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2023-24 budget consultation - BCC Submission

The Belconnen Community Council (BCC) is a not-for-profit, government-funded community organisation. The Belconnen Community Council (BCC) is an advocacy group that represents the interests of our members and the community to the ACT Government on a range of matters affecting the people who live, work, and play in the Belconnen District.

As the voice of Belconnen for over three decades, with over 100,000 people in our catchment, we are intimately engaged with good and bad processes. We are uniquely positioned to offer observations on what works for all sides of the channels we engage with.

We live in a growing district resplendent with natural beauty and a barely sustainable level of infrastructure to support it. Belconnen is the largest district by population, which will increase by 70,000 residents by 2060. The ACT Government must sustainably provide for this predicted population growth within Belconnen in a sustainable way that keeps Belconnen such an attractive place to live. As such, the ACT budget should reflect the reality of this increase and plan for the necessary investments in Belconnen's infrastructure, services, amenities, and employment opportunities to ensure a good standard of living for existing and future Belconnen residents.

The BCC has worked with its community and members to identify several key priorities that should receive urgent attention in this budget. These priorities reflect the main areas of concern that many residents consider needing better focus from the ACT Government to meet community expectations.

Overview of Priorities

These are a summary of the priorities identified by the BCC. We look forward to discussing these in more detail and working with the government to develop and deliver these ideas.

Key Priorities

- Improve the quality and availability of services at Calvary Public Hospital (p. 3).
- Transport Canberra should increase bus numbers, driving staff, and public transport services as a priority, ahead of fleet electrification (p. 4).
- More affordable and accessible housing (p. 11)

Priorities

Hospitals and healthcare (p. 3)

- The planning and design of the new Northside Hospital now, with long-term funding for its construction.
- Housing for healthcare workers.



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Local schools and education (p. 4)

- Prioritise resources for school planning and design work, specifically in Strathnairn and the Belconnen Town Centre.

Public transport, roads and active travel (p. 4).

- Public transport linkages from West Belconnen should be enhanced to prepare for residential growth pressures.
- A feasibility study for infrastructure improvements in public transport services over the short to medium-term.
- Early feasibility and consultation processes for stage three of the light rail (City to Belconnen).
- A Park & Ride facility should be constructed in the new Strathnairn suburb, and Park & Ride facilities across Belconnen should be expanded.
- A multi-level car park for full-time employees in the Belconnen Town Centre.
- Well-maintained footpaths and widening footpaths around Lake Ginninderra.
- The expansion and refinement of cycling infrastructure.
- Well-maintained roads and preparing these assets for the changing climate.
- An equitable integrated transport network that provides choice to Belconnen residents.

Suburban and municipal services (p. 8).

- Increased amenities at Margaret Timpson Park.
- The former Belconnen Health Building site is developed as planned on an expedited schedule or alternative use, including the extension of Margaret Timpson Park.
- Additional facilities are installed around Lake Ginninderra.
- The beautification of Benjamin Way.
- The implementation of circular economy initiatives.
- Static and natural barriers such as large rocks should be installed routinely to protect our mature trees from damage.
- A reversal of the current tree-spraying and removal practice not only out of environmental concern but also to reduce future replanting expenditure.
- Funding be made available to explore options and modify existing TCCS mowing practices in public green spaces to allow for the regeneration and growth of native tree seedlings and native habitats.

Economic Development (p. 11).

- The ACT Government should support and encourage an ongoing Commonwealth Government presence in all the Town Centres.
- The ACT Government should establish an office in the Belconnen Town Centre.
- Support and encouragement for ongoing and greater private investment in the Belconnen Town Centre and across the Belconnen District.



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- The local centre upgrade funding program continues to be funded.

Other (p. 13).

- A timeline for increasing ACT policing resources to meet the demands of the growing Belconnen District.
- An increase in the Deed of Grant provided to community councils.
- Upgrading the Canberra Stadium in Bruce.
- Increase funding availability for EPSDD to process Development Applications and to provide certainty on potential developments.

