



PURDON

Block 42 Section 65 *Belconnen*

Community Consultation Report
MAY 2025





In the spirit of reconciliation, we respectfully recognise and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work, and their continuing and important connection to lands, waterways, and communities. We are committed to building inclusive, connected and respectful communities that value and celebrate cultural heritage.

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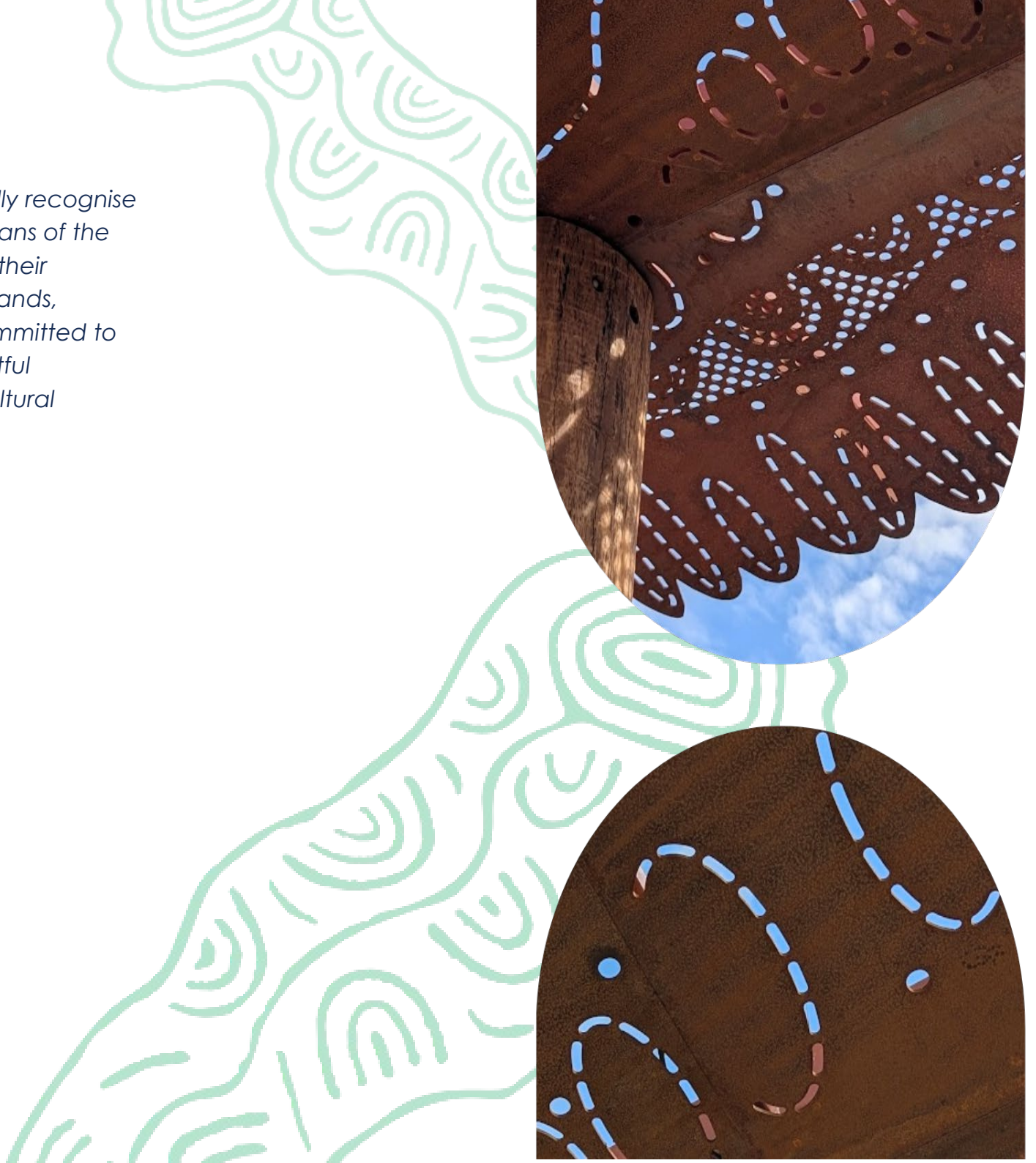




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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

This Supporting Report has been prepared by Purdon for the University of Canberra in support of a proponent-initiated major plan amendment (MPA) to the Territory Plan 2023 in accordance with Part 5.2 of the *Planning Act 2023*. The MPA is proposed to allow for a mixed-use development over the subject site. The amendments proposed are listed below:

1. Changes to the Territory Plan Map to re-zone Block 42 Section 65 Belconnen from **CFZ – Community Facilities** to **CZ2 Business Zone**
2. Changes to the Belconnen District Policy Assessment Requirements to limit building heights on site with opportunity provided for taller proposals to be considered; and set key planning parameters

1.2 The site

The site is located on Block 42 Section 65, Belconnen. It's across the road from the University of Canberra and right next to John Knight Memorial Park and Lake Ginninderra. Westfield Belconnen, local schools, the Belconnen Bus Interchange, and a wide range of services are all within walking distance.

The site covers just over a hectare and is currently zoned as a Community Facilities Zone (CFZ).



Figure 1- Site context



1.3 Background

The University of Canberra had broader vision laid out in the 2020 UC Bruce Campus Masterplan for a mixed-use development

Part 4.2 of the master plan report outlined the following Directions for the Arscott House site:

Consider the former Arscott House site for purpose-built short-term accommodation, enabling an increasingly large contingent of overseas students and their families, conference attendees and partners to more deeply engage in the UC experience.

Although the former Arscott House site is currently zoned as CFZ Community Use (which does not permit commercial accommodation uses), the Master Plan team recommend that the strategic potential of a hotel/conference facility should be investigated as part of any future development proposal, with consideration to any planning/lease implications.

And a key implementation driver for the short-term development of the university (2020-2026) was to:

Utilise the former Arscott House site for a strategic partnership: Re-imagine former Arscott House as a University gateway into Belconnen, exploring funding opportunities to deliver a regionally significant hotel and conference facility.

Building on the guidance provided in the 2020 Master Plan, UC has progressed future renewal of

the site through a concept development study, engaging architects, engineers and planners.

This study has informed the final version of the Major Plan Amendment, which sets out the proposed planning and design framework to guide future development on the site.

1.4 Purpose

This report outlines the community engagement process undertaken to support the proposed Major Plan Amendment (MPA) for Block 42 Section 65 Belconnen.

