

2019-20

ACT Government

Budget Submission



Winter sun in the Woden Town Square will be limited by zoning for 28 storey residential towers on the perimeter

ACT Budget Consultation

Chief Minister, Treasury & Economic Directorate

budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2019-20 ACT Government Budget process.

The Woden Valley Community Council (WVCC) was established to promote the interests of the Woden Valley community and contribute to the physical and social planning of the Woden Valley. The ACT Government provides funding support to the WVCC to communicate to the Territory the views, expectations and concerns of community members.

Woden, Canberra's first town centre, is centrally located, an employment hub and has duplicated roads that provide bus rapid transit from surrounding regions. The Town Centre services around 70,000 people in the Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo communities. See **Attachment A**

The Woden Town Centre is in a period of renewal after becoming run down over many years. To secure the physical, economic and social well-being of current and future communities it is time to plan for the needs of the broader community using our social and economic hubs.

While we understand the reasons for densification (to provide for the forecast population increase and reduce environmental impacts) we want densification to be done well. Residential towers need to be positioned to reduce the impact of overshadowing and balanced with open green spaces, community facilities and the following vision in the Woden Town Centre Master Plan:

'Woden Town Centre is a major community and commercial hub for the Woden Valley and wider Canberra region. It will be a place that attracts people to live, work, socialise and enjoy throughout the day and evenings. The town square is the central focal point for social and community activity that will connect people to a network of safe and active streets and public parks'.

The co-location of a community centre, a CIT, a multi-purpose sports hall and a publicly supported pool in the town centre will draw people into the centre and help provide vibrant areas and an active life style that reduces the reliance on cars.

Our Group Centres (Curtin and Mawson), suburban shops and the Phillip commercial area also need upgrades, including central open spaces and playgrounds.

The highest priority for Woden is a community/arts centre which would include a new site for the Woden Community Service to deliver its vital services in a centrally located, accessible community hub. Currently their programs are inefficiently located over four sites and there is limited access to the childcare centre.

On 23 October 2018 the Chief Minister delivered his Ministerial Statement: *Delivering an inclusive, progressive and connected Canberra* which included renewal of town centres to create lively active hubs.

As stated by the Chief Minister in his 2016 Statement of Ambition - *'Cities don't succeed by accident or by leaving things to chance – they require design, good governance and great collaboration'*.

The WVCC requests the development of a land use plan to guide future government and private sector investment, including sites for community facilities and cycle networks in the Woden Town Centre.

Our draft land use plan is at **Attachment B** and our priorities are at **Attachment C**.

2019-20 Budget priorities for Woden

The policy outcomes that the WVCC seeks are:

1. Community pride in a **vibrant** town centre, group centres and local shops;
2. **Housing choices**, including **affordable housing**;
3. Increased **job** opportunities in Woden;
4. **Higher education** in Woden: and
5. Better health outcomes with **sporting, arts and recreational facilities**.

In order to meet the policy outcomes, the following recommendations are provided.

Community/Arts Hub

The Woden community has never had a community centre nor has the Woden Community Service appropriate accommodation. Their current accommodation is located over four locations and has poor access, particularly to the child care.

A new community hub could be planned on the east west pedestrian link to bring activity to the central area. This facility could also host Woden Community Service, meeting rooms, training rooms, a mothers and children area, technology for public use and a visual and performing arts centre.

On 18 October 2018, the ACT Government announced that planning had started for a future community centre in Woden. We now need a land use plan to ensure that all facilities required are sited to create an active and vibrant centre.

Attachment A shows the catchments for the town centres

St Vincent de Paul's proposal to reduce homelessness by repurposing the CIT Woden Site

The WVCC supports the St Vincent de Paul Society in their efforts to address the issue of homelessness, however, we are not convinced that the Woden CIT is the appropriate site. Another opportunity may arise with the vacation of the building currently occupied by the Woden Community Service. This may be an ideal site as it is located opposite the Woden Health Service and provides access to services and facilities in Woden for the clients of St Vincent de Paul.