Hospitals and healthcare

Key Priority: Improve the quality and availability of services at Calvary Public Hospital.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (Calvary) is the primary public hospital and is essential for the residents on the Northside of Canberra. As the population of Northside Canberra has grown, the level of service and staffing at Calvary has failed to keep pace with increasing demand. As our population growth continues to be focused in Canberra's north, its importance will only increase. As Calvary begins to service a greater proportion of Canberra's population, the ACT Government must work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the necessary funding is available to provide more services currently only available at the Canberra Hospital. Not only will this improve the coverage and health services for Canberrans who reside in Northside Canberra, but it will also take pressure off the Canberra Hospital, which has seen wait times blow out for many critical necessary and elective surgeries. The BCC proposes as a priority that the ACT Government commits additional funding for services at Calvary Public Hospital and also lobbies the Commonwealth Government to increase its commitment.

The planning and design of the new Northside Hospital now, with long-term funding for its construction.

The BCC welcomes the ACT Government's commitment to planning a new Northside hospital. A new hospital is required to meet the needs of our growing and changing population; a hospital that is designed to deliver the necessary clinical services now and over the next 50 to 70 years (the estimated life expectancy of the new hospital). Noting the government's preference for the existing hospital site, we suggest that such a significant long-term investment requires exploring other sites, potentially within the Belconnen Town Centre, that enable better accessibility through closeness to housing, services and public transport routes.

Housing for healthcare workers.

An increasingly common issue raised with the BCC is the wait times and low staffing levels at Calvary Public Hospital and the Canberra Hospital. Simultaneously, multiple stories of Canberran



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healthcare workers leaving our city have been raised as they are priced out of Canberra's increasingly unaffordable housing market. To address this issue, the BCC submits that the ACT Budget should include funding for housing that is provided to healthcare workers at affordable rates. This would have the added benefit of enticing healthcare workers from interstate with a financial incentive through cheaper housing.

Local schools and education

Prioritise resources for school planning and design work, specifically in Strathnairn and the Belconnen Town Centre.

The BCC notes that design work is underway for Ginninderry's first P-6 school and early childhood education centre in Strathnairn for an expected opening in 2025. The necessary resources must be available to deliver this on time and in a manner that meets community expectations. Additionally, per the ACT's Infrastructure Plan, funding should be available to undertake feasibility studies to inform future school infrastructure needs arising from further urban renewal in the Belconnen Town Centre. An early and proactive approach will maximise the benefit of infrastructure investment in the Belconnen Town Centre and allow for more effective integration with public and active transport networks.

Public transport, roads and active travel

Key priority: Transport Canberra should increase bus numbers, driving staff, and public transport services as a priority, ahead of fleet electrification.

The latest Transport Canberra timetable reduces the public transport services available to the community. There are fewer buses today than in 1993, and without expanding the bus fleet, the growing demand from the increased population and housing in Belconnen cannot be met. The inability of Transport Canberra to deliver the promised weekend bus services and the reduction in those services in late 2019 is an ongoing and unacceptable issue.

The ACT government should include funding for constructing and expanding additional bus depots as part of a broader fleet expansion to service the ACT's bus network. The increase in bus numbers should take priority over the electrification of the fleet, as the primary goal of Transport Canberra should be to increase service quality and passenger numbers. The emissions savings from building a better bus network with higher patronage exceed savings from prioritising the electrification of the fleet.

The ACT Government should review and expand weekend and public holiday public transport services as a priority. A seven-day-a-week timetable with consistent route numbering would instil confidence in our public transport network and encourage sustained patronage. The limited



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services on these days encourage the community to use private vehicles and undermine the ACT Government's push to be an environmentally sustainable jurisdiction. The community expects the ACT Government to have industrial practices that support a public transport network that serves the people, rather than the reverse. This should be a priority as we enter a COVID-normal world.

Public transport linkages from West Belconnen should be enhanced to prepare for residential growth pressures.

Public transport routes and timetables must be expanded to reflect the changing geography and population of West Belconnen. Ongoing residential development in the Ginninderry project will increase traffic and impact existing road capacity in the West Belconnen region. This region of Canberra is expected to see sustained population growth over the next 40 years. Further improvements to public transport connections from West Belconnen are essential to alleviate the increased traffic.

Additional Rapid routes should be added to allow better access for West Belconnen residents to Belconnen, Civic and beyond. Direct access Rapid routes from Ginninderry to Belconnen, via Drake Brockman Drive and Belconnen Way, would service Ginninderry, Holt, Higgins, Hawker and Page; this would provide access for students to schools zoned for the area ahead of the Strathnairn Primary School completion in 2025. The public transport services should be planned and delivered now before more new residents form the habit of using their private vehicles to commute to their place of work or study.

A feasibility study for infrastructure improvements in public transport services over the short to medium-term.

