

Suggestion for reuse of old Belconnen bus way: the human friendly boulevard

My suggestion is to use the Busway to correct a major flaw in cycle and pedestrian access to the Belconnen Town Centre. From the north, bicycle access is virtually impossible to the Mall. Coming from the northwest, one has to negotiate two sets of light at the corner of Luxton and Lathlain streets and then go across a very risky entrance to the Mall parking, with nothing to prevent motorists from crossing the footpath or on road cycling lane paralleling Lathlain Street and hitting cyclists. Alternatively, pedestrians and cyclists coming from Lake Ginninderra can negotiate the underground parking ramps at the Mall to eventually arrive at rather incongruously placed bicycle racks on the top floor of the Mall. Since there is effectively no cyclist access to them, they are largely unused.

The unused Busway connects Coulter Drive, near its junction with Joynton Smith Drive, to the Mall. When it was used by busses, it continued on to the former Belconnen Bus Station. A pedestrian bridge, which is now in service on the cycleway bordering the west side of Lake Burely Griffin, crossed the old Busway, linking the Mall to Lathlain St. The Busway was truncated on its southern end by the building of the Mall extension, which includes a bus station.

My suggestion is to turn the Busway into a Human Friendly Boulevard. A cycle way would be paralleled by a footpath, forming the Boulevard, leading from the Busway origin at Coulter Drive to the Mall. At the Mall end of this, the Boulevard would be gradually raised, passing under the entry to the car park from Lathlain St. and connecting to the existing pedestrian walkway along Lathlain St., leading to the Bus Station. Along the Boulevard, north of Luxton St., blocks of flats or townhouses would be built. Automotive access to them would be at the rear of the flats or townhouses, via alleyways and a convoluted system of narrow connecting lanes. The idea would be to permit the occupants of the flats or townhouses to keep vehicles garaged behind them but to make it impossible to use these vehicles to commute back and forth to Belconnen. Such commuting would be done by bicycles or on foot. Some of the blocks of flats would have commercial spaces on the ground floor, which could be used as shops or for dining. It should also be possible to intersperse the flats or townhouses with playgrounds or recreation facilities.

Connecting cycle ways and footpaths would need to be built to provide access to Lake Ginninderra and, at the north end, Florey Shops and Florey Primary School. An underpass or overpass would link the Boulevard to a cycle path on the opposite side of Coulter Drive, which would lead to the Shops or School.

My proposal would develop housing where it is needed: near the Belconnen Town Centre, and do it in a way that would provide access on a human scale, eliminating the motor car from the urban landscape. My feeling is that cars should have a recreational function, rather than a transport one. It would appeal to townplanners who have their eye on financial viability, as the sale of land should easily cover the cost of the infrastructure. Its proximity to the Mall would make it desirable.

There are, of course, alternative uses for the Busway. A transport corridor is one, but since future light rail expansion is planning near Southern Cross Drive, rather than Ginninderra Drive, this would not be terribly practical. The Busway could be made into a park, but its proximity to Lake Ginninderra would make such a park redundant, in my opinion, as people would prefer to stroll and play near the Lake.

I urge my fellow cycles to give some consideration to my model proposal. Why not design our living spaces around bicycles, instead of trying to fit bicycles into living spaces which are designed around cars?

Core Area Redevelopment

It would be nice to see a redevelopment of the core area around Margaret Timpson Park. At the moment it's visually unappealing and not a good use of space. But it could become a central point that has some character and that generates some social interaction.

I would like to see Benjamin Way north from the bus interchange to Emu Bank closed to traffic. If the road was closed Westfield could add a line of cafes and eateries along the walk way and half the road, but facing outward toward the park. The rest of the road could be turned into green space which could connect to an improved Margaret Timpson Park and a new playground on the site of the old Belconnen Health Centre. A playground on this site would be useful as no new facilities for children have been added to the area, even though the number of residents in the town centre has increased over the last couple of years.

Protection of the Lake from Further Development

I would like to see the lake protected from any further development. Locals and others from the Belconnen area visit the lake because of its attractive natural setting. It's the only place in the area in which people can enjoy such a pleasant walk through bushland and parks. Any further development along the shore or high rise buildings, even if set back, but which tower over the lake, would compromise the natural setting, the uniqueness of the area, and the reason people visit and enjoy the lake.

Westfield Residential Development/Emu Bank Development

I don't believe the proposed 24 story Westfield residential development on Emu Bank is appropriate for the core area. A building of this size would be over-scaled for the core area, towering over the surrounding buildings and streets as well as the lake. It would stand out on the skyline in a very ugly and intrusive way, much like the units on Corinna St in Woden, which appear out-of-place because of their height. Any development along Emu Bank should be low rise – no higher than the existing level – with high rise buildings restricted to areas further south away from the lake.

Even with height restrictions, there is still an opportunity to improve Emu Bank by improving the quality of the businesses there. I would like to see more restaurants but not night clubs or bars. A bar or night club situated so close to a residential area would be noisy and disruptive to local residents (I am one of those local residents), and potentially a security concern. Noise from bars and drunken people leaving them in the early hours of the morning has been a problem in the past. When it occurs it has a significant impact on local residents' quality of life.

Finally, I don't believe building more residential buildings will improve the town centre. At the moment the town centre, particularly the core area, doesn't lack residential accommodation, it lacks spaces which generate a positive atmosphere, some social

interaction and a sense of community. Hopefully the new town plan will find a way to generate this sense of community, rather than just adding more people.

20th Jan 2015

Comments on Planned Draft Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan

Hi,

I would like to offer thoughts and suggestions on the planned Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan:

1. **Building heights.** The higher level buildings should be limited to 12 storeys except in a central core that exists between Eastern Valley Way and Benjamin Way in an existing east west alignment. I am aware you have approved a couple of buildings elsewhere which are higher.
WHY? Belconnen should be considered an integral part of Canberra and have the same essential control applied as for central Canberra and the other town centres.
2. Further high rise should be limited to the area mentioned above with some options maybe closer to Eastern Valley Way to be included.
3. Areas closer to the Lake should have lower height limits ie 6-8 storeys phased down from the higher levels further away from the Lake. This is similar to your 8-10 storey proposals along Benjamin Way south of Immigration.
4. Please discard the concept of **marker buildings** at places around Belconnen. They are not needed. They don't make Belconnen any more aesthetic nor obvious.
5. **Areas around the Lake should be protected from significant development** except for that area along Emu Bank & Beissel St. Some areas close to Emu bank already have 3, and 7 storey structures whilst right along the shore line it seems to be limited to 2-3 storeys. I think right on the lake edge 2-3 storeys is adequate and sensible. We do not need to emulate Kinston foreshores in this regard.
6. **Lake Ginninderra parklands need more protection especially the Western Foreshores and the Diddam's Close area.** These are the main open spaces left around the Lake with Diddam's Close also hosting kangaroos and the odd wallaby and even snake. However it might be feasible to have a community facility along the edge of Ginninderra Drive without impacting too much on the peninsula.
7. **Café/Restaurants are suitable along Emu Bank and Beissel St** to the old Police Boating site. Lake Ginninderra foreshores already has more cafes & restaurants than any other Lake except for Burley Griffin's Kingston foreshores area.

8. **The Lake Foreshores could be beautified a little more.** E.g. that area opposite the Mall, the old Emu Inlet Park could have some nice gardens and deciduous colourful trees added to provide colour and vibrancy.
9. **The Lake, not the Town centre, is the natural centre of Belconnen.** (Even one of the planners publically stated that). It's the recreation centre of the area being used extensively for walking, running, cycling, and kayaking plus picnicking and children's playgrounds and parties. For many of us it the central hub of our well-being experiences.
10. **Parking.** I know most new buildings will have parking included within and maybe some for public use at a price. However it's become a serious issue for most people that Belconnen now does not have enough parking at peak periods. Why not consider a dedicated parking building or two near the Mall which could be used for parking for people going to offices, movies, art centre, dinner, gym, doctor, etc. Surely one of those sites along Emu Bank (ie the current government paid parking site next to the mall) could be sold for a dedicated 6 storey car park with ready access from Luxton St, Emu Bank, Joynton Smith Drive. By making this a dedicated parking building it would be an obvious choice for many to head to and could have easy access to it. This is nearly a no brainer.
11. **The old bus route along Joynton Smith alignment** could be used for a bike/walking link through to Coulter Drive. The section closest to the mall could be used to make a further Park/Ride facility or just paid parking. Some of the section west of the Totterdell St roundabout might be suitable for medium density housing in places.
12. **Cycling routes through BTC need improving.** The old Bus route through to Coulter Drive could be redeveloped to include a dedicated cycle path, then connected over Coulter Drive through open space in Florey, the across Connah St, Florey then along a large grassy easement along John Cleland Drive down to Ginninderra Drive creating a faster link between BTC and West Belconnen. There also needs to be a better connection from the Mall Area to the bike path that starts on the south side of Belconnen Way opposite the south end of Benjamin Way and continues on to Glenloch and Civic. Also the old route up from John Knight Park through the University of Canberra quadrangle, then out to College St and eventually connecting up with the path behind the CIT and on to Civic needs review and better access as well across Hyden Drive.
13. **Belconnen does not really have a vibrant town centre plaza like facility** whereas Woden has its plaza and Civic has Garema Place and City walk. I guess this is a hard thing to create. However there is the option of another plaza near the old police and ambulance facilities. When they are all vacated they could possibly be linked across Rae St to the area between Purdue and Walder St and east to Lathlain St could be developed as another Town Plaza. It might be possible to re-create an underpass under Lathlain St and into the Mall. However to be successful we need such plazas to be

more for the people and more open and not closed in by buildings all around them unless the buildings are of lower height. I heard a person from LDA articulate some of this and he made perfect sense.

14. **One thing that needs more thinking is the aging of the population.** The Town Centre does have one Retirement facility on the eastern shore of the lake. Maybe a similar facility could be hosted along Ginninderra Drive on the north eastern edge of Diddam's Close Peninsular.
15. **Cheaper Commercial Space.** The Mall and any new building nearby will no doubt be structured on the premise that the office/retail space is A grade and thus attracting a higher rental. Much of the office/retail accommodation in the West Belconnen Trades Area is of a lower standard and usually cheaper rental. You need to think in your zoning how this cheaper commercial rental accommodation can be retained if you're serious in Government about supporting small business development.
16. **Use of Cars versus Other Transport Means.** You state in your overview document that the Government wants to encourage people to other forms of transport than cars. I think this is too simplistic and quite naive really. Most people have a car or two and this is their main means of transport. Some still get the bus to work. However most families drive the kids to school and use the car for their major shopping trips. How can a woman with two children and a heap of shopping get the bus? When you look at walking and cycling infrastructure in Central Belconnen you can see that it has not been developed that much in recent years, except on road cycle lanes.
You also need to start thinking about more enviro-friendly cars. The future of cars in many cities will probably move more to battery and/or fuel cell vehicles and these of course will still need somewhere to park. Thus I think it's likely that in the future, and with the road system we have in Belconnen there will always be a large demand for car parking in the BTC. It's not Sydney nor London and the road system is relatively good.
17. **Inclusive Community.** A lot of the development in BTC has been simply apartments with a more transient population than one might get in others part of suburban Canberra. Future development needs to consider how housing can be structured to make them more family friendly so as to foster a greater community spirit.
18. **Max Yield!** The current development theme in the BTC seems to be to squeeze the maximum number of apartments into the smallest spaces possible to achieve the maximum yield for LDA. Its justified as it improves the economic return to the ACT and makes it more attractive for developers. It then reduces the need to have higher density in the surrounding suburbs. But is it the right way to go? Do you want Canberra to look like the Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, etc?
19. If you look at Jamison Group Centre you'll note how the original developers tried to squeeze in the maximum number of units with minimal parking. It was approved against the wishes of the community. Now the new developer has come up with a

more community friendly lower height and less apartment's solution. This shows with the right will and sensible development solutions can be achieved.

20. **Vision Statements.** I think a future Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan needs some overarching vision statements that discuss Belconnen being an integral part of Canberra and retaining the overall aspects of Canberra bush capital with lots of green space and retention of distant landscapes and vistas as much as possible. One of your planners (Chris I think?) suggested at a BCC meeting we should reconsider whether we need to retain such concepts. I think the answer essentially revolves around do we wish to remain a unique Canberra or just become another city with large residential and commercial boxes with interlinked roads and footpaths.
21. **End to Development.** Somewhere we need to consider how big Belconnen Town Centre can be? Why does it have to keep growing? Belconnen will grow a bit, with Lawson and West Macgregor etc. However there must be a limit otherwise our quality of life will seriously impacted. Many European cities are not growing much and people there are happy with that.
- Do we really need massive growth at BTC?** The local Government seems fixated on the Metro Light Rail and I am sure will be pushing redevelopment along that transport corridor as the number one priority. It's also clear that Canberra will be going through a lower level of growth in the future years as the Federal Government (both previous and current) were and are keen to curtail the public sector growth. Canberra will most likely be less attractive a place to come if jobs growth is limited.

I have attached extracts from two recent articles in the Australian press by reputable Australians who argue for the benefits of green and open space and for building well planned inclusive cities. I have found that cycling and walking around Lake Ginninderra, amongst other places, does provide some of the wellbeing elements that Ross Gittins talks about below. If we can retain that '*close to nature experience*' around Lake Ginninderra then we will all benefit over the long term.



For your mental health, get back in touch with nature

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/dr-jeremy-dean-knows-best--for-your-mental-health-get-back-in-touch-with-nature-20141223-12cnv2.html>

Ross Gittins. You can listen to him talk on the above link

In this article published 24th Dec 2014 in the Canberra Times and other Fairfax press their economics guru Ross Gittins outlines the benefits of nature to city people:

“There's plenty of evidence that contact with nature is very good for both our feelings of wellbeing and our health. Ross Gittins comments.

.....Same as most years: heading for the bush. This time we're going to the mountains.

As a denizen of the inner city I've long had a great desire to get out into the country whenever possible. Get into the grass and trees, where the air is clean and the sleeping seems better.....

There's a place we rent not far up the coast that backs onto a national park. I call it Lyrebird Lodge. And even when we go overseas I often find the country towns beat the big cities.....

But cities have their dark side and insufficient grass and trees is it. That's more than just a personal preference. Environmental psychologists and others have been gathering impressive evidence of the health-given properties of greenery.....

Research published last year found that people who live in urban areas with more green space tend to report greater wellbeing - less mental distress and higher life satisfaction - than city dwellers who don't have parks, gardens or other green space nearby.....

A different study followed the experience of more than 1000 people over five years, in which time some moved to greener urban areas and some to less green areas. The results showed that, on average, people who moved to greener areas felt an immediate improvement in their mental health. This boost could still be measured three years later.

"These findings are important for urban planners thinking about introducing new green spaces to towns and cities, suggesting they could provide long term and sustained benefits for local communities," the lead author of the study said.

A study from Canada began by summarising all the various benefits from contact with nature that other research had found: it can restore people's ability to pay attention, improve concentration in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and speed recovery from illness. It may even reduce the risk of dying.....

Many studies find health benefits from contact with nature. The Norwegian paper says a key element in this may be nature's stress-reducing effect. Stress plays a role in the causes and development of cardiovascular diseases, anxiety disorders and depression.

Contact with nature may help "simply by being consciously or unconsciously 'pleasing to the eye'". Office employees seem to compensate for lack of a window view by introducing indoor plants or even just pictures of nature. One study found that having a view to plants from the work station decreased the amount of self-reported sick leave.

One of my favourite blog sites, PsyBlog, conducted by the British psychologist Dr Jeremy Dean, notes research estimating that people now spend 25 per cent less time in nature than they did 20 years ago. Instead, recreational time is often spent surfing the internet, playing video games and watching movies.

But this is more up my line: Dean reports a study finding that taking group walks in nature is associated with better mental wellbeing and lower stress and depression. The study evaluated a British program called Walking for Health, and involved nearly 2000 participants, divided into two matched groups of those who took part in the walks and those who didn't.....

Those who seemed to benefit most were those who'd been through a recent stressful life event, such as divorce, bereavement or a serious illness.

"Our findings suggest that something as simple as joining an outdoor walking group may not only improve someone's daily positive emotions but may also contribute a non-pharmacological approach to serious conditions like depression," one of the study's authors said....."

Governments can't create community spirit, but they can support inclusion
[Anthony Albanese](#)

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/24/governments-cant-create-community-spirit-but-they-can-support-inclusion>

In this article published 24th Dec 2014 the alternative federal opposition leader articulated various aspects about inclusion, society and planning etc. The relevant words for the BTC Plan seem to me to be:

“..... For too long, Australian governments have shown inadequate interest in urban policy and the way in which well-designed cities facilitate the human contact that people crave and which enriches their lives.

We spend so much time designing our buildings that we give inadequate thought to the spaces between those structures. If properly designed, these spaces can provide focal points for local communities that encourage interaction and inclusion.

It might be as simple as providing more shade around buildings and more parks in our neighbourhoods. Greater use of mixed precincts that include residential and public or entertainment space would also help bring people together.

We need more parks, public areas and entertainment options that deliver the environment in which communities flourish.....

And we need to do all we can to ensure that hubs where people cross paths most often - like shopping centres and train stations – also include places where people can interact.

When governments don't value communities and when they treat people as little more than economic units, people become alienated....."

Background

Lake Ginninderra is a highly valued resource, regularly used not only by local residents but by several hundreds of youth and adult members of Scouting in the north ACT Region. In fact, it is the primary focus of all Scouting water activities north of Lake Burley Griffin. Its consistent use is made possible by the facilities constructed by the Lake Ginninderra Sea Scout Group (LGSS) at their Evelyn Parker Place address (off Beissel Street, Belconnen). Safe, unhindered access to these facilities is essential in order for the safe, continued use by our members and the local community.

The LGSS Group aims to achieve more than just casual use of the lake. As part of the world wide Scouting Organisation, it has a mission for the development of young people.

The Mission for Scouting, at the local, national and international level, is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.

This is achieved by:

- *Involving them throughout their formative years in a non-formal educational process;*
- *Using a specific method that makes each individual the principle agent in his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person; and*
- *Assisting them to establish a value system based upon spiritual, social and personal principles as expressed in the Promise and Law.*

Built on guidance from the ACT Branch and with input from Scout Leaders, Support Committee Members, Parents and Carers, the Group is keen to provide input into any future plans and planning activities for Lake Ginninderra.

The current LGSS team is very fortunate that many past members have had foresight and energy to provide us with a sound base: we have outstanding facilities, including our new boat shed; good equipment; exceptional scout leaders and a great group of youth members including our seniors Venturers and associated Rovers. Collectively, we provide the best possible environment for our youth members. Furthermore, north of Lake Burley Griffin, we are the only 'sea scouts' and thus the only venue for providing extensive water-based scouting activities to over 1,200 scouts in the northern ACT.

Further explanation is probably not necessary, but it is worth reiterating that the scouting community, like most community groups, relies on volunteer support. The rewards are not financial; they are life experiences for us as individuals and the group members as a community. The fundraising levy is not a way for the group to raise money. It is an incentive for people to give their time and effort to avoid payment, so that the Group might gain their help to provide the necessary support structures for a worthwhile program for our children. Our program allows them to grow and develop as active members of society who understand and respect the needs of a supportive family, be that the family at home, at school, in the scout group, or in the town, country or world community.

LGSS recognises the value of such contributions by providing discounts of some fee elements to those offering their time and effort in a variety of roles. LGSS also offers discounts as financial assistance to ensure all members of the community share a similar opportunity to be involved in scouting.

LGSS is a voluntary, not-for-profit, community group running active programmes for young people in Canberra under the auspices of Scouts Australia. LGSS receives no government funding, instead relying entirely on funds provided by its members, fundraising and some donations and grants for its operations. All equipment, facilities and consumables are funded from the LGSS budget.

Submission comments

As described above, LGSS provides structured, development and leadership programmes for local youth. As a Sea Scout group, our activities centre on water-focussed events, although a full programme of outdoor adventures are incorporated throughout the year. As such, our concerns for the Master Plan relate to potential impacts on the ability to provide these activities in the future.

The key interests for us in the development of the 2015 Belconnen Master Plan are:

- Continued direct access to the lake is critical for water-focussed activities of our Group. Youth members aged 7-18 years regularly access water-focussed activities via the 'beach' onsite beside the hall. If this access was to be lost or degraded, it would impact on the effectiveness of the water-focussed activities we provide to local youth, particularly during the sailing season between spring and autumn.
- This is also relevant to broader Sea Scout operations across the ACT. 'Tri-Lakes' is a regular, thrice-yearly competition between the Sea Scout groups at Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra. Retaining access to the 'beach' onsite beside the hall is essential to enable safe and easy access for these activities, and the associated community involvement in them.
- Clean and safe foreshore environments are an ongoing issue, given our frequent activities on or near the water's edge. We conduct annual Clean-up Australia events to improve the condition of the western foreshore by reducing the rubbish build up. Needles and syringes, shopping trolleys, glass bottles and aluminium cans are the most common rubbish collected. Any new developments need to target the cleanliness and safety of the foreshore, and the ability to effectively maintain that level of cleanliness. The stormwater system is the principle avenue for much of this refuse entering the lake. We see management of the stormwater system and a clean and safe foreshore environment as critical to providing a safe and clean location for all lake users.
- Car parking will be a particular issue. During peak times immediately before and after scouting section meetings, as parents arrive to drop off or pick up their children, there is an intense period of car parking pressure and an increased associated risk of injury to youth members and adults. Developments adjoining Beissel St will add to this pressure and risk. To minimise this, parking areas will need to be well designed to enable clean and smooth traffic flow, and dedicated drop off zones.
- Our Group is constrained by the current size of the leased property and, noting the strong pressure for growth and interest from youth members in the community, we would want to have the ability to extend our operations (boat/canoe storage, meeting venue, etc.) over the next several years.

- LGSS conducts weekly activities for around 100 youth members¹ and is a base for the Lake Ginninderra Rover Scouts (14 older youth members). Sixteen scout leaders, 33 adult helpers and a support committee conduct over 400 hours of sessions at the scout hall every year. The hall provides the base for sailing and canoeing activities conducted on Lake Ginninderra over the Spring, Summer and Autumn months, including evenings and weekends. Additionally, over 30 camping activities and ACT competitive sea-scout sailing events (on Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Tuggeranong and on Sydney Harbour) utilise the hall and its storage facilities as a base of operations.
- LGSS is the home of active youth programmes run by the local community. The programmes are local, regional, national and international, with local youth members participating in Cuborees, inter-state activities, Jamborees in Australia and New Zealand, community service programmes in Indonesia and competitive water activities in the ACT and NSW.
- LGSS is funded entirely through member fees and fundraising activities. These funds provide for the hall maintenance, the cost of utilities, the cost of equipment (including boats and camp equipment, and associated trailers), insurance, association costs and the costs associated with scouting activities.
- The scout hall is also extensively used by community groups and social organisations throughout the week. Typically, such groups utilise the scout hall for some 20 hours per week when not needed for scouting, providing a base for social and cultural activities.
- Participation in scouting in the Belconnen area is growing with most scout groups regularly reporting full capacity, particularly in the cub and scout sections (7 ½ - 15 years of age). There are three Sea Scout groups in the ACT. LGSS offers a challenging mix of land-based and water-based activities centred on Lake Ginninderra, the only such group in North Canberra and surrounding NSW districts.
- It is expected that there will be continuing pressure for growth. Accordingly, LGSS recently constructed a new boat shed to better support water activities on Lake Ginninderra in response to the growing popularity of scouting.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to be part of the discussion about the future of the Belconnen Master Plan and we hope a strong community focus drives its implementation.

Regards



¹ 12 Joey Scouts, 35 Cub Scouts, 34 Scouts and 15 Venturers at December 2014.