Engagement at the MPA stage can present challenges, as there is no defined built form for the community to respond to. To ensure the consultation was meaningful, the broader engagement focused on understanding how the local community currently uses and experiences the town centre — including how people move through the space, the places they value, and the types of activities they engage in. This approach aimed to provide a foundation for shaping the proposal to reflect community use patterns and support a vibrant, accessible urban environment.

In addition to broad-based engagement, targeted discussions were held with key stakeholders, including the Belconnen Community Council and immediate site neighbour, the UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra (the College). These conversations offered deeper insights into local priorities, potential concerns, and site-specific aspirations. Their input was particularly valuable in identifying opportunities and challenges that may not emerge through broader community feedback alone. This report captures both the wider community responses and the specific themes raised through these targeted interactions.

1.5 Scope

This report provides an overview of the consultation undertaken to inform the community and gather feedback on the proposed Major Plan Amendment (MPA). It outlines the engagement methodology and details the consultation activities conducted during the engagement period from 28 April to 16 May 2025. The report presents key findings from the community survey and targeted stakeholder feedback, and concludes by identifying the community's key priorities to help guide the details of Major Plan Amendment proposal.



2. ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 Our Approach

Our approach to engagement brings together planning expertise and a practical understanding of how to involve the community in a meaningful way. We focus on creating clear, inclusive opportunities for stakeholders and the community to learn about a proposal and share their views early in the process.

2.2 Guiding Principles

The following principles, drawn from Section 11 of the *Planning Act 2023*, guided the engagement activities planned and delivered for this project:

- **Accessible** — Easy to access and presented in a variety of ways.
- **Balanced** — Facilitates and encourages constructive responses from a wide range of stakeholders and community views and are considered together with views of other stakeholders.
- **Inclusive** — Engage all stakeholders directly affected by the proposal and aim to engage all other stakeholders affected by the proposal.
- **Meaningful** — Information provided as part of the consultation is adequate and well informed, it genuinely seeks feedback, and community views are genuinely

considered and incorporated into the final decision.

- **Resourced** — Processes are appropriately supported, considering the significance, complexity and impact of the proposal.
- **Respectful** — The engagement process is collaborative, genuine and courteous towards all views expressed.
- **Timely** — Engagement is undertaken early and at other appropriate times in the planning process and allows sufficient time for stakeholders to engage and form a collective decision.
- **Transparent** — Information provided is clear and observable, government and proponents provide reasons for decisions, including how community views have been considered.
- **Understandable** — Clear about the overall objective of the consultation, accurate, written in planning language and presented clearly.



2.3 Stakeholder Identification

A review of the local context informed the identification of key stakeholders for this project. With the site located on the edge of the Belconnen Town Centre and adjacent to John Knight Memorial Park, engagement focused on local businesses and residents in the nearby high-density residential towers. While the area was relatively small, its population density was large (~2,000 addresses), making it a key priority for consultation. Targeted stakeholders also included the Belconnen Community Council (BCC) and the college adjacent to the site, given their close proximity to the site and their important roles in representing local interests.

Table 1 – Stakeholder List

| Stakeholder Type | Stakeholder Name |
|-------------------------|---|
| Targeted stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra• Belconnen Community Council and its members (BCC) |
| Nearby businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variety of businesses located within the selected distribution area (see distribution map) |
| Nearby residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wayfarer• Republic Precinct (High Society 1 & 2, Nightfall)• Soho• Altitude |
| Community organisations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involve Canberra• ACT Council of Social Services• People with Disability Australia• Peddle Power• Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment• LGBTIQ• Canberra Business Chamber• ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service• Australian Council of Social Services• Greater Canberra |



2.4 Consultation Tools and Activities

The following tools and activities were used to consult with the local community and relevant stakeholders. Each was designed to share information, encourage participation, and gather meaningful feedback to help inform the project's direction.

Table 2 – Overview of engagement touchpoints

| Tool | Detail | Stakeholder | Timing |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Project webpage | To support community engagement, a dedicated project webpage was hosted on the Purdon website. It explained the MPA process in plain English, offered a clear overview of the proposal, and provided a direct link to an online survey. This made it easy for community members to understand the project and share their feedback. The webpage remains live and can be viewed here . | All | 28 April 2025 - current |
| Survey | A survey was created to understand how the community uses and experiences the Belconnen Town Centre. It gathered insights on movement, key destinations, values, and challenges to help inform future planning based on what matters most to the community. | All | 28 April – 16 May 2025 |
| Engagement flyer | Flyers were distributed to residents and businesses within the local area to raise awareness of the consultation. The flyer provided an overview of the proposal, explained how to get involved, and included a QR code linking directly to the project webpage and survey. This made it easy for community members to access more information and share their feedback online. | Nearby residents Nearby businesses | 28 April 2025 |
| Email communication | An email was sent to identified stakeholders to inform them about the consultation. The message included a brief overview of the project and a direct link to the dedicated project webpage, ensuring stakeholders had easy access to information and an opportunity to participate in the engagement process. | Targeted stakeholder Community organisations | Emailed 28 April 2025 |
| Presentation to BCC | A presentation was delivered to members of the Belconnen Community Council to provide an overview of the proposal and explain the community consultation process. The session gave Council members an opportunity to ask questions, share initial feedback, and help raise awareness of the engagement within the local community. During the engagement period, it was requested that the BCC share the survey with their membership via email and social media. This helped extend the reach of the engagement, encouraging broader community participation and increasing survey responses from local stakeholders. | Targeted stakeholder | Presentation 15 April 2025 Information sharing 12 – 13 May |



| | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Presentation to UC Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra | A presentation was delivered to Ginninderra College, involving two representatives from the College and two representatives from the ACT Education Directorate. As a direct neighbour to the site, the session provided an opportunity to inform the college about the proposal and discuss potential impacts or opportunities. | Targeted stakeholder | 13 May 2025 |
|---|---|----------------------|-------------|



3. RESULTS

3.1 Metrics

ENGAGEMENT METRICS AT A GLANCE



Figure 2 – Engagement metrics

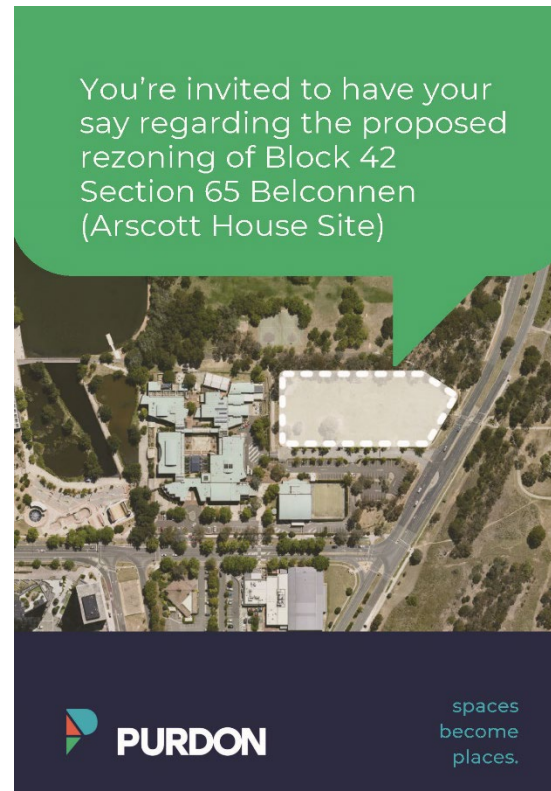


Figure 3 – Engagement Flyers

THE PROPOSAL

Purdon has been engaged by the University of Canberra to undertake community consultation in relation to the proposed rezoning of Block 42 Section 65 Belconnen (former Arcscott House Site).

