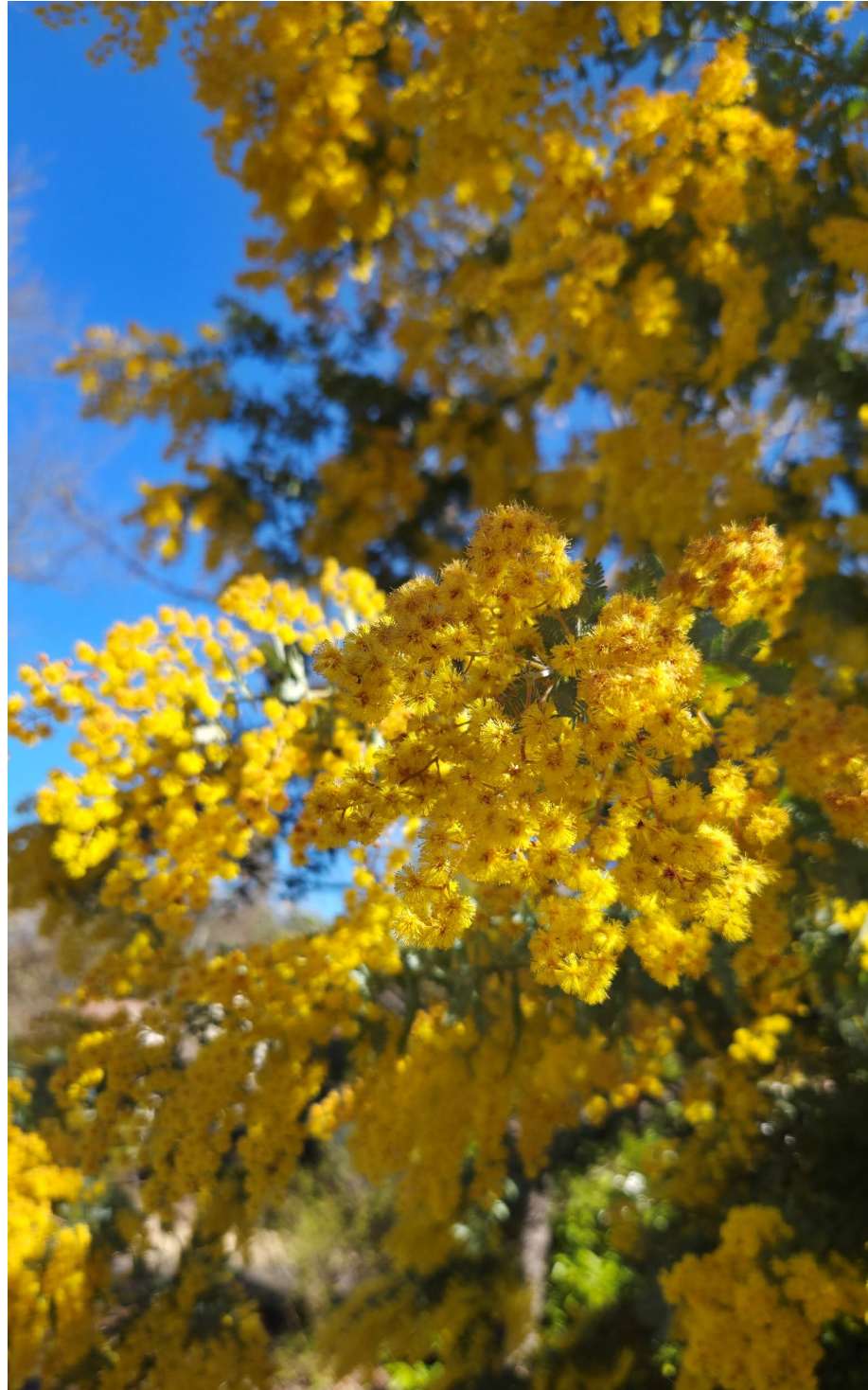




# Needs Assessment

**Forrest, Section 36 Block 5**  
November 2025

# Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region.

We recognise their enduring connection to the land, waters, and skies, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We also recognise the continuing cultures, contributions, and custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, and their ongoing role in shaping places, communities, and knowledge systems.



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- Enrolment Forecast

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- Recommendation



# Introduction

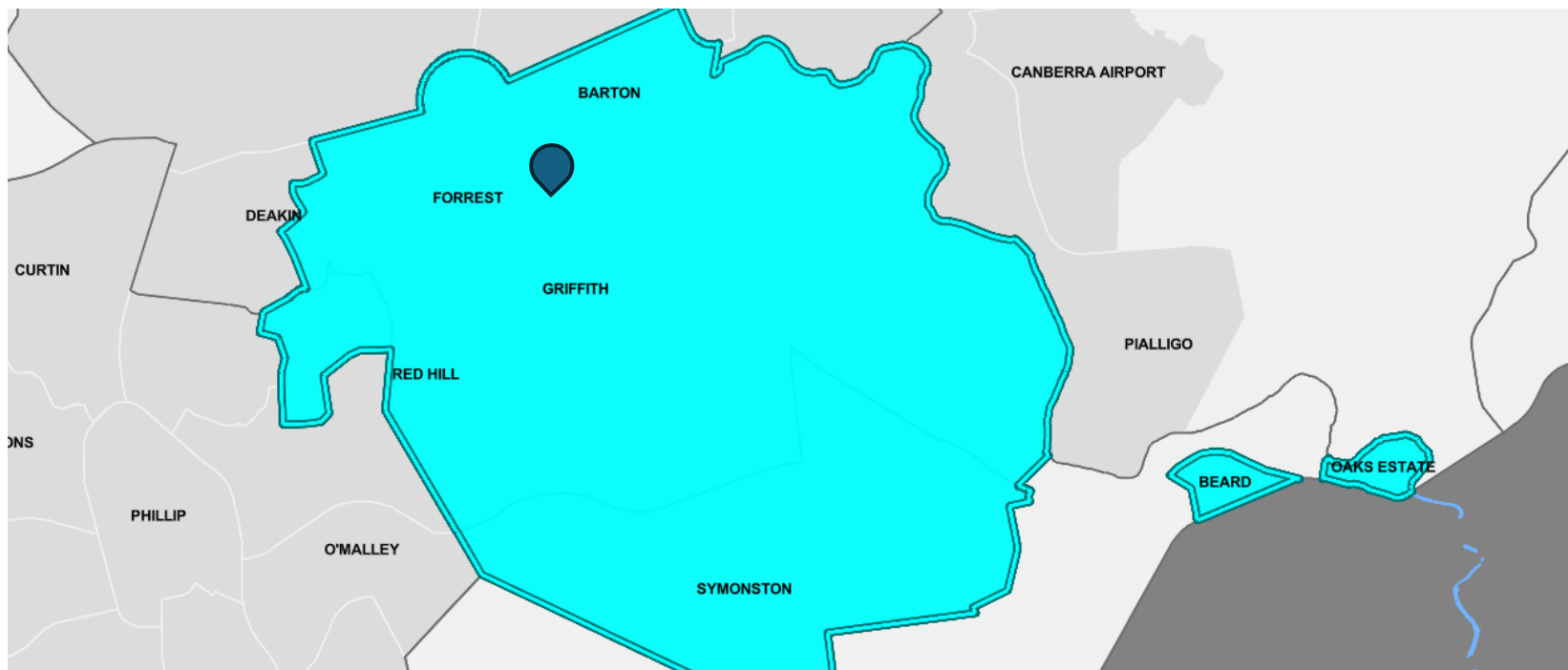
Site Context & Project Assumptions



# Project Objective



Site Location, Landchecker



School Catchment Area, ACTmapi

This Needs Assessment accompanies a Major Plan Amendment Application, which seeks to amend the Territory Plan map at Forrest Section 36 Block 5, from the existing PRZ2 Restricted Access Recreation Zone to Community Facility Zone (CFZ).

The proposed amendment enables the expansion of the adjoining Telopea Park School, strengthening its capacity to meet increasing enrolment pressures and supporting its role as the principal public secondary education provider in the Inner South.

This assessment evaluates the potential social implications of the zone change, population growth and shifting demographic demand across the catchment.

It also provides an evidence-led understanding of the site's existing function and outlines how the proposed transition to CFZ can deliver public benefit while maintaining a balanced provision of open space and amenity.



# Site Context



Site Location, Landchecker



Telopea Park School (possibly photographed 1940), CDHS



View from Red Hill 1927,

The site of the proposed plan amendment is directly adjacent the existing Telopea Park School, separated by New South Wales Crescent. It is otherwise bound by Manuka Circle to the south-east (beyond which is the Manuka Oval complex) and Fitzroy Street to the south-west. To the north-west of the site are CZ5 Mixed Use buildings, comprising commercial and residential uses, separated by Proposed Block 4 Section 36 Forrest containing a pedestrian path linking New South Wales Crescent and Fitzroy Street.

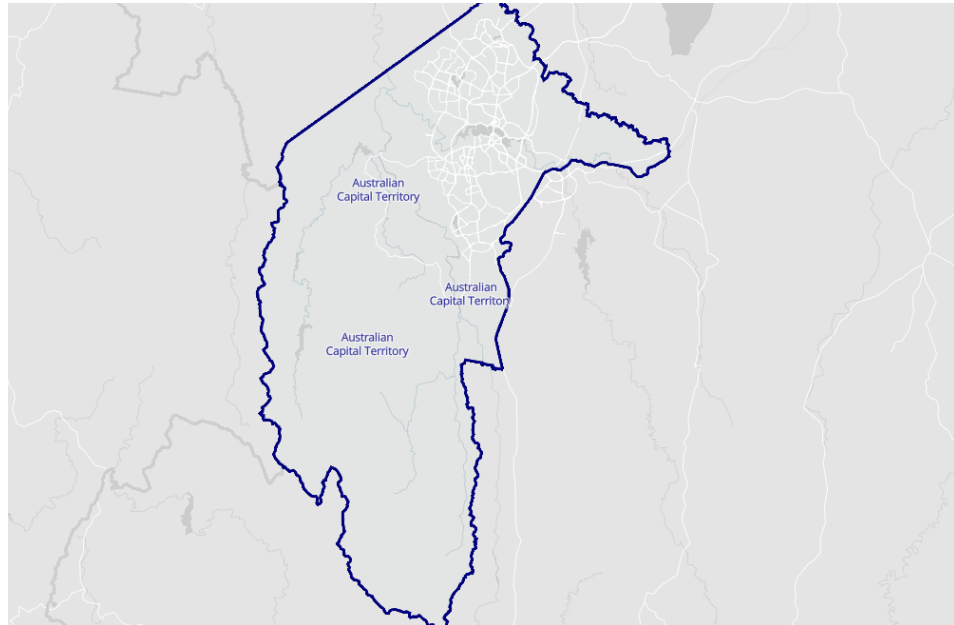
The Block is currently zoned PRZ2 – Restricted Access Recreation and is presently utilised as open space and a cluster of four tennis courts to the eastern corner, available for use by members of the public.

The site was initially marked as a school in the Federal Territory Feature Maps of the early 20th century. By Griffin's plan in 1918, the existing school had been placed at its current location across Telopea Parkway (now New South Wales Crescent). By 1943 the site was documented as the Tennis Courts, with 1951 aerial imagery showing that the tennis courts were located over the western part of the site, which is currently playing fields. This arrangement remained until 1975, when the tennis courts were moved to their current location, to be replaced by playing fields. These works had completed by 1979, with the site remaining in its current state since then.

