



South Canberra Netball Association v Tuggeranong at the ACT Netball Centre in Lyneham

**Woden Town Centre
multi-purpose sports hall proposal**

February 2019

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Foreword

Sport and recreation activities have the ability to bring people of all ages together and provide opportunities for inclusion. They can inspire and motivate individuals while also fostering community pride.

The demolition of Woden's basketball stadium and closure of both the Woden CIT and the MPowerdome in Tuggeranong have left a shortage of indoor sports facilities across the south of Canberra.

The growing ACT electorate of Murrumbidgee does not have an indoor multi-purpose sports facility leaving many sporting teams, including basketball, netball, futsal, gymnastics, badminton and roller derby with limited access to indoor sports facilities.

This proposal seeks \$30 million from Governments to construct a multi-purpose sports hall in the centrally located Woden Town Centre. This facility will contribute to the government's policy objectives of incorporating Active Living Principles into our daily lives and encourage physical, social, and economic activities. It is particularly important to provide opportunities for young people to engage with the community when the attraction of devices in the home is so strong.



Ms Fiona Carrick
President
Woden Valley
Community Council



Mr Tom Anderson
Chair
Weston Creek
Community Council



Ms Marea Fatseas
Chair
Inner South Canberra
Community Council



Ms Kirsten Cross
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Woden Valley
Gymnastics Club



Mr Robert Lamaro
Treasurer
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Ms Emma Davidson
Deputy CEO
Women's Centre for
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(and Roller Derby)



Ms Margie Sheedy
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Ms Claire Major
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1 Background

Woden, Canberra’s first town centre, is centrally located, an employment hub and home to an increasing number of residential towers. It is accessible by rapid bus services from surrounding districts and provides jobs and services to growing populations including: Woden (49,200), Weston Creek (33,200), Molonglo (51,400) and South Canberra (40,300) bringing the catchment for the Woden Town Centre to 174,100 people by 2041. Population forecasts sourced from the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*.

Over recent years facilities have closed and some large employers have moved to other locations leaving buildings empty. There has been a decline in activity (eg the basketball stadium was demolished, the CIT closed and the ice skating rink and pool are at risk of closure) in the centre with residents driving to other districts for social and recreational amenity. This leaves the Woden community with few facilities for meeting places to build a strong and resilient community.

In response to population growth, the environmental impacts of urban sprawl and the lack of activity in the Woden Town Centre, the ACT Government has plans for high rise residential towers to bring people, and therefore activity, to the centre. Densification and a commitment to light rail stage 2 is changing Woden however the plans do not provide for the associated community infrastructure for the growing population. These changes provide an opportunity to plan the future character of the town centre and focus on the well-being of the community. The Woden Valley Community Council (WVCC) is concerned that the balance between residential towers, public space and community facilities does not meet the current and future needs of the community.

National Capital Plan

One of the key principles of Canberra’s urban structure has been that a hierarchy of centres has been developed, with each town having a centre acting as a focal point for higher order retail functions, commercial services, offices and community facilities. The town centres are intended to provide the services and facilities for the catchment.