We are preparing a Major Plan Amendment (MPA) application to vary the Territory Plan. The proposed amendment would allow a broader range of permissible uses for the site and introduce additional planning policy to help guide any future Development Applications.

HAVE YOUR SAY

As part of the MPA process, we're seeking community input to help shape the rezoning proposal. Your insights will inform us about what is important to Belconnen locals, to integrate the site into the Town Centre's future.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Want to learn more? Visit our website to explore the proposal and complete a short survey.

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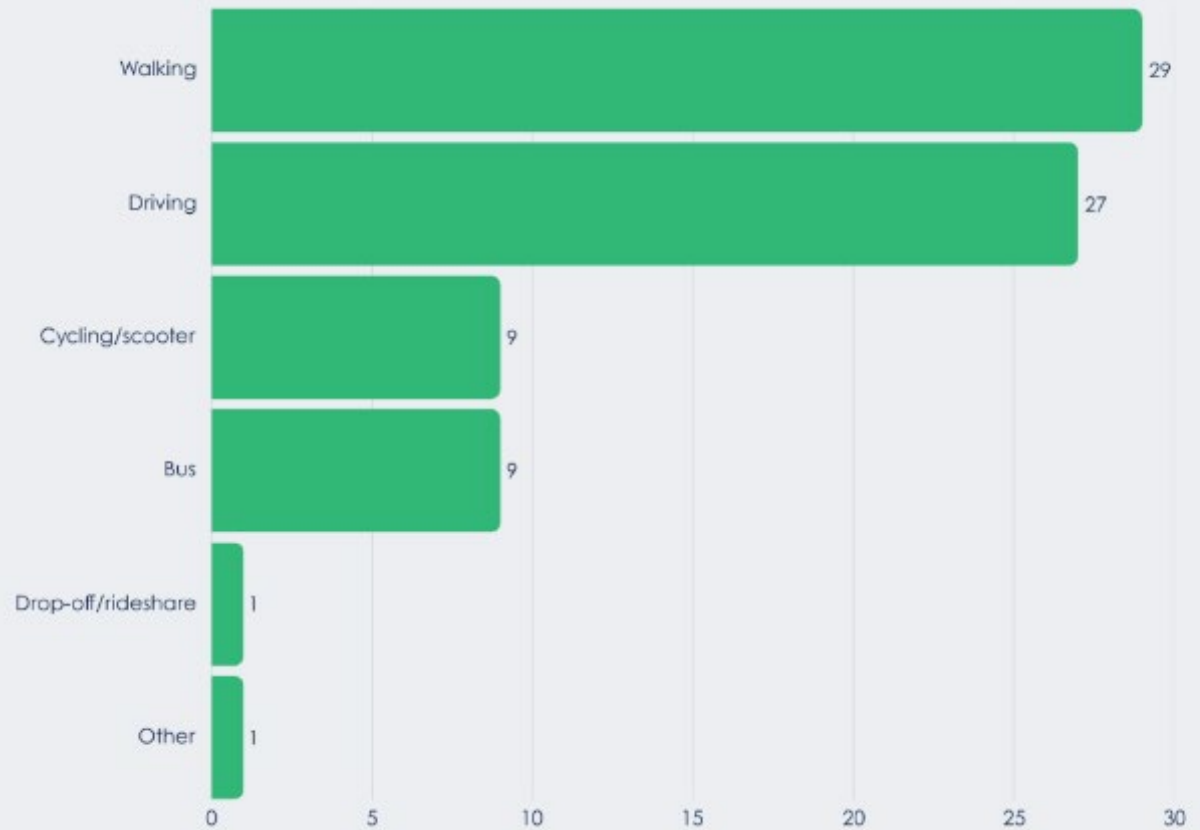
3.2 Survey Results

Question 1

How do you usually get to and around the Belconnen Town Centre?

Q1

How do you usually get around the Belconnen Town Centre?

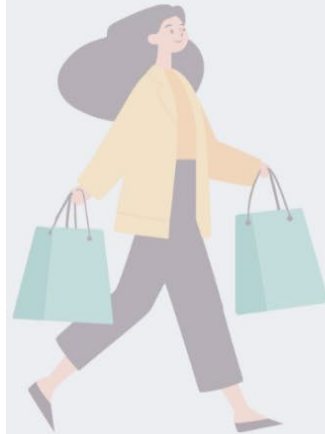




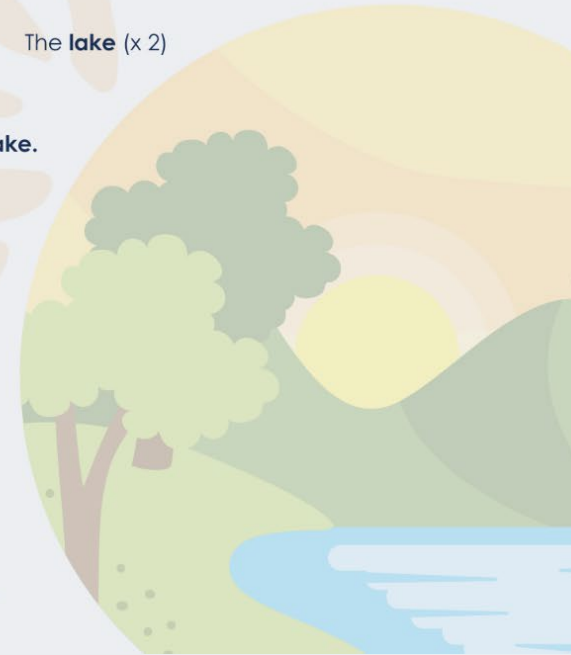
Question 2

Where do you most enjoy spending time in the town centre?

Q2 | Where do you most enjoy spending time in the town centre?