The BCC recommends the ACT Government investigates short to medium-term infrastructure projects that would improve public transport services. Dedicated bus lanes, such as along Southern Cross Drive and Hayden Drive, should be constructed to improve bus services. Noting that in the long-term light rail will underpin our public transport system, existing residents live in the Belconnen district today and deserve a quality public transport system. This infrastructure should work with light rail to contribute to a high-quality integrated public transport system in the long term.

Early feasibility and consultation processes for stage three of the light rail (City to Belconnen).

While planning and constructing light rail to Woden will continue for several years, there is an opportunity to have an ambitious light rail delivery program. Ongoing studies for light rail stage three to enliven the east-west transport corridor must be funded to support growth in Belconnen; additionally, with the expected population growth in West Belconnen, stage three must go to Kippax. Funding preliminary community consultation and feasibility studies is essential to



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minimising the kind of delays that have affected stage two of the light rail. These studies must be transparent, and allow for meaningful engagement by the community, to ensure there is a plan to genuinely improve the overall network. These studies should consider the routes and possibility of express lines and provide more certainty for broader government investment into an integrated public transport system.

A Park & Ride facility should be constructed in the new Strathnairn suburb, and Park & Ride facilities across Belconnen should be expanded.

Park & Ride could be an increasingly popular option to grow public transport patronage and reduce parking pressure in town centres. Increased Park & Ride facilities should be explored in areas with high patronage and used to enhance existing parking, particularly at local centres. Park & Ride can be attractive if it is near local centres and is linked to local businesses with other vehicle traffic coming and going throughout the day. This passive surveillance and activity will dissuade car theft or vandalism and increase local business patronage. As new residential areas of Belconnen are developed, like public transport, new Park & Ride space must be built before people start moving in. A Park & Ride facility located near the proposed Strathnairn Primary School site (corner of Pro Hart and Asimus Avenues) would provide central access for residents near existing bus stops, the convenience of additional parking near the school for working families, as well as access to the Link community building and the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor public walking trails. Public transport options must be available and accessible for people to consider it a viable alternative for daily commutes.

A multi-level car park for full-time employees in the Belconnen Town Centre.

In previous budget submissions, the BCC proposed new multi-level parking in the Belconnen Town Centre. This was picked up in the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan and must be implemented. Multi-level car parking for full-time employees in the Belconnen Town Centre would free up surface parking for greater economic benefit through commercial or office space, while providing employees unable to access public transport with secure parking within a sensible walking distance of their employment. A further benefit would be alleviating illegal parking from suburbs surrounding the Belconnen Town Centre. While the government could fund this, it is likely achievable by changing zoning requirements.

The BCC recommends that, if constructed, the ground level of any structure facing a major street contain retail premises. Allowing mixed use of this typology will avoid the dead zone created by the multi-level car parks surrounding Westfield's core buildings and encourage further economic development in the Belconnen Town Centre. Parking is at a premium in Belconnen, and a study conducted as part of the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan process showed that capacity approaches 90 to 100% at times. Many of the residential buildings constructed in the Belconnen



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Town Centre over the last decade have empty parking spaces during office hours. Additional usable parking could be found with innovative parking technology that could marry this space with demand and resolve parking pressure.

Well-maintained footpaths and widening footpaths around Lake Ginninderra.

Active transport is government policy, and walking is the primary active transport mode. The existing footpath and cycleway networks in some Belconnen suburbs and around Lake Ginninderra are ageing and need urgent attention. Footpaths are essential to connect the community and encourage outdoor activity; their disrepair is increasingly dangerous, particularly with an ageing population. Many footpaths and cycleways could benefit from widening, particularly in areas of high activity, such as around Lake Ginninderra. Footpaths near schools and bus stops must be repaired and maintained as a priority.

The BCC appreciates the recent maintenance of lights on the edge of the path around Lake Ginninderra. The lighting considerably improves the safety of those who walk, run, or ride around the lake at night. A further safety improvement would be repainting the worn lane markings on the paths around the lake and regular maintenance. This would help both avoid collisions at any time of day and improve path visibility at night.

The expansion and refinement of cycling infrastructure.

Cycling is the other active transport mode, and further infrastructure investments should be made. Cycleways, cycle lanes, protected bike lanes, and cycling infrastructure generally is essential for cycling to be a practical alternative to driving. However, more proactive efforts could be made to futureproof new and updated roads to easily allow for the addition of cycling infrastructure as demand grows.