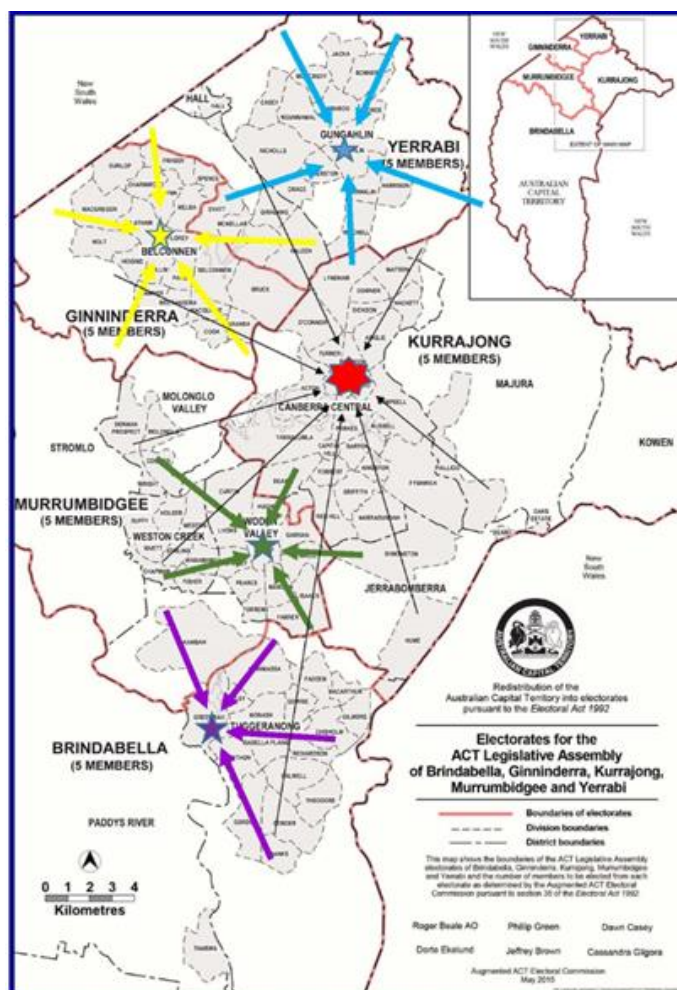
Woden Town Centre Master Plan - Vision

*“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”.*

WVCC’s additional Vision

The Woden community has pride in the Town Centre and strengthens connections between people by sharing social, cultural and recreational facilities and public spaces to build a strong and resilient community.

The City and Town Centre catchments



2 Problem Definition

Loss of green public spaces and community facilities

Both public and private facilities have closed in Woden and green spaces are being developed for housing.

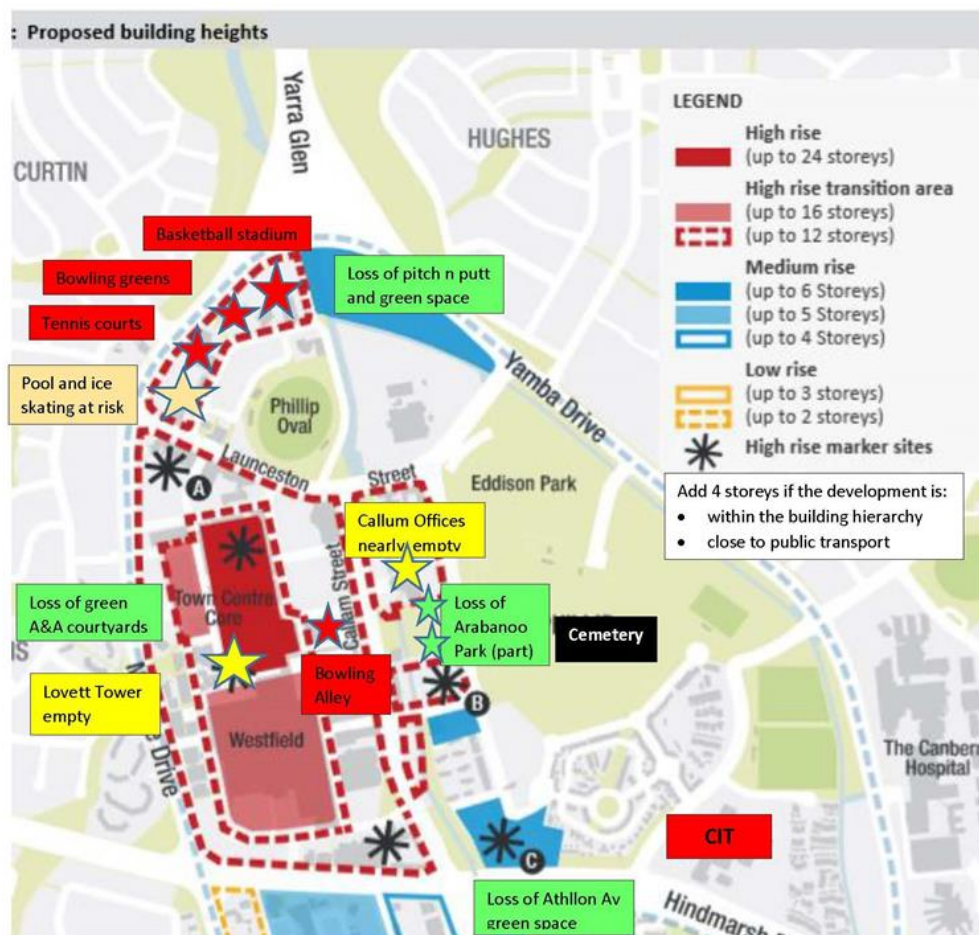
The Canberra Southern Cross Club sold the basketball stadium (multi-purpose sports hall), health centre, bowling greens and tennis courts to developers. They closed the pitch n putt and built a new health centre (including a 17 metre pool) with plans to develop the rest of the site with residential accommodation.