26 January 2015

Master plans
GPO Box 158
CANVERRA ACT 2601

Dear [REDACTED]

The community of [REDACTED] Church, Belconnen, is grateful to have the opportunity to provide input to the Belconnen Town Centre Plan. As the church is located within the area covered by the plan and as the vast majority of the congregation live in Belconnen, the realisation of any plan could have considerable implications for the congregation.

Not all congregational members attend every week and so on three Sundays in January the congregation was asked for suggestions as to how the town centre could be improved. As would be expected from a fairly large community the suggestions made were quite wide ranging, some being outside the scope of the Town Centre Plan but have been included in the attached for your information.

The suggestions were collated and in order to obtain some ranking of suggestions members were asked to tick the suggestions to which they most agreed. Attachment A provides the suggestions grouped into categories and where possible in rank order. Many suggestions received the same number of ticks and Attachment B attempts to rank the suggestions in rank groupings.

The highest ranked suggestion was "Ensuring that the 'bush capital' look is maintained throughout the town centre, including where there is high rise development". In this respect the church community reflects the views of the wider Canberra community as undertaken in the extensive surveys for *Time to Talk Canberra 2030*. The second highest ranked suggestion was "The Lake needs to be pristine and kept pristine for future generations to enjoy". Improvements to pedestrian spaces and linkages were also seen as a significant issue.

Yours sincerely

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOWN CENTRE SUGGESTIONS BY CATEGORY FOR THE TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Bush capital look and greenery

- Ensuring that the 'bush capital' look is maintained throughout the town centre, including where there is high rise development.
- Linking the height of a building to the amount of green space around it. The taller the building the more green space and trees have to be provided around it and between it and the footpath.
- Avoidance of concrete canyons – ensuring that tall buildings cannot be build right up to the footpath.
- Shrubs in the median strip of Benjamin Way where trees cannot be planted.

Lake Ginninderra

- The Lake needs to be pristine and kept pristine for future generations to enjoy.
- Dragon-boats, sail boats, paddle boats on the Lake but no powered boats.
- No fast-food outlets around the Lake.
- The Lake water be of sufficient quality to allow snorkelling.
- No further developments around the Lake, apart from where the fast-food outlets are currently located, the expansion of the arts centre and an iconic community-oriented redevelopment of Ginninderra House.
- Gondolas on the Lake.

Improved pedestrian linkages

- Wide paved pedestrian linkages from the University of Canberra to the Westfield Mall and from the Westfield Mall to the Belconnen Markets.
- Active pedestrian spaces – where people can walk as well as ride bikes, skateboards and segways.
- A pedestrian bridge over Aikman Drive, where there is now a pedestrian crossing, to improve University of Canberra students access to the town centre and to improve traffic flow.
- A pedestrian bridge over (or underpass across) Emu Bank, where there is now a pedestrian crossing between the Belconnen Library and the 'Lighthouse', to improve University of Canberra students access to the town centre and to improve traffic flow.
- A theme, such as a legless lizard or a wavy line, on the major pedestrian linkages to give the town centre a theme or unique look.
- Benjamin Way in front of the Westfield Mall be made a pedestrian only area.
- Wider footpaths in most locations.

Margaret Timpson Park

- The park be made more attractive with more shade trees with seats underneath them so that the park is not just a place to walk through.
- Possibly barbecue facilities and gardens be included in the park.

Fast food outlets

- Removal of the fast food outlets from the lake foreshore.
- More cafes and unique shops around the bus interchange at the Westfield Mall.
- All fast food outlets be located together, possibly near McDonalds, and not on the lake foreshore.

Government Employment

- Ensure that no large government employer, such as the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, leaves the Belconnen Town Centre or is at least replaced by a similar sized or larger employer.

Traffic lights

- More strategic use of traffic lights – so that there is not a series of red lights.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOWN CENTRE SUGGESTIONS BY RANKING FOR THE TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Very Highly Ranked

- Ensuring that the 'bush capital' look is maintained throughout the town centre, including where there is high rise development.
- The Lake needs to be pristine and kept pristine for future generations to enjoy.

Highly Ranked

- Wide paved pedestrian linkages from the University of Canberra to the Westfield Mall and from the Westfield Mall to the Belconnen Markets.
- Linking the height of a building to the amount of green space around it. The taller the building the more green space and trees have to be provided around it and between it and the footpath.
- Active pedestrian spaces – where people can walk as well as ride bikes, skateboards and segways.
- Margaret Timpson Park be made more attractive with more shade trees with seats underneath them so that the park is not just a place to walk through.
- Avoidance of concrete canyons – ensuring that tall buildings cannot be build right up to the footpath.
- Dragon-boats, sail boats, paddle boats on the Lake but no powered boats.

Medium Ranked

- A pedestrian bridge over Aikman Drive, where there is now a pedestrian crossing, to improve University of Canberra students access to the town centre and to improve traffic flow.
- No fast-food outlets around the Lake.
- Ensure that no large government employer, such as the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, leaves the Belconnen Town Centre or is at least replaced by a similar sized or larger employer.
- A pedestrian bridge over (or underpass across) Emu Bank, where there is now a pedestrian crossing between the Belconnen Library and the 'Lighthouse', to improve University of Canberra students access to the town centre and to improve traffic flow.
- Removal of the fast food outlets from the lake foreshore.
- The Lake water be of sufficient quality to allow snorkelling.
- More cafes and unique shops around the bus interchange at the Westfield Mall.
- No further developments around the Lake, apart from where the fast-food outlets are currently located, the expansion of the arts centre and an iconic community-oriented redevelopment of Ginninderra House.
- Gondolas on the Lake.
- A theme, such as a legless lizard or a wavy line, on the major pedestrian linkages to give the town centre a theme or unique look.

Other Suggestions

- Shrubs in the median strip of Benjamin Way where trees cannot be planted.
- Benjamin Way in front of the Westfield Mall be made a pedestrian only area.
- Wider footpaths in most locations.
- Possibly barbecue facilities and gardens be included in Margaret Timpson Park.
- More strategic use of traffic lights – so that there is not a series of red lights
- All fast food outlets be located together, possibly near McDonalds, and not on the lake foreshore.

B

5. CONNECTION B

- HIGH QUALITY VERTICAL PUBLIC SPACE
- CONNECTS BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRES 2 ASSETS (LAKE + EMU BANK TO LATHLAIN ST ACTIVE FRONTAGE)
- PLAZA SPACE AT LOWEWR LEVEL WITH RETAIL FRONTAGE TO MALL SITE.
- EASY ACCESS EAST WEST TOWARDS THE LAKEFRONT

1. EMU BANK

- MAKE BEST USE OF EXISTNG STREET TREES AND DIMENSION
- NEW BUILDINGS ADDRESS EMU BANK AND LAKEFRONT AT GRADE
- EASEMENT FOR SERVICE ACCESS BETWEEN BLOCKS ALLOWS ACCESSIBLE PATH OF TRAVEL TO LAKE FRONT
- ACTIVE FRONTAGE SHOULD CONTINUE TO LATHLAIN STREET.
- RETAIL FRONTAGE FOR WESTFIELD ADDRESSING THE LAKE / PARK

BELCONNEN

01 SITE PLAN
SCALE 1 : 2000

2. CONNECTION A

- VERTICAL PUBLIC SPACE OF RAMPS AND STAIRS.
- SHOULD BE A HIGH QUALITY URBAN OBJECT.
- CONNECTS EMU BANK TO CHANDLER STREET
- VIEWS TO THE LAKE
- POSSIBLE WITHIN EXISTING UNDEVELOPED SITES
- EXISTING RAMP IS RUDIMENTARY, POORLY LOCATED AND CONNECTS TO COHEN STREET BUS INTERCHANGE. HELPFUL, BUT NOT IDEAL.

3. CHANDLER STREET

- BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR A PEDESTRIAN LINK EAST / WEST ACROSS THE TOWN CENTRE.
- COHEN ST AND COLLEGE STREET NOT SUITABLE.
- MAKE BEST USE OF EXISTING SITES TO CREATE ACTIVE FRONTAGE AT GROUND
- INVEST IN STREET PLANTING AND AMENITY TO 'CLOSE THE LOOP' AND FACILITATE HIGH QUALITY PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO ALL PARTS OF THE TOWN CENTRE.

4. LATHLAIN STREET

- LATHLAIN STREET HAS GOOD BONES
- OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE A 2 SIDED STREET WITH ACTIVE FRONTAGE TO BOTH SIDES
- RESIDENTIAL / MIXED USE TO 4 - 6 STORIES TO WEST SIDE
- POTENTIAL FOR HIGH QUALITY LANDSCAPED PROMENADE LINKING NORTH TO SOUTH.
- USES THE EXISTING MALL FRONTAGE AND BUS INTERCHANGE TO BEST ADVANTAGE.

OBJECTIVE

- THIS IS A PROPOSAL SUGGESTING CONNECTIONS AND STREET WORKS. PLANNING PARAMETERS.
- IT WORKS WITH THE CURRENT PARTS OF THE BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE THAT ARE EITHER SUCCESSFUL, OR HAVE LATENT POTENTIAL TO BE GREAT PLACES / SPACES.
- THE PROPOSAL CONNECTS THESE SPACES IN SIMPLE WAYS, ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND REDUCING THE RELIANCE UPON CAR BASED TRAVEL.
- THERBY MAKING A MORE LIVEABLE CENTRE.
- 20 YEAR TIME FRAME....

THANK YOU.

Drawing Number: 11-00



PROJECT NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
STRUCTURAL NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
ENGINEERING NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
MISCELLANEOUS NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
VERANDA NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
ACQUANT NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
LANDSCAPE NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
QUANTITY NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE

Client	Ow
Project No	Prt
Project	Pr
Ent	13
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Project	1
Drawing	1

Submission for the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan – A Better Belconnen

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in [REDACTED] Belconnen. I have a number of ideas that I believe should be incorporated into the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.

Emu Bank – College St “promenade”

YouTube video link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ixnGu8M8rs>

Bruce is the education hub of Belconnen, with over 20,000 students attending the University of Canberra, UC Senior Secondary College, Radford College, the Australian Institute of Sport, and the Canberra Institute of Technology.

While thousands of these students live on-campus or in nearby suburbs, there is no way for students to easily and safely cycle or walk to the main Belconnen shopping district or Lake Ginninderra.

The Draft Master Plan indicated that strengthening the links between the Town Centre and the University of Canberra was an important issue under consideration. Building a “promenade” exclusively for cyclists and pedestrians which links Emu Bank through to College St would encourage greater movement between these areas, increase commercial opportunities and community vibrancy.

Margaret Timpson Park and the Belconnen Library

YouTube video link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1SrcMLT ws>

Margaret Timpson Park and the Belconnen Library need to be opened up, better lit, and made into a safe place to congregate day or night. These spaces need to be clean, friendly, modern and welcoming.

Fixing this should be a top priority.

Margaret Timpson should be a mixed use space that would suit outdoor lunch and picnics for nearby workers and families. The space should be able to facilitate festivals and public performances, and have an all-abilities playground to encourage more families (particularly those living in nearby apartments) to make better use of the space.

Better physical and sound separation, such as a hedge or additional trees, should be planted to increase the separation from Benjamin Way and make it safer for kids to play. There are 2 grass pyramids which were intended to have flowers planted on it at selected times of the year, but this doesn't happen. These pyramids make it difficult for the space to be used for large gatherings, and should be removed.

The Belconnen library exterior is run down, uninviting and unsafe. It should be either moved to where the remand centre is, or be completely redeveloped and opened up as part of a broader Swanson Plaza revamp.

Lake Ginninderra

Lake Ginninderra is a well utilised lake, but it could be improved. It is important that the walk around Lake Ginninderra is well-lit and clean, with more drainage work done to minimise muddy puddles during rain.

Much as part of the walk around Lake Burley Griffin is named after former Prime Minister Robert Menzies, I think it would be fitting for a part of the Lake Ginninderra Walk to be named the “Gough and Margaret Whitlam Walk”.

Former Remand Centre and Police Station

Given its proximity to the Belconnen Bus Interchange, the former remand centre and police station should be redeveloped as a community services hub. These facilities should be designed to benefit everyone in our Belconnen community, but particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged. As noted above, this could be the site for a new Belconnen library as well as other community support services.

One option which should be considered is the provision of a space similar to the Early Morning Centre (EMC) in Civic, which provides support for people who are homeless. The EMC offers free breakfast and has shower facilities as well as providing support and referral services to help people access the services they need.

Height Restrictions

I am in favour of increased residential density in the Town Centre, while avoiding the cautionary example of the Woden tower buildings which stand out like a sore thumb in the landscape. Buildings should be integrated with the landscape and avoid impeding the views of already constructed buildings. As a general principle, taller buildings should be constructed in land areas which are lower than their immediate surrounds, with stricter height limits on apartments built on ridges.

Emu Bank

Emu Bank needs to continue its evolution into an entertainment precinct for Belconnen, with a diverse mix of restaurants, bars, and other entertainment.

Currently a lack of transport options is a major restriction – for example, there is no Taxi Rank or dedicated taxi pick up points. Businesses at Emu Bank should be approached about the possibility of subsidising a free weekend/evening shuttle service that runs between the Belconnen Mall, along Emu Bank and then to the University of Canberra. This would provide a safe, attractive option for transport for those who wish to consume alcohol and/or cannot drive.

Additionally, there should be an increased focus on events that utilise Lake Ginninderra and particularly the lakefront. Possible events include powered or unpowered water sports events, night-time cinema, and/or fireworks displays.

Parking

There have been a lot of complaints about parking in the Belconnen Town Centre. It will only get worse as new buildings are built and parking on spaces which are currently used for parking. Ensuring that a dedicated, multi-storey underground carpark is included in the plans for upcoming residential development in Belconnen is critical to encourage people to take advantage of our businesses, restaurants, cultural, and community facilities.

The lack of adequate, nearby parking hinders attendance at events held at the Belconnen Arts Centre, a problem which will only get more pronounced when Stage 2 with a theatre is constructed.

Oatley court

Noting the \$3m capital investment in a 'Grant for Development of a New Basketball Centre and Player Amenities', it would be appropriate for the Oatley Court region of Belconnen to become a hub for indoor sports and recreation hub. This might include table tennis, a kids' indoor play area, snooker/billiards, rock climbing, and/or hobby games such as chess.

Joynton Smith busway

The disused Joynton Smith busway should be redeveloped, preferably for residential purposes such as apartments. However, residents in that part of Belconnen should be separately consulted about their needs to ensure that any changes are appropriate to the area and support their requirements.

Coulter Drive

There should be a greatly improved bike lane on Coulter Drive from Ginninderra Drive to Belconnen Way, which also integrates the existing cycleways and walking tracks in Page and Belconnen.

Belconnen Master Plan

Any Master Plan for the Belconnen Town Centre must comply with the basic tenets outlined in the *'Transport for Canberra'* document (2012) which was prepared in conjunction with the *'ACT Planning Strategy'*. These documents are intended to integrate transport and land use policies in the ACT for the next 20 years.

Currently, **public transport** in Belconnen is overly reliant on the **Westfield Bus Interchange** as the publicly perceived central public transport node in the Belconnen Town Centre with the **Community Bus Interchange** being under utilised.

The strong bias toward the Westfield Bus Interchange results in lack of connectivity for public transport users to most other service sites in the Belconnen Town Centre apart from the Westfield Shopping Mall itself. After hours, it is difficult for commuters to access cultural activities at, for example, the Belconnen Arts Centre, as there is very restricted allowed movement through the Westfield Centre itself after hours.

Making the Community Bus Interchange a more attractive and recognisable central public transport hub would make other facilities such as the Belconnen Library, Belconnen Community Services, Senior Citizens Club, Centrelink, and the Government Shopfront more accessible to all residents of Belconnen through the public transport network. At present, these services are virtually invisible to Belconnen residents through lack of information about their location and problems of access.

The invisibility of these services and sites would be greatly facilitated by better **signage** in the Town Centre.

Access to these sites for those with mobility problems has not yet been addressed. Pedestrians and cyclists have issues moving through the Town Centre as a result of stairs and other impediments. If **walking and cycling** is to be encouraged through the Town Centre in keeping with the Government's policy of keeping cars out of the Centre, these issues need to be addressed as a priority.

The services in the Town Centre should be as easily accessible to all residents of Belconnen as they are to those who have chosen to live in the Town Centre itself. This is fair and equitable.

Belconnen Town Centre

Park & Ride Facility

Belconnen Community Bus Station

Currently the only suitable facility for ACTION Bus patrons in the Belconnen Town Centre is the car park between the Belconnen Community Bus Station and Swanson Court. I understand that long term this area is designated to be allocated for high rise development. This would leave no suitable location for bus patrons/residents of the Belconnen area to park & ride in the town centre and also those from further afield such as Hall, Murrumbateman and surrounding areas.

An area currently not utilised but one that would be eminently suitable is the air space above the Belconnen Community Bus Station. This is quite a large area (area unknown) and currently does nothing to enhance the town centre, or bus patronage

I would envisage a multi story structure with car parking on three levels. Separate entry and exit points would be from Chandler Street. This would not have too much of a negative impact on high rise residences on Chandler Street. As the area is unknown the number of car parking spaces is also unknown.

Elevators and stairways would lead straight down to the bus stops on both sides of the bus station. To enhance its streetscape and take away the typical multistorey car park appearance, a frontage could be designed that would fit in with adjoining properties.

To make bus travel to Civic, Russell and Barton more attractive ACTION Super Express buses could commence from this bus station in the morning peak period (7.30 -8.45am) and run nonstop to Civic Interchange and then on to Russell and Barton. The reverse could operate commencing in Barton for the afternoon peak (4.30 -5.45). These buses would then have travel times similar to cars.

Parking cost would be comparable with other pay parking in the Belconnen Town Centre. As an inducement to park and ride, not just park, payment at the end of the day could be made utilising the MyWay card. If it showed a bus trip usage for both the morning and afternoon a discount could be given for the car parking cost.

Above part of the top level for car parking, a childcare facility could be built. This would enable bus patrons to park, take their child/ren to the childcare facility then catch the bus into town. Access to this facility would be via lift with access restricted to workers/parents etc by use of a swipe card or some type of similar system. Also on the rest of the roof a medical facility could be built. This would allow persons who do not drive or have mobility problems access to such a facility by accessing it from the nearest bus stop to their home. The design of this could have a glass wall facing the child care outdoor section so patients could watch the children playing. These two facilities would pay long term rent which would provide an additional income stream.

To assist the ACT Government with its aspiration of having renewable energy providing most power in the city, solar panels could be installed on the childcare and medical facilities roofs. This would contribute to lowering the lighting power needs of the parking facility thus enhancing its 'green reputation'.

By building a car parking facility above the current bus facility, patrons would be protected from the weather elements all year round.

A problem with under cover bus and rail stations is that they can feel claustrophobic and dark, however by having several light wells and side light vents, this could be overcome during the day and at night it would be extremely well lit. Maybe even a wall of water as a feature, however whilst attractive it may not be feasible.

The design of the bus station would need to ensure that it did not become a wind tunnel. Back lit moving advertisements would also enhance the appearance as would soft background music. Installation of a number of CCTV cameras would add to a feeling of security.

As an added feature an attractive elevated covered walkway could be built across Benjamin Way to link to Belconnen Mall.

Construction of this facility has the following benefits:-

- Utilise an unused space
- Enhance bus travel to Civic by providing no stop buses in peak travel time between the two areas
- Ease traffic congestion between Belconnen and Civic
- Ease parking in Civic
- Provide space for a childcare facility in Belconnen town centre
- Provide for a medical facility easily accessible for persons with limited mobility
- Allow for a creative facade towards Benjamin Way
- Assist with the Government's desire for greater use of renewable energy
- Link parking cost with MyWay card

15 Jan 2015



BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN 2015

BELCONNEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

January 2015

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PREFACE

The Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan 2015 (hereinafter Master Plan) is not a detailed design but will set out how the area could develop and redevelop into the future. There have been four Master Plans, with the last in 2001. The Belconnen Community Council (BCC) strongly believes that this update to the Master Plan comes at a critical time for Belconnen Town Centre, which is the subject of significant momentum and change but still faces many challenges. We welcome this update, and the opportunity to provide comment in this important process.

With respect to challenges, the BCC notes that many of a) the observations in [our submission to the 2001 Master Plan process](#) and b) the [recommendations](#) in the 2001 Master Plan are still relevant today. It is not the BCC's intention to reproduce these documents in this submission. However, we note that both documents provide extremely useful context as to what concerns remain unresolved, and what issues have been addressed - and the history behind these. The ongoing nature of some issues will mean that many of our comments on them from 2001 still hold value, and have been used to inform this submission.

In advance of this update to the Master Plan, the BCC conducted a survey in 2014. The aim of the survey was two-fold: to ensure there was momentum in the lead up to this formal consultation, and to better inform the BCC (and ultimately the ACT Government) about community perceptions of the Town Centre. Again, the BCC is not intending to reproduce [the survey report](#), but it too informs this submission.

The BCC notes the Master Plan consultation posters have stressed it is up to the business community to take advantage of opportunities identified in the 2015 Master Plan. The community will have ownership of a plan which reflects their ideas and vision for the Town Centre. Ownership will then result in the community taking advantage of these opportunities presented in the Master Plan. It is in the *implementation* of suggestions and principles that ongoing issues will be resolved so Master Plan strategies must be realistic and facilitative.

These considerations have necessitated as much community contribution as possible into the Master Plan process. The BCC's key role has been driving this engagement to complement the ACT Government's own promotion. Since the ACT Government's launch of the initial consultation in November 2014, the BCC has held community ideas forums; drafted information for widely-read blogs and websites; engaged the community via Facebook and Twitter; and prepared YouTube videos. In collaboration with Westfield Belconnen, we sponsored an exhibition *Belconnen: Portraits of a Place* with photographs of many of Belconnen's suburbs (especially the Town Centre) taken by a local artist in 2014. The BCC used this exhibition to promote the Master Plan update and received a positive response. On 29 January, the BCC collaborated with Belconnen Community Service and Belconnen Arts Centre - two other key community organisations in the Town Centre - to host a free community barbecue and ideas forum. We estimate over 100 members of the community attended this event. We have been pleased with the success of each of these engagement channels and hope there has been an elevated level of community contribution which leads to a comprehensive Master Plan.

The suggestions that follow in our submission are informed by years of discussion and community consultation, and we believe genuinely reflect what should be the future of the Town Centre. Our submission is in three parts:

1. **Vision for Belconnen Town Centre:** this outlines what Belconnen Town Centre should look and feel like in the short- and medium-term

2. **Overarching principles and concerns:** this important section outlines key principles which support the vision
3. **Challenges and opportunities:** this section visits key issues within the Town Centre and at the conclusion of each recommends *priorities* and *desirables* consistent with the overarching principles to help achieve the vision

2025: VISION FOR BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE

In 2025, Belconnen Town Centre is benefiting from the wide community consultation in 2015 which informed and was reflected in the Master Plan. The resulting community ownership of the Master Plan has ensured that development adhered to its guiding principles.

The Town Centre is a hub where built form is harmonised with open space, and is an attractive and well utilised residential, commercial, educational and leisure node. The Town Centre enjoys numerous dining precincts, with its centrepiece being the creative and dining precincts along Emu Bank. The dining options along Emu Bank each take full advantage of Lake Ginninderra. Creative opportunities include live music and the theatre at the Belconnen Arts Centre, as well as markets and pop-up festivals.

The entire area from the old water police station site stretching clockwise around Lake Ginninderra to Lake Ginninderra College is preserved public open space, with appropriate areas utilised for water sports and other recreational and exercise activities. Food vendors and small businesses here are very popular. The abundant flora and fauna ensures the Town Centre is an attractive place for refuge and relaxation, and its connection to the popular Emu Bank precinct makes it a popular destination for Canberrans and interstate visitors.