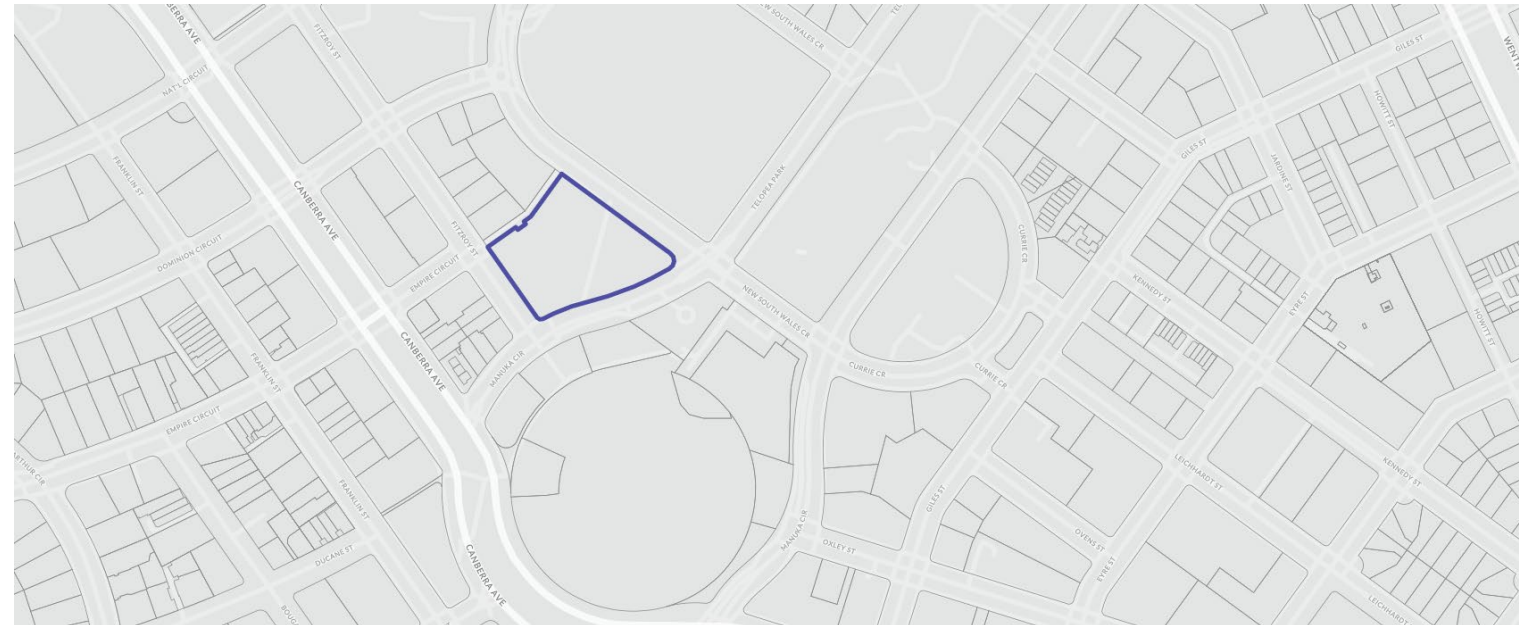
The subject site has an area of 14,571m<sup>2</sup>.



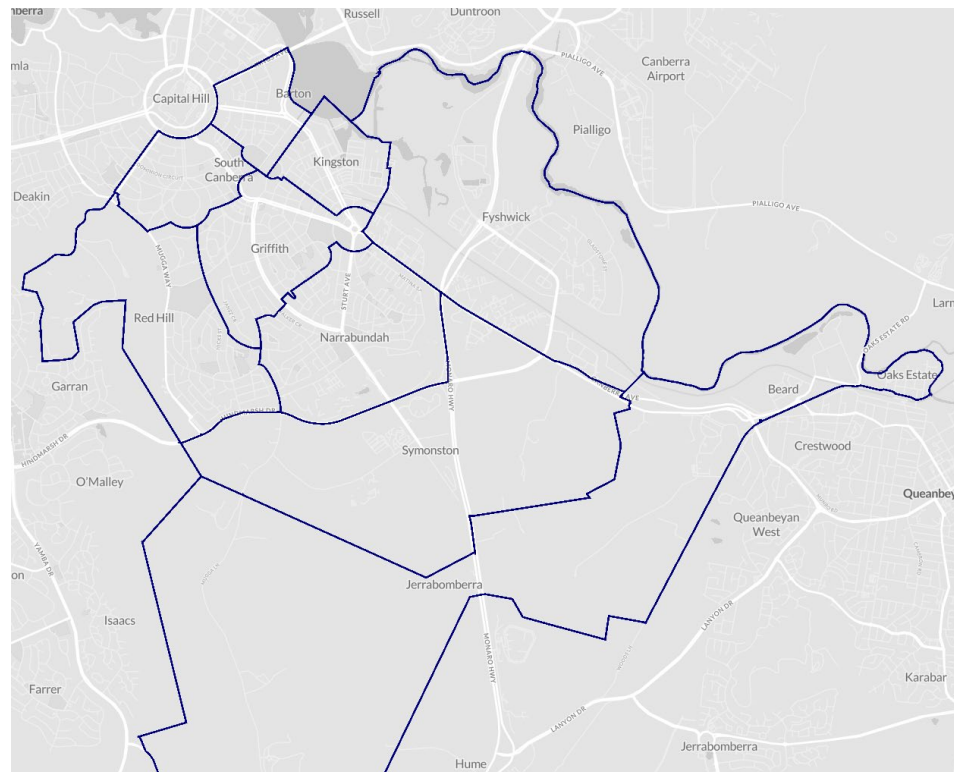
# Study Catchment - Assumptions



Australian Capital Territory



Subject Site



Study Catchment Area

The assessment focuses on the school's functional catchment. The school's primary enrolment area stretches from Kingston, Red Hill, Griffith, Barton, Forrest, Narrabundah, Fyshwick, Beard, Symonston, Oaks Estate and a small portion of Deakin, as shown in the *School Catchment Area* figure adjacent. Population and household data that best aligns with the catchment geography is available from the ABS at SA2 scale. For the purpose of this Needs Assessment, the study area has therefore been defined using the following SA2s: Kingston, Red Hill, Griffith, Barton, Forrest, Narrabundah, Fyshwick and Canberra East.

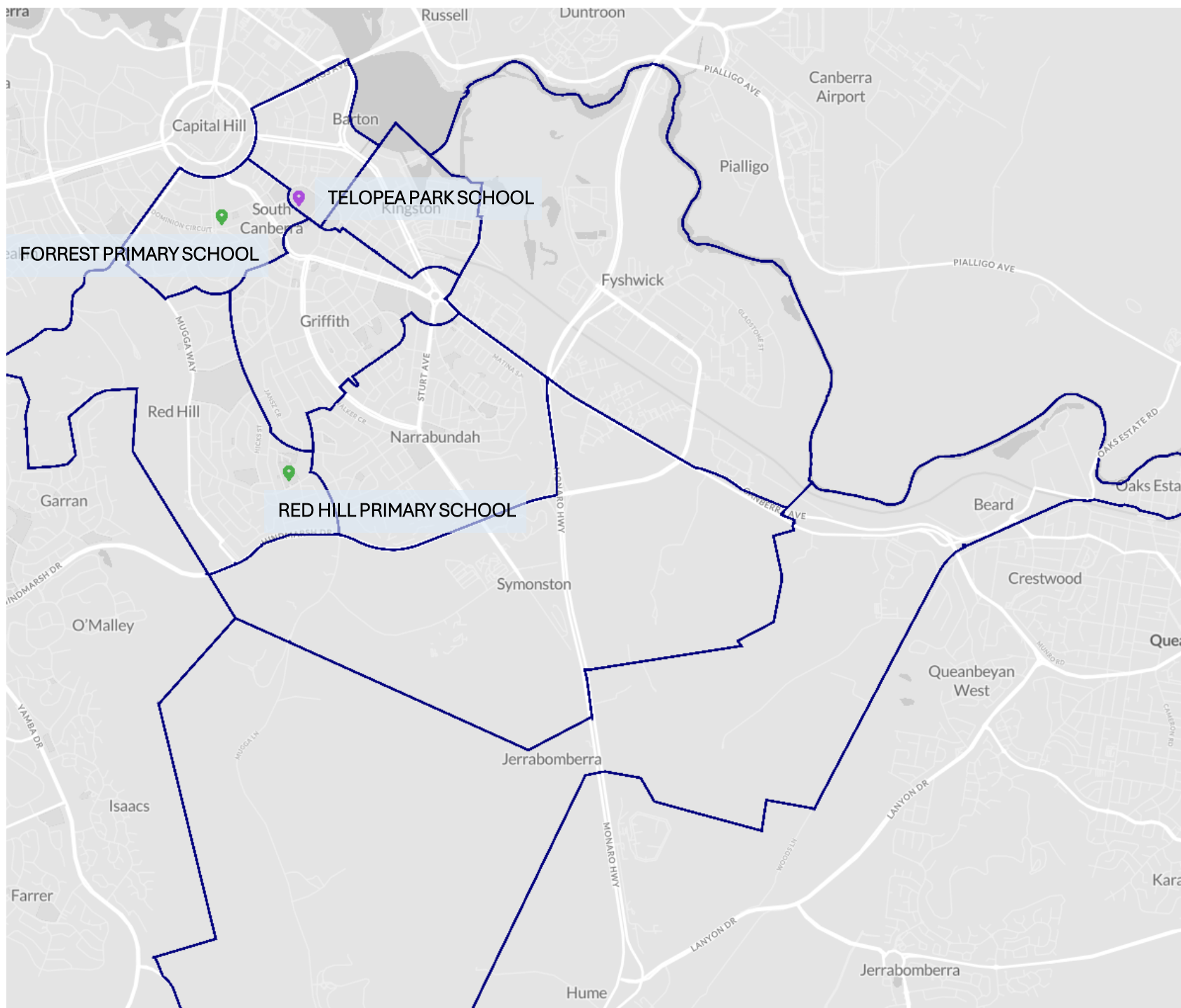
Canberra East includes Symonston, Beard and Oaks Estate. Although this SA2 boundary also covers parts of Jerrabomberra, that land use pattern is largely non-residential at present. Additionally, the minor section of Deakin that falls within the school's catchment boundary has not been separately analysed due to its marginal contribution and difficulty in isolating reliable data that would meaningfully influence overall trends.

These assumptions provide a representative profile of the communities served by the school and support a realistic analysis of demographic change, school aged population forecasts and socio-economic characteristics. Importantly, this approach allows the findings to remain conservative, ensuring the case for expansion is evidence based and supported by clear planning and population need.

Lastly, data has been sourced from ABS Census 2021, ACT School Census, Treasury's ACT Population Projections, ACT Geospatial Data Catalogue and Landchecker. Maps and images have been sourced from Landchecker, ACTmapi, Google Earth and Canberra & District Historical Society (CDHS).



# Study Catchment – Existing Schools



Schools within study catchment area

The study area aligns with the functional catchment of Telopea Park School, encompassing the suburbs of Kingston, Red Hill, Griffith, Forrest, Barton, Narrabundah, Fyshwick, Beard, Symonston, Oaks Estate and small portion of Deakin (not included in the study catchment).

Telopea Park School, illustrated as a purple pin on the adjoining map, holds a unique place within the ACT public education system as one of the few schools offering continuous education from Kindergarten through to Year 10. However, within this catchment, the school is the designated public high school provider for Years 7 to 10.

Two additional primary schools support the primary years of schooling within the same catchment, shown in green pins on the map:

- Red Hill School
- Forrest Primary School

These providers technically feed into the high school at Telopea, reinforcing a strong and predictable student demand pipeline. Beyond these three public education facilities, there are no additional government school sites within the catchment.

Although the Inner South contains private schools, they fall outside the ACT Government's service delivery model and are not required to meet local enrolment needs. Public education remains the core responsibility of the Education Directorate, with planning focused on ensuring equitable, accessible schooling within priority enrolment areas. As such, private school participation has not been factored into this catchment analysis, which centres on the capacity and pressures within the public system.