The ACT Government closed the CIT (TAFE) and sold the Phillip pool to the private sector. The pool and the ice rink are now at risk of becoming financially unviable and closure should a new National Ice Sports Centre be built in Canberra. The Woden Town Centre does host ovals, indoor cricket nets and an athletics track.

While the WVCC welcomes development we want it to be done well. A plan is required to identify sites for public green spaces and community facilities in the centre. Buildings on the north of these facilities should have human scale to allow the sun into meeting places, particularly in Canberra’s cooler months. A plan would guide private and public investment providing certainty and confidence to both the community and developers about the long term liveability of the Town Centre.

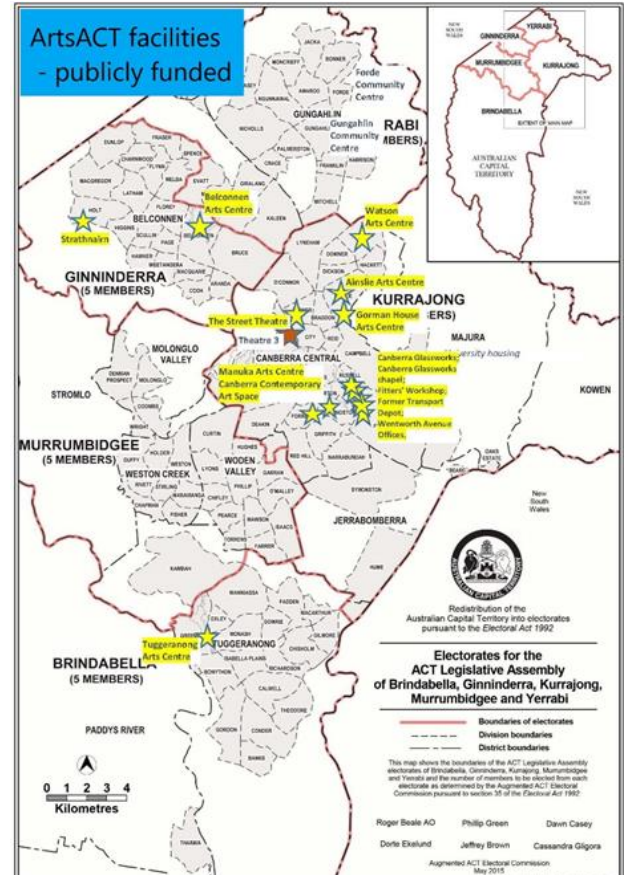
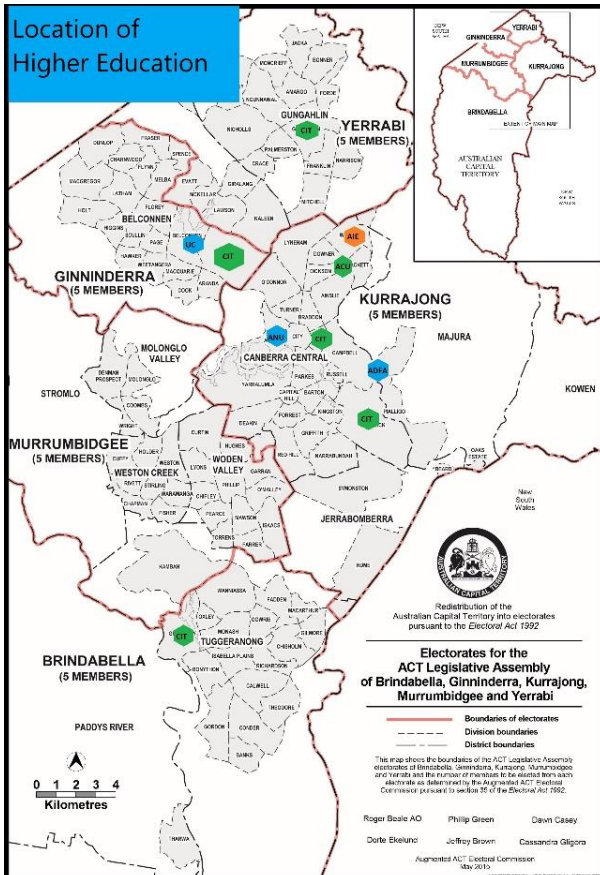
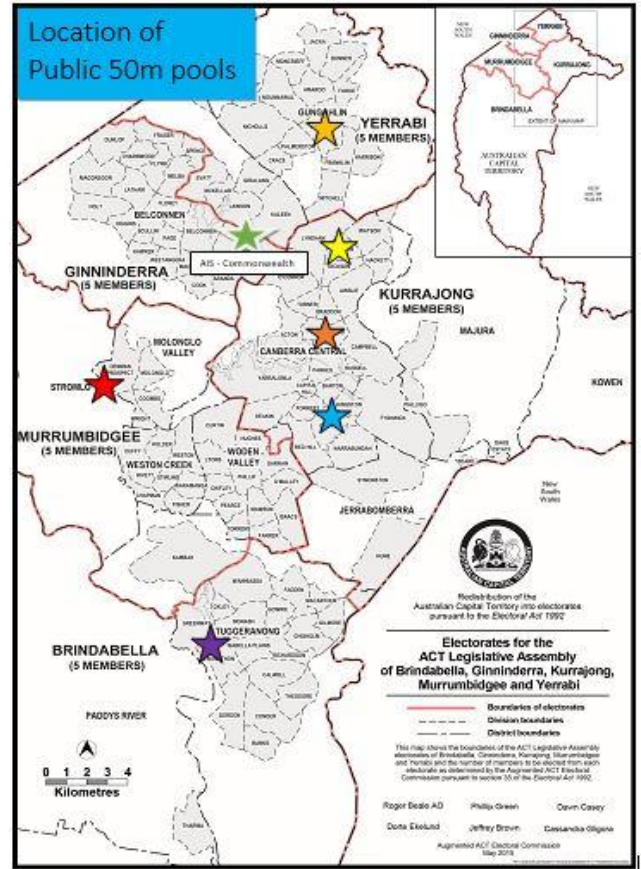
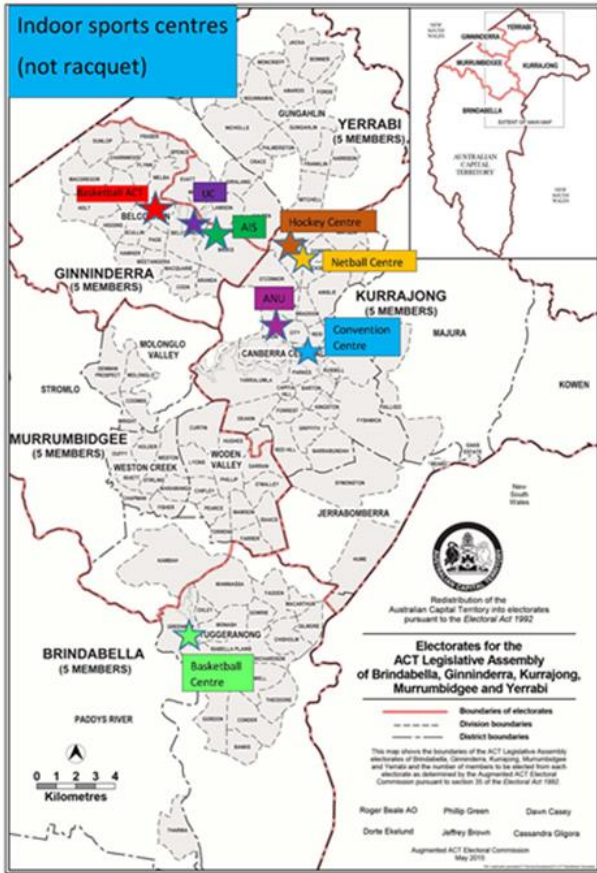
The ACT Government updated the Phillip Precinct Code in August 2018 which allows very high density in a building hierarchy from 12 to 24 storeys in the centre. An additional 4 storeys is available to developers if they are in the building hierarchy and close to public transport, effectively allowing 16 to 28 storeys. The plan does not identify sites for community/cultural and recreational facilities.