Residential density has increased in a manageable and sustained manner, consistent with the commercial growth of other areas in the Town Centre. During both day and night, the Town Centre is serviced by a large range of diverse large and small businesses and a residential, leisure, educational and employment population that services these. Development has been of extremely high quality and the Town Centre enjoys modern hotel and conference facilities.

Pedestrian and cycle movement in the Town Centre is a key feature. Those who reach the Town Centre do so by public transport, walking, cycling or by car. Those utilising cars are able to park them in a central destination and then easily manoeuvre between key areas of the Town Centre. This central destination could be a multi-level parking facility with sympathetic design consistent with the built form and open space of the Town Centre. Those who need to drive through the Town Centre do so at 40km/h or less.

The Town Centre is interesting to be in and travel through, creating many opportunities to linger. It is supported by appropriate and interesting lighting and tree-lined spaces throughout the Town Centre, as well as wide footpaths and separated, wide cycleways. Margaret Timpson Park provides an important symbolic connection for the residential and business areas of the Town Centre to Lake Ginninderra and is used as a true town square, supported by a boulevard along Benjamin Way. The light rail line that may extend from Kippax through the Town Centre into Civic has its main stop between Westfield Belconnen and Margaret Timpson Park¹. The location provides easy access to the integrated bus service and shares a cycling locker and MyWay office that conveniently offers local tourists maps and information.

Employers are attracted to the Town Centre because it is a holistic hub in an attractive location with good access, ease of movement, and the ability to engage with and recruit highly educated staff. There is adequate daytime parking, convenient public transport and a large level of services and facilities in the Town Centre ensuring that it attracts new businesses as well as employees to it as a matter of preference.

¹ The BCC does not wish to pre-empt the 2015 Light Rail Master Plan, but recognises that Light Rail is a key ACT Government policy

Many new businesses are located in the Trades and Services Area and near the University of Canberra (UC). There are pleasant, walkable means of access for students to the amenities provided in the Town Centre, and local residents are able to access UC's facilities, including its hospital, library, sporting ovals and entertainment venues. The vibrancy that students have brought to urban life has spread throughout the Town Centre, which increasingly supports a growing international student sector. In addition to businesses, the Trades and Services Area complements the Emu Bank precinct as a live music venue.

Belconnen Community Service continues to offer important services to the Belconnen region, and is in a location which is serviced by nearby retail and public transport amenity.

All the residents of Belconnen are rightly proud of their Belconnen Town Centre. Its development has been sympathetic and in character with its historical form, while incorporating innovative designs that have added to its amenity. It is a town centre that people and businesses aspire to be in.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND CONCERNS

1. Open space in the Belconnen Town Centre must be preserved, protected and maintained

The value of open space in the Town Centre cannot be understated. Lake Ginninderra with its bushland setting distinguishes the Town Centre. The open space contributes to the Town Centre's character, richness and attractiveness, providing refuge for wildlife and people, facilitating leisure and exercise, and allowing residential densification through the provision of a 'backyard' for residents.

The BCC does not consider that development in the Town Centre and preservation of open space are competing or mutually exclusive issues. Indeed, high density options set away from Lake Ginninderra may need to continue to be considered to ensure that open space can be preserved.

The BCC proposes that the ACT Government move to protect the existing urban open space surrounding Lake Ginninderra. The BCC proposes these lands be permanently protected from building or development that would alter its current open, natural and accessible character. In particular, the lands should be protected from the inherent exclusion created by residential developments.

In addition to its protection, the open space must be preserved and appropriately maintained to ensure its status and accessibility. Key open space areas in addition to Lake Ginninderra are Margaret Timpson Park, Emu Ridge oval, Diddams Close park and peninsula, bushland on Belconnen Way, and bushland near Coulter Drive and Nettlefold Street. These all have different characters, the diversity of which is important:

- Lake Ginninderra's natural shore areas, from Emu Inlet (former Water Police building) clockwise to UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra reflects a character of open, wild and natural terrain, with substantially unmodified riparian interfaces formed by natural processes (following the damming of the river).
- Formal park spaces such as Margaret Timpson Park provide central, ordered and predictable environments for people to use (residents, workers, students and visitors).
- Suburban open space provides walking and bicycling corridors, free from dangers and distractions of roadside cycle and footpaths, as well as opportunities for other recreation such as organised or spontaneous sport.

Ensuring the protection of the varied types of open space will keep them available for future generations.

2. Belconnen Town Centre needs to be a holistically attractive employment, education, residential and leisure destination

The Belconnen Town Centre has a strong employment base with large and smaller employers. The Town Centre abuts the University of Canberra, Calvary Hospital, the Australian Institute of Sport and the Canberra Institute of Technology. These institutions are influential in the development of the Town Centre and its daily life. The definition of the Town Centre should be updated to include these institutions within its borders. Recognising these institutions as part of the Town Centre is a vital step in linking them to the development of it, while also further cementing the Town Centre as an employment and educational hub.

The Town Centre has popular and diverse shopping precincts from Westfield Belconnen to the Trades and Services Area which ensures diversity of employment and opportunity. The Town Centre also has a range of recreational options, from the many at Lake Ginninderra, to facilities such as Belco Skate Park, ovals, indoor basketball and even laser tag, as well as numerous live music venues. The Town Centre also has an increasing residential population which is supporting businesses after working hours and further ensuring the Town Centre feels like a Town Centre 24 hours a day. This balance between these strong hubs, and their continued enhancement, is what makes the Town Centre viable and animated, and ensures its ongoing success. No one hub should be prioritised at the expense of any other.

3. An appropriately defined Town Centre must be better symbolically and physically connected - both within it, and to surrounding suburbs

The BCC considers that there is low community understanding about what the Town Centre is and what it contains. This lack of understanding means a sense of identity and recognition is difficult to develop, which can have consequences like making consultation about and compliance with the Master Plan more difficult.

Once the Town Centre is appropriately defined (described above), stronger physical and symbolic connections will help ensure that it is clear what and where the Town Centre is, maintaining and enhancing its identity and role as the node for the broader region. Physical and symbolic connections include better and more paths, trees and shrubs, art work, and amenity. Regional linkages through the expansion of modes and routes of the transit network, convenient parking and developing attractors such as dining or cultural clusters will assist in encouraging denizens of surrounding suburbs to the Town Centre.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following section provides analysis on the key challenges and opportunities for the Town Centre. The BCC has identified issues that are *priorities* - those that must be enabled or addressed - and issues that are *desirables* - those that should be addressed, but not at the expense of the priorities. These specific challenges and opportunities inform our vision for the Belconnen Town Centre.

LAKE GINNINDERRA

Lake Ginninderra is among the most - if not the most - important asset in the Town Centre. There are significant opportunities for its key role in distinguishing the Town Centre to be enhanced while preserving its character and quality, and the bushland around it.

Importantly, the popular pathway around Lake Ginninderra is disconnected near the Belconnen Arts Centre, where the path deviates from Emu Inlet to the Emu Bank road (despite there being some paving along Emu Bank foreshore). To rectify this, the foreshore development outside the Belconnen Arts Centre needs to be completed. This will additionally separate recreational users from pedestrian traffic accessing Belconnen Arts Centre and The Boardwalk and decongest those areas.

The path around Lake Ginninderra is extremely popular, but in many places is very narrow. This can cause disharmony among the different users. There are many opportunities to widen the path - if not designate distinguished pedestrian and cycle ways - without interfering with existing flora or amenity.

In addition to a cafe/bar destination/precinct (*see Emu Bank, below*), there is value in creating a smaller recreation/dining precinct elsewhere around the lake to encourage further use. This could be the implementation of a venue similar to or consistent with a yacht or rowing club, with some small boat launching facilities, kayak hire, and a fish and chip shop.

John Knight Memorial Park is widely regarded and utilised; its ongoing maintenance is crucial. The northern peninsula should be preserved, but could support an activity which works in harmony with the space, such as a small adventure park, climbing wall or ropes course.

While Lake Ginninderra has a reasonable amount of seating and drinking fountains, more and improved seating, and more drinking fountains and increased/better signage alerting patrons to their existence is desirable.

Priorities for Lake Ginninderra

1. Open space and bushland around Lake Ginninderra must be appropriately defined as protected land which cannot be developed in the future.
2. The path around the lake must be widened wherever possible to account for increasing recreational use.
3. The area of land in front of Belconnen Arts Centre must be in-filled so that the path around Lake Ginninderra can be properly connected.

Lake Ginninderra Desirables

1. An already largely developed area around Lake Ginninderra could be identified as an appropriate recreational and dining precinct
2. More seating provided

3. More drinking fountains provided

EMU BANK

Due to its location on the lake and proximity to other significant amenities, it is widely agreed that Emu Bank should be a premier dining precinct - not just for Belconnen, but all of Canberra. To reach this potential, small and larger amendments must be made to its design.

Despite significant investment in its redevelopment, Emu Inlet is little utilised and does not provide a strong connection around the lake, nor to the Town Centre. The BCC suggests Emu Inlet and Margaret Timpson Park each have a small water feature which draws on Lake Ginninderra and provides a symbolic connection of some of the key open spaces in the Town Centre (see *Margaret Timpson Park*). Emu Inlet has little shade, no barbecue facilities, few seats (at least in the shade), and no toilets. While these facilities are provided for elsewhere in the Town Centre, or there is greater need elsewhere currently (see *Margaret Timpson Park*), the Master Plan should provide for the establishment of these future facilities.

The Arts Centre is the Town Centre's cultural hub and future planning must consider that once capital funding is made available, the Arts Centre will be an even greater cultural institution than it currently stands, comprising dance studios, galleries and a large theatre. The BCC notes the finalisation of 'Stage 2' will increase patronage along Emu Bank and help contribute to a more vibrant dining precinct, and urges its completion.

The Emu Bank foreshore paving is loose and/or cracked, and requires complete overhaul. While setback from other recreational activity might be desirable for a dining precinct, in some cases along Emu Bank the height or set back is too much. The provision of significant parking facilities along the Emu Bank road has resulted in businesses facing the road instead of facing one of Belconnen's greatest assets, the lake. To reverse this, solutions could include setting businesses further back (where car parks currently are) and providing greater linkages to the lake through outdoor dining (similar to the various options supported at Kingston Foreshore).

The BCC notes that despite the strong community desire for a dining precinct, some building space along Emu Bank is still for rent. This might indicate that a building was not fit for purpose, or might indicate that different use should be considered for some space to ensure that it can be as active as possible at all times. This other use may require a change in ACT regulations permitting use of retail spaces.

One of the consistently strongest community views conveyed to the BCC is that fast food chains Hungry Jack's and Red Rooster are in an inappropriate location for their business model. While both restaurants are popular and support a range of demographics, the business model does not facilitate Emu Bank as a destination, with many patrons using the drive-thru facility instead of enjoying the lakefront as a destination. While fast food chains arguably do have a place within the Belconnen Town Centre, a more appropriate location may be the Trades and Services Area.

The BCC notes that one way to increase active frontages along the Emu Bank section of Lake Ginninderra is to have mixed use development, which could necessitate some higher buildings (ie of two, three or four storeys, similar to the developments seen in Braddon, with recreational/commercial/dining on the ground floor, followed by commercial and residential areas on higher floors). Community views put to the BCC include that the Lake Ginninderra foreshore should be protected to the fullest extent possible, including from building heights. There is a community perception that higher buildings may make one of the Town Centre's and region's

greatest assets physically and symbolically inaccessible. Bearing this in mind, the BCC notes the success of Ha Ha Bar and the bar above it, La De Da (housed in a two-storey building set back and up from Lake Ginninderra), which may indicate some compromise is available. (See *Public Realm*.)

Priorities for Emu Bank

1. Address the quality of the Emu Bank foreshore
2. Redesign how buildings and businesses engage with Emu Bank
3. While difficult, the culture of Emu Bank can only truly change if the fast food chains are encouraged to move to another destination in the Town Centre
4. Finalise 'Stage 2' of the Belconnen Arts Centre as soon as reasonably possible

RELATIONSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA, CALVARY HOSPITAL, CANBERRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT²

The University of Canberra (UC), Calvary Hospital, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) are major employment, academic, health and creative institutions which have a natural fit within a definition of the Belconnen Town Centre.

The Master Plan must further facilitate these natural connections to enable those who work and study at these institutions to utilise the Belconnen Town Centre and its services and contribute to its vitality. For example, with large amounts of office space in the Town Centre, one option could be for start-up companies or projects arising from work at UC to be housed in the Town Centre. This could be the beginning of a 'business park' formed by our own intellectual capital, and complement the educational force in the Town Centre.

Priority for relationship with key institutions in Bruce

1. UC, Calvary Hospital, CIT and AIS must be appropriately defined as forming part of the Town Centre

Desirable for relationship with key institutions in Bruce

1. Facilitate access to areas in the Town Centre to begin a Belconnen business park supported by intellectual capital

TRADES AND SERVICES AREA³

The Trades and Services area is a vital employment centre and provides a range of services not easily accessible without travelling large distances. The BCC appreciates that the area has a unique aspect and could one day be an area with increasing residential development. However, many trades are noisy and can create unusual odours, and the site has some thriving restaurants, live music venues and taverns. The area therefore requires a long-term, thoughtful strategy to negotiate how perceivably competing interests could be harmonious. The existence of this area at this point in time provides an appropriate base to encourage more, and more diverse, small businesses into the Belconnen Town Centre to increase its economic sustainability into the future and reduce its dependency on major employers.

² Physical connectivity within the Town Centre is discussed in *Connectivity*

³ This beautification of this area is discussed in *Public Realm*; parking is discussed in *Parking*; and pedestrian connections is discussed in *Connectivity and access*.

If the bus depot were to relocate or downsize in the medium-term, this location might be the most appropriate beginning of a mixed-use residential and commercial area linking disparate areas of the Town Centre, and rather than encroaching on the traditional trades and services area, facilitating smooth connections with it. The area would also need to facilitate, not impede, public transport options including potential bus and/or light rail routes. As discussed further in *Central Areas*, future decisions for this major site are predicated on the community having their expectations of how this area will be used met, and a significant process of community consultation.

The former police station and remand centre site could reasonably be an opportunity for parking or residential development. However, the site's proximity to two bus stations and Westfield Belconnen means it could more appropriately be utilised by a centre which provides for community services, with some ground-level office space or restaurants.

As discussed in *Emu Bank*, the Trades and Services area is more appropriate for fast food chains. Unlike Emu Bank, the Trades and Services area is located on the edge of the Town Centre and is connected to major arterial roads. As the heart of the Town Centre, Emu Bank should be a pedestrian hub with minimal vehicular traffic moving through it, while the Trades and Services area's location makes it more conducive for larger volumes of vehicular traffic.

Priorities for Trades and Services area

1. Former police station site to be mixed use, with emphasis on community services
2. Facilitate movement of fast food chains to this area
3. Future development of the bus depot site is predicated on significant community consultation
4. Protect and enhance the area as a diverse employment district

CONNECTIVITY^{4, 5}

Enhanced connectivity in the Town Centre is among the highest priorities for the 2015 Master Plan. Better connectivity and access is the key support to ensure the Town Centre remains a holistic one. An area with sophisticated, high quality connections easily identifies as a major hub or Town Centre.

Traffic interaction is a key issue in the Town Centre on roads and on pathways. An improved relationship between vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic can be achieved with enhanced infrastructure. Pedestrians and cyclists should be - and should feel they are - prioritised. Broadly, the genuine physical separation of cycle traffic from pedestrians on one side and cars on the other with different height kerbs (similar to Copenhagen) is a priority. Cycling lanes need to be of sufficient width to host a number of cyclists without them encroaching onto the road.

The curvature of Emu Bank road, speed of traffic, and number and range of users entering and exiting it (including car parks along it) make it a dangerous area. One option for Emu Bank could be to make traffic one-way - whether all day or at certain peak periods. This could also be the catalyst for some sympathetic reshaping of the streetscape, widening of footpaths, and provision of a dedicated cycle lane to make it a more attractive boulevard.

To reflect the Town Centre's status and encourage more pedestrian and bicycle patronage, more streets need speed limits of 40km/h if not lower. The BCC notes a 40km/h speed limit does not mean that speed humps also need to be installed to encourage drivers to adhere to the limit. That said, the

⁴ Benjamin Way is specifically discussed under *Central Areas*

⁵ Lighting and trees are discussed under *Public Realm*

BCC is not automatically opposed to the installation of speed humps. Instead, our consistent argument is that existing and future speed humps need an absolute redesign: those that extend across the entire roadway are more sensible and practical and less disturbing than the existing speed humps.

The BCC recognises that the Town Centre includes many disparate areas⁶ which need better symbolic and physical connections. Better linkages are needed to Bruce to reflect UC's, AIS's, CIT's and Calvary Hospital's rightful presence as part of an amended definition of the Town Centre. This includes at least a footbridge over Aikman Drive.

Disparate areas require high quality, wide pathways, but there are also measures which complement these pathways. This could include a shuttle bus around the key areas of the Town Centre (UC, CISAC, Emu Bank/BCS/Library, Trades and Services, Westfield Belconnen and Belconnen Markets), and rental bike stations at each of these key areas where bikes can be picked up and dropped off. These bikes should be equipped with large baskets to ensure the transport of goods around the Town Centre; this may be part of the solution to reducing the trolley dumping. In addition to physically and symbolically connecting the Town Centre, these measures would help to ensure cars are left at home or are parked in a central area and not used to travel short distances to other areas of the Town Centre.

The shared bike lane and footpath running from the corner of Lathlain and Luxton Streets to Florey (under Totterdell Street) should naturally be extended to cross Joynton Smith Drive to meet with the pathway north of Beissel Street.

As a guide to the short- and medium-term development of the Town Centre, the Master Plan may again endure another ~15 years, and the Capital Metro expansion will likely occur during the currency of the Master Plan. For this obvious reason, the Master Plan must reflect possible light rail routes (expected to be reflected in the Light Rail Master Plan) and how this will interact with existing traffic connections and enhance the integrated public transport network in the Belconnen region. The disused busway along Joynton Smith Drive should be reserved for future generations as a public transport corridor. In the meantime, it should be partly remediated with grass and pathways to facilitate better connections for Totterdell Street and its surrounding areas, including Florey, Westfield Belconnen, and Beissel Street. If light rail transits through the Town Centre, it will necessitate the integration of it with the bus station.

Finally, while enhanced linkages within the Town Centre are a priority, the Town Centre's status is due to it being the heart of the entire Belconnen region, and so linkages to the Town Centre from other suburbs are an equally high priority. Increased pathways and cycleways would assist with this, particularly to Lawson, Page, Florey, Aranda and Macquarie. Consideration should be given to whether the arterial roads are currently acting as barriers to nearby suburbs' access to the Town Centre and whether this could be improved.

Connectivity priorities

1. Physical connection (footbridge) between University of Canberra and the Town Centre
2. Complete revitalisation and enhancement of path and cycleways, including widening paths, increasing paths, adding a physically separated and wide bicycle lane throughout the Town Centre
3. Consideration given to possible light rail routes and how this will integrate with other public transport and pedestrian and cycle access

⁶ See Survey Report 2014 for further discussion on these areas

4. Disused busway on Joynton Smith Drive to be preserved as a future public transport corridor but used for pedestrian access in the meantime
5. Physical connections (footpaths, cycleways) to the Town Centre from Belconnen suburbs
6. More 40km/h zones

Connectivity desirables

1. Physical connection between other institutions in Bruce and the Town Centre
2. Extension of bike lane and footpath at Lathlain and Luxton Streets to join Beissel Street
3. Rental bike stations at each of the main areas in the Town Centre
4. Shuttle bus to each of the main areas in the Town Centre
5. Emu Bank one-way for traffic (whether all day or at certain times of day)

PARKING

Outside Westfield Belconnen, the most common parking arrangement in the Town Centre is surface car parks. Since the 2001 Master Plan, significant areas of this surface parking have been sold for residential and commercial development. While the Town Centre still has a large amount of surface parking, there are now parking pressures in the Town Centre and surrounding suburbs. The introduction of paid parking has not seen demand for parking decrease. The disparate areas of the Town Centre result in people driving from location to location within it, necessitating car parks at each of these locations. Some measures to enhance connectivity within and to the Town Centre, identified earlier, can address this, but it is realistic to assume that many people will still at least drive a vehicle to the Town Centre.

The BCC does not believe the continuance of surface car parks is an appropriate solution. Rather, the construction of a multilevel parking facility in the Town Centre is required. One suggested location is in the Trade and Services area (including potentially at the bus depot site) where there is a natural elevation so it can be sympathetically and attractively built, with extra retail space provided at the ground level. Any multi-storey car park would need to have strong physical walking and cycleway connections from it to the rest of the Town Centre.

Parking priority

1. Establish an attractive multi-storey parking facility with strong physical connections to the rest of the Town Centre

PUBLIC REALM, including building heights

Building heights is an issue which has garnered significant attention in the Belconnen Town Centre. The BCC 2014 survey found that the issue is an extremely complex one, and the height of a building should be determined with consideration given to:

- not blocking natural features, including views of the lake, mountains, and sky
- not blocking sunlight / creating shadowy areas / overshadowing
- not creating wind corridors
- ensuring that any development includes or at least retains green space / vegetation
- aesthetics
- the extent of the reduction of parking for residents, visitors and workers in the Town Centre
- building purpose
- demand for housing and not creating oversupply
- situational considerations (eg with greater density might come more cars, greater traffic)
- proportion and proximity to other buildings, area and streetscape

Each time a new tall building has been proposed in the Town Centre, there has been surprise within the community and confusion about whether a tall building is consistent with the character of the Town Centre. This indicates that expectations have not been managed, and that there is no clear guide on what determines an appropriate height and in which locations. This must be rectified in the forthcoming Master Plan: those who live, work, study and use the area must have an understanding of what is likely to happen throughout the Town Centre, what the expectations are for and from future developments, how they will generally look, and where tall buildings will go.

As mentioned elsewhere, the BCC appreciates that the preservation of open space may necessitate increasing higher density in the Town Centre. Again, it would be useful to identify where higher density could reasonably occur; locations where the above criteria would be largely satisfied, and with consideration of the existing shape of the land.

In its submission to the 2001 Master Plan, the BCC recognised that increasing residential population could lead to "viability, liveliness and 'people presence', and to diverse and interesting town centres where a wide range of residents and visitors feel at home." Fourteen years later, Belconnen Town Centre is increasingly becoming an area where there is movement 24 hours a day. Businesses are taking advantage of this, resulting in a street cafe/bar culture along areas including Benjamin Way. To support this movement and to ensure greater connectivity and access (as discussed earlier), buildings must be set back an appropriate distance to allow for appropriately wide pathways and flora. In some circumstances, the planting of trees and shrubs between the building and the footpath, and the footpath and the street (ie both sides of a footpath) would be desirable. Essentially, new buildings should ideally have a smaller footprint. In addition, new developments must have attractive street facades and accessible retail space. Having diverse and interesting businesses at ground level assists with connectivity; the community is more likely to both walk through and linger in an active area.

The BCC suggests that in developing the draft Master Plan, an extensive community study be undertaken to garner community views on expectations of building height and design, appropriate locations, and what the development could reasonably add to the area to result in net community gain. This way, the community will have ownership of future development decisions and have an early understanding and expectation of likely development and design. To ensure that this works, the BCC stresses that land must be released in a consistent, careful way so that the market is at no point flooded with development.

The community has increasingly seen the removal of public bins from the Belconnen Town Centre, particularly around Lake Ginninderra. Despite best intentions, it can be unpleasant to carry rubbish (from picnic rubbish to dog waste) for long distances. Restoring these bins is important to support an increasing residential, business and recreational population and facilitate appropriate civic outcomes.