- Westfield
- mall & grazier lane
- parks and walkways, westfield shopping centre
- Belconnen Mall
- Belconnen Mall and surrounding businesses
- At the **lake**
- grazier lane
- Benjamin Way
- Lake** Ginninderra and Margaret Timpson Park and Belco Arts Centre, Belco Library
- Petstock, Belconnen markets, Westfield
- Mall (x 2)
- Around the **lake**/the parks next to it
- Westfield shopping and enjoying the parks around **lake** Ginninderra
- The **lake** (x 2)
- The outdoor restaurants at Westfield and also emu bank and the foreshore
- By the **lake**.
- Home (republic precinct)
- The **Lake** Shops Restaurants
- Lake** Gininderra (x 2)
- John knight park with my dog
- by the **lake** and on the **lake**
- Lake** Skate park Restaurants around lake
- Library, John Knight Park
- Lake** Ginninderra and surrounds
- Enjoy is not a relevant word here.
- Walking and Cycling around **Lake** G
- Cafes/ restaurants on the water
- This does not relate to the block use.



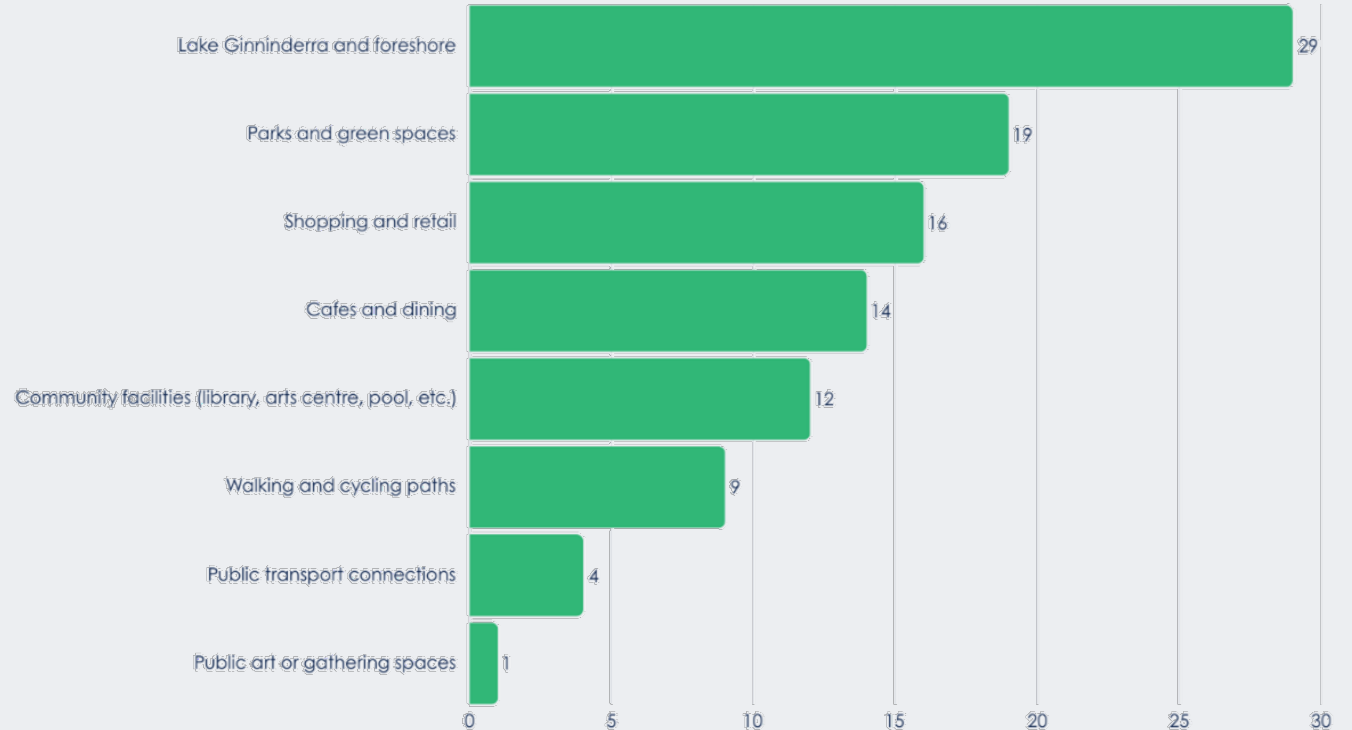


Question 3

Which of the following places or features do you value most in the town centre?

Q3

*Which of the following places or features do you value most in the town centre?
(Select up to 3)*





Question 4

What would you like to see more of in the town centre?

Q4 | What would you like to see more of in the town centre?

more public **facilities**, such as educational facilities, parks, theme parks, and restaurants

More cafes, spaces for **community events** and opportunities for local businesses

Unique public/theme park with special offers and service. Hate the idea of building/construction of apartments in block 42 section 65, already too many high rise buildings around, and the surrounding environment might be further damaged.

Events for the family / date nights. Destination Locations to draw people to them, and not part of a mixed-use development.

Green spaces and playgrounds

Outdoor eateries/ fun **attractions** (mini golf)

Cafes and restaurants with **green space** to sit on the grass and enjoy time with the family. A playground would be excellent

Well designed low rise medium density housing integrated with **open space**

more community use **green spaces** and play areas, supported by carparking and walking paths. John Knight park requires more parking options given the high use by visitors. We do not more large style accommodation towers, given the development currently underway or planned. the current CFZ zone provides a buffer between JK park and development.

Pleasant **outdoor spaces**

community facilities

More outdoor events, like **markets**, festivals



Shelters, **rest areas** with seating and more bbq facilities.

Activities for kids

Open spaces

Water **activities on the lake**. Roller skating or ice skating rink. More restaurants & cafes around the lake. Off lead dog areas south side. More free parking. A pub that opens New Year's Eve!



Activations, better public amenity and **facilities** around the lake.

Buses to Belconnen markets

Cafes & small bars

Design for the longer term an overall vision

More **retail** outside the mall

Nothing really. There is ample empty commercial space and apartment in the way

Community spaces

Quality **dining** especially along the foreshore

This does not relate to the block use. It should be used for university purposes. Either for the main campus or as part of the college.

Utilize the areas around Emu Bank to **activate the lake**, it's beautiful there but the space could be so much better.

Cafes

Free convenient parking.

Safer night **dining** and entertainment

Less apartment developments



More **cafes** and activity around the lake. Do something with the land that has been reposed for development near the lake Empty blocked utilised and empty buildings filled.