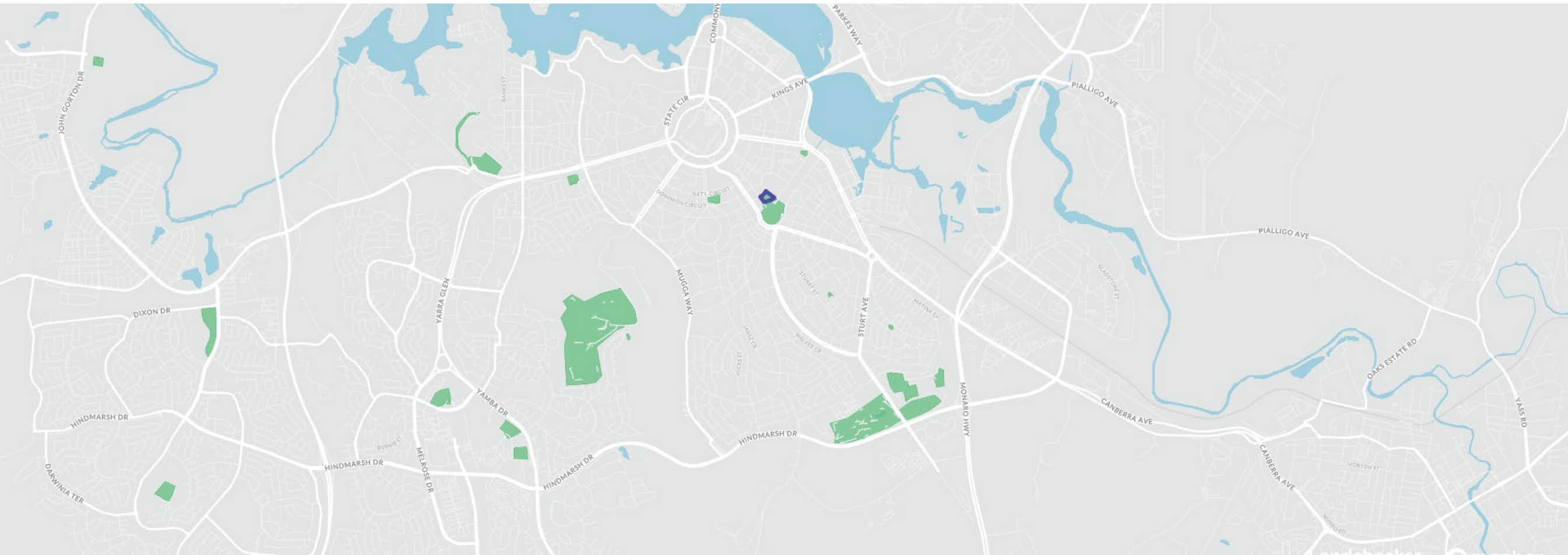


# LAND USE

Density, PRZ2 Restricted Access and Recreation Zone & CFZ Community Facilities Zone



# Spatial Understanding



## - PRZ2 Restricted Access Recreation Zone

Spatial analysis of Canberra's Inner South and surrounding districts highlights that PRZ2 land is limited in comparison to other zones. These parcels are generally positioned within close proximity to residential zones to support organised sport and recreation uses that require dedicated facilities and regular access.

This spatial pattern reflects a broader planning evolution. Under the 1993 Territory Plan, PRZ2 was intended to accommodate a range of recreation uses in association with clubs and educational institutes, while being able to be commercially operated.

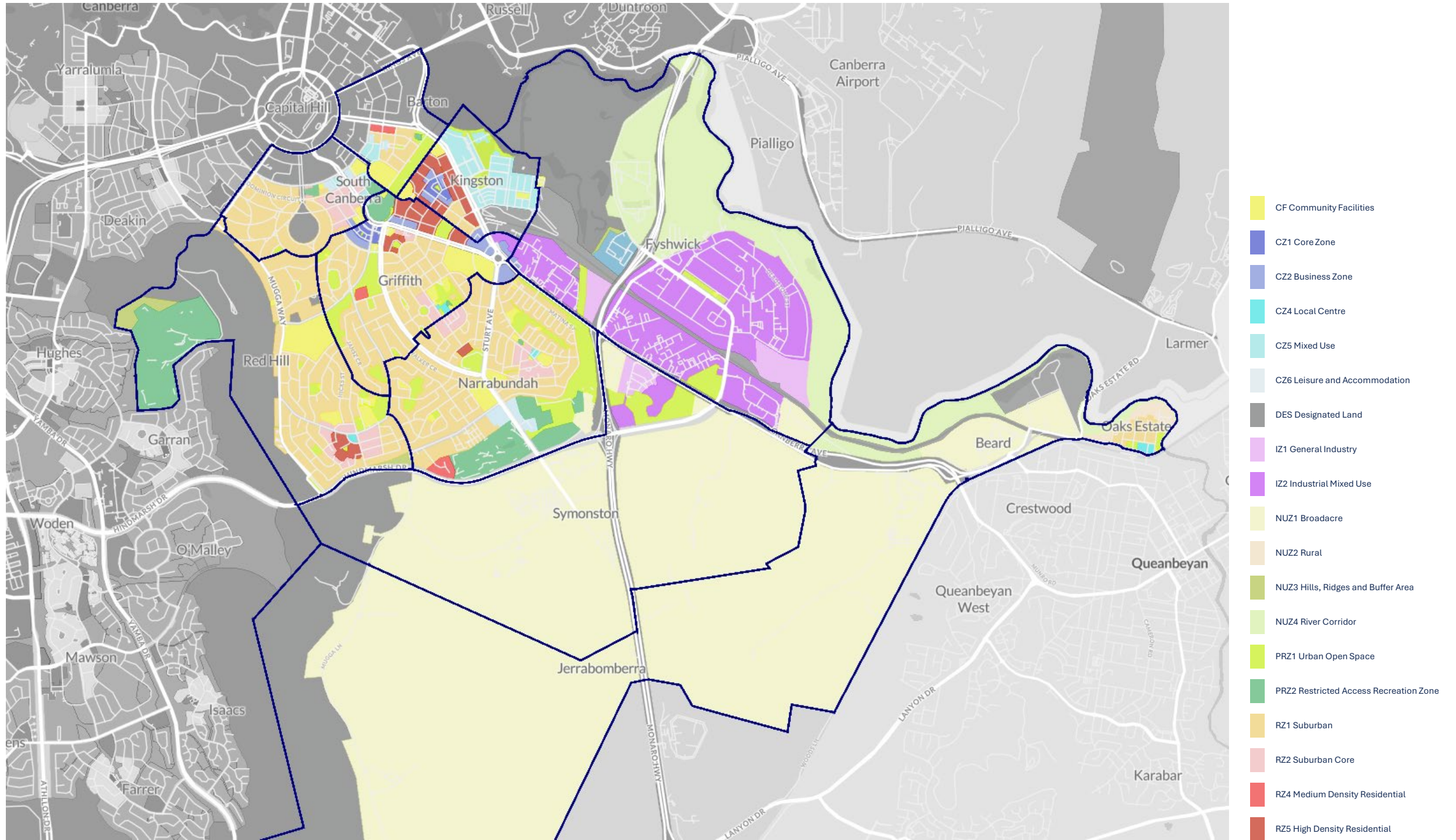
Today, PRZ2 forms only a small percentage of land use in the ACT. Larger recreation landscapes and open spaces with significant environmental and landscape values are protected within PRZ1, while commercial recreation offerings are

more commonly located within commercial zones along with improved urban infill to ensure visibility, access and economic viability. The Inner South and surrounding districts PRZ2 land use has remained the same since 2008. While the remaining land use within the district has evolved with a focus on urban infill.

As reflected in Canberra's Inner North and City district, recent rezoning of PRZ2 includes Ainslie Section 26 from PRZ2 to CZ5 & RZ5, and Lyneham S67 moving from PRZ2 to CZ5. Whilst these projects rezoned PRZ2 for different uses, they demonstrate the zone is less relevant to Canberra's land use patterns as time continues. This is also reflected in new suburb development, where open and recreational spaces are provided through other zones.



# Land Use & Density



Land Use of Study Catchment



# Land Use & Density

This analysis demonstrates that the school's catchment is characterised primarily by established residential suburbs supported by pockets of commercial and light industrial land. These suburbs represent some of Canberra's earliest neighbourhoods, reflecting a traditional planning pattern of low-rise detached housing, generous lot sizes and strong landscape settings.

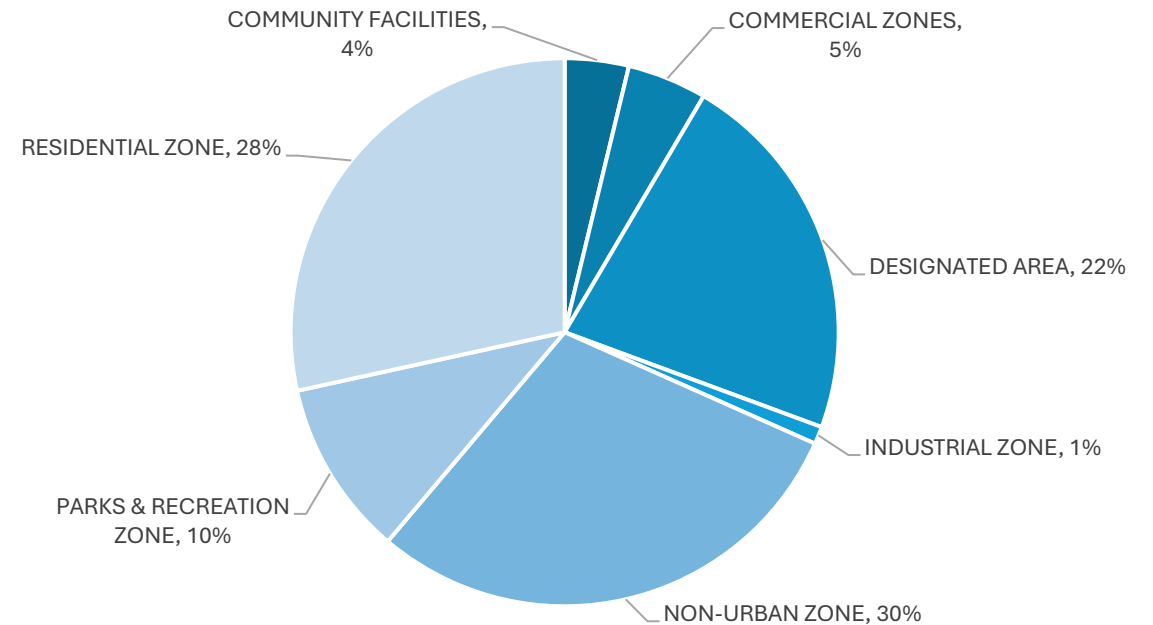
The density chart reinforces this context. Most suburbs within the catchment sit well below 25 persons per hectare, placing them in the very low-density residential range. Forrest and Red Hill illustrate this particularly clearly at around 11 and 6 persons per hectare respectively. These figures reflect their longstanding low density character, strong heritage controls, and consequent limited infill opportunities.

By comparison, Kingston shows a notably higher density at approximately 47 persons per hectare. This uplift is driven by infill and urban renewal projects at the Kingston Foreshore and adjacent mixed-use areas, where a greater mix of apartment and townhouse developments have been delivered. Narrabundah and Griffith fall between these two conditions, indicating a gradual transition toward moderate density and more diverse housing typologies.