To complement this, dog waste bag dispensers could be installed in areas of high use in Belconnen Town Centre, particularly around Lake Ginninderra. While dog waste is always the responsibility of the dog owner, bag dispensers can assist if an owner has forgotten or run out, ensuring there is no excuse for failing to pick up the waste. Dispensers must be of quality and sturdiness to protect the bags from weather elements; be stocked with biodegradable bags; and have a locking mechanism to ensure bags cannot be pulled continuously.

Opportunities exist to enhance the Trades and Services area with some better designs including awnings and shady trees so that it remains an attractive and viable destination. The BCC notes that

this area also has a unique purpose, and any further development should seek to enhance or support it, not design it out.

Finally, to enhance symbolic connectivity, trees unique to the Town Centre could be planted throughout the Town Centre and especially along major thoroughfares to help identify it as a key area, while also providing shade throughout. Increased, connected lighting would also provide for a physical and symbolic connection, enhancing safety and reflecting that the Town Centre is used 24 hours a day. Lighting could be interesting and unique to further assist the Town Centre's identity.

Public realm priorities

1. The Master Plan must set expectations on future building development on the basis of at least the above criteria, if not an extensive community study, which are widely recognised and adhered to
2. Buildings to be at an appropriate set-back from the road to allow for wide pathways and appropriate flora
3. Restoration of public bins in areas of high use (for example, near Emu Inlet and around Lake Ginninderra)

Public realm desirables

1. Installation of at least one dog waste bag dispenser around Lake Ginninderra
2. Thematic tree planting throughout the Town Centre to appropriately indicate its status and provide other amenity
3. Unique, interesting lighting connecting the disparate areas of the Town Centre, and around Lake Ginninderra

CENTRAL AREAS

Margaret Timpson Park (located across from the Westfield Belconnen front entrance on Benjamin Way) connects numerous areas of the Town Centre with an established path system around and through it. As a green space connecting residential, business and employment areas of the Town Centre, the park could be utilised as a town square. However, while the park has visually striking elements, including the Bert Flugelman *Tumbling Cubes*, a garden bed featuring the Canberra Rose, established palm trees, grass pyramids, and a large amount of green space, it remains a thoroughfare rather than a destination. Indeed, of the above described elements, only the paths provide a connection - physical or otherwise - to the rest of the Town Centre.

Margaret Timpson Park has a range of seating and shade, but lacks tables. It has no barbecues, play equipment or toilets (the nearest are in the Belconnen Library or Westfield Belconnen). Finally, the park is largely surrounded by buildings, including the vacant former ACT Health centre, meaning there is little of interest to look at (including people-watching)⁷. Additional amenity here could facilitate the evident opportunity this site has to be a central meeting and event place in the Town Centre. A water feature (whether a fountain or splash park) could be a symbolic connection to the heart of the Town Centre, Lake Ginninderra.

In the longer term, the park's proximity to the bus station, lake, residences, major employers and Westfield Belconnen could mean it is an appropriate integrated public transport and tourist terminal.

⁷ The BCC expects this to change as Benjamin Way develops more into a boulevard

Despite being the main entrance to the Town Centre, Benjamin Way feels anything but. However, as mentioned above, there is an increasing cafe/bar culture thanks to the wide footpaths in some areas along Benjamin Way which indicates the area's potential.

Benjamin Way theoretically connects Emu Ridge residents and the Belconnen Markets with Lake Ginninderra and Westfield Belconnen. However, while Benjamin Way has a boulevard of trees and some reasonable pathways, few people use this connection, preferring to drive. The distance between Belconnen Markets and Westfield Belconnen is almost identical to the Braddon Caltex near the northern end of Lonsdale Street (Braddon) and Civic Dendy Cinemas (around one kilometre). However, there is much more to see and be engaged by between Dendy and Caltex in Braddon than there is between Belconnen Markets and Westfield Belconnen, which may in part contribute to its lack of non-car use.

The median strip along Benjamin Way is a significant amount of green space which could be enhanced as the main cycleway/footpath connecting the Town Centre to other suburbs. Over time, this amenity could facilitate smaller retail businesses, restaurants or pop-ups. An alternative is whether it could be a light rail route in the longer term. Regardless, in the short term this area could be better utilised to contribute to the identity of the Town Centre and increase connectivity.

Consistent with earlier remarks, path and cycleways need to be upgraded. Benjamin Way presents an opportunity to make any new paving unique and interesting, and increase rest points. This could include themed paving, supported by artwork designed by local residents or students from one of the educational campuses.

The upper end of Benjamin Way (near Westfield Belconnen) is devoid of trees. The BCC understands this is due to sewerage and irrigation beneath it, and note the need to allow for clear lines of sight for traffic in this busy area. While trees would be unsuitable, the planting of shrubs (with delicate pathways through) could help protect the visual amenity of the area and increase the physical and symbolic connectivity.

Priorities for central areas

1. Increased seating and tables at Margaret Timpson Park
2. Increased and diverse trees and shrubs at Margaret Timpson Park and along Benjamin Way
3. Upgraded, widened and themed path and cycleways along Benjamin Way

Desirables for central areas

1. Barbecue facility and drinking fountains with shade at Margaret Timpson Park
2. Water feature at Margaret Timpson Park
3. Public toilet at Margaret Timpson Park
4. Play equipment at Margaret Timpson Park

COMMERCIAL DIVERSITY

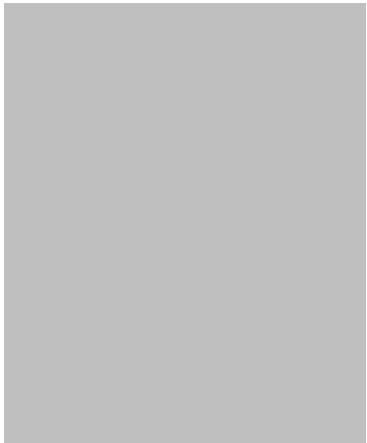
As identified elsewhere, the Town Centre is fortunate to have major and smaller employers, ensuring business diversity in the Town Centre. Business diversity in the Town Centre is critical to ensure that the Town Centre remains viable for future generations, particularly given potential economic conditions and uncertainty about the long-term role of some major employers.

To this end, the Master Plan must identify and facilitate ways to increase commercial diversity in the Town Centre. This includes fewer restrictions on the types of business allowed to operate at each premises. In addition, the Town Centre has significant amounts of vacant commercial space. This

could be used to foster business start-ups or hold community events such as a branch of, or something akin to, the [You Are Here](#) festival. Festivals like You Are Here can showcase available commercial space while also utilising otherwise unused space.

Priority for commercial diversity

1. Identify strategies to facilitate and encourage greater commercial presence and diversity in the Town Centre, both short- and longer-term.



30 January 2015

Belconnen Master Plan
Strategic Planning Division
Environment and Planning Directorate
Dame Pattie Menzies House
16 Challis Street
Dickson ACT 2602

By Email – Belconnen@act.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Belconnen Town Centre – Draft Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in the development of the Belconnen Master Plan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] acknowledges the ACT Government's commitments to town centres, supports attempts to diversify the ACT economy and encourages all efforts to do so. However the ACT's urban structure of a single city centre with multiple town centres is only viable where the Commonwealth Government maintains employment commitments in these locations. Unfortunately Belconnen is not unique amongst town centres and now faces sustainability issues arising from the ongoing contraction of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (**ABS**) and the potential withdrawal of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration & Border Protection (**DIBP**). This is of particular concern to [REDACTED] given the absence of a substantial private sector to backfill vacated office space. To be blunt, the downsizing of the ABS and the potential loss of DIBP from Belconnen could result in a long term vacancies which may take years to fill.

While very supportive of the Belconnen Master Plan process, [REDACTED] considers the most pressing issue to be that of economic viability. Developing a strong and diverse economy is essential to creating more resilient town centres. Discussions around building heights and pedestrian connections are irrelevant in the context of a town centre facing a substantial reduction in employment, and a relatively one dimensional economy. The Master Plan should have a strong focus on economic development and it is consequentially essential that the Treasury and Economic Development Directorates are fully engaged in the process. The Chief Minister should adopt a leadership role reflecting his new Urban Renewal portfolio.

We concur that Belconnen Town Centre has advantages arising from its proximity to major institutions. The consultation materials discuss opportunities to improve the relationship between these institutions and the town centre. [REDACTED] sees particular opportunities in consolidating these institutions, and/or facilitating further growth of these in the town centre, thereby reinventing Belconnen Town Centre as a hub for learning as one example.



This would catalyse other education, research and development activities in the town centre, in time creating a more sustainable economy while potentially freeing up large tracts of underutilised brownfield land for more intensive redevelopment. We consider early discussions with key institutions regarding the future of their lease holdings critical to understanding the role they can play in the town centre in the event that Commonwealth Departments vacate now, or at a future date. Irrespective, there may be other opportunities that arise over the timeframe considered by the Master Plan; the Master Plan should integrate sufficient flexibility to allow these opportunities to be fostered as they emerge.

While ACT Government attempts to diversify the economy are admirable, opportunities are often hampered by the economic levers surrounding the planning system. Previous town centre master plans have been silent on the role of economic levers in delivering planning outcomes. We recommend that the role of economic levers, such as LVC remissions, stamp duty exemptions and rate reductions, in achieving a diverse and sustainable town centre be fully investigated and integrated into the master plan.

█ notes the ACT Government's commitment to creating employment in the Gungahlin Town Centre. █ requests that consideration be given to a similar commitment to Belconnen, recognising that the impacts of employment contraction will be far more acute and difficult to reverse in Belconnen than in Gungahlin which, as a newer town centre, does not have the same level of existing investment. The flow on impacts arising from an employment contraction in Belconnen will be exponentially higher. It is essential that the ACT Government adopt a leadership role in this instance.

█ looks forward to working proactively with the ACT Government to secure the future of the Belconnen Town Centre. Please do not hesitate to contact the writer should you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter by phone █
█

Yours sincerely,

█



Pedal Power ACT
any bike, any where, any time

Submission on the Belconnen Master Plan 2015





Front cover: *A left-turning vehicle cuts off a rider on Lathlain St.*

Rear cover: *Where to from here? Riders trying to cross Cohen St near a site being redeveloped by the ACT Government's Economic Development Directorate.*

Pedal Power ACT
SUBMISSION ON THE MASTER PLAN FOR BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE
AND THE BROADER BELCONNEN CENTRE
January 2015

The master plan covers the large area of central Belconnen shown below. In this submission, the **Belconnen town centre** means the area inside the blue line on the map. The area outside the Belconnen town centre and within the red boundaries is referred to as the **broader Belconnen centre**.



The corresponding sections of the current ACT Cycling and Walking Map are at Attachments A and B.

This submission is in 5 parts:

- | | |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Part 1 | Executive summary — priority issues for the master plan |
| Part 2 | The master plan study area |
| Part 3 | Pedal Power ACT online survey |
| Part 4 | Belconnen town centre |
| Part 5 | Broader Belconnen centre |

PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY — PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE MASTER PLAN

Current cycling conditions in the Belconnen town centre are difficult, confused and unsafe. That is the clear message from Pedal Power ACT's online survey which underpins this submission. Positive action is needed to ensure that cycling in the area can appeal to families and the community as a whole, not just to those with the necessary commitment, resilience — and courage. While the number of bicycle trips is increasing, they are not increasing as quickly as in Canberra as a whole.

While some cycling facilities exist in the broader Belconnen centre, they are ageing and disconnected. Most are inherited from before self-government; more are needed. Some pre-existing cycle routes have been disrupted by later urban development. Through-trips between the many important destinations in the study area are difficult or impossible, especially for people who are not comfortable riding on roads. The area does not have anything that could be called a well connected cycle network.

Central Belconnen was and continues to be built for motor vehicles, not people. This is the basic source of the problems that the master plan must address.

As part of the solution, the master plan should at minimum provide for:

- all planning and development decisions to put the needs of active travel first, public transport second, and private motor vehicles third;
- formally designating the entire study area as an Active Travel Zone;
- designing modern cycling facilities for the area from first principles, rather than as an afterthought or attempting to retrofit inadequate infrastructure;
- a protected North-South Cycle Highway traversing the town centre, using Benjamin Way and the disused Joynton Smith Dr busway (proposed route map at Attachment D);
- a protected East-West Cycle Highway traversing the entire study area from O'Connor to Page, connecting all major destinations, with grade-separated arterial road crossings at Haydon Dr and College St and with priority for similar quality links to Calvary Hospital, Kaleen, Fernhill Park and the Belconnen Fresh Food Market (Attachment D);
- a protected cycle loop around the town centre using Josephson St in the west and Emu Bank in the east, with the latter to become a 20 km/h shared space between Benjamin Way and the bus station entrance (Attachment D);
- creation of a shared space along Benjamin Way from the south-eastern corner of Belconnen Mall to the lake shore;
- a continuous high quality shared path link around the southern tip of the lake and wetlands from the Arts Centre to Lake Ginninderra College via Emu Bank and the skateboard park, to complete a clearly defined Lake Ginninderra Circuit;
- a default 40 km/h speed limit on all other roads in the study area that are currently rated below 60 km/h;
- assistance to the University of Canberra with improvements in cycle access through and within the campus;
- a commitment to implement area-based active travel improvements in the study area, modelled on European best practice;
- ample secure bicycle parking at all major destinations in the study area, especially the Canberra Stadium and the Mall, with a financial contribution from Westfield;
- further improvement in directional signage; and
- a commitment to maintain major on- and off-road cycle routes to the same standard as roads.

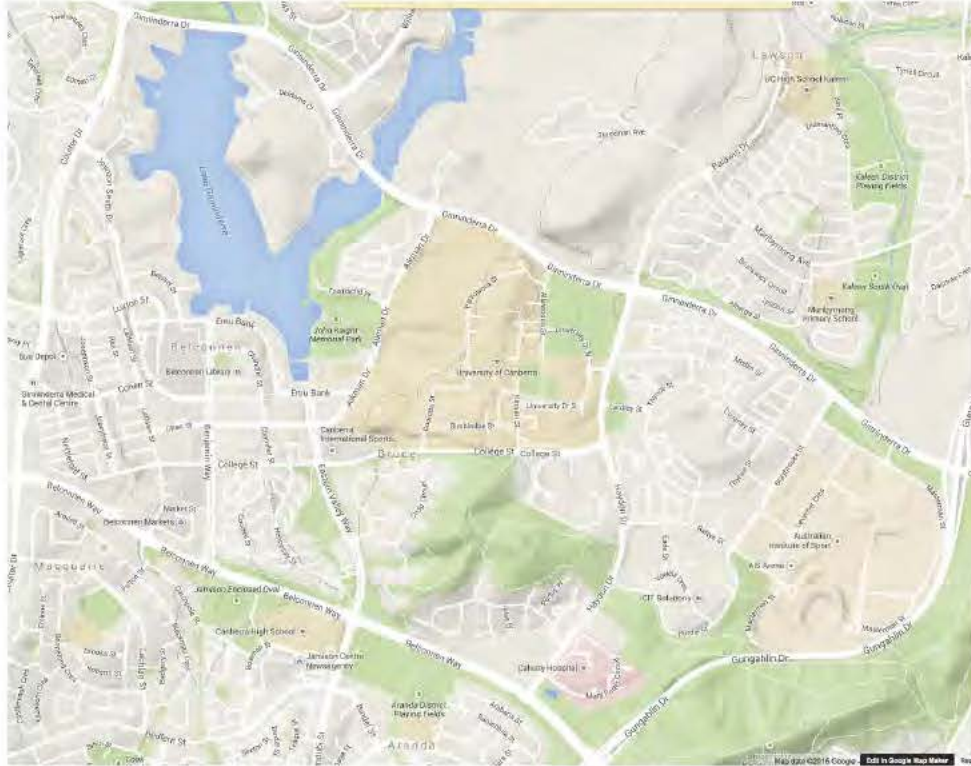
This submission has been informed and driven by the opinions of experienced bike riders. The ACT Government should note the reality they face in their day-to-day cycling.

It's time to recognise the merit of giving central Belconnen a cycle network for the many people who would ride if it were safe and convenient. This would benefit the whole community, not just those on bicycles. With its lake, scenic parklands, bush setting and important community destinations, the area has the potential to become one of the most attractive cycling precincts in Australia.

PART 2: THE MASTER PLAN STUDY AREA

Topography

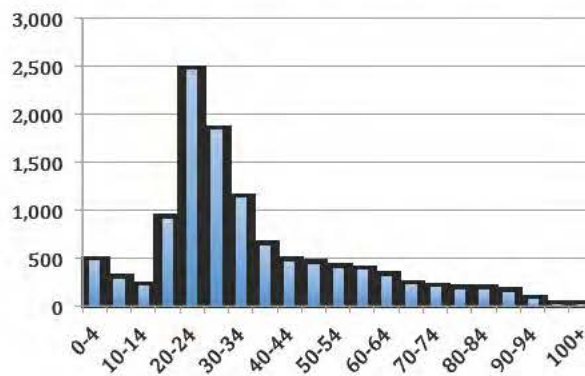
The terrain of the study area is favourable for cycling. The inner part of the town centre is generally flat, but with rising ground up to Coulter Drive in the west. In the broader Belconnen centre, the University of Canberra and Radford College are located on a central north-south ridge, with relatively steep climbs on either side and some hilly terrain south of College St. In the east, the residential areas and public institutions are on relatively flat ground.



Demographics

The 2011 Census reported 10,826 people living in Belconnen/Bruce, an area of 10.2 sq km. This equates to a population density of just over 1,000 per sq km, compared with 800 per sq km for the ACT major urban area as a whole.

The population age profile is relatively youthful, with 40% in their twenties:



This reflects a high student population and an increasing trend towards apartment living in the town centre and Bruce.

Cycling mode share

The 2011 Census found that 142 residents of the study area cycled to work on census day in August, representing 2.8% of all journeys to work. This is the same as the cycling mode share for the ACT as a whole. 79% of these people were male and 21% female — a significant gender disparity compared with the ACT-wide ratio of 72% to 28%.

Conclusions – Part 2

With relatively favourable terrain; a youthful, educated, high-density population; and many significant destinations within easy reach, the cycling mode share result of 2.8% — right on the ACT average — is concerning. It compares unfavourably with older suburbs close to the ANU, such as 8% in Turner and 15% in O'Connor (which adjoins the study area on the other side of Gungahlin Dr). This immediately suggests that something is wrong with cycling conditions in the study area. The fact that male riders outnumbered females almost 4 to 1 in the 2011 Census (a higher ratio than the ACT average) suggests that conditions favour the 'strong and fearless'. The study area has a more modern built environment, but one that is designed for motor vehicles rather than people on cycling or walking. This issue must be addressed in the master plan.

The inclusion in the master plan of features to encourage more people to cycle should increase the cycling mode share and help the Government meet its *Transport for Canberra* targets.



Narrow on-road cycle lane, Benjamin Way, looking south

PART 3: PEDAL POWER ACT ONLINE SURVEY

Feeling unsafe, poor bike paths and a lack of cycling infrastructure continue to frustrate many cyclists in and around the Belconnen town centre, according to an online survey conducted by Pedal Power ACT in early 2015.

120 people responded, 88% of whom were members of Pedal Power ACT. 60% of respondents were over 50, and three-quarters were male. However, views on cycling conditions in Belconnen were remarkably consistent, irrespective of age or gender — although women were marginally more concerned about safety and security. If you ride in central Belconnen, you will have much the same opinion of it, and not much good to say.

Overall most people are unhappy with the cycling conditions, want more cycle paths, don't feel safe on their bikes and generally have the experience of cycling in the area to back up their views. Almost a third reported cycling into the town centre on most days, and half do so within the broader Belconnen centre. Around 11% of people regularly transit the town centre on the way to somewhere else.

The survey shows just 7% of respondents rate cycling infrastructure around the town centre as 'good', with a majority (45%) describing it as 'barely adequate'. In addition, around two-thirds of respondents said they felt 'not really safe' or 'not at all safe' when riding in the area (in this context safety contains both active, eg bike lanes, and passive components, eg path lighting).

While many people are eager to ride to the town centre – and find it easy to do so – they often find many problems once they arrive. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated the need for dedicated bike paths, on-road cycling lanes and storage infrastructure such as bike racks or cages for those combining cycling with public transport.

Key problems identified by respondents include:

- physical danger and the perception of danger;
- mental stress;
- a 'network' with more missing links than infrastructure;
- excessive delays waiting for vehicle traffic;
- slow, inconvenient, confusing and circuitous routes;
- lack of signage;
- poor or missing end-of-ride facilities; and
- a sense of neglect: that cars matter and bikes don't.

Over the past few years, the town centre has seen considerable expansion — including major road changes, more residential accommodation and stronger links to surrounding areas such as the University of Canberra. Alongside these changes, there is a growing number of cyclists in the area, so it is critical that future transport infrastructure reflects the needs of people riding to work, shops, school or for leisure.

This is the first time that Pedal Power ACT has conducted a survey to gather in-depth member views on a major planning issue. It will not be the last. We regard this survey as a benchmark. We intend to repeat it in 3 years to assess what improvements have eventuated.

Later parts of this submission refer to statistics and opinions from the survey in greater depth. All comments are reproduced verbatim.

Conclusions – Part 3

The great majority of experienced bike riders find conditions in central Belconnen unsatisfactory. There is very little good news.

The master plan is an ideal opportunity to set out a plan to make it more convenient and pleasant to cycle in and through Belconnen town centre and to the major institutions in the study area.

PART 4: BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE

Pedal Power ACT's vision

Pedal Power's vision for the Belconnen town centre is one where:

- the town centre and broader Belconnen centre are developed as showcases for cycling and walking;
- streetscapes provide greater amenity, convenience and safety for the community as a whole;
- priority is given to cycling, walking and public transport over private motor vehicles, in line with the Government's *Transport for Canberra* aim of encouraging active travel;
- bicycles are fully recognised as legitimate means of transport used by the whole '8 to 80' age cohort;
- car parking fees reflect the true economic value of parking spaces, noting that better cycling access will require less space allocated to parking;
- people have safe and convenient external connections with the surrounding residential zones, cycle trunk routes and on-road bike lanes, and internal connections between shops, workplaces, community facilities and public transport;
- safe, quick, convenient and clearly designated cycle routes exist through and around the centre, taking in all the major destinations such as the Markets and adjacent destinations such as the University of Canberra and Calvary Hospital;
- adequate bike parking is provided at the main destinations;
- low speed limits throughout the town centre and shared spaces provide a clear message that the town centre is a place for people where they can safely and pleasantly walk and cycle — these speed limit zones should be expanded;
- 20 km/h shared zones are created where people walking and cycling mix with slow-moving traffic; and
- cycle crossings are provided in parallel with pedestrian crossings.

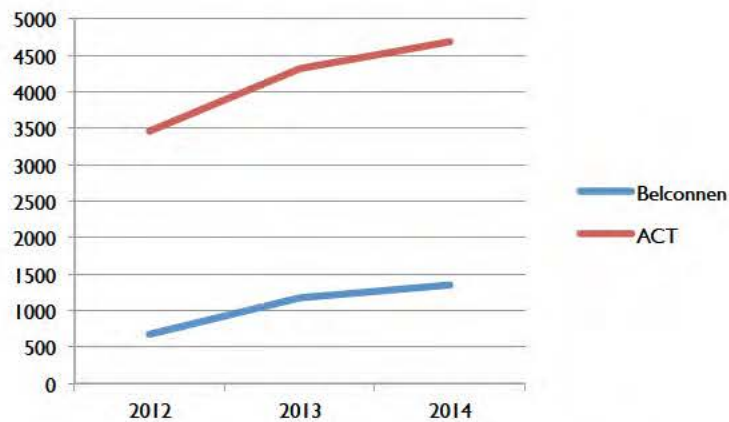


Benjamin Way 40 km/h zone, no bike path

Inadequate cycling infrastructure

The master plan should support the ACT Government's commitment to shifting from a reliance on private motor vehicles to increasing active travel (cycling and walking) as set out in *Transport for Canberra*.