Primary school

I am really looking forward to seeing a **primary school** built.

fewer high rise apartments (particularly over 12 stories) crowding out green space

School, lakefront **cafes and dining**

Separated traffic

Cleanliness Clean Recreational facilities (why on earth Ipswich can manage a public pool but Canberra can't is wild!!) More quality **restaurants and cafes** with accessible parking and clean views Tram





3.3 Community and Stakeholder Feedback

3.3.1 Belconnen Community Council Presentation

A presentation on the proposal was given to the Belconnen Community Council on 15 April 2025. The session was attended by Council members and included a question-and-answer segment. The table below summarises the questions raised during the presentation and provides a response.

Table 3 – Summary of commentary from Belconnen Community Council presentation

| Commentary | Response |
|---|---|
| <p>Uncertainty Around UC’s Intentions and Development Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will the University of Canberra develop the site itself or sell it post-rezoning?• What is UC’s long-term vision for its landholdings, and is there transparency in that process? | <p>The University of Canberra owns the site, which previously accommodated Arscott House a student residence closed in 2014 and demolished in 2020. The University of Canberra is now seeking to increase the site's potential to support a more connected and growing Belconnen.</p> <p>The proposed Major Plan Amendment (MPA) aims to establish clear planning framework through the process of land rezoning, which will guide future development.</p> <p>While no decision has been made on future ownership, the intention is to allow a broader range of land uses that align with planning policy and the strategic role of the Belconnen Town Centre.</p> <p>Any future development whether led by UC or another party will still be subject to a separate Development Application process, including further community consultation and assessment by the Territory Planning Authority.</p> |
| <p>Loss of Community Facility Zoned Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What safeguards are in place to ensure meaningful community benefit is retained on the site?• Is the rezoning a downgrade of public utility for private gain? | <p>The proposed rezoning recognises the site’s strategic location adjacent to the Belconnen Town Centre and seeks to allow a broader mix of uses, including community, residential and small-scale commercial activities.</p> <p>To better understand the role of community use on the site, a separate Social Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This reflects the University of Canberra’s commitment to ensuring there is no reduction in community benefit. The social impact assessment highlights the abundance of CFZ land in the Belconnen Town Centre and surrounding area, particularly at the UC Campus.</p> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>The UC's future master planning intends to better utilise the campus for expansion of community facilities, allowing for an efficient and active campus. Efficient and sustainable growth on campus gives back to the community, furthering its role as a key part of the Belconnen Innovation Precinct (AIS, North Canberra Hospital, Calvary Private Hospital, CIT, UC and UC Hospital; as defined in the Belconnen District Strategy).</p> <p>To ensure that community benefit is provided <u>by the site</u> in the future, as part of the MPA, an Assessment Outcome is proposed in the District Policy. Any future Development Application on the site will have to demonstrate how the proposal will deliver a contribution of community facilities to the Belconnen Town Centre.</p> <p>Any future development will remain subject to planning approval, which will provide further opportunities to assess public benefit and community outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Built Form, Height and Overshadowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What height range is being considered and how will it relate to the surrounding area?• How will the development address solar access, shadowing, and wind effects? | <p>The proposal is seeking to amend the Belconnen District Policy to include planning controls that set a maximum building height of 42 metres (approximately 12 storeys) on the site, with the potential to reach 54 metres (up to 16 storeys) for some buildings where design outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>The proposed MPA seeks to align with these height provisions to ensure consistency with the broader planning framework for the Belconnen Town Centre.</p> <p>Any future development on the site will need to demonstrate compliance with requirements for solar access, overshadowing and wind impacts through detailed design and assessment at the development application stage.</p> |
| <p>Environmental Integrity and Tree Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will significant trees be retained, particularly mature trees in the site's northern corridor?• How does the proposal respond to broader ecological values? | <p>The rezoning proposed under the MPA does not involve the removal of trees. The updated planning framework will support future development that incorporates green infrastructure, increased canopy cover and water-sensitive urban design measures. Future DA applications will be required to address the Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide, that will protect, enhance and engage with nature on and around the site.</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>As an example, the concept design retains the all the regulated trees on site and introduces an improved biodiversity corridor, championing the goals of the BSUD to retain, connect and enhance nature.</p> |
| <p>Affordable and Inclusive Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will any housing delivered on site include affordable, student, or social housing?• How does this contribute to the ACT’s broader 30,000 homes target? | <p>The rezoning to CZ2 will enable future residential uses but does not prescribe specific housing types at this stage.</p> <p>The site’s proximity to the UC campus makes it well suited to student and key worker accommodation, and future proposals may explore opportunities for affordable or build-to-rent models.</p> <p>Rezoning the site for higher density directly supports the ACT Government’s target to deliver 30,000 new homes by 2030 by enabling higher density infill development in a well-connected, central location.</p> |
| <p>Pedestrian Connectivity and Public Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will the site improve walkability and lighting, particularly for UC students travelling between campus and the town centre?• Will public safety be addressed in both interim and long-term design? | <p>The proposed planning framework encourages improved pedestrian connections through the site, particularly between the UC campus, UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra and the Belconnen Town Centre. This is aligned with, and will enhance the upgrades planned along this corridor on the the UC campus, such as the UC Park and the continued revitalisation of the “Belconnen Boulevard” through better lighting, and social sport facilities.</p> <p>Future development will be expected to improve walkability and respond to lighting and passive surveillance as part of site design. Rezoning to CZ2 allows for more uses that are active and provide surveillance after-hours.</p> |
| <p>Community Engagement and Decision-Making Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will future engagement be inclusive of digitally disconnected or linguistically diverse residents?• How will feedback meaningfully shape outcomes? | <p>The current engagement approach includes both online and in-person opportunities to ensure accessibility for a broad cross-section of the community, including those who are digitally disconnected or linguistically diverse. All feedback will be reviewed and summarised as part of the MPA submission, helping to inform refinements to the planning framework.</p> |



Further engagement will also occur at later stages, including during the development application process, where community input will again be considered for detailed design.

3.3.2 Written Submissions

During the engagement period, an email address was provided on the project website for those who wished to share written feedback on the proposal. One written submission was received from a community member. The tables below summarises the key points raised in the submissions.