Facilities and Healthy Living

Woden requires investment in infrastructure to connect people and support the ACT Government's Healthy Living initiative:

- sporting facilities – a multi-purpose indoor sports facility and a publically funded pool;
- a cycling network from the suburbs to the Woden Town Centre;
- open green spaces
- playgrounds in the Town Centre, Group Centres, suburban shops and the Phillip Business district.

Attachments D to F demonstrate the gaps in the provision of publicly funded community facilities with the new pool at Stromlo not providing for active living in Woden, a major community and commercial hub.

Higher Education

A CIT learning centre would improve learning outcomes, help attract young people to the area and bring activity to the Woden Town Centre.

The 2015-16 Budget included a measure for the CIT to actively seek opportunities to provide a community campus in the Woden Town Centre. The proposed move to Woden would provide CIT with a more modern learning environment and have the advantage of being more accessible for the public and closer to public transport. The outcome of this work has not been released.

A modern learning centre would help with educational outcomes and provide Woden with the benefits that jobs in higher education provide a community.

The WVCC recommends that the Woden **CIT** is re-opened close to the town centre to provide:

- allied health courses with innovative ideas to realise synergies with the Canberra Hospital;
- aged care and child care courses;
- STEM centre of excellence;
- courses that complement the work of the Woden Community Service eg ESL

An analysis to determine ways to capitalise on Woden's economic advantage of hosting the Canberra Hospital should be undertaken. Identification of opportunities to develop health education and a health 'Hub', (including healthy living policies and sporting facilities) could be developed into a strategy to retain a sustainable CIT campus, create job opportunities, better health outcomes and contribute to urban renewal of Woden.

Environment

While welcoming the work underway through the ACT Healthy Waterways project, funding should also be provided to naturalise the Creek at the Woden Town Park to provide a natural environment for people to relax and enjoy.

Open green spaces should be identified in the central area of the town centre to replace the green courtyards in the Alexander and Albemarle buildings that were sold to developers.

Playspaces

Play provides multiple health, wellbeing, social, cultural and economic benefits. Our shopping environments have little open green spaces and play areas.

Play spaces are needed at our town centre, group centres, local shops and Phillip business district to engage and bind our community.

Road and Bus Infrastructure

While Woden has strong north south and east west road connections, there are number of projects that need to be undertaken to improve the flow of both general traffic and the bus network, including:

Road infrastructure improvements

- intersection improvements –
 - Launceston St, Irving St and Furzer St to improve traffic flow and safety; and

- a left-turn slip lane, heading north, from Melrose Drive into Hindmarsh Drive to reduce congestion.
- duplication of Athllon Drive between Shea St and the roundabout at Melrose Drive;
- Cotter Road reconfiguration to access south bound lanes on Adelaide Avenue;

Bus infrastructure improvements to encourage people to use public transport

- park n ride spaces –
 - Mawson requires more spaces – it is often full and a deterrent to using public transport, additional car parks could be provided on the corner block of Athllon Drive and Beasley St (the Mawson playing fields).
 - next to the Lyons Church of Christ, opposite Glenorchy Street and Yolla Place.
- kiss n ride drop off facilities should be provided as people currently stop to drop off people in the bus bays which is dangerous when buses are approaching.
- longer **bus bays** to manage the number of buses stopping on the Rapid routes
- suburban bus stops closer to the blue rapid, eg in Torrens

Parking – Woden Athletics Park

The Woden Athletics Park is a major athletics facility however the parking is inadequate for access from both local and interstate residents.

Light Rail

The new bus network is based on the concept of rapid routes designed to move large numbers of people between Canberra’s town centres, public transport interchanges and other key locations, such as Dickson, Coleman Court and Canberra International Airport.

Should a light rail be built it should ensure rapid services are retained with the light rail taking the direct alignment from the City to Woden and continue to Mawson.

Land Use Plan

Currently Woden is being developed in an ad hoc manner, a Land Use Plan is required to ensure that the best outcomes are delivered for Woden’s future communities.