The diagram below highlights the loss of facilities (red boxes) and green spaces, empty commercial buildings (yellow) and shows the zoning for highrise residential towers.



Shortage of facilities in the south

The closure of facilities in the south has contributed to an imbalance of recreational infrastructure (indoor sports, pools, the arts and higher education) between the north and south of Canberra, particularly in Woden and Weston Creek. The new pool at Stromlo does not negate the need for a centrally located pool in Woden.



3 Policy Context

Inactivity is the fourth largest cause of chronic conditions in Australia and the nation is now one of the most obese on earth. Fifty-six percent of Australian adults — more than 10 million people — are living sedentary or low-activity lifestyles (source Sport 2030 - National Sport Plan). There are many policy documents that encourage active living.

The **ACT Government's Active Living policy** and vision for Canberra is to be a healthy, active, vibrant city that is well connected, compact and equitable. The key principles of the Commonwealth's **National Capital Plan** (NCP) is for each town to have a centre acting as a focal point for higher order retail functions, commercial services, offices and community facilities and that the expansion of services and facilities should be provided for and encouraged in each of the town centres. The lack of facilities in the Woden Town Centre does not align with these policies.

Nor does the lack of facilities meet the objectives of the ACT's **Territory Plan** to ensure, in a manner not inconsistent with the NCP, that the planning and development of the ACT provides an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and undertake recreation. In December 2017, the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal reported on the *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan Number 344 Woden Town Centre* and recommended the provision of recreation facilities in Woden.

Similarly, the situation does not meet the Directions in the **ACT Planning Strategy 2018** to deliver social infrastructure that meets community needs and supports strong communities (4.1) and to deliver recreation, open (green) space and public spaces that support social interaction, physical and mental health and engagement in public life (4.2).

Notwithstanding the ACT Government's policies and the 2015 ACT **Indoor Sports Facilities Study** which found (with the closure of the Woden Basketball Stadium and the CIT) that there is a shortage of indoor sports facilities, the planning for Woden does not provide sites for the future development of community facilities or consider the social and physical needs for access to indoor sports facilities in the south of Canberra.

The vision in the Australian Government's **National Sport Plan - Sport 2030** is to be the world's most active and healthy sporting nation, known for its integrity and sporting success. There are five target outcomes to:

- improve the physical health of Australians — through the benefits of sport and physical activity, including reduced risk of chronic conditions.
- improve the mental health of Australians — through the recognised mental health benefits of sport and physical activity, including the improved management of mental illness and greater social connectedness.
- grow personal development — from taking up a new challenge, to setting a new personal goal or striving for the podium, being active can help everyone endeavour to be their best self.
- strengthen our communities — by harnessing the social benefits of sport including through improved cohesion and reduced isolation; and
- grow Australia's economy — building on the already significant contribution of sport to the Australian economy.

The **Planning Liveable Cities** Report released by Infrastructure Australia in December 2018 provides some guidance to the efficient and productive operation of our cities. It states that 'people want to live in places with easy access to parks, schools, community facilities and reasonable travel times to work and services. Creating liveable places is not optional for governments, it is essential'.