Table 4 – Written submission commentary

| Commentary | Response |
|--|---|
| <p>Concern about Rezoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The submitter expressed strong concern about the proposed rezoning of Block 42 Section 65 Belconnen from CFZ, fearing it may be sold for private development.• Suggested the university consider selling other land it owns on College Street instead of rezoning this site.• Requested the university focus on enhancing community and green spaces. | <p>The proposed rezoning reflects the site’s strategic location adjacent to the Belconnen Town Centre and its potential to accommodate a mix of uses that benefit both the University of Canberra and the broader community.</p> <p>While the University has not made any decisions regarding future ownership, any future development will be subject to the Territory Plan 2023 and Planning Act 2023. These existing frameworks and the proposed specific planning controls within will ensure outcomes align with community needs. This includes integration of open spaces and improved pedestrian connectivity.</p> <p>The site has remained underutilised for several years, and the proposed rezoning seeks to unlock its potential while retaining opportunities for long-term community benefit through proposed planning controls.</p> |
| <p>Value of Green Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The block is seen as an important green buffer between John Knight Park and surrounding urban areas.• The submitter, a recent resident of the Republic precinct, emphasised the value of green space for wellbeing in high-density living. | <p>The site is currently zoned as Community Facility Zone (CFZ) and has historically been used for built form, including Arscott House. While not a designated open space, we acknowledge its current open space character and the value placed on green buffers, especially by nearby residents.</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>The proposed rezoning introduces Assessment outcomes that guide future development to respond sensitively to the site's context, including its proximity to John Knight Park. This can be seen in the indicative development concept which creates a green link to connect to the park and introduces active frontages.</p> |
| <p>Existing and Potential Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested potential to extend the frisbee course and provide outdoor space for PE and sport, noting the college lacks outdoor sports areas. | <p>We acknowledge the suggestion to use the site for expanded outdoor recreation, including sports and frisbee facilities for the adjacent college.</p> <p>While the site is not currently reserved for open space under the Territory Plan, the proposed planning framework does not prevent future development from incorporating recreational or community uses.</p> <p>Feedback about outdoor space needs will be considered as part of ongoing planning and future design responses.</p> |
| <p>Concerns About Overdevelopment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern raised about ongoing high-rise development contributing to overcrowding, transport issues, and reduced outdoor space for families and older residents. | <p>Proposed building height controls and resulting densities are being aligned Belconnen District Strategy and existing Policy controls, ensuring consistency with ACT's broader vision and framework.</p> <p>The site's location near public transport, open space and services makes it suitable for urban infill, reducing pressure on suburban and greenfield areas.</p> <p>Future development proposals will be assessed for impacts on transport, amenity, and open space provision to ensure a balanced outcome.</p> |

3.3.3 Targeted Stakeholder Commentary

As described in section 2.4, UCSSCLG was consulted in a targeted engagement meeting. Representatives from the school's leadership and the ACT Education Directorate attended the meeting. After the meeting, both emailed written submissions to Purdon. These are summarised below, with responses to the points raised.

Table 5 - ACT Government Education Directorate

| Commentary | Response |
|--|----------|
| <p>Inconsistency with Belconnen District Strategy</p> | |



The site is not located in Belconnen Town Centre, nor is it identified as 'Change Area' or 'Key Site' in the Belconnen District Strategy (2023). Development at the proposed scale is inconsistent with the District Strategy and areas identified for major development and change.

Significant additional information is required to justify the strategic merits of the proposed MPA, with particular focus on identifying impacts to the most immediate neighbour, Lake Ginninderra College (the College) being required.

Proposed heights and interface with the College

Little information has been provided with regards to proposed heights, with the only indication being between 12 and 16 storeys.

Purdon have claimed they are considering how to allow for an appropriate interface with the College to mitigate impacts. This could include transitioning or 'stepping down' heights as they near the existing two storey College. However, it is unclear how the proposed MPA will be able to achieve this, given key constraints.

- Firstly, the site is 1.04ha in area and has a north-south dimension of only ~69m, meaning there is very limited space to achieve a gradual transition of height that would allow for both quality built form and an appropriate interface.
- Secondly, the site is located to the north and east of the College, meaning overshadowing will occur. If transitioning heights away from the College, the tallest built form on the site would be located towards the northeast. This will result in considerable overshadowing of both the site itself and the College. This has amenity, health and operational impacts for the College.

While the site is not specifically identified as a Change Area or Key Site in the Belconnen District Strategy, it is located immediately adjacent to the Belconnen Town Centre and exhibits characteristics consistent with a Potential Urban Regeneration Area, as outlined in the Strategy.

The MPA proposal also aligns with the Strategy's broader objectives to facilitate urban infill in locations with strong access to centres, public transport and services. The proposed planning framework includes controls relating to height, setbacks, overshadowing and design to ensure an appropriate transition to neighbouring uses, including the College.

Detailed technical assessments such as those addressing overshadowing, privacy and school interface will be undertaken at the development application stage.

We acknowledge the concern regarding height and interface with the College. While no final built form is proposed at this stage, the MPA introduces planning controls to manage building heights, transitions and design quality across the site. A maximum height of 42 metres (approximately 12 storeys) is proposed, with potential for up to 54 metres (approximately 16 storeys) where certain design outcomes are met. These limits are consistent with the Belconnen Town Centre context and reflect the site's location adjacent to the Town Centre.

The interface with the College is a key consideration to the proposed planning framework, and future development will be required to demonstrate how overshadowing, privacy and amenity impacts are addressed. Detailed assessments including solar and built form studies will form part of any future development application in line with the Territory planning framework.

While the site's compact dimensions and orientation present constraints, these can be addressed through a considered architectural design response. Preliminary concept documentation as part of the MPA demonstrates that a height transition is achievable, allowing for an appropriate interface with surrounding uses.



The Belconnen District Policy sets heights for land within the Town Centre (noting the site itself is not within the Town Centre). The most recent version of the District Policy (effective 6 May 2025) sets the heights of land closest to the site (areas 'L', 'I' and 'E' in Figure 2 of the District Policy) at 2, 6 and 18 storeys. Given these height limits for land within the Town Centre, it is unclear why heights of 12-16 storeys are appropriate for the site.

The proposed MPA does not seek approval for a specific built form development but establishes supporting planning framework to the Belconnen District Policy through which any future design and siting Development Application must demonstrate high-quality, context-sensitive design.

Proposed land uses

Although Purdon have outlined that the proposed MPA would seek to rezone the site from CFZ Community Facility Zone to CZ2 Business Zone, no information has been provided on the proposed or likely land uses.

While we acknowledge the nature of a MPA, in order to justify the proposal's strategic merits and adequately assess the impacts, there must be consideration for what land uses are likely to eventuate (or will be pursued) at the site if the proposed amendments to the Territory Plan were adopted.

Given the nature, operation and proximity of the College, land uses at the site that are appropriate and compatible with existing school uses are essential. The proposed MPA should identify the land uses likely to eventuate at the site and demonstrate why and how these uses are appropriate and compatible with the College.

The proposed MPA seeks to rezone the site from Community Facility Zone (CFZ) to Business Zone (CZ2) to allow a broader range of future land uses consistent with the surrounding Belconnen Town Centre. While no specific land uses are confirmed at this stage, the intention is to, through rezoning, allow for a mix of permissible uses on the site including residential, small-scale retail, and community or social uses many of which are compatible with the adjacent College.