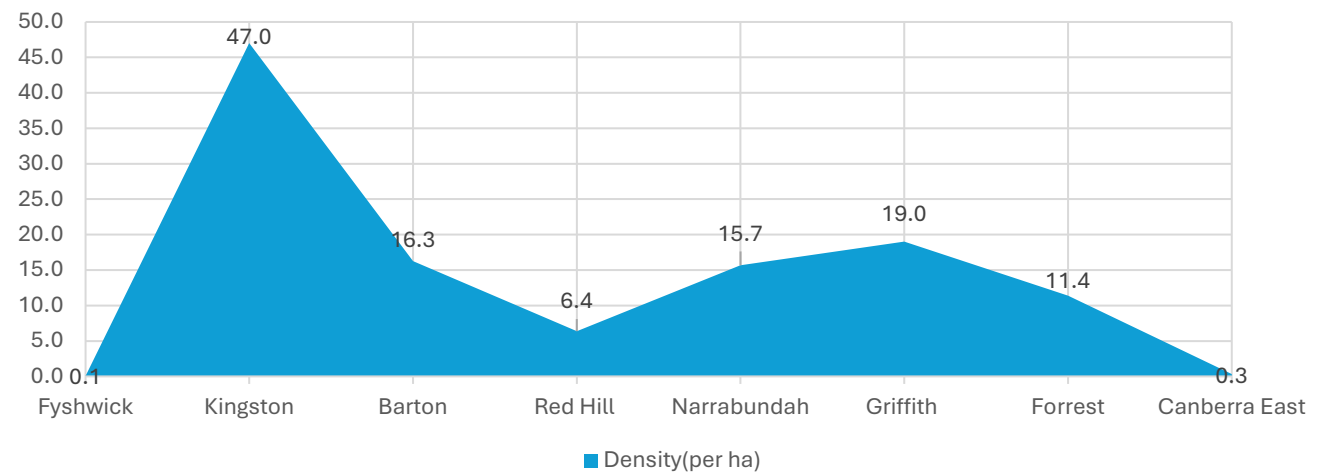
Together, these density patterns highlight a catchment that is:

- Reliant on its limited set of public schools to accommodate future students.
- **Close to 28% of the catchment has land use that is residential use. This accounts for 838 hectares of land.**
- The school's catchment spans largely established, low-density suburbs. Yet, due to the wide expanse of residential land, even modest increase in family households will quickly translate into noticeable enrolment growth.
- With urban intensification expected in areas such as Kingston and Griffith, along with changes to the Plan like DPA-04 - Missing Middle (which affects all residential zones) and DPA-B - Section 19 Forrest, enabling gradual housing infill, the number of school-aged children within the catchment will continue to rise.

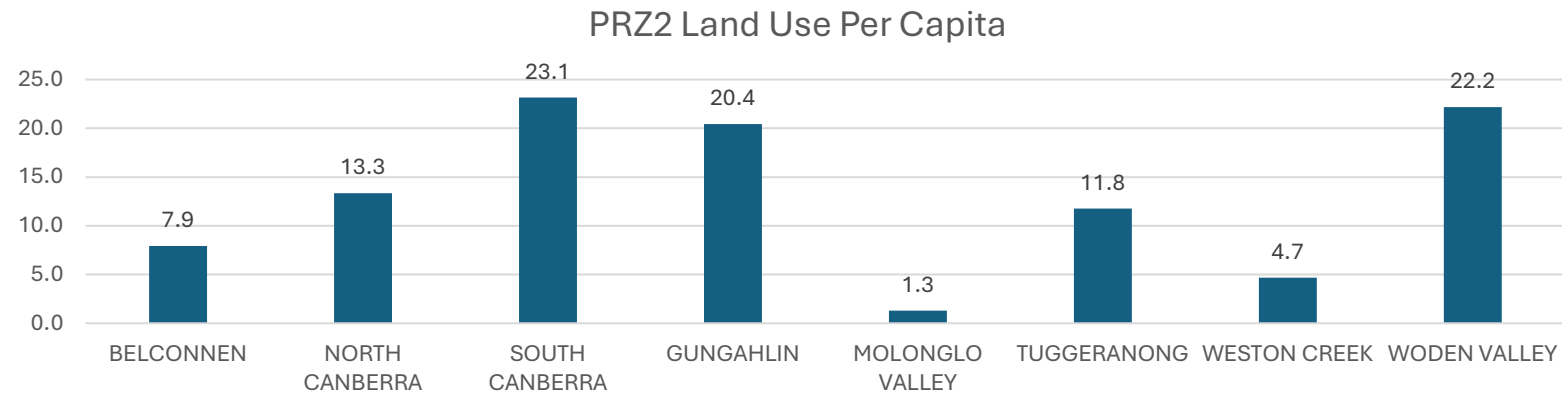
Study Catchment – Land Use



Study Catchment Density(per ha)



# Land Use & PRZ2 - Canberra



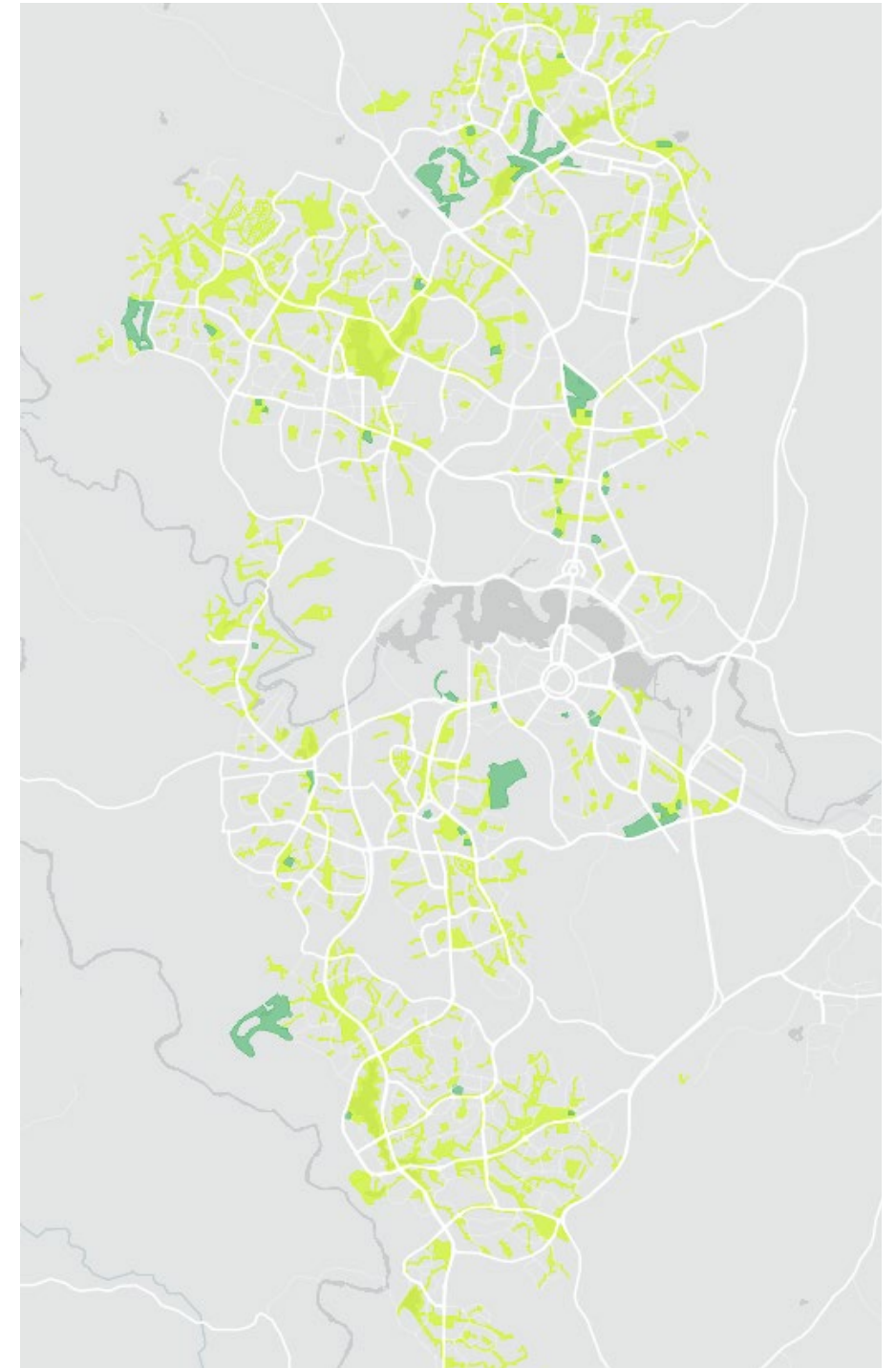
The distribution of PRZ2 land across Canberra's districts reflects historic planning patterns and the evolution of recreation infrastructure delivery. South Canberra has the highest provision of PRZ2 land per capita, while Molonglo Valley has very little zoned PRZ2 given its newer planning structure, reliance on PRZ1 assets, and ongoing development. This is illustrated on the adjoining ACT map, with PRZ1 Urban Open Space in light green and PRZ2 Restricted Access and Recreation Zone in dark green.

North Canberra benefits from modest but strategic allocations of PRZ2 land historically integrated with schools, clubs, and community destinations. Tuggeranong and Weston Creek illustrate mid-range availability, supporting both formal sport and localised recreation. In contrast, Belconnen has one of the lowest PRZ2 per capita rates at just 7.9 sqm per person. This reflects its greater reliance on PRZ1, community and commercial zoned land for recreation facilities.

As reflected in the map, PRZ2 across Canberra is intentionally limited in scale and function. Most public open space, parkland, and recreational amenity is delivered through the extensive PRZ1 network, which continues to serve the city's population as the dominant open space and recreation zone. PRZ2 zoned land's accessibility and scale vary significantly, with many sites functioning as dedicated-use spaces that are not universally available to the public.

As PRZ1 absorbs the majority of open space and recreation demand, the per-capita provision of PRZ2 in any district is not the primary indicator of recreational open spaces. This means a small, targeted conversion of PRZ2 land to support essential community infrastructure, in this case an established school, results in a negligible impact on recreation access at the district scale.

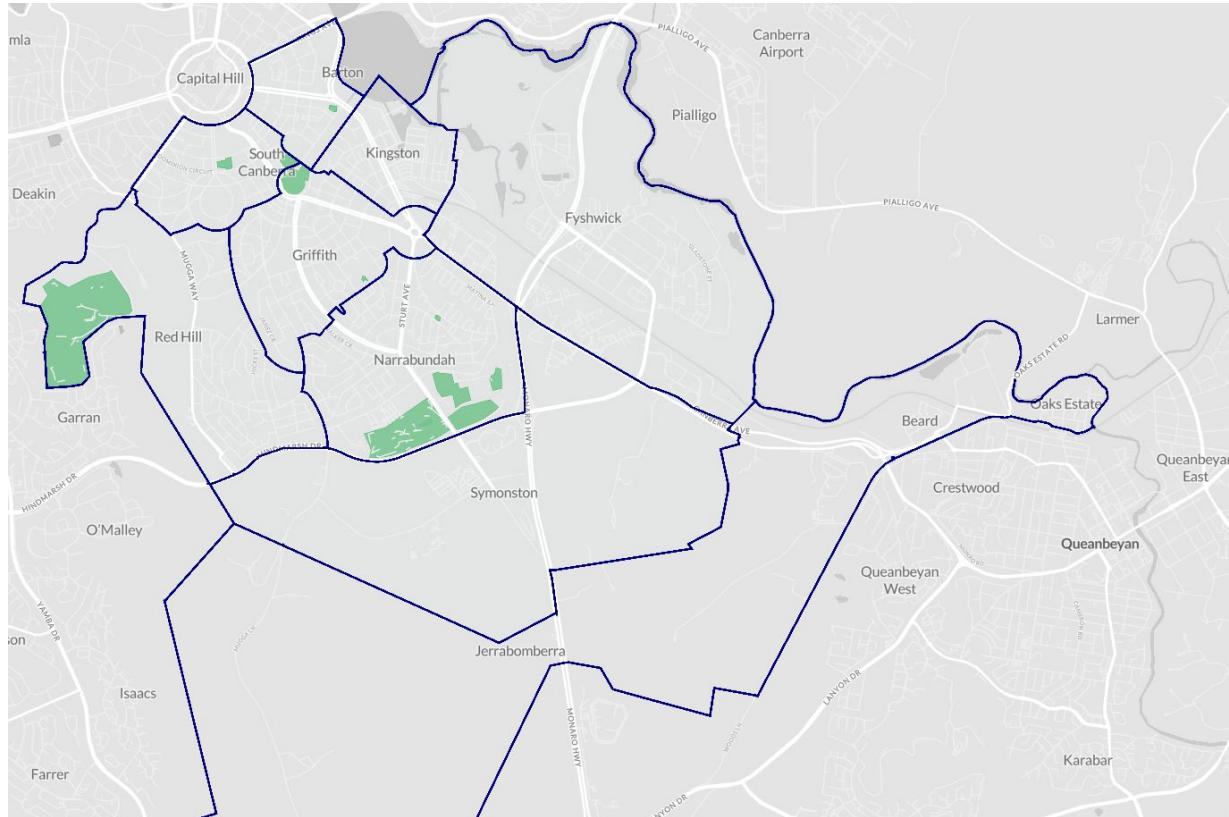
**In the study catchment area where both PRZ2 and PRZ1 are abundant and well distributed, the proposed land use shift to CFZ Community Facility Zone simply improves the efficiency of how this parcel functions, without reducing broader community access to sport and open space.**