The Belconnen town centre has poor cycling facilities and this is discouraging bike riding. Pedal Power ACT's annual cordon count shows that the lack of good access into and around the centre appears to be hindering the use of bicycles to access the centre. The numbers of people using the town centre on bikes between 2012 and 2014 are relatively low, and increasing significantly slower than for the ACT's major town centres as a whole.



Pedal Power ACT sees an opportunity for the master plan provide for safe, quick, convenient bicycle access to, within and through the town centre. The cycling infrastructure must be of a standard that the entire '8 to 80' age cohort (especially women and children) would be happy to use as part of their daily routine. This does not mean leaving riders to make their way on the footpaths while the streets remain primarily as channels for motor vehicles.



Crossing the slip lane, Emu Bank, heading west

The current cycle routes are patchy and fragmented. The ACT Government's own mapping shows how disjointed they have become in the town centre as a result of piecemeal, uncoordinated urban development. This deters take-up of cycling by significant numbers of people, especially women and children. It is difficult to get around the town centre by bike (and to a lesser extent, on foot).

Several cycling routes in the town centre have been disrupted by past and planned future urban development. For example, before the western side of the Mall was redeveloped, there was a popular shared path running along the Lathlain St corridor straight to the old red footbridge and into the Mall, or on across Chan St to Benjamin Way along a main shared path running diagonally through Section 43 (Attachment A).

The 10-metre wide Section 43 route is to be closed as a result of redevelopment of the site. The developer noted that the route was little used — not surprising, given the absence of signage and the difficulty of getting to it now. In its comments on the redevelopment of Section 43, Pedal Power ACT stated:

The important point to note is that the site should not be looked at in isolation. We agreed that a piecemeal approach had delivered poor outcomes for cycling and that the town centre was still an unattractive environment for active travel.

Any work to provide off-road access around Section 43 should fit in with wider plans including improved access to the Mall.

It is relatively easy to reach the town centre perimeter by bike. However, access within the town centre is unattractive, inconvenient and difficult, with conflict often arising between bikes, pedestrians and motor vehicles. There are currently no marked off-road cycle routes traversing the town centre either north-south or east-west, and no major roads with bike lanes or parallel shared paths running their entire length. On Lathlain St, the northern part of Benjamin Way, Eastern Valley Way, Josephson St, College St and Cohen St, people are either in with traffic or on the footpath (if any). The light industrial and commercial area west of Lathlain St has next to no provision for cycling.



Bike parking at the Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, looking north

The Mall acts as a major barrier drawing in large numbers of motor vehicles including heavy trucks and buses. Bike parking is inadequate or absent; for example on the Mall's Benjamin Way frontage there is parking for *four bicycles*, and others usually have to be chained to trees and street furniture. (Separate discussions are in prospect with Westfield management about this.) Signage is lacking and there are few visual clues to those unfamiliar with the centre. The informal routes currently used by cyclists exist because people have worked out by trial and error where best to cycle. The missing and derelict cycle infrastructure in 'the last kilometre of the ride' is discouraging cycling and needs to be addressed.

Given the upsurge in very high density accommodation in and around the town centre, it is vital that the master plan make active travel across central Belconnen as attractive, safe and convenient as possible. Pedal Power ACT would like to work with the master plan team to develop a detailed plan for cycling in the town centre drawing on the outcomes of these studies and reflecting the forthcoming ACT Active Travel Framework.

Access into the centre from the perimeter roads

The town centre is bounded to the south and west by 80 km/h arterial roads which impede access. From the east (a crucial direction given the need to improve east-west cycling links with the broader Belconnen centre) access is impeded by busy divided 60/70 km/h feeder streets. Access from the north is disjointed and also disrupted by heavy traffic; this access route would be greatly improved if the disused Joynton Smith Dr busway were adapted as an active travel corridor. Access points are characterised by signalised intersections with long delays for people cycling and walking. There are missing connections around a lot of intersections, eg Ginninderra Drive/Coulter Drive.

While people generally report that they can reach the perimeter of the town centre without difficulty, their problems escalate inside the surrounding ring of arterial roads.

Improving this access should be a priority of the master plan. Grade-separated crossings to accommodate cycling and walking should be built for College St and Haydon Dr, given the importance of the east-west links with the University and Bruce.

Although not strictly within the study area for the master plan, the ACT Government should consider traffic calming and cycling infrastructure improvements on feeder routes from suburbs bordering the town centre.



The College St hill eastbound, near the University of Canberra

This would encourage cycling participation to and from the key catchment area within 4 km of the town centre — a distance over which cycling is demonstrably quicker than any other form of transport.

The disused Joynton Smith Dr busway: the people-friendly boulevard

The disused busway could correct a major flaw in cycle and pedestrian access to the town centre. From the north, bicycle access is virtually impossible to the Mall. Coming from the northwest, one has to negotiate two sets of light at the corner of Luxton and Lathlain streets and then go across a very risky entrance to the Mall parking, with nothing to prevent motorists from crossing the footpath or on road cycling lane paralleling Lathlain St. and hitting cyclists. Alternatively, pedestrians and cyclists coming from Lake Ginninderra can negotiate the underground parking ramps at the Mall to eventually arrive at rather incongruously placed bicycle racks on the top floor of the Mall. Since there is effectively no cyclist access to them, they are largely unused.



Lathlain St – crossing the Mall carpark entrance

The busway connects Coulter Drive, near its junction with Joynton Smith Drive, to the Mall. When it was used by buses, it continued on to the former Belconnen bus station. A pedestrian bridge (which is now in service at Molonglo Reach on Lake Burley Griffin) crossed the old busway, linking the Mall to Lathlain St. The busway was truncated on its southern end by the building of the Mall extension, which includes a bus station.

The busway should become a People Friendly Boulevard. A cycle way would be paralleled by a footpath, forming the boulevard, leading from the busway origin at Coulter Drive to the Mall. At the Mall end of this, the boulevard would be gradually raised, passing under the entry to the car park from Lathlain St. and connecting to the existing pedestrian walkway along Lathlain St., leading to the bus station. Along the boulevard, north of Luxton St., blocks of flats or townhouses would be built. Automotive access to them would be at the rear of the flats or townhouses, via alleyways and



The disused busway from Coulter Dr straight to the Mall

a convoluted system of narrow connecting lanes.

The idea would be to permit the occupants of the flats or townhouses to keep vehicles garaged behind them but to make it impossible to use these vehicles to commute back and forth to Belconnen. Such commuting would be done by bicycles or on foot. Some of the blocks of flats would have commercial spaces on the ground floor, which could be used as shops or for dining. It should also be possible to intersperse the flats or townhouses with playgrounds or recreational facilities.

Connecting cycle ways and footpaths would need to be built to provide access to Lake Ginninderra and, at the north end, Florey shops and Florey primary school. An underpass or overpass would link the boulevard to a cycle path on the opposite side of Coulter Drive, which would lead to the shops or school.

This proposal would develop housing where it is needed (near the Belconnen town centre), and do it in a way that would provide access on a human scale, eliminating the motor car from the urban landscape. The sale of land would easily cover the cost of the infrastructure. Its proximity to the Mall would make it desirable.

Enlivening street-level activity

North-south and east-west cycle and walking routes within the centre should be defined. The routes would be linked to the main access points on the perimeter and provide unobstructed access to the major destinations. The remodelling to accommodate these routes would provide an opportunity to enliven the zones by quality redesigning of buildings and streetscapes to achieve a pleasant boulevard effect with increased street-level shops and restaurants/cafes. This may involve reducing street car parking and/or discouraging through traffic.



Green on-road lane, Lathlain St

Design of cycle routes within the centre

The cycling routes would be segregated from traffic and people on foot. In some places, shared zones may be preferable or dictated by the existing layout. The routes would need to be clear of bollards, posts, street furniture, planters and other obstructions.

Pedal Power ACT has discussed with master plan project staff its preferred design options for safe, quick and convenient urban cycling infrastructure of a kind that would be suitable for the Belconnen town centre. These designs, some aspects of which are illustrated at Attachment C, are based on world best practice.

This approach is reflected in the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads *Separated Cycleways* design guidelines (January 2014), which are more advanced than any other Australian guidelines and contain many excellent illustrations and photos throughout.¹

For significant numbers of people of all ages to take up cycling as an everyday form of transport, there must be a dense grid of high-quality cycling routes for them to ride on. These routes need to be safe, direct and provide a low-stress riding environment. The main sources of stress while riding a bicycle are proximity to motor vehicle traffic and conflict with people walking, so the aim should be to design these out of cycling networks.

Local cycling networks can only be effective where the density of both population and potential destinations is high enough for short-trip cycling to be a useful transport option, and where the terrain is relatively flat. The study area for the Belconnen master plan is an ideal candidate for this approach, with its increasingly high density population, significant workforce, further planned development (including a new hospital on the University campus) and important destinations in close proximity to the town centre. A willing population is already in place, and many more are set to join them as redevelopment progresses.

Because this approach relies on creating complete networks at a scale relevant to cycling, prioritisation should be on an area basis, rather than route by route. Priority should be given to areas where local networks would have the most immediate benefit and all the routes within them addressed more-or-less at once.

As well as on-road cycle lanes and new shared paths, the current footpaths through the town centre should be widened and upgraded to accommodate bikes.

A cycle loop around the town centre

Several survey respondents identified the need for a cycle loop or bypass right around the town centre. This would be used by people who do not need or wish to traverse the inner streets on their way to other destinations, or who want easier access to other parts of the town centre. On the western side, Josephson St would be suitable for use (with minimal upgrading) as a relatively quiet, divided thoroughfare. To the east, this need could be met by a short link between the proposed Emu Bank shared zone and the East-West Cycle Highway at Cameron Ave. Suitable route options have been identified on the map at Attachment D.

Recommended shared zones – Benjamin Way and Emu Bank

A 20 km/h shared zone (where traffic and people cycling and walking mingle as in Bunda Street) could be used in sections of road where increased street activity is planned. Pedal Power ACT considers that this would be appropriate for:

- Benjamin Way from the south-eastern corner of the Mall to the lake shore; and
- Emu Bank along the Lake Ginninderra section between Benjamin Way and the bus station entrance.

This would be particularly appropriate for Emu Bank, as the route is planned to be developed into a busy 'hub' and should not be regarded as a vehicle thoroughfare. Emu Bank is a key part of Pedal Power ACT's proposed eastern bypass of the town centre for people travelling through to other destinations.

The section of Emu Bank between the bus station entrance and Aikman Dr should be included in the 40 km/h zone that we propose for all roads in the study area currently rated below 60 km/h (see Part 1).

Belconnen Fresh Food Market

This is an important destination in the town centre vicinity — especially for encouraging families to ride as part of their weekly routine. On market days, vehicle traffic is heavy. While there are minimal bike parking facilities, there is very little provision for safe cycling access, either from the Lathlain St side or Benjamin Way. Pedal Power ACT suggests that there should be a high quality link to the Market from the proposed East-West Cycle Highway (see Part 1 and Attachment D).

¹ http://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/media/vanilla_content/files/SeparatedCyclewaysGuidelinesQLD.pdf

Bike parking

The provision of adequate bike parking should be an integral part of the planning for increased cycling in the centre. Developers must meet the minimal bike parking requirements in the ACT Bicycle Parking General Code. These requirements have not changed since 2006, while cycling levels have increased. Building owners and developers should be encouraged to provide lockup areas for bikes.



Benjamin Way — staying out of the left-turn lane

The approval process for new or renovating building work should require provision of bike parking and storage as well as change rooms and showers that will cater for increased cycling levels. Building owners and developers should bear the cost.



Looking for bike parking at the Mall

Toilets and water fountains

Survey respondents suggest that more are needed, especially at the southern end of the lake in the vicinity of the town centre, and in high traffic areas. Existing toilet facilities should be upgraded.

Lake Ginninderra shared path

This path is popular for recreational and commuter use and is very busy at peak times. It should be widened to allow for comfort for both cycling and walking. Existing cycling and walking priority over all carpark roads should be confirmed, with stop signs, green strips and rider-activated lighting.

The path should be linked with a more clearly defined shared path around the southern tip of the lake and wetlands from the Arts Centre to Lake Ginninderra College via Emu Bank and the skateboard park. This would provide a clear continuous Lake Ginninderra Circuit for bicycles and walkers, which could become a major attraction for the local area and for Canberra as a whole, complementing the

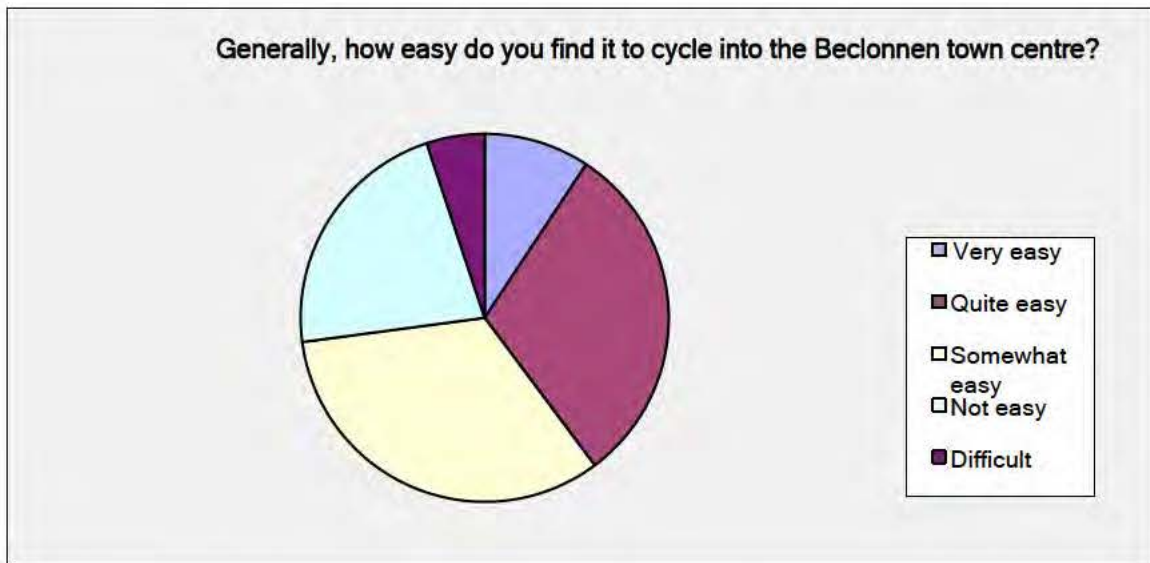
Lake Burley Griffin Circuit. It would provide choice and a scenic route option for people who prefer to ride close to the lake.

Phasing of capital expenditure

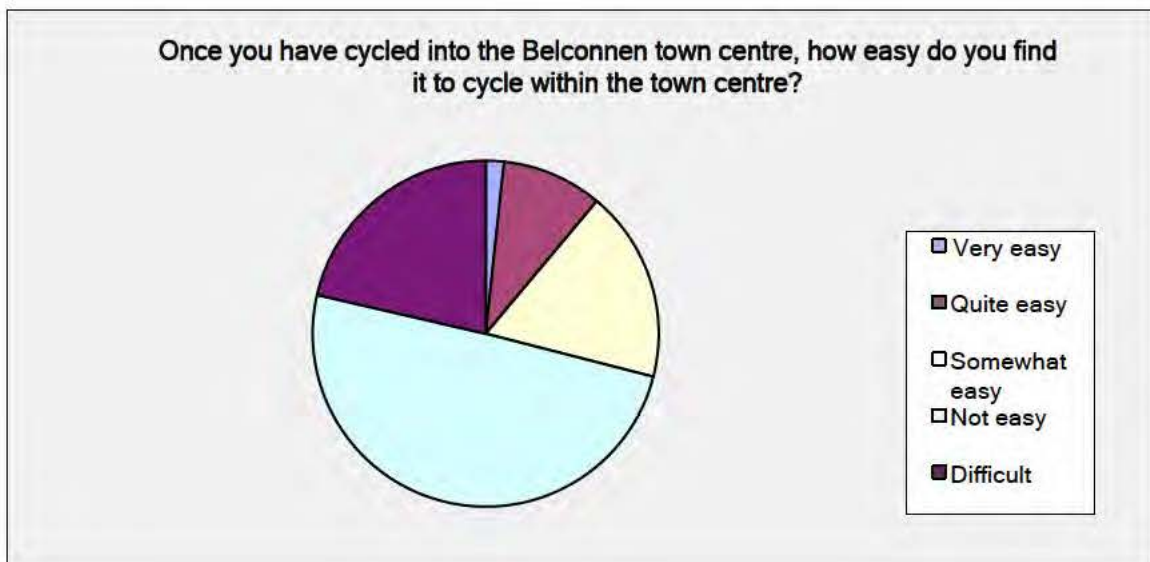
Given the size of the task of redeveloping the town centre, the master plan should rank works according to short, medium and long term. The short-term works would include 'low hanging fruit', i.e. projects that would produce early results for relatively low capital expenditure and are not dependent on other major capital works — for example, the construction of the recommended cycle routes through the town centre with improved connections with perimeter roads and paths.

Findings of the online survey

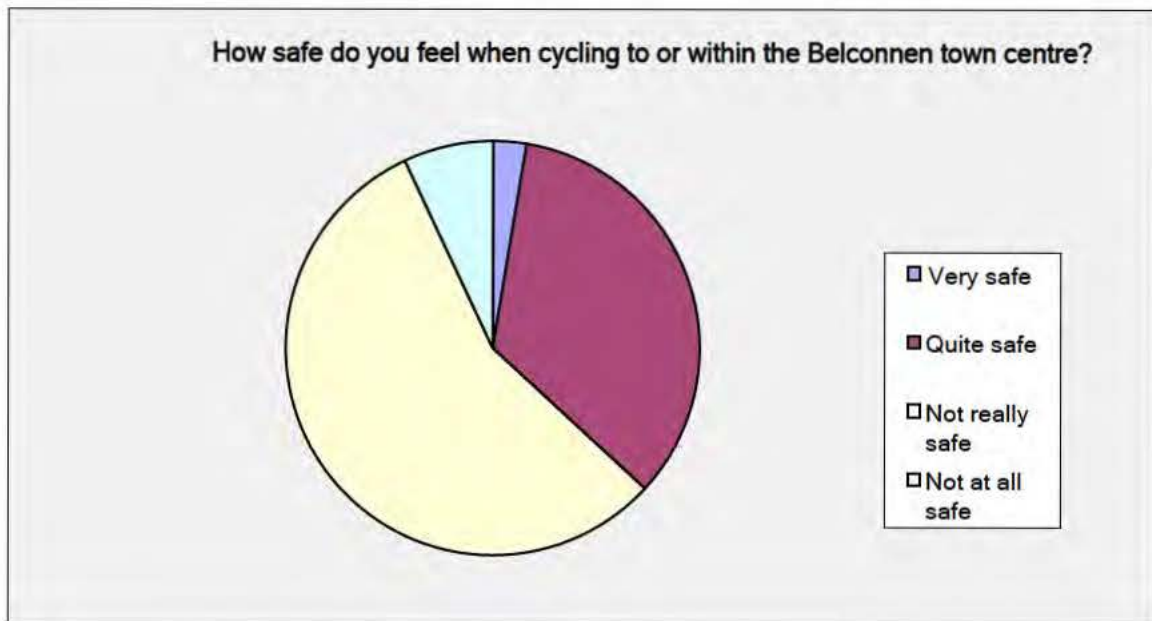
Half the respondents experience difficulty cycling into the Belconnen town centre:



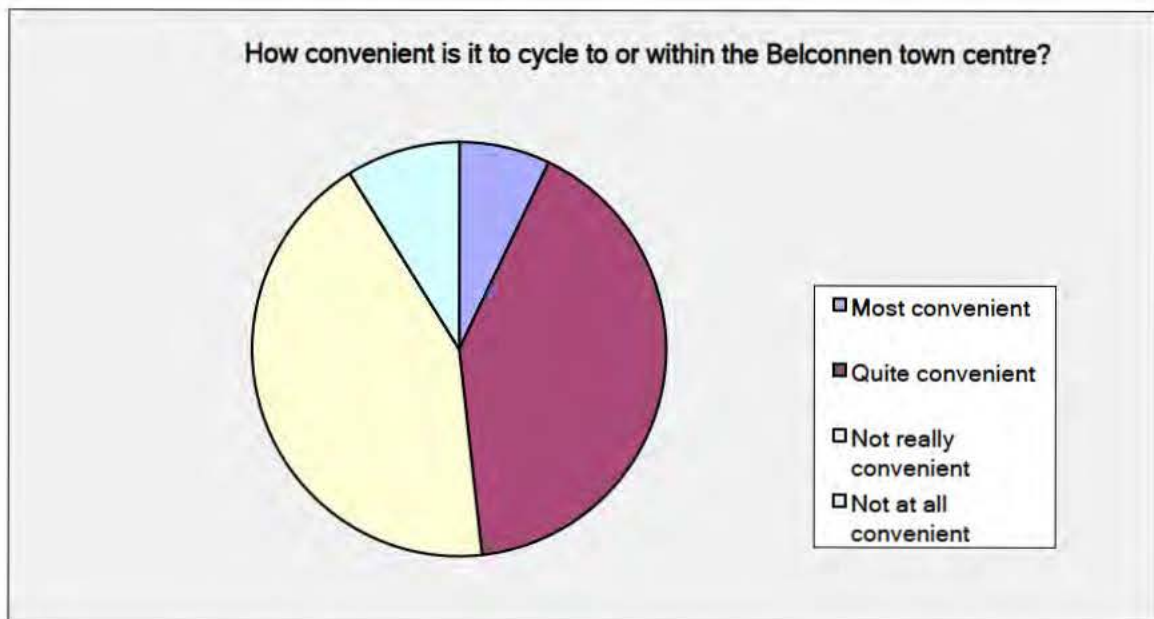
Once there, the difficulties escalate dramatically, with *almost 90%* having problems to some extent:



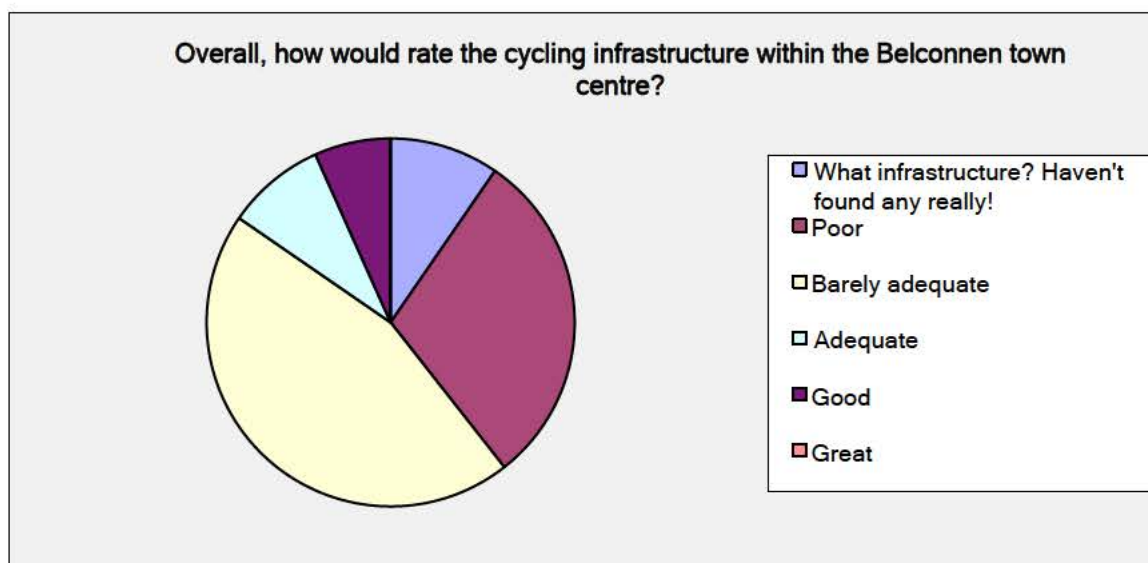
Almost two-thirds feel unsafe to some extent, and only 3% feel 'very safe':



A majority find cycling to or within the town centre inconvenient:



Only 15% rated the town centre infrastructure as fully adequate or better:



This small sample of comments from the survey reflects people's concerns and aspirations for the town centre:

Separate bike lanes would be the ideal & most safe for cyclists & pedestrians.