The CZ2 zone provides flexibility in land use. All future development must proceed through a separate development application process. This process includes detailed assessment of land use compatibility, amenity impacts, and operational considerations.

The Development Application process is managed by the Territory and includes formal public notification period for further community input.

Site access

The site is currently only accessible through the College's right-of-way access off Aikman Drive. It is the College's position that the right-of-way remain solely for the use of the College and not be used to provide access to increased development at the site.

It is unclear how the proposed MPA would address access issues given its current landlocked status and lack of access from Aikman Drive.

Access to the site is a known constraint and will require resolution as part of future planning and development processes. The MPA does not propose changes to access arrangements, nor does it seek to rely on the College's right-of-way.

Preliminary discussions with ACT Education, City Services, and UC have indicated that the most likely access arrangement will be the grant a small stub road into the block(s) in the location of the existing driveway. This road will serve both blocks in the future with unimpeded access. This is subject to a separate process, to happen post-MPA approval.



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| | <p>Any proposed access will need to comply with relevant transport, safety and planning standards and will be assessed in detail at the development application stage.</p> |
| <p>Community land</p> <p>The proposed MPA will erode the availability of Community Facility Zone land at a District level, while simultaneously increasing population and demand for that land.</p> <p>The proposed MPA will need to adequately address this issue. It is noted that Purdon have claimed community uses at the site are being pursued as part of the MPA, but no further detail is provided. Any community uses at the site will need to be supported by appropriate documentation to identify the size, nature, form, function etc. of the allocated floorspace. An appropriate planning mechanism safeguarding its provision in future development of the site is also required.</p> | <p>The proposed MPA recognises the importance of retaining community benefit on the site. While the rezoning would change the zoning from Community Facility Zone (CFZ) to Business Zone (CZ2), a range of community uses remain permissible under CZ2 and are being considered as part of the planning framework.</p> <p>The MPA allows for a broader mix of permissible uses and supports future delivery of integrated outcomes, such as social infrastructure and community spaces, alongside residential and commercial uses. A Social Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the MPA submission to further inform and support community-related provisions.</p> <p>Detailed information on the size, function and delivery of future community uses will be determined through the development application process and supported by further technical studies as required by the Territory.</p> |
| <p>Technical studies</p> <p>Technical studies supporting the proposed MPA have not been provided. It is expected that a full suite of technical studies will be provided when the proposed MPA is lodged.</p> <p>It is important that technical studies are prepared, acknowledging the unique nature of the College. For example, the traffic and transport impact assessment report would need to model and acknowledge that movements to and from the College do not neatly align with ordinary peak travel movements of other land uses.</p> | <p>We acknowledge that the technical studies supporting the MPA have not yet been circulated. These studies are currently being finalised and will accompany the formal MPA submission to the Territory. They will be publicly available during the Territory's statutory public notification period for the MPA.</p> <p>The traffic and transport assessment has considered the operational characteristics of the adjacent College, including its specific movement patterns and peak periods.</p> <p>Additional supporting material includes a Social Impact Assessment, architectural concept documentation, landscape concept drawings, environmental report, and the planning report, all of which demonstrate the intent and structure of the proposed planning controls.</p> |



Student demand

Rezoning of the site that would allow residential uses would increase the resident population and demand for school places, while at the same time reducing land available for education and community uses.

Impacts on demand cannot be quantified given the information available, but detailed analysis will occur once the proposed MPA is lodged and more information is available.

Ownership and management

No information has been provided on the future ownership or management of the site in perpetuity. Given the nature, operation and proximity of the College, this information is essential.

The potential for increased residential population is acknowledged, and any future development will be subject to further assessment, including consideration of demand for education and community services. While the MPA does not propose a specific development or dwelling yield at this stage, it proposes additional planning framework to the Belconnen District Policy that will help guide future applications.

The future ownership and management arrangements for the site have not yet been determined. At this stage, the MPA focuses on rezoning and proposing an additional, rigorous planning framework that sets parameters for future development, regardless of ownership.

The University of Canberra is currently the landholder of the site and remains committed to ensuring that any future development responds appropriately to its context, including its proximity to the College.

Election commitment for a future Belconnen primary school

Work is currently underway on a feasibility study for a future primary school to service Belconnen Town Centre and central Belconnen.

Use of the site as described will reduce options still actively under consideration (through the abovementioned feasibility study) for locating a future primary school to service the increasing population within Belconnen Town Centre and surrounds.

We acknowledge the ACT Government's election commitment and the ongoing feasibility work for a future primary school in the Belconnen Town Centre area.

UC is beginning work on a feasibility study with the ACT Education Directorate to investigate the possibility of having a primary school on its campus. We note that as per the Education Directorate's requirements for public schools, this site is less than half the minimum size for an appropriately sized facility.

While the site has historically been zoned as Community Facility Zone (CFZ), it is not currently reserved or identified for education use under the Territory Plan. The proposed MPA recognises the growing need for community infrastructure and supports a flexible planning framework that can accommodate a range of future uses.



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| | <p>The proposed CZ2 zoning retains the capacity to accommodate community or education-related facilities, should they be required and assessed as appropriate in the future.</p> |
| <p>Traffic generation and parking</p> <p>Significant concerns are held for the amount of traffic and parking that will be generated by the intensification of the site.</p> <p>Traffic generation has health, safety and operational impacts on the College and needs to be appropriately addressed and considered in conjunction with the cumulative impacts of development in the vicinity.</p> <p>Parking problems are likely to be exacerbated and could result in significant ongoing operational and management costs for the College, such as the installation of boom gates to regulate illegal parking. The College is already under pressure with managing parking for existing staff and students.</p> | <p>Concerns regarding traffic and parking impacts are acknowledged. Majority of these issues will be addressed through a Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment, which forms part of the formal MPA submission. Refer to this document for how future uses on site may impact traffic.</p> <p>Future development proposals will also be required to demonstrate that parking demand can be accommodated on-site, in accordance with ACT Government parking provisions, to avoid spillover impacts on neighbouring properties.</p> |
| <p>Height and overshadowing</p> <p>As outlined earlier, there are significant concerns for the proposed heights given the likelihood of overshadowing.</p> <p>Overshadowing has impacts on health and amenity for the College, and potential environmental and operational costs associated with increased HVAC and lighting usage.</p> | <p>We acknowledge the concerns regarding building height and potential overshadowing impacts on the College. The proposed MPA includes planning controls to guide appropriate built form, including height limits, setbacks and overshadowing, to manage potential impacts on adjacent uses.</p> <p>Overshadowing will be assessed in detail at the development application stage.</p> |
| <p>Privacy concerns</p> <p>Built form at the site has the potential to result in overlooking and lack of privacy for the College. It is unclear how this will be managed as part of the proposed MPA but, given the nature of the College, it is essential these concerns are appropriately and properly addressed.</p> | <p>Privacy impacts are acknowledged as a key consideration given the site's proximity to the College. While the MPA does not prescribe specific built form outcomes, it introduces additional planning controls to the Belconnen District Policy that require future development to respond sensitively to adjoining uses.</p> <p>Additionally, through Territory Plan and Planning Act 2023 framework, future detailed design would address building orientation, interface, setbacks, window placement, screening, and landscape buffers.</p> |
| <p>Servicing and infrastructure</p> | |