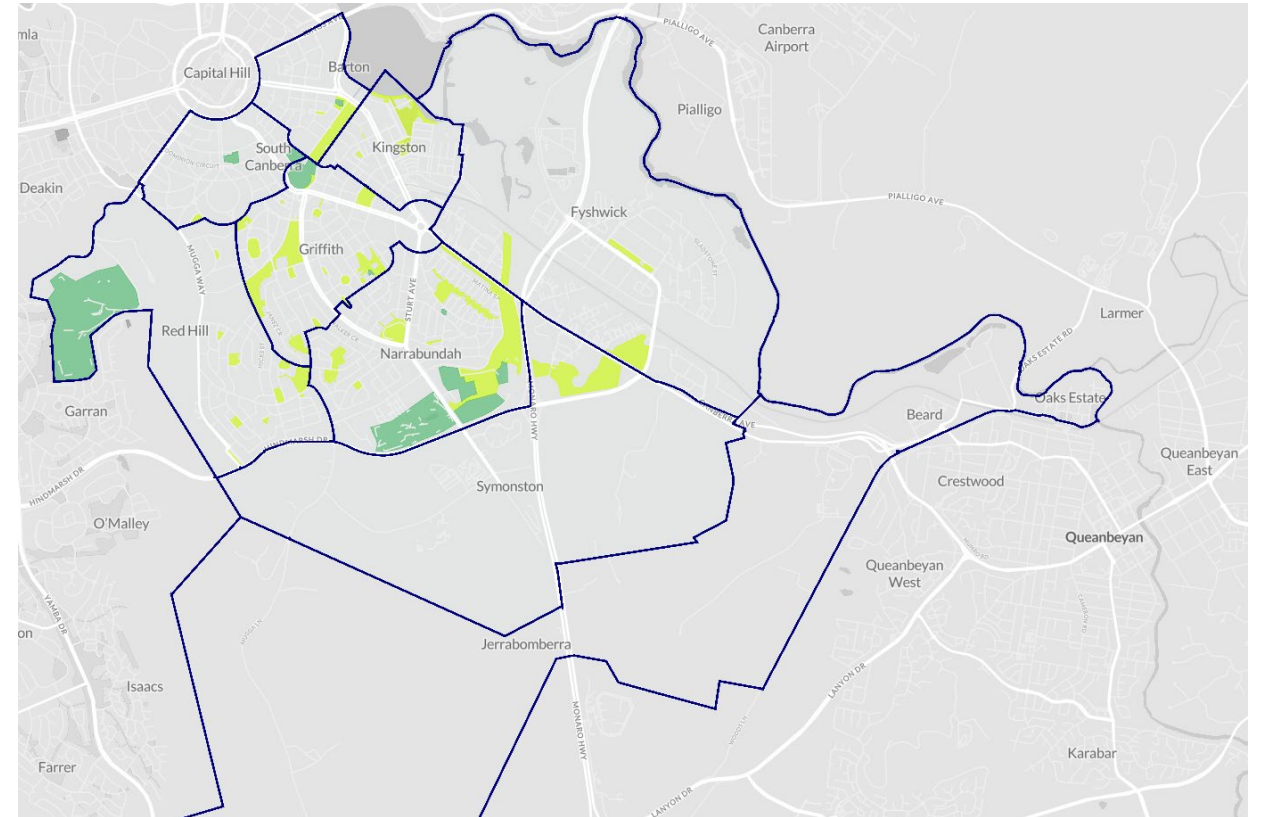
PRZ1 and PRZ2 within ACT



# Land Use & PRZ2 – Study Catchment



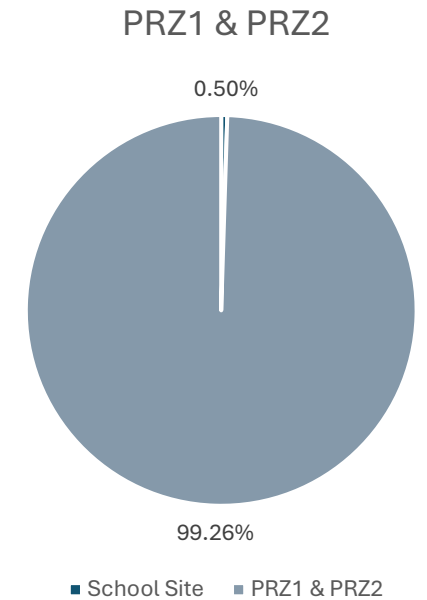
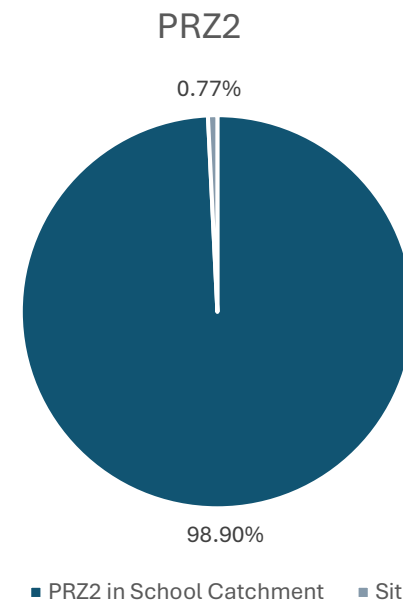
PRZ2 Land Use within Study Catchment Area



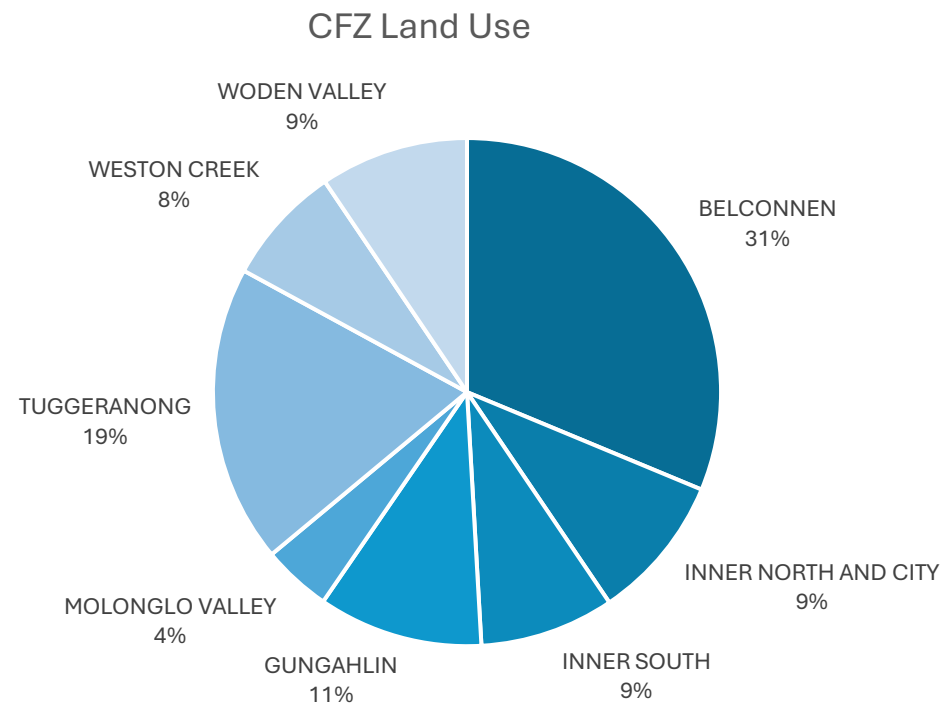
PRZ1 and PRZ2 Land Use within Study Catchment Area

The study catchment contains approximately 130 hectares of PRZ2-zoned land. The subject parcel, at around 14,567 sqm, accounts for only 1.13% of this total. As the site currently accommodates open space and tennis courts, the implications for recreation provision are best evaluated against the combined PRZ1 and PRZ2 open space network serving the catchment (discussed in the previous section). When considered at this broader strategic level, the proposed change represents an overall reduction of approximately 0.73 per cent of open space.

Additionally, the school's expansion intends to retain the tennis courts, which makes up roughly 4,700 sqm of the site. Given that this recreational function is preserved, the net change in open space reduces further to around 0.5% of the total open space provision within the catchment, while 0.77% of PRZ2 land use. Taking this into account, the graphs adjacent demonstrate the minor change this will make to overall land use. It is further noted, this study doesn't include the vast open space available within the district that is Designated Area under the National Capital Plan.