Lawson stage 2 creates the opportunity to provide a meaningful cycle network in this area. A new cycleway along the lakeshore connecting to the existing cycleway near Ginninderra Drive could easily and quickly be constructed. Although it may not be able to continue along Ginninderra Creek, it could be connected to the McKellar side of the lake by building a small footbridge. This would encourage walking and cycling by nearby residents.

The BCC also calls on the ACT Government to honour its election commitment and complete the proposed cycleway along Benjamin Way. This will allow strong, safe, and active travel links between Jamison and the Belconnen Town Centre.

Well-maintained roads and preparing these assets for the changing climate.

Private vehicles are Canberra's most used travel method, and its infrastructure must meet community expectations. The BCC recognises the immense effort and additional road repair



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funding during the recent extreme weather events. However, funding must be available to assess and prepare road infrastructure to limit the financial and safety impacts during future weather events. Additionally, older roads in the Belconnen district would benefit from new road markings and signs; the safety risks of not implementing this maintenance increase when driving conditions worsen. The necessary level of funding must be provided to maintain and prepare roads.

An equitable integrated transport network that provides choice to Belconnen residents.

A well-designed integrated transport network can connect people to job opportunities, education, healthcare, and other essential services while reducing travel times and congestion. By providing affordable and accessible transportation options for all community members, regardless of income, age, or ability, an integrated transport network includes choice and promotes social inclusion; this should be a focus for the ACT Government.

Suburban and municipal services

Increased amenities at Margaret Timpson Park.

Margaret Timpson Park is a crucial 'green space' in the middle of the Belconnen Town Centre. Increased chairs and tables with appropriate shade within Margaret Timpson Park would encourage better and more frequent use of this area. As the park is increasingly used after hours, especially in summer, fairy lights could be placed throughout Margaret Timpson Park and along Benjamin Way to enhance visibility and provide visual distinction. A public toilet facility in the Margaret Timpson Park area would also benefit residents, shoppers, park users and taxi drivers. Westfield has recently extended the access hours to their premises from Benjamin Way until 9.30 in the evening; this must be matched with enhanced amenities in Margaret Timpson Park.

The former Belconnen Health Building site is developed as planned on an expedited schedule or alternative use, including the extension of Margaret Timpson Park.

The former Belconnen Health Building site, now colloquially called the Belconnen Town Centre swimming pool due to its tendency to collect water after heavy rains, remains a significant blight on the town centre. Not only is it aesthetically displeasing, but it also presents a health hazard to nearby residents and detracts from the amenity of the town centre. While the BCC understands this site has been earmarked for a demonstration housing project, there has been no progress in the last three years. Consistent with the feedback received, the best option for the site is extending the existing Margaret Timpson Park footprint. We strongly encourage the ACT Government to set a clear timeframe for the development of that area to ensure that it no longer poses a health risk to the community and enhances the amenity of the town centre. The BCC recommends that the ACT Government dedicate funds to pursuing this development or look at alternative site uses, including the extension of Margaret Timpson Park.



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Additional facilities are installed around Lake Ginninderra.

The existing BBQ facilities around Lake Ginninderra are high quality, well-maintained and extremely popular with the public. Increased BBQ facilities, specifically near the town centre, would increase the amenity of this area and alleviate the demand for other public BBQs. In addition, more and improved seating and lighting around Lake Ginninderra—particularly along Emu Bank—would only enhance this asset. Adding a small playground at the site would provide active recreation for the growing number of children residing in the Belconnen Town Centre.

The beautification of Benjamin Way.

Benjamin Way is essentially the main entrance to the Belconnen Town Centre, yet despite the fame of the Belconnen Owl, this is not obvious. The results of both the BCC survey on the Belconnen Town Centre and consultation for the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan revealed that respondents found the Belconnen Town Centre was disconnected, with some noting that there are distinct areas of activity—most notably at either end of Benjamin Way. Providing greater connectivity along and across will, over time, change Benjamin Way from a long green barrier between one half of the Town Centre and the other to a welcoming connecting boulevard. Linkages between the Belconnen Fresh Food Markets, restaurants and entertainment in Weedon Close, and the businesses catering to new urban dwellers in the residential towers near Benjamin Way will benefit from better connectivity. A walk from Emu Bank to Belconnen Way, past thriving businesses, should be a feature of the Belconnen Town Centre. Investment in the beautification of Benjamin Way will help further community identity and pride in the area and better connect it. Increased lighting, public artwork where/if appropriate and landscaping of the median strip from Chan Street to Lake Ginninderra would be welcomed.