Woden has been zoned for high density residential towers. To minimise car movements to the north and to create an inclusive community in Woden, residents should be able to walk and cycle to recreational facilities in their Town Centre which will then support activity and small business.

Woden is on the north south, east west public transport alignment making it accessible by public transport from across Canberra. Locating facilities in the town centres provides wider economic benefits by bringing people together which reduces social isolation and supports the objective of liveable cities.

4 Needs of the Community

Grass roots sporting groups in the south of Canberra require a facility in which to train and hold competitions, including:

- Netball
- Basketball
- Futsal
- Gymnastics
- Roller Derby
- Badminton
- Table Tennis

The availability of accessible and sustainable sporting infrastructure is critical when it comes to getting our community to move more. We need to provide the Woden/Weston community with opportunities to engage all ages (particularly young people with a preference for devices) in sport, opportunities for fun and social activities.

In addition to the benefits of exercise, sports facilities provide a strong sense of community and pride in the community.

Quotes from the community:

From the perspective of Women's Centre for Health Matters:

'Time and affordability are barriers to physical activity for ACT women. Combining social activity with physical activity is a key motivator for women's participation in healthy behaviours.'

'Being able to access sports facilities closer to where women live reduces the time and cost of travel to participate in sport, and is an enabler to strengthening local social networks that encourage women to continue their participation.'

'Community sports facilities that are affordable and accessible to informal social sports groups make it easier for women to participate with people they know and feel comfortable with.'

'If we want to improve population health, we need to look at ways to make physical activity easier to participate in for women, particularly women on low incomes, with chronic conditions, or from diverse cultural backgrounds.'

- Emma Davidson, Deputy CEO, Women's Centre for Health Matters

From the perspective of Roller Derby:

'Relying on bookings at school halls and similar facilities means that roller derby skaters have been splitting their training sessions between multiple venues, adding to the administrative workload on a volunteer-run community sport. And now, they have skaters training until 10:30pm on weeknights because that's the only time they could get a booking. For a team that competes internationally at the highest level in their sport, this isn't sustainable.'

- Emma Davidson, Deputy CEO, Women's Centre for Health Matters

From the perspective of Badminton:

'The National Badminton Club was forced to find a new facility when the Woden sports centre closed. The move forced us to accept poor lighting and inferior line markings. Some nights we had to turn people away due to maximum occupancy restraints. Both facilities we've used since the move have increased travel time. In particular, public transport has become impractical.'

- Ashley Davidson, former Secretary National Badminton Club

5 Options

Drive to the north – do nothing option

Currently sporting communities are driving to Canberra's north, schools, Tuggeranong or Queanbeyan to access indoor sports facilities for training and competitions.

Dedicated facilities that provide for the whole of Canberra are located in the north, our sporting groups have found them expensive and difficult to access. Currently residents living in the south of Canberra are travelling north for recreation, particularly between 4pm to 10pm adding to traffic congestion. For example, due to the lack of facilities in the south, our district netball teams train at the AIS.

This option is not preferred because the wider benefits of indoor sporting facilities in our Town Centre are not realised.

School halls

We question the economic efficiency of using schools for the community's recreational facilities. The Town Centres are designed to be the focal areas for the community to meet and locating a multi-purpose sports hall in the Town Centre provides activity, supports social inclusion, small business and the wider economic benefits of agglomeration.

There are not economic efficiencies for the sporting groups because juggling administration, sporting equipment and safety of the participants across multiple locations creates logistical hardship. Our sporting groups are losing participants due to the difficulty in securing appropriate accommodation.

While using school halls may provide short term financial efficiencies for the ACT Government, we need to look at the best outcomes for the future of the community and create liveability and pride in our Town Centre.

This option is not preferred because the wider benefits of sporting facilities in our Town Centre are not realised.

A new multi-purpose sports facility

There is limited ability for residents in Woden to walk or ride to indoor recreational facilities and consequently reduce their dependence on cars. The benefits of access to indoor sporting facilities including improvements to health and social connectedness are not being realised.

This is the **preferred option** for all the benefits (see policy context) it provides to the community.