# Land Use & Community Facilities Zone

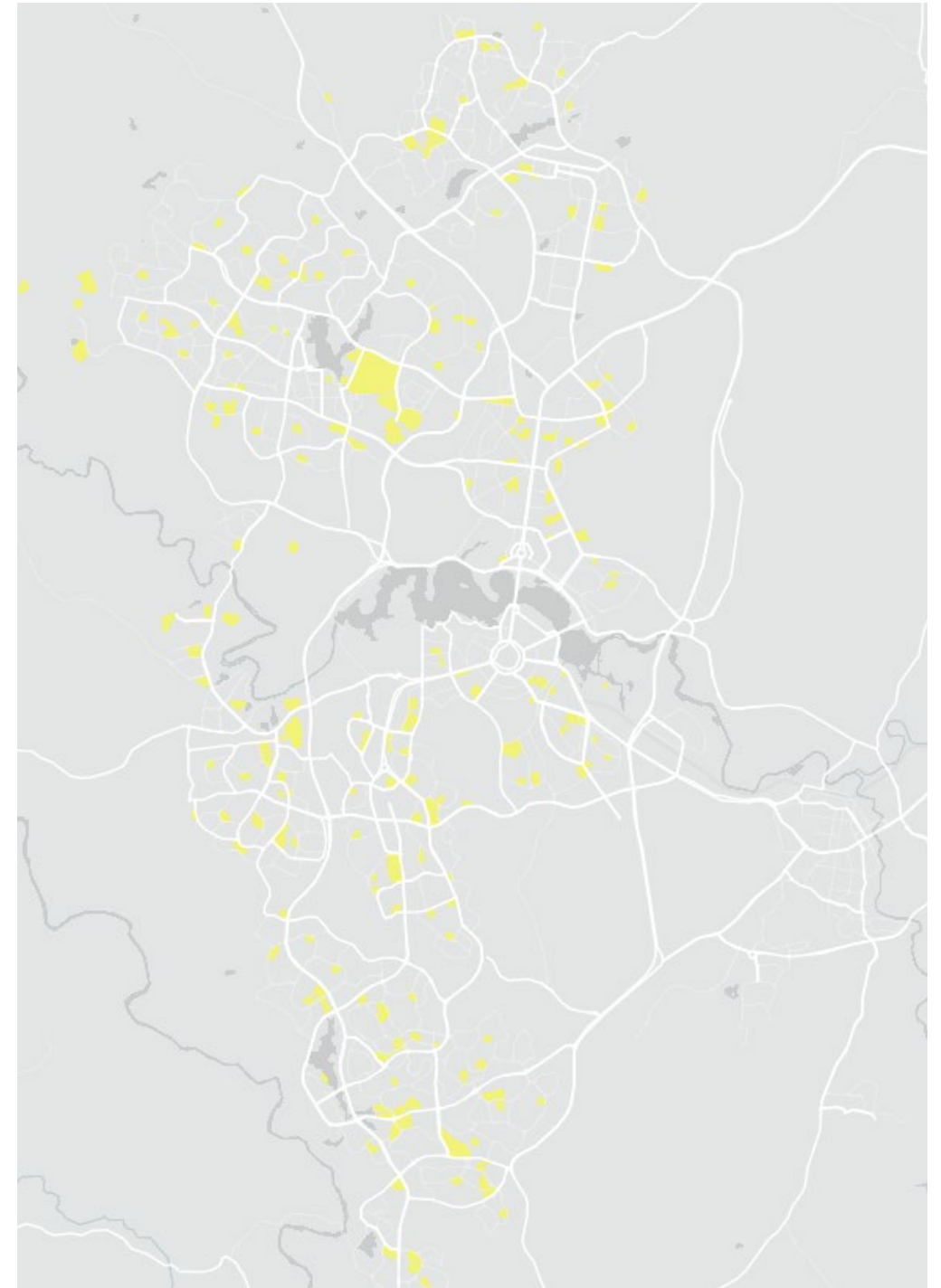


Community Facilities Zone (CFZ) land accommodates the social infrastructure that communities rely on, including schools, early childhood centres, health services and civic facilities.

While Belconnen holds the largest share of CFZ land in the Territory, the Inner South represents only a small proportion of the overall supply, reflecting its long-established suburban structure and scarcity of undeveloped institutional land.

Within the Telopea Park School catchment, there are only three public primary schools (Red Hill Primary School, Forrest Primary School, Telopea Park School) and only one public high school provider (Telopea Park School). There is no available CFZ land to introduce additional education facilities elsewhere in the Inner South.

This spatial structure means that Telopea Park School already carries the core responsibility for public high school delivery in the Inner South. Population renewal and strategic infill will increase enrolment demand, yet opportunities to expand on new land are effectively non-existent. Reclassifying the adjoining PRZ2 parcel to CFZ represents a targeted and efficient response, enabling essential education capacity to be delivered within the area it serves while preserving community access to recreational facilities. The small scale of land use change results in minimal recreation impact, but a significant uplift in social infrastructure resilience for the catchment.



Community Facilities Zones within ACT



# DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Study Catchment



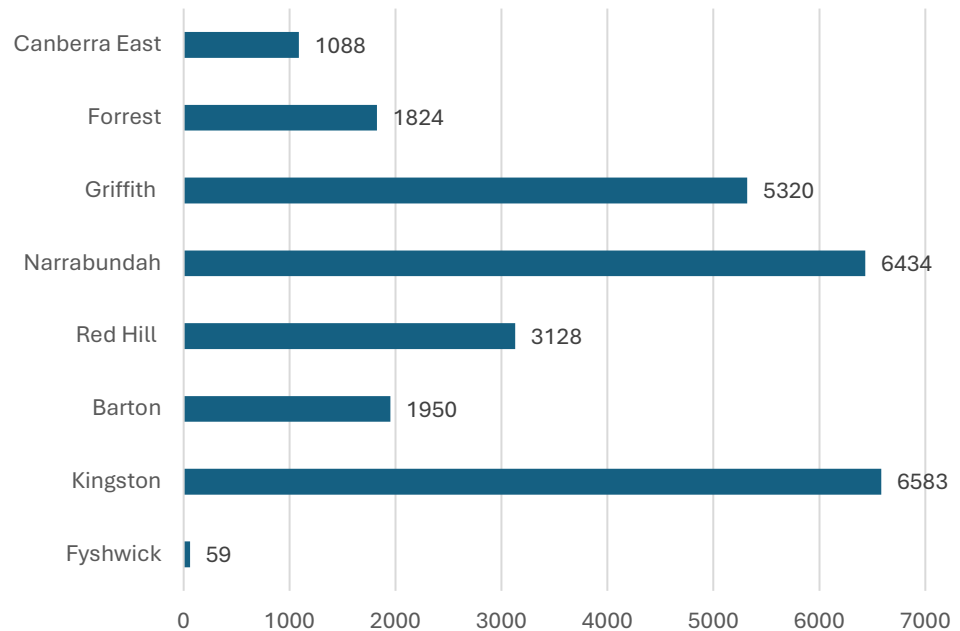
# Demographics

The catchment demonstrates a strong and growing family household profile, with a clear concentration of children within the school-aged cohorts. As per the ABS 2021 census, there are an estimated 2,700 young people aged 5-15 years, of which 60 % fall within the 10–15-year-old high school bracket.

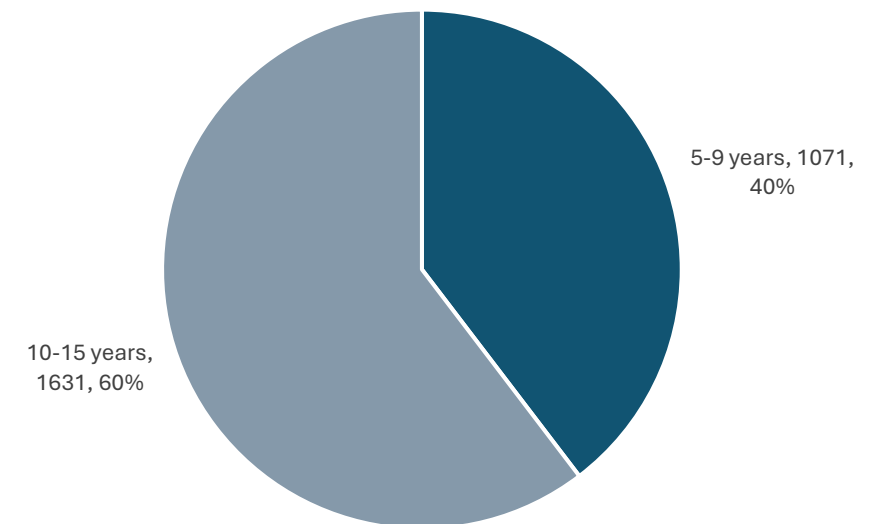
The largest populations sit within high-amenity, established suburbs such as Kingston, Narrabundah and Griffith, each contributing significantly to school enrolment demand. As these areas continue to experience steady population turnover and targeted infill, the number of school-aged children is expected to increase over time.

The broader age profile shows a high representation of young adult and middle-aged cohorts (25-44 years), indicating active family formation, ongoing home-ownership preference, and a demographic trajectory aligned with continued school demand growth.

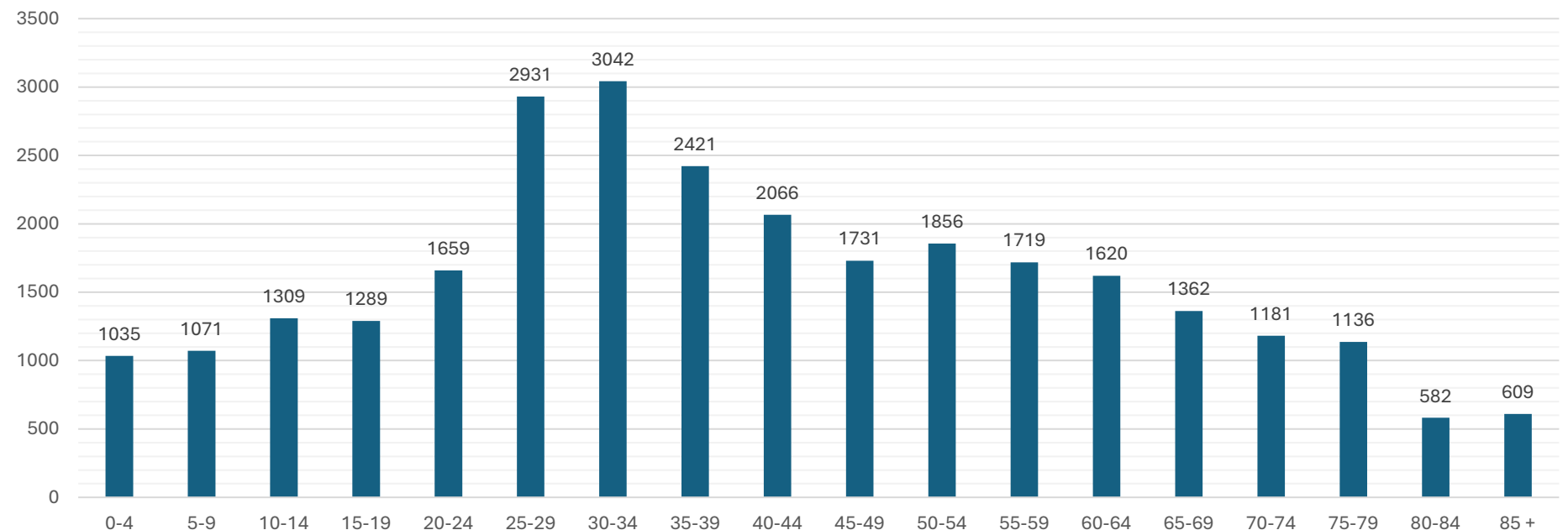
Estimated resident population (no.)