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| <p>It is unclear if current utility infrastructure could support the proposed MPA or if augmentation would be required. There is concern that demand for utility infrastructure will negatively impact the College.</p> | <p>Any necessary upgrades will be the responsibility of the future developer and subject to approval by relevant utility providers and government entities. Infrastructure planning will ensure that service demand generated by future development does not adversely impact existing users, including the College.</p> |
| <p>Although we acknowledge construction may be substantially in the future, there is significant concerns around safety (of physical works and interaction with children), noise, amenity, parking and traffic during construction and development of the site.</p> | <p>While construction is not part of the proposed MPA, any future development on the site will be subject to standard construction management requirements under the development application process.</p> <p>This includes the preparation of a Construction and Temporary Traffic Management Plan, which will address site safety, traffic control, noise mitigation, access restrictions, and coordination with surrounding uses including the College.</p> |

Table 6 – University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra

| Commentary | Response |
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| <p>College Board does have concerns regarding the rezoning application and future use of the site. These concerns come from students, parents and executives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact on school culture • safety of school community and property • potential types of commercial, retail and business located so close to a school environment and students • overall height and proximity of future developments • impact of increased infrastructure, such as roads, parking, congestion | <p>The concerns raised by the College Board, students, parents and executives are acknowledged and appreciated. The proposed MPA seeks to propose a planning framework that supports the Belconnen District Policy and Territory Plan, ensuring that any future development is responsive to the site's context including its proximity to the College.</p> <p>Key matters such as safety, privacy, amenity and land use compatibility will be addressed through the proposed additional planning controls in the Territory Plan. This statutory framework provides for greater detail of assessment at the DA stage.</p> <p>While the CZ2 zone permits a broader range of uses, all future proposals will undergo statutory assessment to ensure alignment with the surrounding land uses, including educational environments.</p> |



4. WHAT DID WE HEAR

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Arscott House MPA revealed a range of views, both in support and concern, regarding the future use and planning of the site. Input was gathered through online survey, written submissions, direct correspondence, and targeted meetings with key stakeholders, including UC Senior Secondary College and ACT Government directorates.

4.1 Key Themes from Survey Insights

The community survey received **38 responses**, with a range of views reflecting the site's visibility and importance within Belconnen.

In response to the survey question about where participants most enjoy spending time in the Belconnen Town Centre, the Lake emerged as the most valued destination, nominated by 58% of respondents. This was followed by the Westfield Mall at 29%, highlighting the role of retail and commercial offerings in the area. Restaurants and cafes and parks were each selected by 16% of respondents, pointing to the importance of both social and green spaces.

In response to the survey question "What would you like to see more of in the town centre?", most participants expressed a strong preference for open spaces (32%), highlighting the community's desire for accessible green areas within a growing urban environment. This was closely followed by

Where do you most enjoy spending time in the town centre?



What would you like to see more of in the town centre?



restaurants and cafes (29%), reinforcing the importance of social and hospitality venues in supporting vibrancy and community life.

Community spaces (16%) and education-related uses (11%) were also identified as key priorities, suggesting a continued interest in inclusive, multipurpose facilities that support learning, gathering, and connection.

4.2 Key Themes from Stakeholder Engagement

Sensitive site integration and school interface

A recurring concern from the College community and several residents was the need for future development to respond carefully to the site's proximity to the school. Issues raised included building height, overlooking, overshadowing, and potential impacts on school culture, safety, and operations. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of transitional built form, visual privacy, and maintaining a respectful interface.

Value of Open Space and Public Realm

Many survey respondents and local residents noted the importance of the site as a green buffer and its contribution to urban open space. There were calls to retain significant trees, improve landscaping, and explore recreation or public amenity uses. The site's role in enhancing



walkability and providing green relief in an increasingly urbanised area was strongly endorsed.

Uncertainty About Land Use and Community Benefit

Questions were raised regarding the future intent of the University and the types of uses permitted under the proposed CZ2 zoning. Respondents sought greater clarity on how community-serving or education-compatible uses would be prioritised. Some expressed concern about perceived loss of Community Facility Zone land and the implications for long-term public benefit.

Infrastructure, Traffic and Parking Impacts

Submissions and stakeholder discussions identified concern about increased traffic, access pressure, and parking demand, especially in relation to existing issues experienced by the College. Questions were also raised about whether existing utility infrastructure could accommodate additional development without impacting nearby land users.



5. CONCLUSION

The community engagement undertaken for the proposed Major Plan Amendment (MPA) at Block 42 Section 65 Belconnen has provided valuable insight into local priorities, concerns and aspirations for the site. The consultation process, delivered between 28 April and 16 May 2025, included a community survey, direct stakeholder meetings, written submissions and online feedback. Engagement was guided by the principles of transparency, inclusivity and early dialogue, as outlined in the Planning Act 2023.

Key feedback themes included strong interest in ensuring appropriate site integration with surrounding uses—particularly the UC Senior Secondary College—alongside calls to retain green space character, support walkability, and ensure public benefit is not diminished through rezoning. Stakeholders also raised concerns about building height, overshadowing, traffic, infrastructure pressure and long-term land use compatibility.

The community survey reinforced the importance of Belconnen's natural assets and social amenities, with the lakefront, parklands and hospitality venues emerging as the most valued destinations. Participants expressed a desire for future development to enhance the public realm, integrate open space, and support inclusive housing and community uses.

The engagement process also revealed uncertainty around the site's future ownership and delivery, as well as the implications of shifting from Community Facility Zone to Business Zone. While no specific development is proposed at this stage, stakeholders highlighted the importance of safeguarding community benefit, access, and amenity throughout future planning stages.

This report and the feedback it captures will inform the development of the MPA and supporting documentation. Community and stakeholder input will also guide future development considerations, ensuring that planning outcomes reflect the values and needs of those who live, learn and work in the Belconnen Town Centre.