6 The preferred option

Scope

A multi-purpose indoor sports centre with parking that includes:

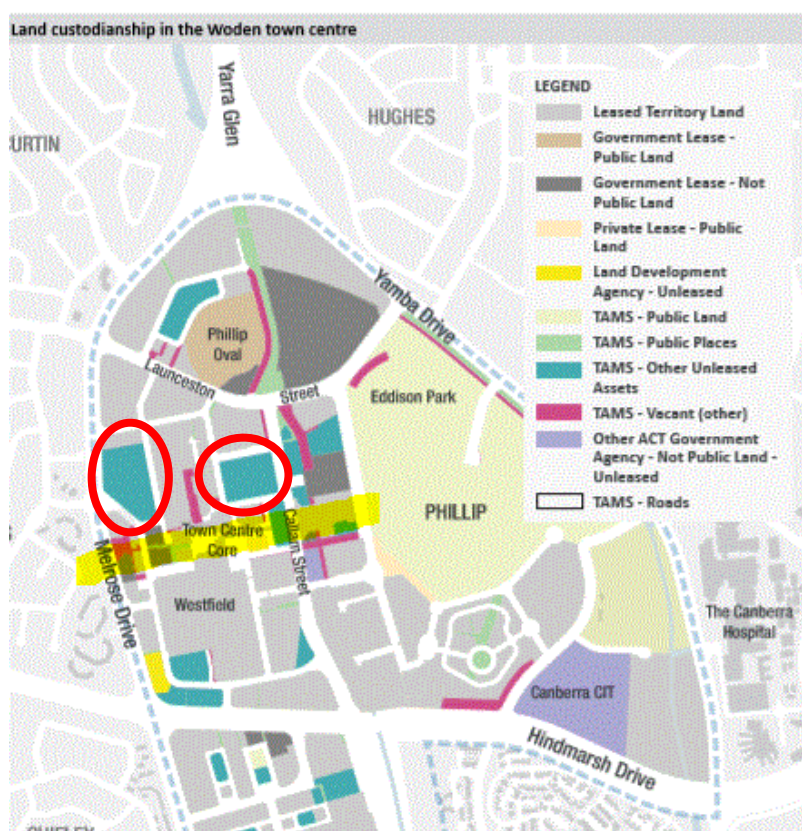
- five courts which are suitable for basketball, netball, futsal, volleyball and roller derby
- One show court with seating for 500
- fully accessible for wheelchair sports
- changing and toilet accommodation for multiple teams
- Equipment storage
- Office accommodation and meeting rooms
- foyer and reception
- kitchen and café
- Complementary rooms for:
 - gymnastics
 - dance
 - martial arts

7 Site selection

The original planning for Woden included a pedestrian link that runs east west from the library, through the Town Square to the bus interchange and Woden Town Park. Planning sought to agglomerate community facilities around this east west link to create activity and facilitate the well-being of the residents. This community link is still there however diminished in its effectiveness due to the lack of facilities, cafes and activity. Community facilities should be located in close proximity to this link with the residents surrounding the focal point and coming together in the centre.

The ACT Government owns central surface carparks in the Woden Town Centre which provides opportunities to build community facilities. Parking spaces would have to be retained with underground parking.

Central sites have been identified on the map below and circled in red with the east west community link highlighted in yellow. There are other options, such as placing recreational facilities on the sides (not on) of the Woden Town Park and Arabanoo Park to activate this area and community consultation is required to consider the benefits of each site.



8 Funding

Community sport infrastructure is a sound investment with more than eight million Australians using community sporting infrastructure every year. Community sport directly employs 57,000 people, contributing \$5.5 billion in increased economic activity, \$4.9 billion in personal health benefits and \$4.2 billion in social capital uplift. (Source: Australian Government's *Sport 2030* Report).

The cost of a 5 court facility with seating, gymnastics room, meeting rooms, a kitchen and a café is likely to cost in the order of **\$25 million to \$30 million**. A contribution of \$15 million from the Commonwealth and \$15 million (and land) from the ACT Government for the capital cost of the facility could see the delivery of this vital community asset.

In NSW, s94 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) allows local governments to collect revenue from developers to contribute to funding local infrastructure.