Study Catchment - 5 to 15 years

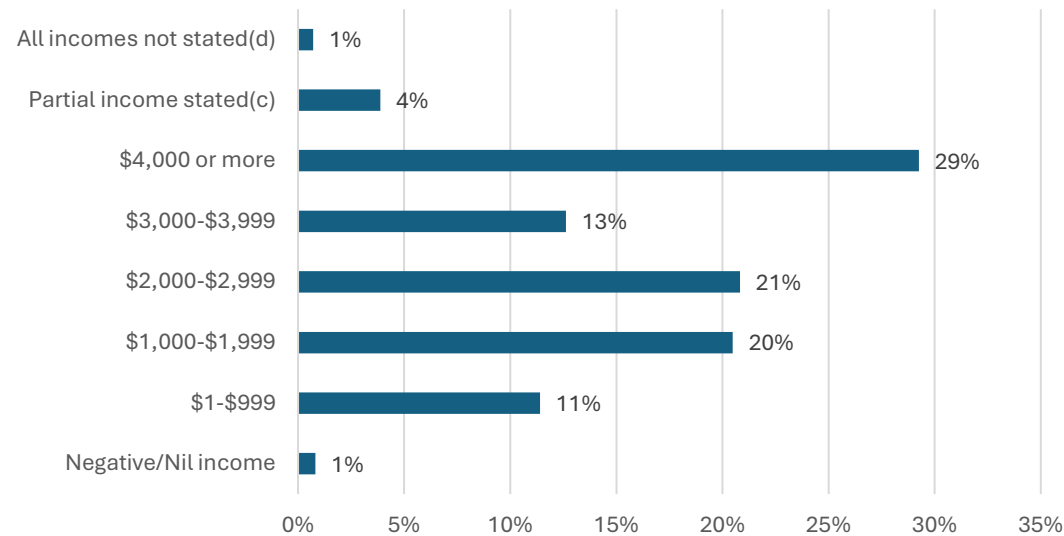


Study Catchment – Age

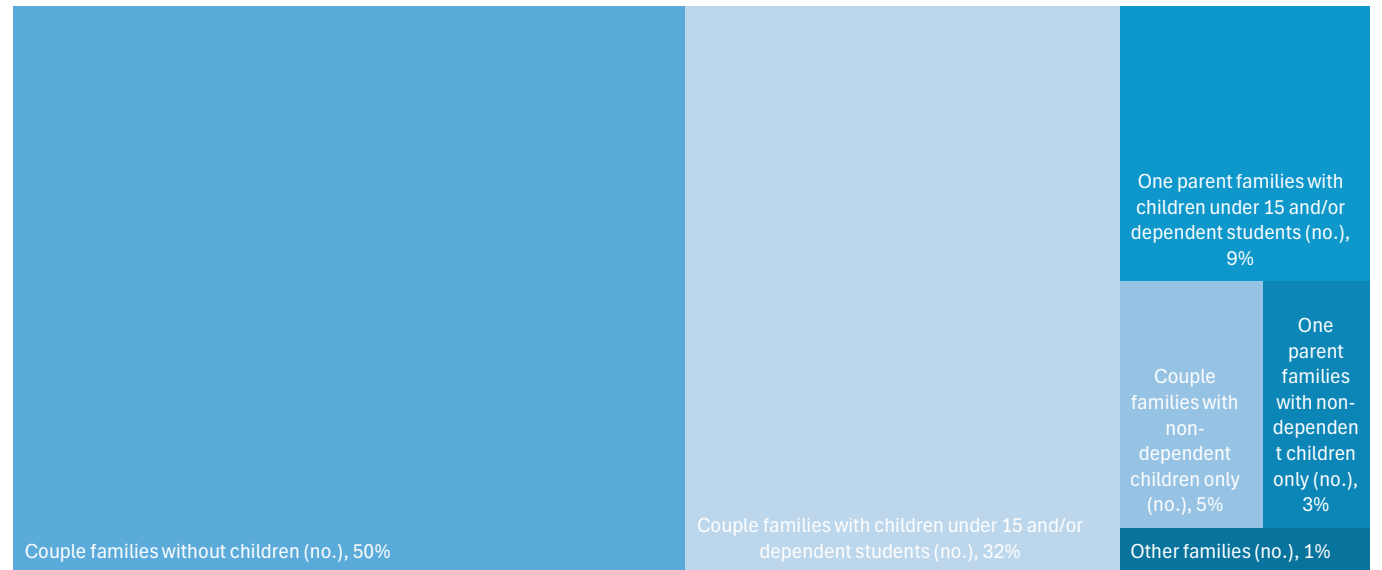


# Demographic

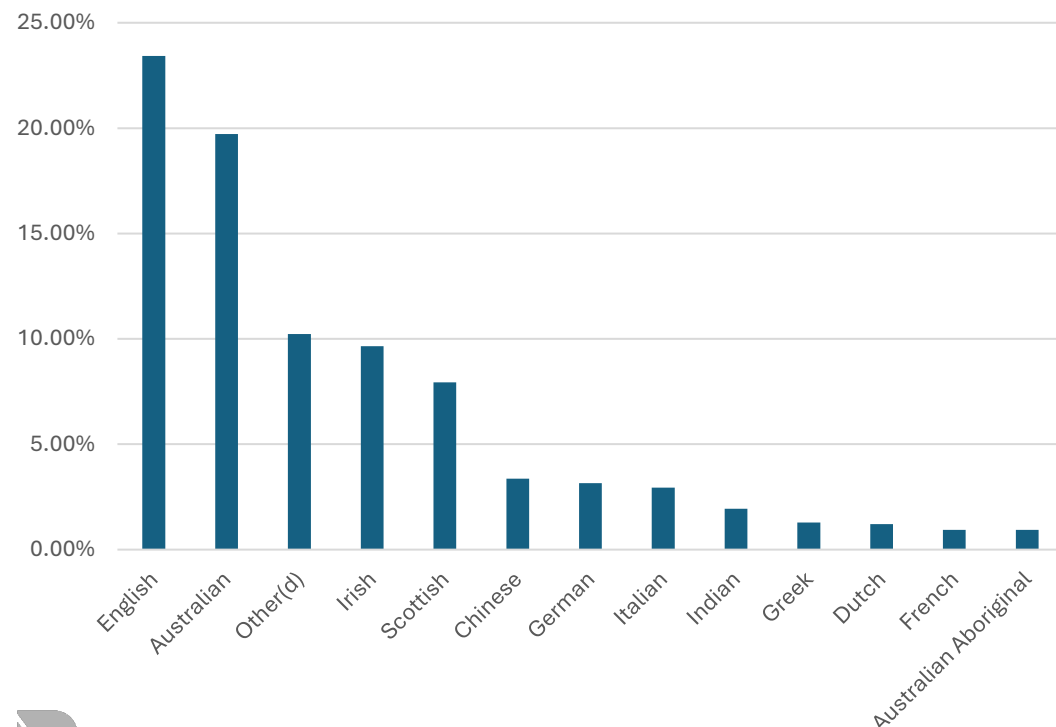
Study Catchment - Total Household Income (Weekly)



Study Catchment – Family Composition



Study Catchment - Ancestry By Country of Birth of Parents



The catchment is characterised by a culturally diverse community, reflecting the diplomatic and professional workforce within the Inner South. Households reporting English, Australian, Chinese, Indian, and Scottish ancestry form the majority of the population, indicating a multicultural profile and demand for inclusive, high-quality education settings. Income trends show a significantly higher proportion of households earning above \$3,000 per week compared with ACT averages. This points to a well-resourced resident base with strong expectations of education standards, continuity, and access to recognised government school pathways such as Telopea Park School.

Family households with children make up approximately half the population structure, with 32% of all households consisting of couples with school-aged children. A further 9% are one-parent families with dependent children. These households sustain consistent education demand even where overall population growth appears moderate.

Combined, these indicators present :

- Highly engaged parent cohort with strong alignment to public schooling
- Significant share of dependent-age children and youth
- Community that actively chooses proximity to schools with established performance

These demographic settings reinforce the strategic importance of education capacity within the catchment to respond to community expectations for accessible, local public schooling.



# Population Forecast

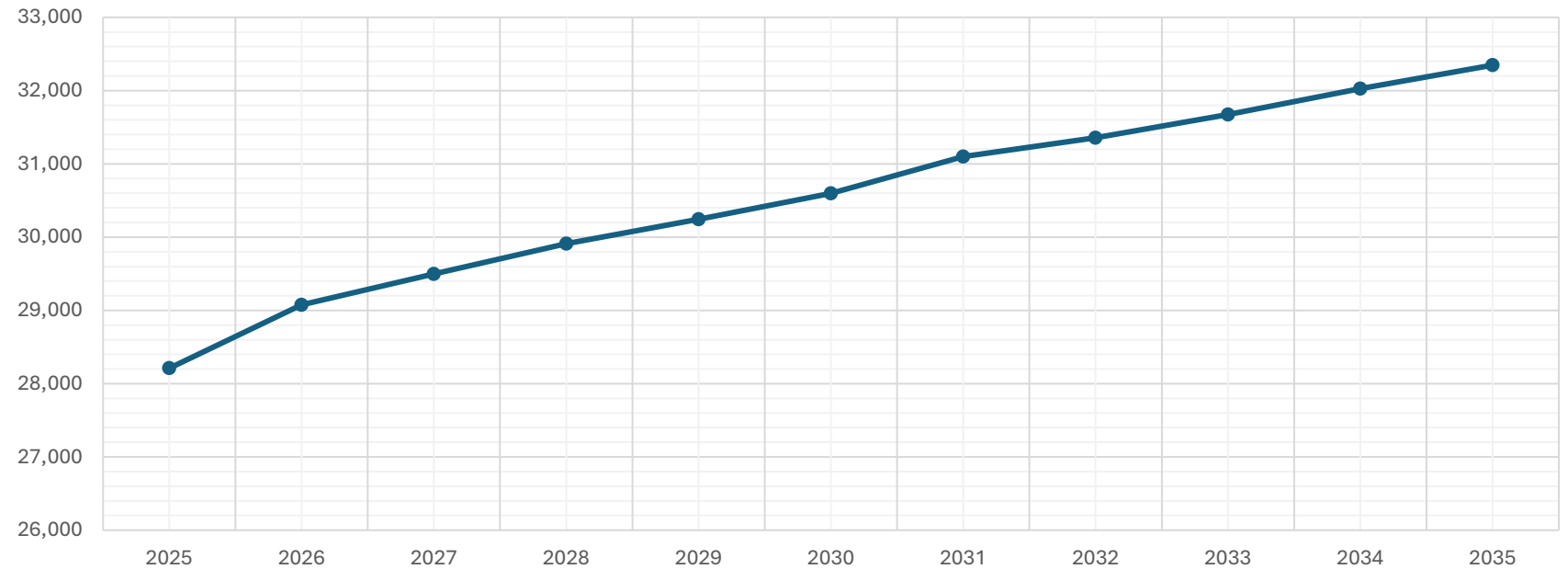
As per ACT's latest projection, the population within the study catchment is forecast to increase steadily over the next decade, growing from around 28,500 residents in 2025 to approximately 32,500 by 2035. This continued uplift reflects ongoing urban renewal within the school's catchment, coupled with stable demand from families seeking access to established services and amenity.

Growth is particularly evident within school-aged cohorts. Between 2025 and 2029, the number of children aged 5–15 years is projected to rise, reinforcing a sustained demand pipeline for primary and high school places.

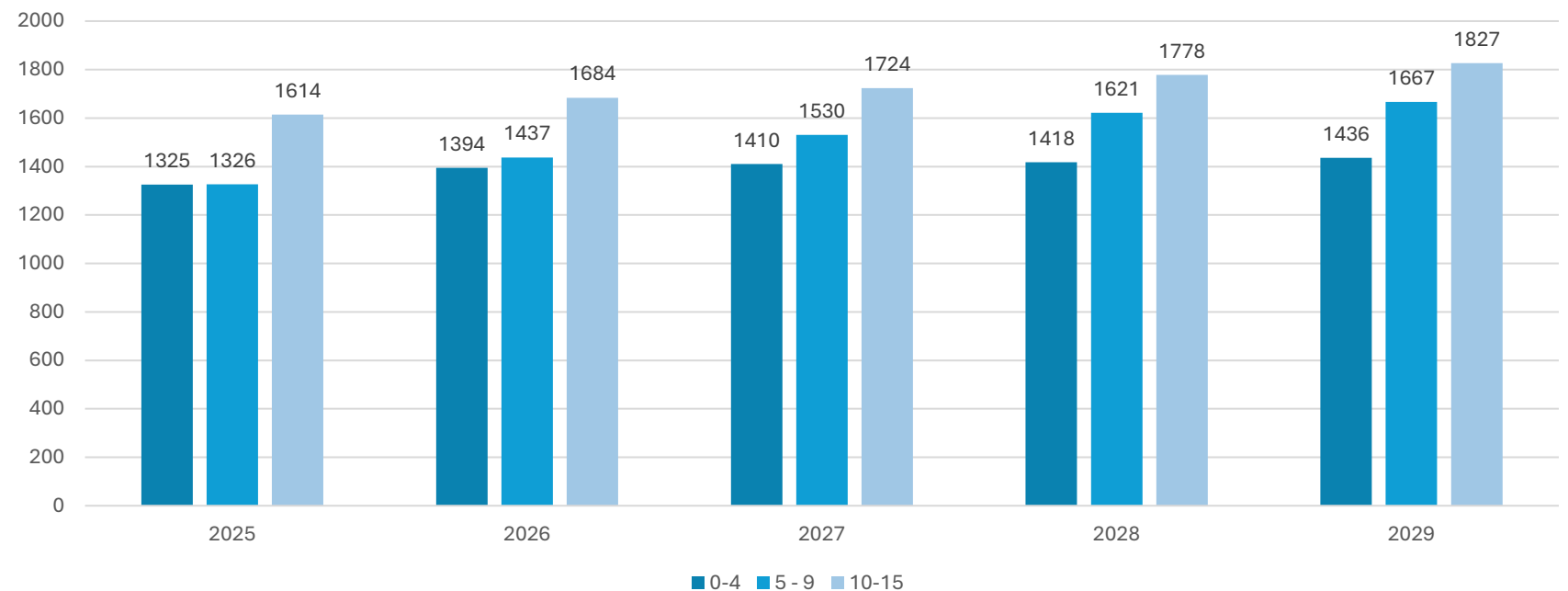
The strongest uplift is expected in the 10-15 year range, directly feeding into the critical Year 7-10 stage currently serviced by Telopea Park School.