Going along Emu bank is unsafe. Getting from lower to upper Belconnen town is hard, and sometimes I walk the bike the whole way.

Dedicated cycle lanes and lower speed limits (40 kmh) throughout the centre not just a few sections..

More off road paths, more on road cycling lanes, priority order to put pedestrians first, then cyclists, then cars.

Separate lanes so I don't have to share roads with cars or footpaths with pedestrians.

Decent bike paths, less need to use roads on signalised intersections, lower traffic speeds.

The cycle infrastructure is patchy - partly bumpy paths, partly roads which seem a bit busy and unfriendly particularly with a couple of kids cycling with me.

A continuing path through from one side to the other would cut down transit time and increase safety.

A full bike path or bike lane the whole length of Benjamin Way.

Separated and dedicated bike lanes within the area and better road crossings to access it.

Bike lanes and physical separation from cars.

I use the footpath when in the town centre as do not feel safe on roads. I think a better marked shared bike and pedestrian system would be much better.

Not having to mix with pedestrians or vehicles.

Very discontinuous path with several road crossings. Not safe for children. Need a way to bypass town centre to get to lake AND a safer series of paths within the centre.

More bike lanes; completion of existing bike paths and lanes; right of way for bike paths where roads cross; more bikes crossings at intersections; less traffic on roads; slower traffic on roads.

Protected bike lanes or paths that are quick and direct.

The paths disappear once you're in the town centre and it's hard to get between different parts. More designated cycle lanes (preferably separated from the road) would help.

Clearly marked cycle access from Belconnen Way to the lake.

Dedicated bike lanes in the town centre. Perhaps physical barrier separating bike and car lanes. Such as a low kerb.

More dedicated routes into key hubs, especially the Mall.

Decent on and off road cycle paths, which connect in a usable network. Provision of at least basic bike parking facilities — at present it is very difficult to park bikes at all.

Intersections need to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

Good bike lanes on a few key routes and strong links to other bike paths. Bike paths seem to end and then there is no clear way to go on the roads around the town centre.

It would be good for me if there were bike paths or good on road lanes for commuting through or past Belconnen centre. I ride from Latham and through Belconnen to get to the Cook bike path.

Real planning with separate dedicated bicycle lanes, actual cycling infrastructure (better parking and crossings).

Bike paths the full length of Benjamin Way between Emu Bank and Belconnen Way.

Need bike path link (ideally dedicated) between Lake G and Benjamin/Belconnen Way intersection. Currently difficult and unsafe (including for pedestrians) to cycle North/South through Town Centre area.

More prominent markings for bike paths lower driving speeds around the Town Centre better directional signage for cyclists.

Cycle lane or path running North South.

More priority given to cyclist over cars.

Good infrastructure mostly, but then a bunch of missing links. These mean you go from safely riding on a shared path to mixing it with vehicles, right at the point where the vehicles are becoming more dense and everyone is busy looking everywhere but at the bike rider.

No bike paths traversing the town centre.

Safety concerns.

Poor bike path network .

Not many places to lock bike near Westfield Shopping Centre.

Very poor bike path network through the town centre and to key spots - markets, mall, library, swimming pool, other shops and facilities.

Lack of security for my parked bikes.

Cyclists have to give way to everything or are redirected - relegated to the footpath, down under subways, over ripple strips, zig zagging everywhere.

Trying to predict erratic pedestrian and vehicle interaction = easier to not cycle.

Fragmented/non-existent bike facilities.

System favours cars getting into multi-story carparks, not bike riders.

No bikeway link to civic bike paths through Belconnen. Eg flynn to Belco ok; Belco civic (via lake or AIS) ok but getting thru Belconnen is a pain.

Unsafe for young families.

Car is king - bikes a poor second.

Exposure to 'dooring' from parked cars.

Ill-defined place of bicycles in transport mix .

Car culture .

Perception of danger.

General hostility towards cyclists by high speed vehicles.

Terrible bike access to facilities in Belconnen town centre.

Need for a Civic style cycling loop around the Belconnen centre.

Not a 'bike friendly' environment.

Direct cycling routes into key hubs, plus a cycling loop around the Belconnen town centre.

Link ups using on road bike lanes. There are no obvious routes to, through and within the town centre. It desperately needs an attitude change by road designers and the community more broadly: road design must encompass bikes as the norm not the exception. Bike riders should not be relegated to what's left as a mish mash of after thoughts.

Better bike path network. It would be good if there was a clear north-south cycle route through the town centre (from lake Ginninderra to Jamison) and an east-west cycle route (from Page/Florey to AIS/Bruce CIT). These cycle routes should avoid roadways and provide access to key facilities and shopping areas in Belconnen.

Management of traffic within the Town Centre should recognize that cycling is an integral part of the overall transport solution, not a poor relative to other methods, particularly road vehicles which currently have preference over all else. All roads surrounding the Belconnen town area are major corridors and were specifically designed for motor vehicles. This is not encouraging use of cycles by people who are not confident and expert in interacting with and dealing with heavy traffic flows. Separation/dedication of bike lanes from traffic is an essential priority.

Re-opening the NW busway to cyclists and pedestrians, ideally with connections to all nearby bike path. After its disuse as a busway this road provided a very safe and fast way of reaching the mall, particularly in winter, that was in regular use by cyclist and pedestrians. It was much (underline much) safer than any other on-road path and more convenient and safer than the lake path.

Dedicated lanes connecting to the mall. Adequate bike parking and security. Better connected bike paths linking Town centre together. Especially commercial area with mall and beyond to Library block and UC.

I would cycle to the Mall much more often if I didn't have to mix it up with traffic en route.

Until things improve people will not want to ride into and around Belconnen town centre to the detriment of us all -- including the shop owners.

I find I can get around ok But have to compete aggressively with other traffic on the roads to make way. Pretty scary.



Poorly maintained shared path, Belconnen Way

Having cycled in Belgium and The Netherlands, there is much to be done by way of improved cycling infrastructure - from adequate cycleways, safer inter-action with motor traffic to better facilities for parking.

Belconnen could make itself a leader in cycling support. It could put cycling first in all urban design decisions. Belconnen should build it first and not rationalise design decisions based on current embedded interests. Westfield should foot a substantial part of any cost.

The surrounding areas are popular but to go e.g. from the Arts Centre to the markets or Bunnings its a bit of a rat run with no clear internal routes.

Scrappy, fragmented and dangerous. Need to create a safe environment for the '8 to 80' age group, both genders, ie where riding is not just for the 'strong and fearless' but one where it a safe and convenient option for your mother and daughter as part of their daily routine. Many people absolutely refuse to ride on roads, and you can understand why.

It is very easy to cycle to the town centre but not easy to cycle within the town centre - Once you get to the town centre, there is practically nothing for cyclists. You either have to ride with cars or with pedestrians. Both are dangerous and inconvenient - I am confident enough to ride on road with cars and I still have this problem. There are many poor links e.g. on-road paths suddenly disappear, cycle paths get randomly closed, shared paths are poorly-maintained and there are bad links to UC, mall, Calvary etc.

Getting to Belconnen is safe and convenient, getting around is difficult and dangerous.

[Bike paths] where can I start? They are virtually non-existent and run out at key places.

A north-south cycle route through the town centre (from lake Ginninderra to Jamison) and an east-west cycle route (from Page/Florey to AIS/Bruce CIT).

Making all MLAs and town planners ride a bike through the town centre several times a year.

Conclusions – Part 4

There is a consensus among experienced riders that routes in and through the Belconnen town centre are ill-defined, fragmented and dangerous. If experienced riders face these difficulties, there will be little hope of attracting less confident riders unless significant steps are taken to improve cycling in the area. Remedial options include protected cycleways (especially for north-south and east-west transit), a protected cycle loop around the town centre, greater priority for active travel, broader application of reduced speed limits, and improved signage.



Churches Centre, Benjamin Way — a choke-point for bikes heading north

PART 5: BROADER BELCONNEN CENTRE

A significant precinct

This relatively compact area (comprising the suburb of Bruce) contains many important Territory and national institutions, most of them directly related to education, health, fitness and the knowledge economy. It should lend itself well to cycling; there are some legacy shared paths (although not well connected) and the Aranda footbridge across Belconnen Way is well regarded. Yet the cycling mode share for Bruce in the 2011 Census was only 3.5% —better than the ACT average, but well below Canberra's inner north.

Difficult cycling access

This personal account from a Radford College student sums up how difficult it is for people on bikes to access and navigate the town centre and broader Belconnen centre:

While I'm not a regular cyclist as school is too far away, when I do ride into Belconnen Town Centre from Flynn, I find that it is near the Woolworths petrol station is where things start to get tricky. At this point, cyclists who have been cycling along Southern Cross Drive have to move across to the right of Luxton Street across 2 lanes of traffic to get onto a bike path. Those cyclists who have been following the bike path through Florey can make it as far as the traffic lights at Luxton and Lathlain and continue down Luxton.

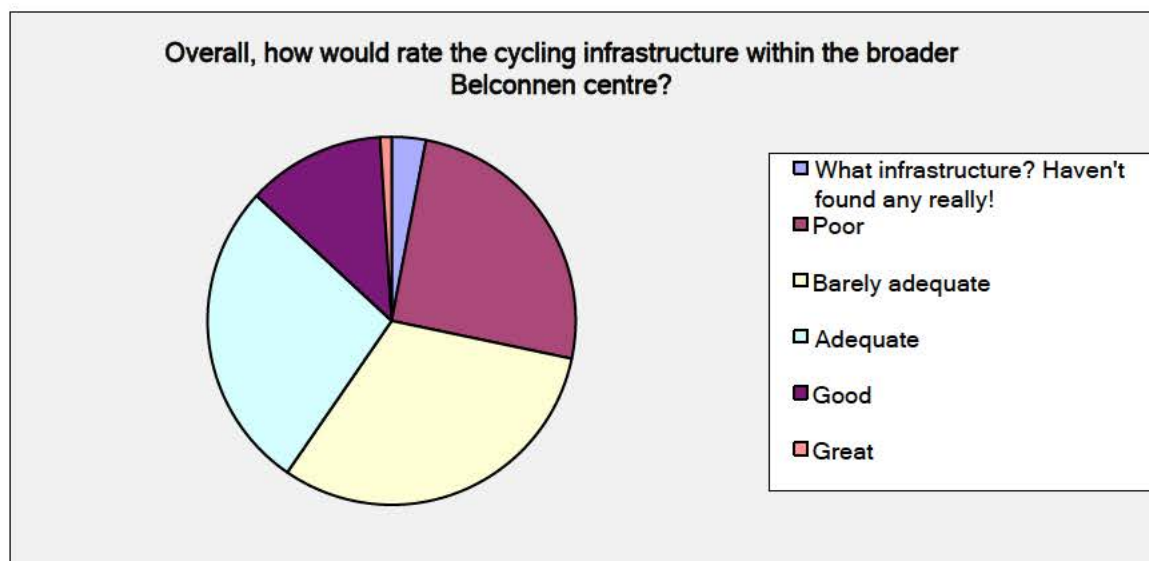
However, if they want to turn right into Lathlain, there is no safe way to get to the bike path without having to dismount and cross two lots of traffic lights. Cyclists end up cutting across the intersection, frustrated with the lights arrangement, which only makes it more dangerous for them. Travelling along Lathlain Street, the bike path simply stops at Cohen Street. All the cyclists going to the offices in this area of Belconnen end up doing some pretty unsafe riding around here.

I am at Radford College and my family have tried to cycle there from Flynn, but we found it rather complicated to work out the best way, and initially ended up lost in University of Canberra, coming up from John Knight Park. This area is poorly sign posted, as are other areas. Signposting is definitely something that could be improved in Belconnen.

Belconnen town centre is an area that is very car based, so any changes that the Master Plan can invoke to make the area more user friendly for cyclists is sensible and welcome.

Findings of the online survey

60% of respondents find the cycling infrastructure barely adequate or worse:



The following small sample of comments from the survey and elsewhere reflects people's views on cycling access to the major institutions in the area.

University of Canberra campus

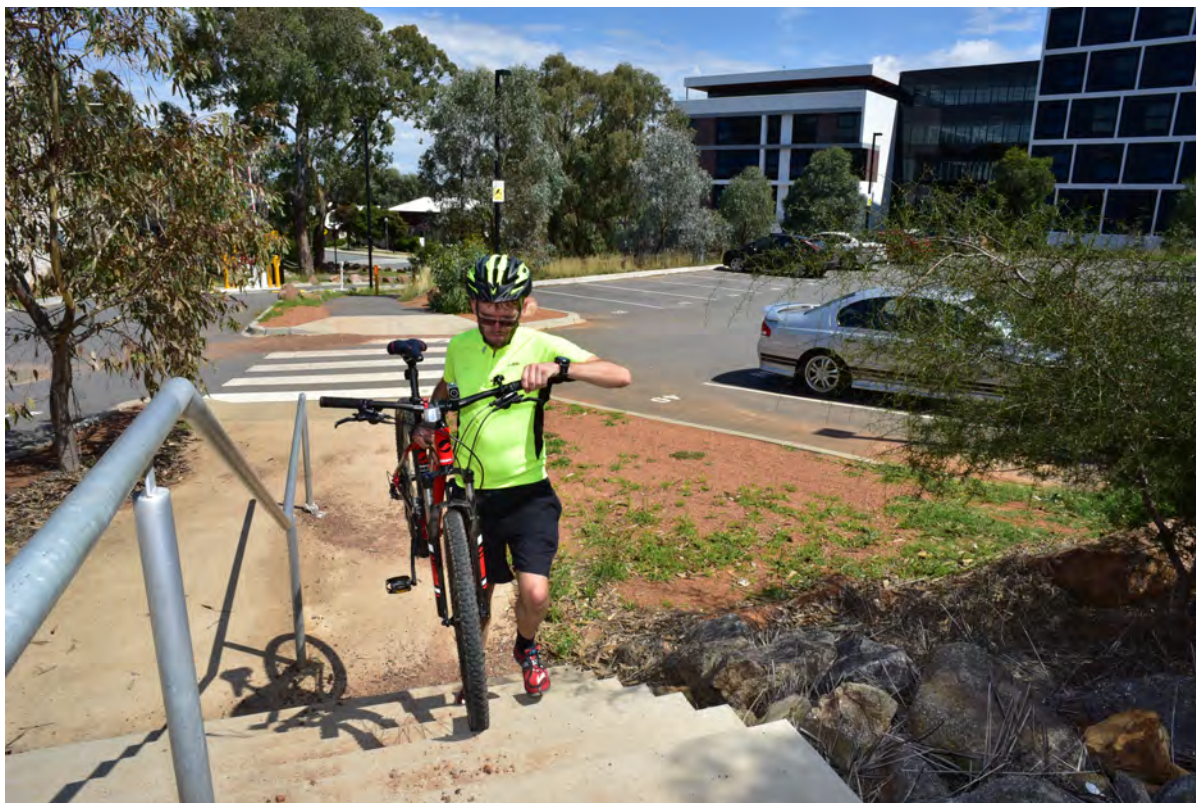
GTA Consultants has provided this account of the challenges faced in improving cycling facilities on the UC campus:

We looked mainly at cycling and walking facilities within the University, but there were some access issues identified. These included:

Campus access points

- A shared path connects the campus path network to the footpath on College Street behind Building 13. Although it no longer connects to the recently removed signalised pedestrian crossing of College Street, this off-road path is an important access from south and east of the campus. The path connection is quite narrow, and poorly maintained. The crossing of Pinnaroo Street is not well marked for road users or path users. There is no lighting at the crossing. Pinnaroo Street, the connecting path and the crossing are part of the College Street road reserve (and likely to be the responsibility of Roads ACT).
- The Kirinari Street entrance from College Street is adequate for riders sharing the wide footpath. The road, at approximately 7m is not wide enough for a car to overtake a cyclist without crossing the centreline. Many cyclists would be uncomfortable cycling on this 40km/h road.
- The Allawoona Street entrance from Ginninderra Drive provides shared paths and bike lanes; however these facilities end abruptly at Pantowora Street. At approximately 7m wide, this is not a safe facility for cyclists.

There were many issues within the campus. The main one seemed to be the difficulty of accessing the Concourse.



Negotiating the University of Canberra campus

Survey comments

Cycling in and thru Uni of Canberra is particularly bad. The footpath and on-road cycle lane along Allawoona St., coming off Ginninderra Drive, both end abruptly. There seems to be more cyclists at UCan since the introduction of paid parking without any improvement to assist cyclists.

Difficult to ride from the lake to UC.

There is no longer a bike path that does not include stairs any more.

Poor path into Belconnen via Lake Ginninderra. Path on College Street is awful and not adequate. Cycling paths within UC also awful and confusing.

It is impossible to ride a bicycle through the campus without hitting stairs. There should be a cycle route through the middle.

Terrible access for bikes.

No clear pathway through the uni, need to walk down stairs etc to access key buildings. Have made an effort with bike racks.

Needs a proper bike path connecting the lake to the uni, then through the uni to both Kaleen and across Haydon Dve.

Since the many new buildings have been constructed, I find it difficult to navigate through, so now avoid.

Not much thought to routes - too many stairs gates traffic - car orientated. Limited parking, poor lighting.

Sometimes I take the bike path from John Knight Memorial Park at Lake Ginninderra upto University of Canberra but then there's no easy way to get onto College St or Hayden Drove from that path through the university. I have to get off my bike and walk down some steps.

There does not appear to be any easy way of getting thru the uni from west to east. For a cycle friendly place, that's really poor. There is a tortuous path (route) but it lacks signage.

No simple path through the university.

I lost the cycle path through UC during building works and haven't been back.

Cannot transverse through UC, have to travel around it.

Too many stairs, no direct route from Lake gininderra to Radford.

Cycling thru and around UCan is not easy. The access from Ginninderra Drive along Allawoona St is poor with both the footpath and on road cycle lanes ending abruptly. There seems to be an increase in cyclists with the introduction of paid parking but few cycling routes.

Poor lighting.

I find riding through UC difficult. I almost always find myself at a flight of steps, or a narrow foot path or a dead end. This may be because of temporary blockages resulting from construction activity. At a minimum better signposting for cyclists is desirable.

It is difficult to access UC. I have also cycled through it and found this is difficult, there are even some parts with mandatory steps! There are some missing links with "desire" dirt tracks.

Canberra Institute of Technology

Survey comments

No thought or priority has ever been given to cycling here, this is why cars have become such a problem because everyone is forced to use one!

Terr ble access for bikes.

No bike path or bike lane direct to the Belconnen Centre to comment on. Does link to Haydon Drive and Ginninderra Drive.

Needs better delineated cycle paths.

Australian Institute of Sport

Survey comments

Very good path around rear of AIS, but poor paths on west side.

Battye road has plenty of room for segregated cycle paths.

Terr ble access for bikes unless you use the path from Civic or Kaleen.

No bike path or bike lane direct to the Belconnen Centre to comment on. Does link to Haydon Drive and Ginninderra Drive.

I have not had any incidents but sometimes I feel unsafe at the speeds cars travel on Battye St as I ride my bike on the road there often.

Since the closure of the direct cycle path from Kaleen to the AIS there is no friendly cycle path to access the AIS. There is no path from Baybrooke St. across to the AIS Pool area or to join the O'Connor Ridge path.

Difficult access, dangerous & unpleasant road crossings on 80 km/h trunk roads.



Waiting to cross Haydon Dr, Bruce — difficult at peak hour

Calvary Hospital

Survey comments

Totally impossible to get her by bike safely!

Poor cycling routes into this key destination. Really hard to navigate across Haydon Drive/Belconnen Way intersection. Aranda/Bruce cycle bridge is wonderful.

Too much provision for car parking, not enough done to encourage people to come by other modes of transport.

Cycle access to the hospital is difficult - and limited to narrow footpaths.

Difficult access, dangerous & unpleasant road crossings on 80 km/h trunk roads

It is difficult to cycle to Calvary because of the off-road paths disappear and Hayden Drive is impossible to cycle on. You have the choice of a narrow footpath to get the final way to Calvary.

Is there any bike access to Calvary? I can think of none. It is almost impossible to get there by bike without risking the possibility of getting the final distance by ambulance. Access from Haydon Drive is a nightmare even by car and all facilities are uphill from any direction. Within the precinct there is no road bike lane and roads are narrow and overcrowded. I cannot think of any bike parking arrangements.

Canberra Stadium

Survey comments

Poor paths into this important destination, except from east.

Terrible access for bikes from the west.

Traffic arrangements before and after events render Canberra Stadium a suicide risk for cyclists. Pathway lighting is hopeless and pedestrian density on the shared paths makes any bike usage pointless.

Insufficient bike racks.



Descending College St – no bike lane

Radford College

Survey comments

Bike path along Haydon Drive needs a lot of work. Path up College Street a disgrace. Much more work needed on safe walking and cycling routes into this large school - and adjacent university.

Too many children are driven to school. We need to discourage this and get kids walking and riding to school. Segregated cycle paths from several kilometres away are required as well as restricting car access to the front of the school.

Should have better cycling access from the Belconnen centre side. Path is not wide enough up the hill and almost non-existent down the hill. Not safe and therefore not encouraging for students. My two boys were not encouraged to ride to school for these reasons.

College St needs better bike paths.

There seems to be no encouragement for public to cycle here.

Bike path and lane completely vanish on College street. There's an area where cyclist have no option except road or footpath-on a rise, and in conjunction with a form one lane-very dangerous.

It was easy to access the back of Radford College until this path was removed. It is not easy to access via College Street. Large numbers of cyclists and pedestrians use this road but it still has no on-road cycle lane, no off-road cycle lane, a narrow footpath on one side and a dirt track desire line on the other side. It is 60, with buses. It is dangerous and should be improved.

Missing links in the broader Belconnen centre

Survey comments

There are so many places it is almost impossible to list. But if new routes are constructed they MUST be direct, otherwise cyclists won't take them (anymore than motorists would if roads were indirect).

The whole place needs improved links to the bike network -- let's see a good plan and its implementation.

Link to the market and a link from the lake through to the jamison centre and the path on Bindubi way. Stronger links

from paths in Bruce to Belconnen Centre.

There needs to be a way to get through the Belconnen Centre as directly and safely as possible.

Everywhere should be connected - bike use should be integral to traffic planning - all kids should be able to ride to school and activities safely as with adults and older people - traffic calming and route design critical.

A decent path through Belconnen town centre joining up to the CIT and AIS path.

There is a path of sorts between the locations mentioned, but a proper crossing of Haydon Drive would be of immense benefit. Obviously an overpass near Purdie Street would be the optimum since this would serve CIT, Radford and CU people as well as Calvary while providing a safe link over Haydon Drive to the path behind the Stadium. Failing this Pedestrian/Bike lights near Purdie Street are highly desirable to knot a safer network together.

A direct path from UC to AIS.

There needs to be a network of safe bike paths right across Belconnen.

Better east-west bike links.

Easier crossing of Haydon Drive between UC/Radford and CIT / Calvary. Over or underpass to make commuting less disruptive as it is often difficult to cross during peak hour.

Past the University of Canberra, between the AIS/CIT and Belconnen town centre.

Direct trunk path from AIS to Belconnen TC via UC, with bridges across Haydon Dr and Aikman Dr.

Belconnen Town Centre to Calvary Hospital.

College Street.