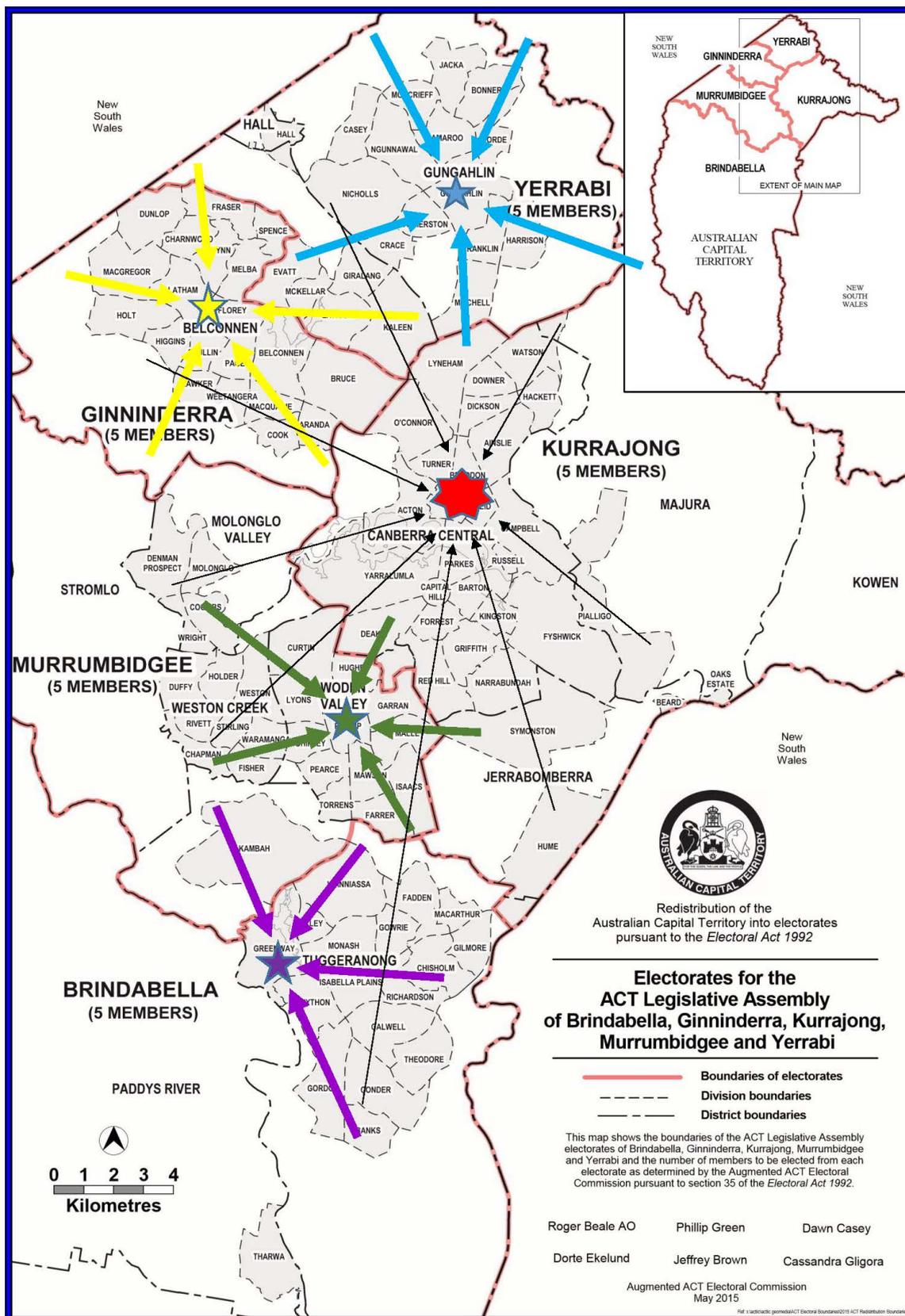
Until a land use plan has been delivered to provide guidance and confidence to both the government and the private sector about development, there should be a moratorium on land releases/sales.

A table summarising the Budget requests is at **Attachment E**. The WVCC recognises that these requests will need to be staged over a number of years, the short term priorities are highlighted in green, medium term in orange and longer term in blue.