The ACT Government performs the role of local government and receives revenue from the Lease Variation Charge which is paid by developers to vary the lease (activities allowed) on a block. The Lease Variation Charge is a betterment levy and is currently set at 75 per cent of the uplift in the value of the lease which allows the government to retain a significant proportion of the increased value of the site for the community's benefit.

Developer contributions should be used to fund community facilities. Woden has a significant number of residential towers in the construction pipeline with 18 residential towers currently at various stages of approval or construction. ACT Government revenue from commercial and residential rates and land tax are also a funding source for community facilities.

The construction of the facility would require funding commitments from governments to provide confidence in the viability of the facility and attract other funding sources, eg the local community clubs and peak sporting bodies.

The table below provides examples of the costs for multi-purpose sports halls built in Australia in recent years.

Organisation	Scope	Estimate (\$m)
Snowy Valleys Council (Tumut) Multi-Purpose Centre Feasibility 2018	4 court indoor sports stadium with a modest pool, café and fitness centre	\$15m to \$20m
Bundaberg Multi-use Sports & Community Centre 2016	3 court sports precinct, gymnastics hall and areas for exercise and group fitness, community meeting rooms, kitchen and canteen facilities.	Stage 1 \$14.5m Stage 2 \$10m
Shepparton Sports Stadium Refurbishment Feasibility Study 2014	additional 2 courts, including show court, seating for 500 spectators Refurbishment of existing facility amenities including new multipurpose room. Mezzanine sports house and administrative hub.	\$18.4m in 2014 dollars <u>Index at 3% a year =</u> \$20.7m in 2018 dollars \$22.6m in 2021 dollars <u>Index at 7% a year =</u> \$24.1m in 2018 dollars \$29.5m in 2021 dollars
Smithfield Sporting Precinct Feasibility Study prepared or the Cairns Regional Council 2010	2 court sports hall, gymnastics hall, health and fitness, hydrotherapy, arts/youth, crèche, cafe/reception	\$16.4m in 2010 dollars <u>Index at 3% a year =</u> \$20.8m in 2018 dollars \$22.7m in 2021 dollars <u>Index at 7% a year =</u> \$28.2m in 2018 dollars \$34.5m in 2021 dollars
Ballina Shire Council Indoor Sports & Events Complex Feasibility Study 2009	3 court multipurpose Indoor Sports and Event Stadium, programmable space, reception and management offices, commercial kitchen, kiosk, change room and amenity blocks, car parking, occasional care, storage/ cleaning spaces	\$12.6m in 2009 dollars <u>Index at 3% a year =</u> \$16.4m in 2018 dollars \$17.9m in 2021 dollars <u>Index at 7% a year =</u> \$28.3m in 2021 dollars

9 Operating arrangements

The ACT Government has various arrangements for the ownership of sporting facilities. They are responsible for overseeing the contracts for operators to manage their five 50m pools. Many indoor sporting facilities are owned by the peak sport bodies, often with capital grants from the ACT Government for construction.

There are a number of options for the management structure for the proposed multi-purpose sports facility in Woden.

Direct Management - The ACT Government employs a manager in a normal employee - employer relationship. The ACT Government has responsibility for the facility's operations including operating policies, financial performance and asset maintenance.

Contract Management - The ACT Government contracts the management of the facility to a community-based organisation or a commercial group. The manager is responsible for the financial performance however the ACT Government could contribute to the maintenance of the facility.

Lease Management: A lease details the rights and responsibilities of the ACT Government and the manager. The manager has responsibility for the facility's operations including financial, maintenance and operating policies. The ACT Government could receive a rental income but has no direct control over day-to-day management.

Joint Management: Two or more parties agree to share the capital cost, usage and maintenance of a facility. The key elements of the management agreement (ie cost-sharing, legal and usage arrangements) are recorded in a legally binding document.

A facility could potentially be operated by existing community organisations in Woden/Weston.

10 Implementation

To deliver a multi-purpose sports hall the ACT Government's agreement to the site, design and funding contribution is required.

Community consultation is also required to inform the site selection and design of the facility.