The implementation of circular economy initiatives.

The BCC looks forward to the ACT Government releasing the ACT Circular Economy Strategy 2022-25 this year. The citywide benefits of shifting towards a circular economy include improving the natural environment, economic growth, and supporting the transition to a net zero city. Early investment in the ACT's circular economy will facilitate better recycling habits and decrease pressure on the Northside Waste Management Facility at Mitchell.

Static and natural barriers such as large rocks should be installed routinely to protect our mature trees from damage.

The Government has a commitment to valuing and protecting mature trees on public land, yet limited actions are being taken to preserve trees on verges and footpaths, especially in high-traffic



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areas. The mature eucalypts in Ibbott Lane on the edge of the car park behind the Belconnen Markets have vehicles driving over their root zone daily. The BCC recommends greater publicity to inform the public that parking on footpaths is illegal, with increased enforcement and penalties. Parking on footpaths blocks foot traffic and cracks pavements, resulting in increased maintenance, which may otherwise have been unnecessary.

A reversal of the current tree-spraying and removal practice not only out of environmental concern but also to reduce future replanting expenditure.

Funding be made available to explore options and modify existing TCCS mowing practices in public green spaces to allow for the regeneration and growth of native tree seedlings and native habitats.

The BCC supports the ACT Government's efforts to ensure 30% canopy cover to reduce heat-island effects and improve the sustainability of the environment. The BCC applauds the planting of trees in areas around Lake Ginninderra. While it represents a welcome start to improving the amenity of the lake, there is considerable opportunity for further tree planting.

One practice that is at odds with the goal of increased canopy cover and sustainability is the spraying and removal of trees that self-seed around the lake. Cessation of this practice would facilitate revegetation in some parks where older trees have been dying over several years, removed and not replaced. Dead trees, which provide fauna habitat, should only be removed if they are a hazard to users of the lake.

Another practice that is at odds with the goals of increased canopy cover and sustainability is the current mowing regime. Regeneration is the cheapest form of revegetation, and encouraging natural regeneration (germination of self-sown seedlings from existing or nearby vegetation) should be a key component of the Government's plan for increasing our urban canopy. Native grassland should rarely be cut, and it is pleasing that the area planted with native grass near Diddams Close playground has been spared from mowing. Unfortunately, mowing near the creek from Kangara Waters has been too aggressive and has destroyed frog habitat. Ideally, 1.5 to 2 meters should be free from mowing around each side of the creeks and from the lake's edge to avoid habitat destruction. Care should be exercised when mowing to ensure that young trees, especially those self-seeding without protective tree guards, are not inadvertently or deliberately mown.

The spraying of ivy and sticky weed (*Galium aparine*) around Lake Ginninderra has been necessary to protect native flora. This spraying has largely been successful, with sticky weed being killed and only a few small patches of ivy evident. Both weeds will likely regenerate in warmer months; further monitoring and spraying may be necessary. While spraying introduced weeds is virtually



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unavoidable, spraying young trees (whether native or introduced) harms the amenity and habitat of native fauna and should be avoided. Avoiding such spraying would facilitate, in the longer term, greater natural restoration of the tree canopy.

Community services and support for families

Key priority: More affordable and accessible housing.

Good quality housing is an essential human need for everyone who lives in the ACT. However, the current housing market is leaving people behind, and the ACT Government must work towards improving the housing market. The ACT Government should investigate the entire housing market (owner-occupied, short and long-term rentals, and public housing) and how demographics will change the type of housing demanded.

International jurisdictions that have investigated this issue and academic evidence on the subject have highlighted the importance of ensuring a consistent, abundant housing supply to ease the cost of housing. The ACT Government should review these other jurisdictions to identify best practices to solve the supply issues and enact policies with quantifiable benchmarks to achieve these solutions.

As part of this, the ACT Government should commit to greater funding for constructing, purchasing and maintaining public housing. To further facilitate housing supply, the ACT Government should enact policies that enable suitable infill while ensuring Canberra maintains its surrounding natural environment.

Economic development.

The ACT Government should support and encourage an ongoing Commonwealth Government presence in all the Town Centres.