Attachments

- A: The Woden Town Centre is a major community and commercial hub
- B: Location of Higher Education in Canberra
- C: Location of publically funded pools
- D: Location of publically supported Arts ACT facilities
- E: Table summarising Budget requests

The Woden Town Centre is a major community and commercial hub for the Woden Valley and wider Canberra region. It requires facilities to attract people to live, work, learn and play





Ice skating

Entertainment precinct

Multi-purpose sports hall

Indoor / outdoor Aquatic Centre with diving facility

Cemetery

Community Hub - library, health centre, Seniors, Woden Community Services

connected green open spaces

Town Square

Police station

Higher education connecting with the hospital

bus - green rapid

Blue rapid or light rail

2019-20 - Woden Valley Community Council Budget Priorities

Budget priorities	Woden Town Centre	Group Centres – Curtin and Mawson	Suburbs
Land Use Plans	Identify public spaces (including green), an entertainment area and sites for community facilities	Identify public spaces (including green) and sites for playspaces	Shops - identify public spaces (including green) and sites for playspaces, bbqs, landscaping and lighting
Community/Arts centre	Identify a site and commit funding, including - Woden Community Services - Arts precinct – visual, performance and music		
CIT	Identify a site and commit to a strategy to return services to Woden		
Multi-purpose sports hall	Identify a site and commit funding		
Pool (publically funded)	Identify a site and commit funding		
Play spaces	Commit funding to construct a play space in the Town Square.	Identify and fund a central spot (including green spaces) for a play space	Provide at every suburban shops – priorities Torrens and Phillip
Open green spaces	Identify sites	Identify sites	Identify sites
Connectivity	Commit funding to cycle network alignments to connect the suburbs to the Town Centre		
Southern Cemetery	Commit to funding a new cemetery		
Woden wetlands	naturalise the Creek at the Town Park		
Road infrastructure improvements	Upgrade intersection at Launceston St and Irving St, Furzer St		
	Duplicate Athllon Drive between Shea St and the roundabout at Melrose Drive		
	a left-turn slip lane, heading north, from Melrose Drive into Hindmarsh Drive		
Parking - Woden Athletics Park	Provide adequate parking at the athletics track		
Bus infrastructure improvements	North Woden – new park n ride opposite the Phillip pool bus stop	Mawson – extension of existing park n ride at Southlands	Mawson – allow cars to park on the empty block a the playing fields - cnr Athllon Drive and Beasley St
	longer bus bays to manage the number of buses stopping on the Rapid route and provide kiss n ride facilities for drop offs		
Street lighting upgrades	Across the Woden Valleys		
Potential to re-purpose buildings	With the growing population, population forecasts should be done to determine whether the Chifley primary school should be re-opened and consideration should be given to the use of the CIT for the current tenants of the Chifley primary school.		

Attachment C

2019-20 Budget Measures

Measure	2019-20	2020-21	Comment
Land Use Plans for the Woden Town Centre and Southlands	planning		To secure the physical, economic and social well-being of current and future communities using the Woden Town Centre and Southlands
Community / Arts Centre	planning	construction	To help build a stronger, healthier, happier, safer and inclusive community.
Multi-purpose sports hall	planning	construction	To help build an active, stronger, healthier, happier and inclusive community.
Play spaces			
- Torrens shops playground	construction		To help build an active, stronger, healthier, happier and inclusive community.
- Phillip business district playground	planning and construction		To help build an active, stronger, healthier, happier and inclusive community.
Road upgrades			
- Launceston St/ Irving St	planning	construction	To reduce congestion and provide a safe intersection
- Launceston St/ Burnie St	planning	construction	To reduce congestion and provide a safe intersection
Parking - Woden Athletics Park	planning	construction	To provide access to the athletics track
Park n Rides			
- Lyons – opposite Phillip pool	planning and construction		To provide efficient access to the public transport network
- Mawson - cnr Athllon St/Beasley St	planning and construction		To provide efficient access to the public transport network

Location of publically funded pools – including the Commonwealth funded AIS.
 There is also a commitment to build a pool at Molonglo.