Protected bike lanes from Haydon Drive, along College St and into the town centre, with a proper protected crossing at Haydon Drive.

Fix the continuity of paths!!

Apart from actually implementing some bike infrastructure generally, modify the traffic into and out of the town centre. It's all very chaotic.

A more strategic approach to the whole layout. Great infrastructure let down by gaps at critical places, and routes that go significantly away from the direct line.

General survey comments about the broader Belconnen centre

Please improve this urgently, it needs priority above roads and cars (which has been the obvious priority in the past) otherwise you will just encourage more cars to clog the Centre.

Take a hub and spokes approach to key destinations, and link them with a ring route.

Get on with fixing things for people to ride bikes -- we want active transport to be a reality!

I tend to avoid it where possible because of the inadequate linkages.

More use of shared streets with 20 km/h limit. Extension of 40 km/h zones. Put bikes & walking first, cars second.

I can't comment as much as I would like because in the past I've found the cycle infrastructure to be so poor I just avoid the place,

Cycling infrastructure in Belconnen is like most other infrastructure in Belconnen, cheap and poorly thought out.

I feel very alone cycling in Belconnen. We have a lot of work to do on cycling culture in Belco!

I asked my wife what she thought of it. She is not as much of a rider as me and needs cycling to be safe and convenient to do it. Her immediate response was - "It's not safe".

The improvements in Civic and elsewhere in Canberra are terrific, and now more people are cycling every day. So let's get Belconnen up to scratch.

Cycle network zones

The priority is to provide safe, quick, pleasant and convenient bicycle off-road routes between the Belconnen town centre and its catchment.

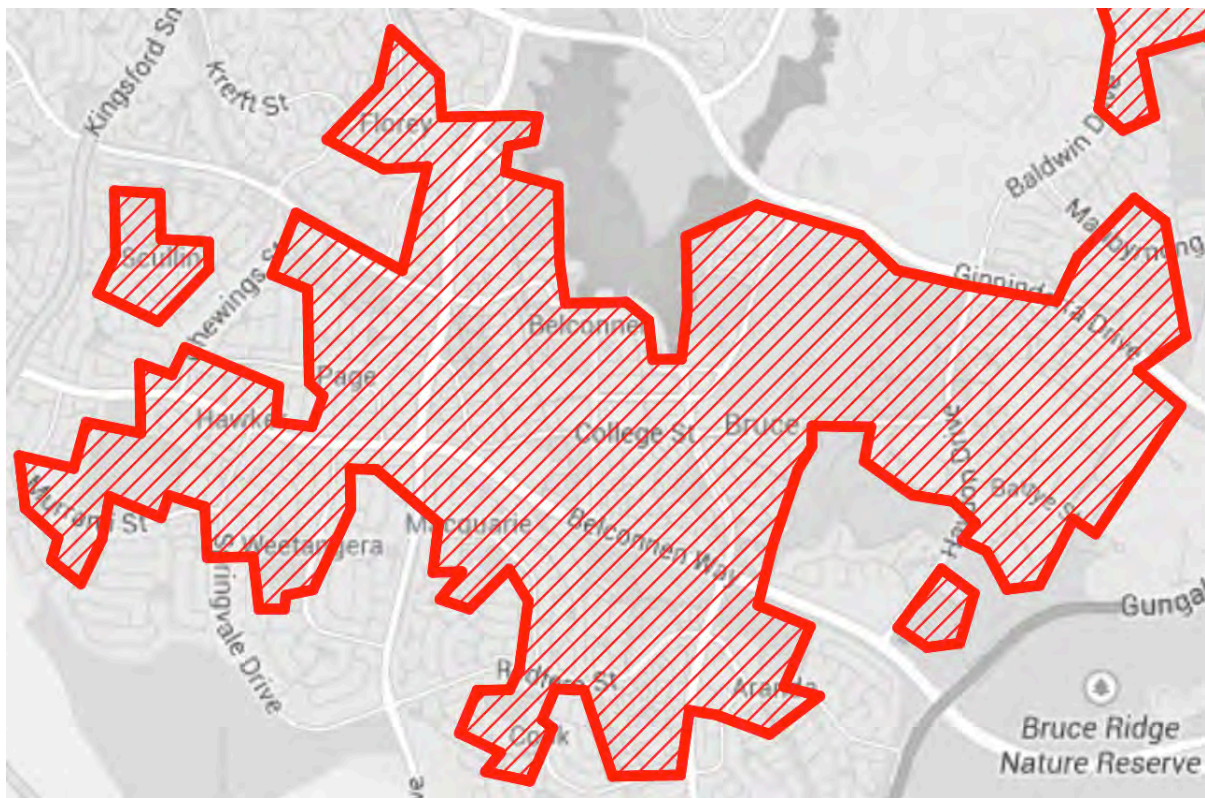
To help identify priority areas for development of the off-road network, Pedal Power ACT has mapped inner Belconnen zones from the Territory Plan that are NOT low-density residential (RZ1) or industrial. The zones therefore include all medium and high density residential areas, all commercial shopping and office areas, all public institutions such as schools, colleges and universities, and all urban parkland that is intensively used, such as lake shores and sports fields. The mapped zones:

- include identifiable medium- and high-density development areas;
- contain the great majority of Belconnen's current and future cycling destinations; and
- have the greatest density of current and future population.

This zone mapping is a quick and accurate way of identifying where cycling has the greatest potential to happen in Belconnen, and therefore where resources should be directed to create the dense networks of quality cycle routes which are required to get people cycling. It makes it easy to:

- see where off-road trunk routes are required to join these areas together; and
- identify in established areas the parts that benefit most from cycle infrastructure improvements due to an increase in population through urban infill.

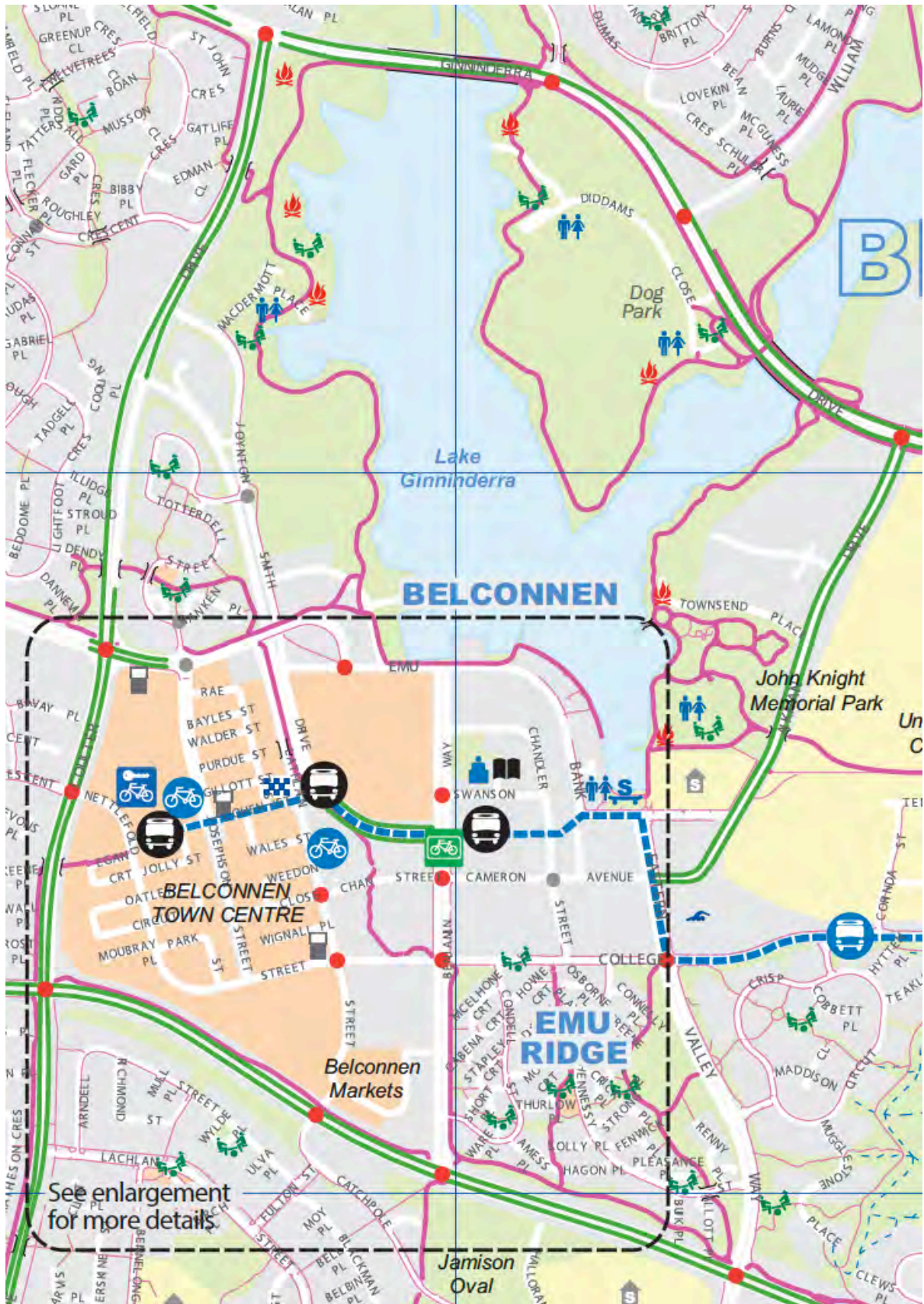
Significantly, most of the master plan study area shows up as a prime candidate for intensive cycling development. Although not within the study area, this view also highlights the importance of effective cycle-friendly links between the broader Belconnen centre and its catchment in areas such as Florey, Hawker, Macquarie, Aranda and Kaleen.



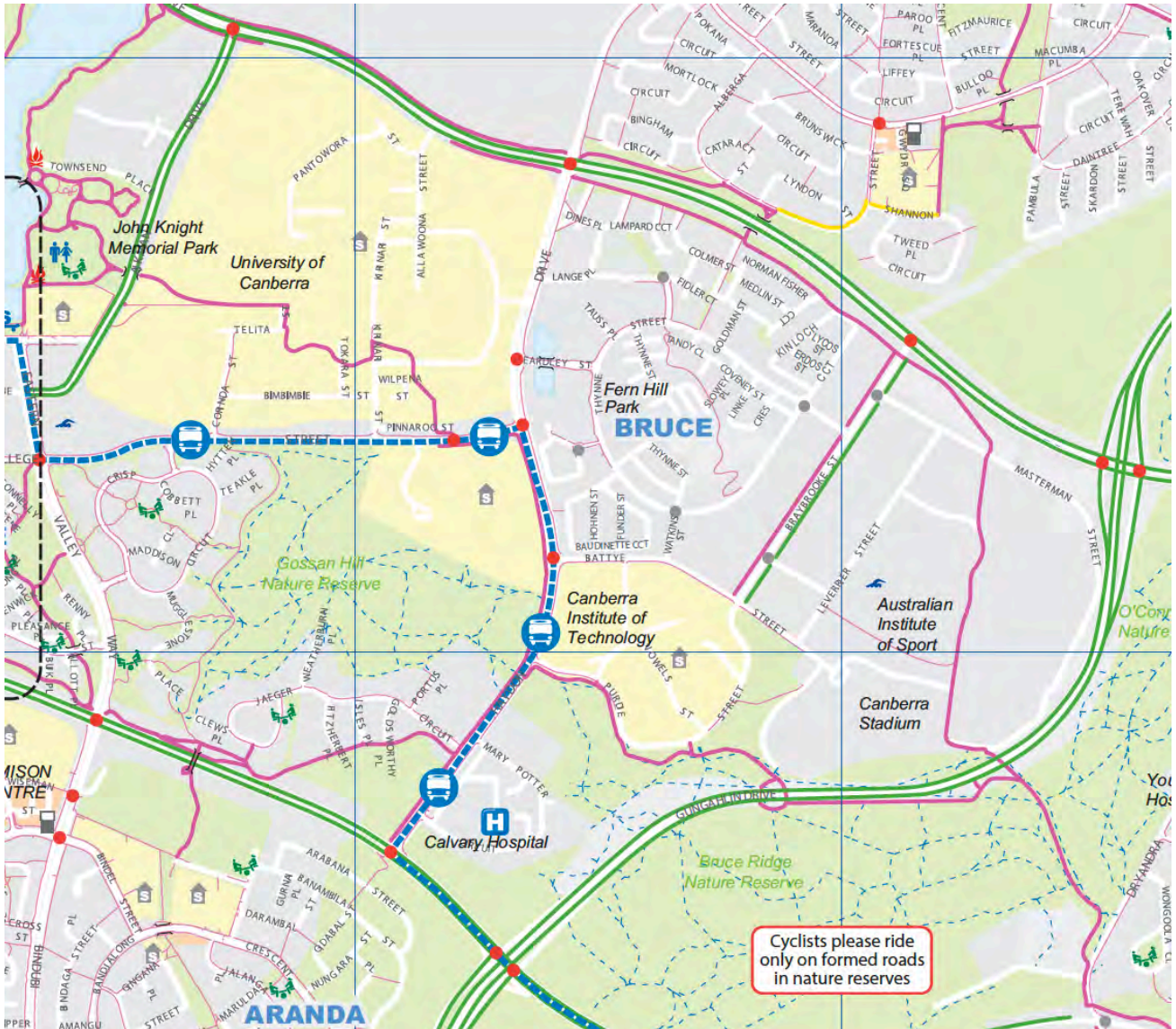
Conclusions – Part 5

People are looking for more effective east-west cycling links between, and access to, the major institutions in the broader Belconnen centre, and with the town centre itself. These links have the potential to maximise cycling participation in the entire study area.

BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE
(extract from ACT Cycling and Walking Map)

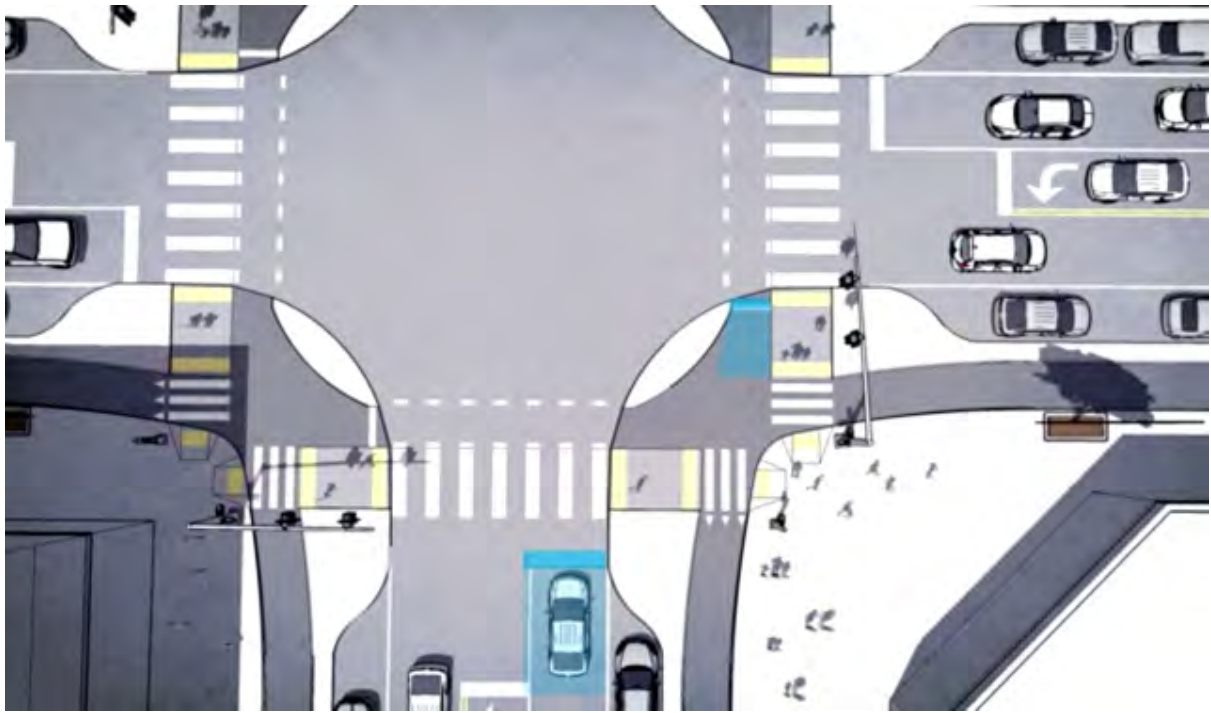


BROADER BELCONNEN CENTRE
(extract from ACT Cycling and Walking Map)



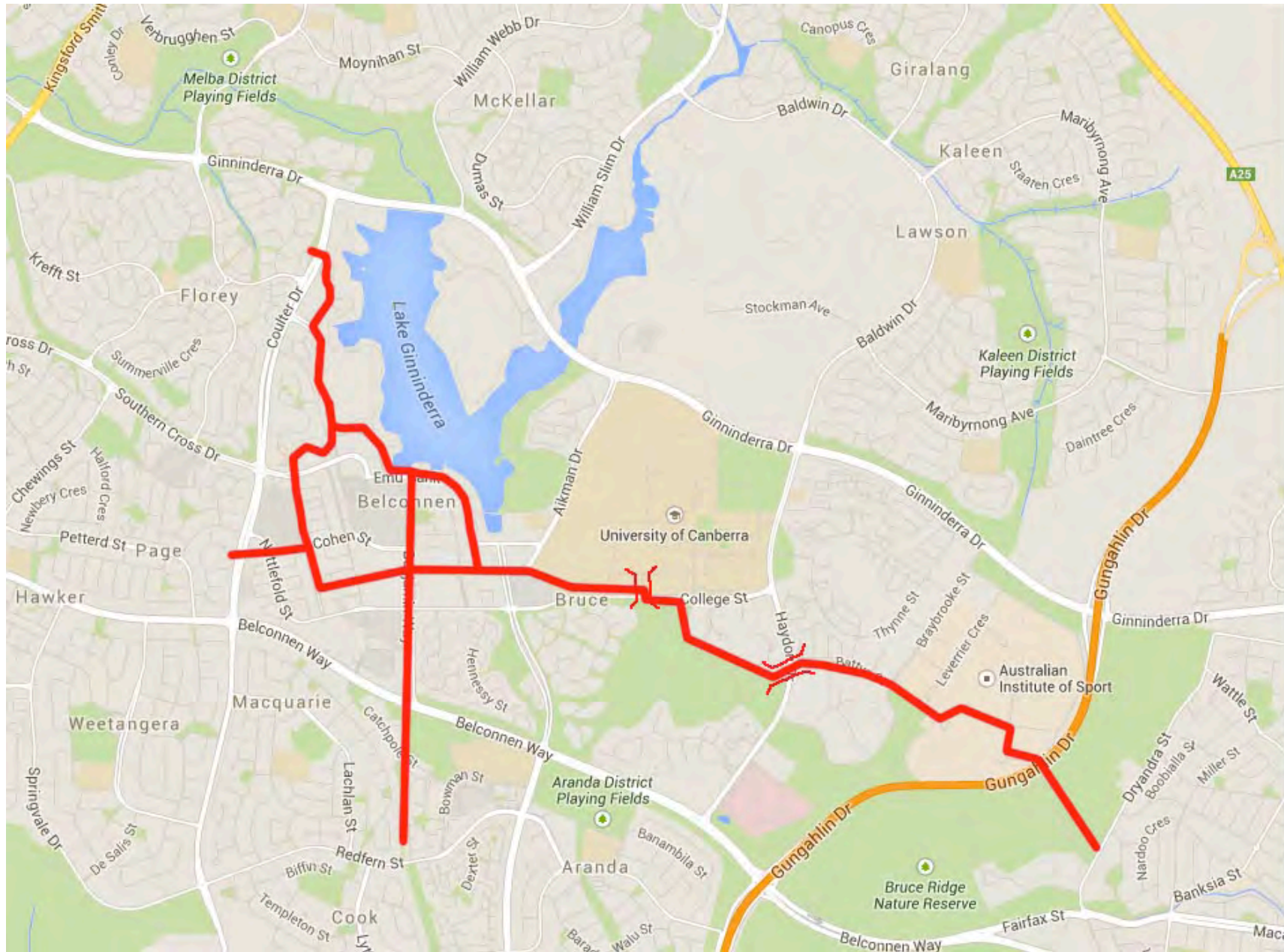
ILLUSTRATIONS OF PREFERRED DESIGN OPTIONS
FOR URBAN CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE









PROTECTED CYCLE HIGHWAYS NEEDED IN CENTRAL BELCONNEN








Belconnen Master Plan
Strategic Planning Division
Environment and Planning Directorate
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601

By email

Belconnen town centre master plan

Introduction

, I have watched the evolution of the town centre from its inception. Over this time, there have been changes in philosophy and policy which have created a mish-mash out of what started as a thoughtfully-planned urban centre. The main change, it seems to me, has been a desertion of the concept that Canberra should be different and, as a twentieth-century city, should avoid the problems of the old cities. Instead we have a capitulation to the forces that have traditionally undermined sound planning principles. Excuses for this have included exponential world population growth, climate change and increased demand for fossil fuels when resources are becoming scarcer. Added to these are the ACT Government's desire to exploit revenue from land development as quickly as possible and generally in an ad hoc fashion.

Any master plan needs to have a clear idea of future needs but it is not clear that this exists in Canberra. There is conflict between the approaches to accommodating population growth, mitigating the effects of climate change and implementing transport options most suited to future constraints.

As use of fossil fuels declines, then more employment opportunities in the town centre should be encouraged or, at least, the future potential for such development should be facilitated to minimise the amount of travelling needed by workers. Instead, all possible sites are being developed for residential in a rush, under the mantra of densification and revenue need for Treasury coffers. As climate change brings warmer conditions to the region, new buildings in the town centre provide little or no space for greenery or trees. Densification of this kind will increase the heat island effect.

The so-called 'mixed development' allowed in commercial zones under current planning laws is a farce. The reality is that much of the Belconnen town centre is becoming largely residential, surrounding what have become isolated areas of commercial, such as the former ATO building on the corner of Cameron Avenue and Chandler Street.

Specific issues

The location of the Belconnen town centre presents challenges that are not amenable to the kind of solutions that might work in other towns. Firstly, unlike other cities or ACT town centres, Belconnen is not built on a flat landscape but across a small drainage basin with a low ridge running north-south and high ground to the west, which creates challenges to connections, both practical and visual. The low ridge, for instance, has isolated the southern lake foreshore from the main commercial hub. Benjamin Way follows the drainage line to the lake.

Secondly, the relocation of the site for the main shopping mall from the eastern side of Benjamin Way to the western side, when the bus interchange had already been designed and constructed to serve a shopping centre on the eastern side, upset the whole town centre design. The attempt to correct this by relocating the interchange to three separate bus stations along Cohen Street, has effectively bisected the commercial centre with a harsh, partially-incised, wide expanse of bitumen, which will become even less people-friendly if the light rail is to be built along it. Upper Cohen Street was not designed originally to carry the amount of traffic it is now required to handle, exemplified by the zigzag system of lane markings to allow some kerbside parking and access to the bus depot.

Thirdly, like other commercial/service centres around Canberra, Belconnen is not located on a major road artery. Traditionally, older cities have grown up along the main road of town. This has facilitated direct transport. Canberra's main roads were designed to be free of obstructions to traffic, to solve the congestion problems manifest in older cities. Unlike other town centres in Canberra, the area of Belconnen attracting the greatest traffic was not located adjacent to any nearby main road but well away from them. Locating the commercial centre so far off the main road means that there is no efficient, direct access. With hindsight, it might have been preferable to locate the commercial area alongside Eastern Valley Way and through to Benjamin Way. Putting residential around the southern part of the lake would have been more valued.

