ACT Government

Report

Woden Town Centre Working Group – Q3 2026 quarterly report

Report purpose

To provide a quarterly report of the work and outputs of the Woden Town Centre Working Group (the working group) as required under the Assembly Resolution of 3 February 2026.

Type of information

A consolidated listing of work underway reflecting both the March 2025 and February 2026 Assembly resolutions.

About the working group

Purpose

The purpose of the Woden Town Centre Working Group is to:

- Operate in an advisory and information sharing capacity;
- Facilitate cross-government coordination to support the integrated delivery of works and initiatives within and impacting on the Woden town centre;
- Identify and where appropriate recommend opportunities for town centre improvements that are part of or consistent with existing priorities, considering the physical, business, environmental, and social dimensions of the town centre; and
- Consider all areas of the Woden town centre including Phillip Service Trades Area.

Work underway

Scope (2025 and 2026 resolutions)	Work underway
Articulate a strategic vision for future land uses, major transport networks, open space and activity centres including Phillip Service Trades Area.	• The draft Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework (the Framework) further articulates the strategic vision of the Woden District Strategy and Planning Strategy. • The working group was briefed on the draft Framework and the planned approach to the forthcoming eight-week community engagement and consultation process. • Feedback on the Framework engagement and consultation is expected to be

	provided to the next meeting planned for late September 2026. • A further roundtable discussion on issues relating to West Deakin and the Phillip Service Trades Area is expected to occur separately from, and outside, the Framework engagement period. • As outlined in the Government's response to the Woden town centre Integrated Land Use Plan Assembly Resolution, the ACT Government will consider the declaration of an urban renewal precinct, or precincts, within the broader Southern Gateway corridor, including the Woden town centre. Future decisions will be informed by community consultation and the draft Framework. • The working group will assist in considering potential approaches to urban renewal within the corridor. • An update will be provided at the September meeting. Depending on timing and emerging issues from consultation and supporting investigations, working group input may also be sought out-of-session.
Social infrastructure: • Gap analysis, including options and criteria to determine the preferred sites for the multi-purpose indoor sports stadium, the street theatre/art centre, and the 50m pool set in a green environment. • Identify suitable sites for an aquatic centre, indoor sports centre, and arts centre to meet community needs.	• The ACT Government is progressing procurement and consultation activities to support development of a new ACT Aquatic Strategy, which will guide future aquatic infrastructure investment across Canberra. A Request for Tender (RFT) to appoint a lead consultant for the ACT Aquatic Strategy project was released on 18 September 2026 • Infrastructure Canberra is progressing initial site analysis assessments for a Government owned 50 metre outdoor public pool in Woden. • The working group will receive a further update next quarter. • Early planning is exploring an option to provide an indoor sport court facility on the corner of Hindmarsh Drive and Ainsworth Street in Phillip (Section 1, Block 17), potentially collocated with a future high school. • The project is currently at an early planning stage and is being considered in accordance with the ACT Government

	Capital Framework. Progression to detailed planning, design and delivery will be subject to future Government decisions and budget funding. • The ACT Government is also exploring opportunities to integrate community, recreation and social infrastructure into major proponent-led redevelopment projects to support both existing and future communities. The working group noted support for this approach, recognising the potential to maximise community benefits, improve facility utilisation and support efficient use of land and infrastructure. • ACT Government has released the Consultant study: ACT Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment and Social Infrastructure Audit (SGS). The study is a tool to inform work across ACT Government and has been provided to the working group.
Identify and recommend improvements to pedestrian, cycling, vehicle, public transport and social connectivity.	• The ACT-wide Active Travel Planning Tool identifies current and planned linkages to and through the Woden town centre and surrounds to achieve the Active Travel Plan goal of 'more people walking and riding more often'. This tool informs work across ACT Government including in the town centre. • The Light Rail Stage 2B final, revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)was submitted to Australian and ACT Government regulators in June 2026. It is currently being assess with an expected determination by the end of 2026. • A future redevelopment of the Woden Westfield would provide an opportunity for connectivity improvements through the centre of the Woden town centre. The working group received an update at the 14 July 2026 meeting. The working group will be kept up to date during the process. • The working group will continue to track and discuss major plan amendment (MPA) applications and proposals in the town centre.

Tree canopy: • Enhance the tree canopy and biodiversity, especially around Yarralumla Creek. • A plan to increase the [Woden town centre tree] canopy to 30 percent.	• The ACT Government is progressing work on the ACT Landscape Plan. This will take a long-term, strategic, spatial approach to urban growth while incorporating our nature conservation objectives across Canberra. The plan will also have a strong climate adaptation focus, alongside providing a strategic direction for urban heat mitigation. The newly appointed ACT Government Landscape Architect attended the 25 September meeting to introduce the work. • Work on the Yarralumla Creek flood study is progressing and due to be completed in Q4. The working group will receive an update at the September meeting.
Assess the social and environmental sustainability and climate adaptability of residential towers.	• Residential proposals over 5 storeys are referred to the National Capital Design Review Process (NCDRP) which includes guidance on sustainability. The working group is not directly involved in the development assessment process but are informed if a Woden town centre proposal is referred to NCDRP. • The ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway (2024) is to lead and support the building and construction sector to deliver sustainable and climate ready buildings now and into the future. • The working group will receive a presentation on this work later in 2026.
Review levels of homelessness and community support services and identify potential sites for new services as part of the town centre development.	• Woden Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Youth Foyer opened in May 2026. • The working group will review and discuss any future proposals or sites for new services.
Housing analysis of apartment size and numbers, ownership/rental mix, vacancy rates, public housing, community housing, affordable housing and unmet housing need. Plan for adequate provision of public, community and affordable housing.	The ACT Government is developing public, community and affordable housing in the Woden Town Centre, to deliver on ACT's housing targets. Continuing initiatives include: • ACT Housing Strategy 2018 and Implementation Plan Update (February 2026) • Affordable Housing Project Fund • Housing Australia Future Fund • Build to rent

	• LVC Reduction for social and affordable housing The working group will discuss any new proposals for public, community and affordable housing in the Woden town centre.
Integration: • Coordinate with the development of the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework. • Consider proponent (developer and/or utility authority) initiated master plans, MPAs or direct sale requests to align with the SGPDF and Woden district strategy.	• The working group met out of session on 13 March 2026 to review and discuss a proponent-initiated MPA application in the town centre. Comments and feedback were provided to the Territory Plan team directly through line areas. • The working group will receive an update on the draft Framework community consultation outcomes at the September 2026 meeting. • No direct sale applications in Woden town centre were received this quarter.
Entertainment precinct and identifying place-making areas: • Planning to create a destination by activating public spaces and supporting the night-time economy.	• CED will provide an update of the review of the City Centre Entertainment Precinct to the working group at the September 2026 meeting. • Activation of public spaces adjacent to Woden CIT will be on the working group agenda for discussion later this year.
Reporting: 1. Progress report by last sitting of 2025. 2. Report back on the above analyses and land use planning by June 2026 and before public consultation on the SGPDF (to be tabled in the Assembly 24 February 2026). 3. "Provide quarterly reporting to the Assembly of the work and outputs of the Working Group"	1. Completed. 2. Completed. 3. Ongoing.