A Commonwealth Government presence in the Town Centres is significant to their economic viability. We appreciate that large departments like the Department of Home Affairs want to consolidate their footprint; successfully rebalancing from Civic to Belconnen proves it is possible. However, the Commonwealth Government is a significant employer in the Belconnen Town Centre that supports vibrant residential and business communities. With improved transportation options, there is no reason that other government departments or commercial enterprises cannot be attracted to the Belconnen Town Centre. The ACT Government must encourage a continuing, if not increased, Commonwealth Government presence in the Belconnen Town Centre.



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The ACT Government should establish an office in the Belconnen Town Centre.

The ACT Government's rationale for establishing a government office block in Gungahlin was to provide greater opportunities for residents to work closer to home and further develop the growing centre. The BCC requests that this approach be adopted in all Town Centres, not least Belconnen. This should include ensuring an ACT Government presence so that the liveability and opportunity for residents and businesses alike are assured.

Support and encouragement for ongoing and greater private investment in the Belconnen Town Centre and across the Belconnen District.

Business uncertainty is growing nationwide with high inflation and increasing interest rates; we must ensure businesses can use every opportunity to reinvent, repurpose and redesign their operations here in Belconnen. The BCC suggests the ACT Government investigates how to further attract private investment to the Belconnen Town Centre and the broader region, particularly given the University of Canberra (UC) location and sporting amenities. Our submission to the draft District Strategies and Territory Plan consultation recommended developing a mixed-use design guide to provide guidance and certainty on mixed-use zoning to deliver a genuine mix of compatible uses in the Belconnen Town Centre, our suburbs and local centres.

Strong residential growth has increased demand for street-level retail and local employment opportunities. These positive effects of urban renewal need to be encouraged and continued. Some limited investment by the ACT Government in the streetscape and median strip of Benjamin Way could be performed in conjunction with long-term plans by Scenter Group (owners of Westfield Belconnen) to encourage more street-facing retail and enhance the out-of-hours amenities of the town centre.

The local centre upgrade funding program continues to be funded.

Local centres are seen as community hubs and should have the appropriate amenity to reflect this. The BCC has been encouraged by the ACT Government's local centre upgrade program, which has seen some improvements like lighting and access; this should continue in a planned manner independent of the electoral cycle. We also encourage private landlords and business owners to contribute to the amenity of the local centres. We do not believe the community should bear the entire cost of improvements to local centres when business significantly benefits from this investment. A cooperative arrangement between government and business can bring about excellent community amenities. The Aranda Shops have benefitted from private investment and community support and are a model for struggling local shops.



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Other

A timeline for increasing ACT policing resources to meet the demands of the growing Belconnen District.

There are concerns that the quantity of police resources in the Belconnen District needs to catch up with population growth. In previous submissions, the BCC has advocated for a police presence at Kippax. As the community and group centre expands, we would expect that resources could be delivered to enhance community protection and directly deter criminal activity. A presence at Kippax would greatly reduce response times to the West Belconnen region. A timeline should be developed for where and how ACT police resources will be enhanced across Canberra.

An increase in the Deed of Grant provided to community councils.

Like all community councils, the Belconnen Community Council is a volunteer-led community organisation. To enhance volunteer work, the BCC requests additional funds to assist with developing community-oriented programs, encouraging community volunteerism, and extending activities to enable effective community advocacy.

Upgrading the Canberra Stadium in Bruce.

The Canberra Stadium requires investment to maximise its benefit to the ACT. The stadium presents an excellent location and opportunity to continue serving Canberrans's sporting and entertainment needs. With the necessary investment to ensure the facility meets modern expectations, the AIS and stadium district could become a vibrant part of the city and require significantly less funding than a new facility in the city centre. It could easily be accessible to all Canberrans via public transport and the future light rail stage 3.

Increase funding availability for EPSDD to process Development Applications and to provide certainty on potential developments.

A significant concern for Belconnen residents is a need for certainty about the planning process, particularly the resources available to the ACT Planning Authority (ACTPLA) to plan for the region's future. It is clear to many observers that EPSDD does not have the resources to perform the long-term planning work of the ACT as well as its role as an arbiter of Development Applications (DA). To rectify the long DA evaluation processes and uncertainty around planning, the ACT Government should ensure that ACTPLA and EPSDD are adequately resourced to perform their role. ACTPLA should receive the necessary funding to comprehensively assess Development Applications to ensure they meet the ACT's standards.



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We thank the ACT Government for the opportunity to provide this input into the 2023/24 budget planning process.

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Chair

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