This demographic trajectory indicates that high-school demand will continue to intensify, reaching operational limits faster than capacity is currently planned to expand.

Study Catchment - Population Forecast 2025-2035



Study Catchment Population Forecast 2025- 2029



# Demographic Snapshot

- The catchment is a stable, established community with strong family representation, limited greenfield development capacity and substantial infill potential driving population growth in key suburbs.
- More than 2,700 children aged between 5 and 15 years live within the catchment as of 2021, forming a strong and sustained student pipeline.
- Forecasts show continued growth in school-aged cohorts through to 2035, placing upward demand pressure on government secondary education.
- The 25-44 age range is one of the dominant cohorts, indicating active family formation and ongoing transition from young couples to households with school-aged children.
- Growth is strongest in Kingston, Narrabundah and Griffith, suburbs undergoing expansion in housing typologies, which attract a wider range of family types.
- The community is culturally diverse, with representation from English, Australian, Chinese, Indian, Italian, German, Aboriginal and other ancestries contributing to a multilingual, globally-connected student population.
- The catchment includes a broad socio-economic spectrum, though households are generally higher-income, reflecting access to premium amenity and school performance expectations.
- Couple families with dependent children form a significant proportion of households, further reinforcing local reliance on well-located education facilities.
- Telopea Park School is the only public high school provider servicing the catchment for Years 7–10.
- Red Hill School and Forrest Primary act as additional primary feeder schools, meaning increasing demand will translate directly into Telopea Park School Y7-Y10 enrolments over time.



Aerial view of the site and adjoining surroundings



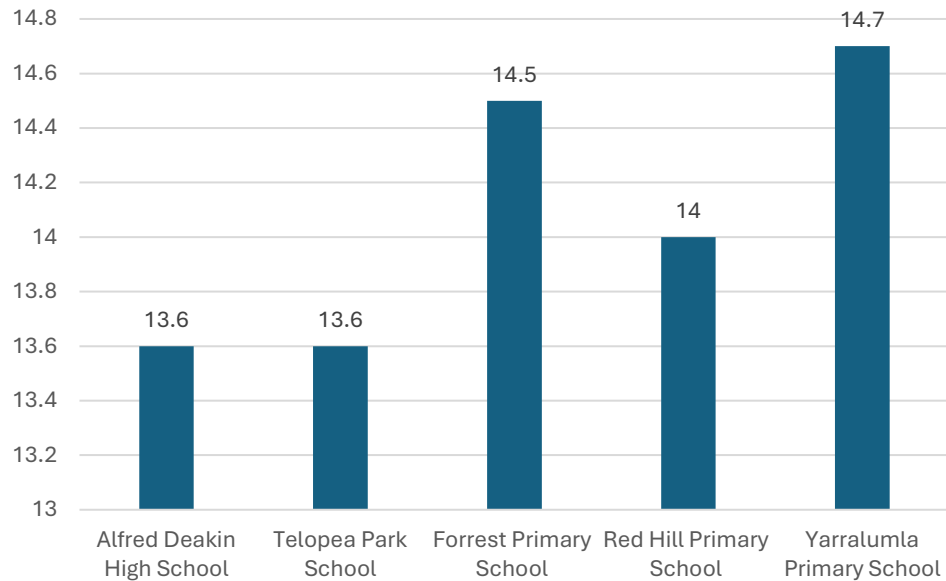
# EDUCATION

## Catchment Capacity

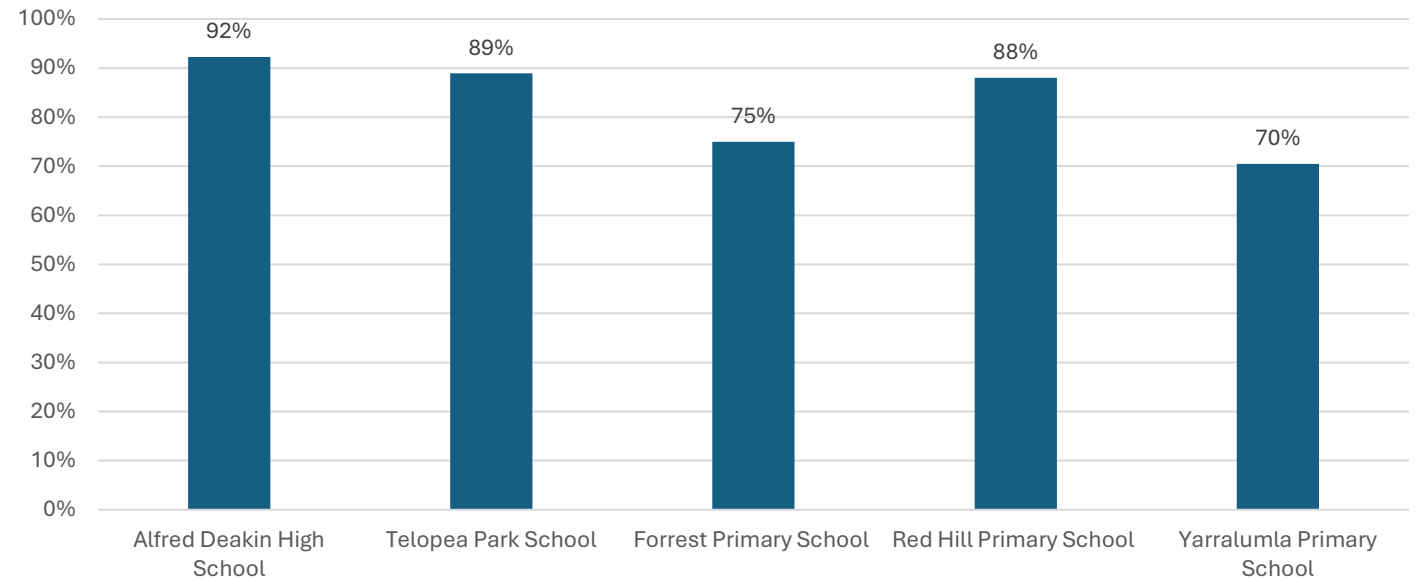


# Education – Enrolment & Capacity

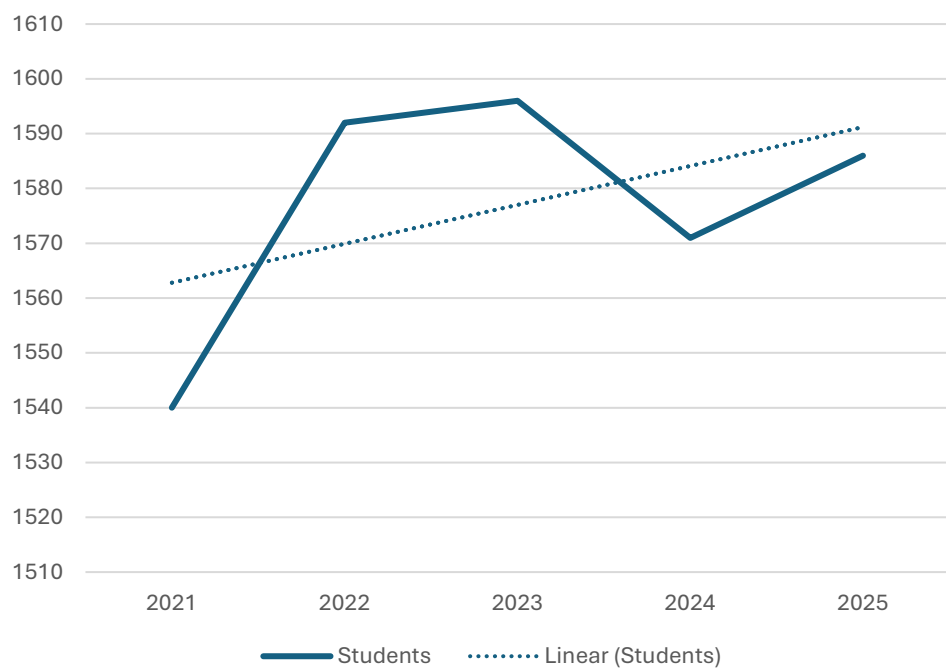
Student to Teacher Ratio - Catchment Study



Capacity - Catchment Study



Telopea Park School Enrolment



Current capacity utilisation at Telopea Park School has reached 89%, surpassing the threshold for optimal operations, which sits at 85% and is now approaching critical levels. This places it just behind Alfred Deakin High School at 92%, Red Hill Primary School at 88% and Forrest Primary School at 75%, signalling enrolment pressure across Inner South’s public education network.

Student-to-teacher ratios at Telopea Park stand at 13.6, closely aligned with Alfred Deakin and notably lower than the higher ratios recorded at Forrest Primary (14.5) and Yarralumla Primary (14.7). This suggests current staffing levels are comparatively well-balanced but offer limited flexibility for scaling up under existing configurations.

The enrolment trend for Telopea Park School between 2021 and 2025 underscores the school's critical position within the catchment's public education network. Although there is some short-term fluctuation visible, such as a slight dip in enrolments in 2024, the linear trajectory remains upward, with the school rebounding in 2025 to over 1,580 students.

The broader demographic outlook signals that this upward pressure is not a temporary surge but a sustained trend. Forecast data from 2025 to 2035 indicates continued population growth within the school-aged cohort, particularly among children aged 10–15 years.



# CONCLUSION

Summary and Recommendations



# Conclusion and Recommendations

The proposed rezoning of Forrest Section 36 Block 5 from PRZ2 to CFZ presents a pragmatic and socially responsive solution to an increasingly constrained education network in Canberra's Inner South. The catchment, while stable and largely built out, is experiencing sustained infill and densification, particularly in suburbs like Griffith, Kingston and Narrabundah.

With a growing school-aged population and limited options for large-scale greenfield expansion, pressure on existing education infrastructure is not a future risk but a current reality.

The proposed rezoning of Forrest Section 36 Block 5 responds to a clear capacity challenge within the Inner South's education network, one shaped by a constrained urban footprint, demographic uplift in school-aged cohorts, and a single secondary provider bearing disproportionate load.

Enrolments are nearing its notional capacity of 1,784 students, with student-to-teacher ratios already stretched and space for expansion limited. Without intervention, this growth trajectory risks surpassing operational thresholds, leading to impacts on learning environments, staff workload and equitable access.

The proposed land use shift offers a low-disruption, high-impact opportunity to support school expansion adjacent to its existing footprint. It avoids the need for costly and disjointed relocation strategies and allows for infrastructure uplift to be delivered in situ.

The subject site, while currently zoned for recreation, is not critical to the core delivery of open space in the district, particularly when viewed in the context of PRZ1 contributions nearby that carry the bulk of green infrastructure responsibility.

The rezoning would also deliver social benefit beyond infrastructure capacity. It supports continuity in educational pathways, protects local enrolment access, and anchors public schooling as a central, place-based amenity.

These are not abstract gains; they materially affect family stability, student outcomes, and the broader functioning of a diverse and growing community.



Aerial view of Telopea Park 1955, CDHS



Aerial view of Telopea Park 2025, Google Earth



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