Fourthly, like other urban centres around the world, the enclosed shopping mall has drawn most activity into itself at the expense of the remaining town centre. The extension of Westfield's Belconnen Mall can be seen as a major planning error in this respect. Likewise, building a three-storeyed car park on the lake side of the mall was a gross misuse of valuable land. Indeed, building the mall in that location can be seen as a gross misuse of valuable land.

Fifthly, the location of the Belconnen Arts Centre on the foreshore appears to part of the unsuccessful attempt to expand the nightclub/restaurant area along the foreshore. In some respects, it might have been more appropriate to build the arts centre adjacent to Margaret Timpson Park, so that it would have been part of the 'town hall area' along with the library and community centre and church. Instead, it is rather out on a limb with no convenient parking and no convenient access to public transport. For many local residents, focussed as most are on the mall, it is probably out of sight and out of mind.

Sixthly, a combination of densification and transport policies, along with the desire for land revenue, has led to a reduction in car parking spaces in the Belconnen town centre. The paternalistic, autocratic belief that making car driving difficult by removing car parks will force people to use public transport is naïve and not supported by the evidence. This is

effectively telling people that they need to revert to the lifestyles of a century ago and forego the flexibility of 20th and 21st century modes of transport. The evidence around Canberra and, especially, in North Canberra shows that providing inadequate parking facilities simply leads to the congested roads typical of towns built before the 20th century. The different needs of the 21st century will inevitably result in the development of different forms of transport, including all-electric small vehicles that will still need parking facilities.

My preferences

1. A conscious attempt should be made to create a cohesive ‘town hall area’ around Margaret Timpson Park. The portion of Benjamin Way in front of Margaret Timpson Park should be redesigned to better connect that part of the town centre to the shopping mall. Given that the central island is located there because it is a drainage line, it could be expanded to encompass the adjacent traffic lane on both carriageways of Benjamin Way, leaving one lane of traffic on each side of the central strip. This would allow planting of low shrubs to improve the appearance and connection of the central island to both the park and the mall.
2. There is some gossip about the possibility of the ‘town hall area’ being moved to the services area of Belconnen, specifically on the site of the former police station and remand centre. This would definitely downgrade the ‘town hall area’ to a run-of-the-mill, uninspired centre, somewhat like the Woden Library area. Lathlain Drive is an uninspiring road to be the main street of the town centre. It has no beginning and no end, just the T-intersection with Luxton Street and the awkward dogleg beside Bunnings (another example of ad hoc planning). Benjamin Way should be enhanced as the main street, not abandoned, and the active frontages designed into the eastern side of the Westfield Belconnen Mall should be re-activated, not abandoned to the deadness now evident under current Westfield policy.
3. For anyone sitting at the Community Bus Station, the tall buildings of Sentinel and Altitude dominate but are not excessive. Construction of similarly tall buildings on the Community Centre car park, however, would dramatically change the ambience. Not only would the bus station feel enclosed and oppressive to waiting passengers but, in afternoons, the whole road along the bus station would be in shadow. On winter afternoons, this could be particularly cold and unpleasant. The decision in the 2008 Design Concept Report for the BTC specifying 60 metres building height on section 152, needs to be reconsidered in the overall context of the surrounding environment. Additionally, allowing such tall buildings on this site would create a great wall of tall buildings running east west across the line of sight to and from Mt Painter and other high points. The tall building on the University of Canberra campus already intrudes on the view of Black Mountain. The master plan should indicate some cohesion in the permissible building heights across the town centre, having regard to solar access, environmental amenity and landscape in the context of Canberra’s being a “city in the landscape”. The trend of the valley ridgelines at Lake Ginninderra is about 630 metres above sea level. This might be considered as the maximum height for future buildings in the town centre so as to retain sight of the hills from all aspects of Belconnen.
4. Adequate parking facilities need to be provided for both residential and commercial premises. Developers of high-rise or other residential buildings should be required to

provide parking in accordance with the guidelines and not allowed exemptions of any kind on the spurious belief that everyone will be catching public transport in future. No one can exactly foretell what the future will hold but, once a parking space has been alienated, it is impossible to reinstate it if future needs demand it. Reducing parking spaces will leave Canberra in the same situation as old cities built before people had the ability to move freely over distances. Is population growth going to reduce our standard of living?

5. Lake Ginninderra should be protected and enhanced as a major recreation area for Belconnen. There are excellent playgrounds for children but the main facility for adults, the round-the-lake path is inadequate for the number and variety of users. This path should be widened so that it can be comfortably and safely shared by walkers, runners and cyclists. The part of the path along the Emu Bank foreshore needs redesign to allow passage of these various users without conflict.
6. The service area between Lathlain and Coulter Drives should remain restricted to services as introduction of other uses will inevitably lead to services being priced or forced out. In particular, residential should not be considered in this area. This should be retained as an area of employment with no creeping residential slowly making inroads.

Conclusion

It is essential that the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan provide a thorough guide for development of the area that works well into the future – one that works better than currently exists. This means a trade-off between competing demands but always keeping in mind the need to avoid the mistakes of earlier planners and the problems in old towns while considering future demand such as climate change and transport change. A clear overall plan is needed to avoid further ad hoc decisions that work against a successful town centre.

Thank you,



**Belconnen Town Centre
Master Plan 2015 – Submission**



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Preface

The town centre has everything I need to be entertained, to shop, socialise and to enjoy some sporting pursuits. Past development has been a credit to the town centre.

With the increase in population densities, I recognise that the town centre will need to change over the next ten years to meet the demands of a bigger population. The challenge in my view is how to meet those demands whilst retaining the amenity of the area.

My submission to the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan will demonstrate a number of areas in which I think the town centre can improve upon previous ideas.

I am hopeful that this consultation will inspire those in charge of the future development of my town centre to build upon an already established fine set of principals so that in ten years time the town centre still meets all my needs as it does today.

Connectivity and Access

Principle

The bicycle culture within the town centre needs to be maintained and enhanced. Having connected paths brings Cyclists to the town centre, enables them to ride safely and access cafes easily with their cohort at the end of their cycling leg. Having a safe riding environment would promote more organised activities as well as casual riders, including that of families, in and around the town centre.

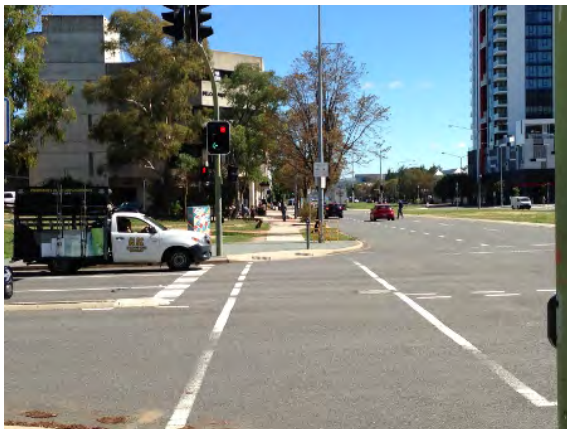
Objectives

- Shared pedestrian / bicycle paths within the town centre should be constructed to link existing paths.
- Shared pedestrian / bicycle paths should be built off-street where practical.
- Shared pedestrian / bicycle paths should enable riders to traverse the town centre along major thoroughfares in, out and around the town centre.

Artefacts and Examples

Benjamin Way

- A bicycle path that doesn't link is Benjamin Way. Between College Street and Belconnen Way the shared path is off-street on the Northern side. The shared path between College Street and Emu Bank is on the Southern side, and is in parts impractical and dangerous.



Picture 2: View North at the corner of Chan Street and Belconnen Way



Picture 1: View South at the corner of Chan Street and Benjamin Way

- The following two pictures illustrate the hazards that cyclists face when riding on the “approved” path:

- Picture 2, demonstrates the approach by cyclists to the shops on the Western side of Belconnen Way. After crossing Chan Street, cyclists need to navigate a half-circle of roadway that leads to a small off-street car park, before needing to navigate two to three steps to be on the same level of the shops or to avoid the steps, run into trees.
- Picture 1, shows the set of stairs that is dangerous to the unwary rider if travelling Southbound and a ramp quite unsuited to inexperienced cyclists.
- In summary, having a section of shared pedestrian / bicycle path along this section of Belconnen Way is totally unacceptable.

Emu Bank

- The shared pedestrian / bicycle path that is routed along Emu Bank in front of Belconnen Arts Centre should be relocated to the foreshore of the lake. The intention is to improve safety.
- Patrons of the Arts Centre and the retail environment are pitted against cyclists and runners as the shared pedestrian bicycle path merges into the pavement at two points along Emu Bank due to the incomplete development of the foreshore, as demonstrated in Picture 3 and Picture 4.



Picture 3: Convergence of foreshore path to street, looking West along Emu Bank from the Belconnen Arts Centre



Picture 4: Convergence of paths, leading from behind and in front of The Boardwalk heading West to the Belconnen Arts Centre

- In summary, development of the foreshore at the Belconnen Arts Centre would enhance the amenity of the area as improve the safety of those citizens patronising the area.

Belco Skate Park

- Cyclists transiting Emu Bank via the shared bicycle / pedestrian path at the Southern end of the lake should be able to continue their journey between the Lighthouse Bar and Belco Skate Park in a direct manner.
- Design decisions have inhibited cyclists from being able to traverse in that manner and put the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at risk:
- Picture 5 shows the path between the Lighthouse Bar and the skate park. The path is too narrow to be shared with cyclists and pedestrians.

- Picture 6 shows the design decision to have a path that is too narrow and a set of stairs that leads pedestrians into trees.



Picture 5: The view North along the path at the rear of the Soundy Close building close to the foreshore



Picture 6: Looking South towards Belconnen Skate Park

- In summary, this section of the lake foreshore needs to be redesigned so that pedestrians and cyclists can safely enjoy the area.

Solutions

- Have the bike path on Benjamin Way relocated so that it travels down the entire Eastern side, as shown in Picture 7, as the available space for such a path is significantly greater than where the path currently is. An alternative would be to utilise one side of the grassed centre strip from College Street to Emu Bank.



Picture 7: View North on the Eastern side of Belconnen Way, near the corner of Chandler Street

- Complete the foreshore development on the Southern End of Lake Ginninderra and include a shared pedestrian / bicycle path along it to improve amenity and safety for all that use the paths. The two convergence points onto Emu Bank will still be needed but the foreshore path will entice cyclists and runners away from the pedestrian traffic accessing Belconnen Arts Centre and The Boardwalk.

- Redevelop the path between the Lighthouse Bar and Belco Skate Park so that area for cyclists and pedestrians can be safely shared and to allow a direct route onto the Southern end of Emu Bank. Development of the area should be in a style similar to that of the shared pedestrian / bicycle path along the Emu Bank foreshore behind the commercial precinct, as illustrated in Picture 8.



Picture 8: View South of the shared pedestrian / bicycle path along the Emu Bank foreshore behind the commercial precinct

Culture and Physical Activities – Emu Bank

Principle

Cultural and physical activities are innate to the people that live in and visit Belconnen. Enhancing the cultural offerings and provisioning a hub to support the base of a wide range of physical activities would expand the number of groups utilising the area and contribute to the intellect and physical fitness of the area.

Objectives

- Provision for an identifiable cultural and community sporting hub along the foreshore between the area surrounding Evelyn Parker Place to The Boardwalk on Emu Bank.
- Enhance the Belconnen Arts Centre precinct

Artefacts and Examples

- The lake foreshore development is incomplete:
 - Picture 9 shows an incomplete section of the lake foreshore and the idleness of the lot on the Eastern side of Belconnen Arts Centre



Picture 9: Empty land on the Eastern side of Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC)

- Funding inaction for the Belconnen Arts Centre stage II construction is impeding the centres ability to offer a fuller range of cultural and artistic offerings.
 - The Belconnen Arts Centre is a pivotal cultural icon to Canberra which should continue to underpin a wide range of exhibitions, music, art and craft and other activities led by community organisations.
- Underutilised space, such as the Water Police building station should be redeveloped to be used as a base for sporting groups enabling easier access to the lake precinct.

- In summary:
 - The Belconnen Arts Centre Stage II construction should be funded immediately to commence construction.
 - The area that contains the now disused Water Police Station presents an opportunity for local sporting groups to have a hub to enable easier access to the lake precinct.

Solutions

- Complete the Belconnen Arts Centre Stage II construction and related foreshore development.
- Facilitate the redevelopment of the area in which the disused Water Police Station is contained for the use of sporting and other social / cultural groups.

Lake Ginninderra

Principle

The lake precinct provides the community with a pleasant and relaxing environment. The extensive open spaces, linked shared pedestrian / bicycle paths, with BBQ areas at key points around the lake allow for a host of recreational, group and family activities. Preserving and enhancing the lake environment will keep attracting visitors.

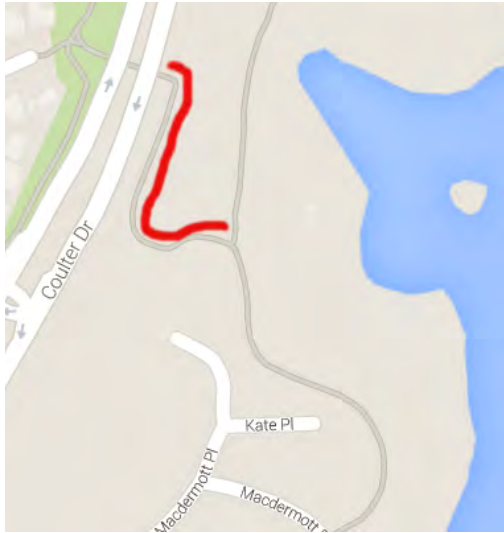
Objectives

- Allow the use of the lake to be extended to legitimate competition-only water-related clubs for training.
- Install path lighting at key places along the pathways where there is currently none.
- The main pathway that circles the lake is widened to safely support a burgeoning number of cyclists, in-line skaters, runners and walkers.

Artefacts and Examples

- A Territory and Municipal Services trial that concluded in 2013 reported that, "... monitoring during the trial did not discern any negative environmental impacts."¹ Specific license conditions that were placed on the waterskiing fraternity ensured that other on-water users of the lake would not be affected.
 - It seems perfectly reasonable that the lake should be used by as many different groups of users as possible so long as the lake's integrity, including aquatic life and vegetation remains intact.
 - Having a different activity on the lake could attract more visitors to the area which in turn may support the local economy.
- Path lighting around the lake precinct as a matter of public safety from the perspective of being seen by other users of the path. Not all paths in the lake precinct are lit.
 - The section of path in the lake precinct that branches off the main path leading to Florey, as marked with the red line in Picture 10, has no lighting.

1 http://www.tams.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/575916/Final-report-on-the-Lake-Ginninderra-water-ski-training-trial.pdf



Picture 10: Google Map: marked in red, the path that leads to Florey that has no lighting

- The main shared pedestrian / bicycle path around the lake precinct has congestion during peak activity and exercise times which is risking the safety of all concerned. The safety aspect is highlighted during such times during the weekend mornings when a plethora of cyclists as well as running groups, such as Ginninderra Parkrun², are transiting around the lake precinct at similar times.
- In summary:
 - Fostering an increase in cultural destinations as well as provisioning a venue for an alternate on-water activity would enhance Belconnen's already substantial reputation as a place for locals and tourists to visit
 - Completing the foreshore development rids the area of a public eye-sore.
 - Having well lit paths with street lighting in the lake precinct will reduce avoidable accidents

Solutions

- Complete the foreshore development on the South side of the lake precinct.
- Reinstate licenses to members of the ACT Water Ski Association who are in training for competition to use the lake, as per the conditions set under the 2012/13 trial.
- Ensure that street lighting exists on all paths in the lake precinct.
- Widen the shared pedestrian / bicycle path around the lake precinct.

² <http://www.parkrun.com.au/ginninderra/>

Night Life and Entertainment – Service Trades Area

Principle

Many residents in a modern and vibrant town centre seek night time entertainment close to where they live. Music and related venues near residential zones can often raise the ire of the localised community. A workable solution needs to be found to suit residents that prefer a quieter evening and those that seek entertainment venues after-dark and weekends. Belconnen Town Centre should have a dedicated entertainment precinct to attract locals staying locally, keeping the local economy strong and to be seen as a place that people outside the area would want to visit.

Objectives

- Provision an area in the service trades area where live music and nightclubs can entertain patrons
- Encourage entertainment related businesses into the area to expand the current offerings of night club and live music venues

Artefacts and Examples

- In New Action, as an example of their live music scene:
 - By accounts it was a hit with patrons but complaints from local residents never ceased³.
- In Belconnen:
 - The trade services area already has a number of late-night music venues.
 - The town centre service trades area is far enough away from residents to negate complaints about noise but close enough to transport links for patrons to transit in and out of the area.
 - The service trades area has established cafes and small restaurants that predominantly serve the businesses that operate in the area. A fraction of the restaurants in the area operate during the evening.
 - A number of 1970-era two-story commercial buildings in the North end of the service trades area are vacant. Building owners, leasees and property developers could be encouraged to transform the area into an area that is utilised more.
- In summary:
 - The town centre has an abundance of residents looking for entertainment venues. Having an entertainment precinct away from residential zoned areas makes sense and

³ <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/canberra-life/noise-complaints-threaten-live-jazz-music-at-new-acton-20141114-11m5xm.html>

mitigates future antagonism between residents making complaints and those seeking somewhere to socialise and be entertained.

- The trade services area has an established mix of cafes and restaurants that could review their business hours to reflect the change in people-traffic.

Solutions

- Provision a dedicated entertainment precinct in the Trade Services Area
- Encourage developers into the area to transform underutilised commercial premises

Parking – Service Trades Area

Principle

Small business operators working at the commercial buildings along the corner of Lathlain and Cohen Streets should not be disadvantaged by the loss of parking bays as a result of the decision to redevelop the site that was a public car park into the Belconnen Community Health Centre and associated cafe.

Objectives

- There should be no loss to the number of parking bays in the local area available for small businesses to service their customers.
- Small business operators need to have faith that their government won't impede their livelihood

Artefacts and Examples

- One of the retail businesses operating along the corner of Lathlain and Cohen Streets is stating that the redevelopment of the car park into a health centre and cafe, has significantly hurt their revenue.
- There is limited on-street car parking in the area.
- Off-street car parking is set aside for tenants within the commercial buildings.
- The public car parks on the federal government site bordering Chan Street, Lathlain Street and College Street, are consistently heavily utilised and do not provide many opportunities for casual car parking.
- In summary:
 - Established small business operators have invested their future in good faith that there would have no significant impediment to the public being able to access their place of business public
 - The loss of car park spaces has led to a downturn in people accessing the businesses that won't be resolved until additional car park spaces are put in place within a reasonably close distance.

Solutions

- A portion of the block on the site of the decommissioned police station, preferably on the Cohen Street end, should be acquired for use as a public car park

Multi-Car Parks – Central Area

Principle

Large multi-car single-level parking spaces have been the backbone to meet the needs of people working and shopping in the town centre. As the town centre has matured and space has become more of a premium, the love affair with mass single-level car parks needs to come to an end. Continued population growth in the town centre, which in turn has led to a number of significantly sized residential developments over the last few years means that a new approach to meet the parking needs in the town centre has to be considered.

Objectives

- Multi-story residential developments to provide all residents with car spaces contained within the structure
- All new and reengineered public car spaces should be multi-story, covering a smaller ground footprint.
- Multi-story commercial developments to provide car spaces contained within the structure for a percentage of the maximum certified capacity of the structure

Artefacts and Examples

- One of the latest residential developments in the town centre, Sentinel, on the corner of Benjamin Way and Cohen Street, contains all of its residential parking within its structure.
- Picture 11 demonstrates the space saving initiative of having car spaces built within the structure. This is an initiative that can be replicated across new residential developments. Limited visitor car parking should also be contained within the residential structure.



Picture 11: The Sentinel residential development with its car park occupying the lower floors

- In Brisbane’s central business district, the Riparian Plaza⁴ utilises 11 car park levels out of its 53-stories by employing a helical design. Whilst a helical design might be a bit extravagant for Belconnen town centre, it proves that contained parking is a practical implementation.
- In summary:
 - The town centre has a lot of space set aside for car parking that is mostly only used during business hours
 - Car parking zones could be better configured so that its utilised more efficiently to open the space up for better use.

Solutions

- Multi-car park spaces should be gradually sold off to private car park operators on the proviso that the sites are subdivided and the portions for car parks are redeveloped into multi-story sites.
- The remaining portions of the subdivided spaces are redeveloped for residential, commercial or public green space.

4 Riparian Plaza, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riparian_Plaza

Belconnen Arts Centre Submission to

The Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan and Precinct Code Process.

January 2015

Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC) welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan and Precinct Code process being conducted by the ACT Government's Environment and Planning Directorate. Representatives from BAC participated in the Design Workshop held on 4 December and the Board and Staff would like to formally provide the points below for consideration in preparation of the Draft Town Centre Master Plan.

- BAC is a prominent position in the town centre at the end of Benjamin Way and can act as gateway to an active and contemporary day and night strip on Emu Bank. It would be highly desirable for Master Plan and Urban Design proposals to reinforce and enhance the Arts Centre site as a catalyst for renewal of the Emu Bank precinct. This may be best achieved through the creation of detailed Emu Bank Precinct plan that sets out to signify and prioritise the creation of an integrated cultural, entertainment and dining precinct that is the place for the town centre's night time economy. We think a specific plan to drive revitalisation of the Emu Bank Precinct, and its subsequent execution, will be one of the most effective ways to attract people and drive future growth of Belconnen Town Centre.
- The physical relationships to Benjamin Way and Emu Bank need to be improved to increase visual and perceived connectivity. There are currently safety and perception issues which inhibit a free and flowing access from town centre to the Arts Centre and onto the lake.
- The intersection of Benjamin Way and Emu Bank and surrounding footpaths present safety issues for those crossing the streets and accessing the Centre. These include cyclist and pedestrian conflict due to narrow paths and rough surfaces affecting those requiring wheelchairs and ambulatory assistance. There are no pedestrian safety barriers for roadside and centre of road traffic islands.
- Emu Bank road design has traffic and safety implications for the Centre, including poor capacity for a drop off area, the speed of traffic inhibits safe crossing, no crossing immediately to the East along Emu Bank and the future traffic implications of the completed Stage 2 in line with existing consultant findings should to be incorporated into the road design.
- Lake Foreshore to the North and East of the Centre should be a priority in order to improve public safety, create public amenity, enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity and improve landscape aesthetics. Foreshore completion will also enable BAC to fully embrace the lake and maximise the space for cultural activities of the Centre. Design ideally to include a soft natural edge to encourage habitat and wildlife, safe access to the water's edge for recreation, education and creative opportunities. This would be the only opportunity to have direct experience of the water's edge along Emu Bank adjacent to the town centre.
- The Master Plan and Precinct Code to include a public art and place-making strategy to enshrine appropriate cultural expression and for art to be integral to the streetscape. The landscape and architecture in the Town Centre needs to reinforce the cultural identity of Belconnen and reflect its dynamic community and build connections.

- Emu Inlet park next to BAC would be enhanced with public toilets and power provisions. Toilets for year round public convenience for all and power for events to be held there. (PA, food stalls, entertainment, displays etc.). Event usage of the site will increase and with good infrastructure community activities can be planned more easily and happen more frequently. This will increase the sense of Belconnen as a dynamic community in a very visible way in a significant Town Centre location.
- Public toilets are lacking in the town centre proper (i.e. not Lake Ginninderra), with only one at the skate park. Provision improves amenity, serving the whole community including the homeless and vulnerable. Margaret Timpson Park also can use public toilets. This shortfall in amenity has been an issue for more than 20 years.

Board and Staff members would be happy to discuss any of the related issues further as appropriate.

We look forward to participating further in the process.

Submission on Belconnen Master Plan

I would like to submit my comments on the development of the Belconnen Master Plan. I have been a resident of Belconnen since 1996 and seen it develop over the years and am interested in how it develops into the future. I think there is potential to improve the amenity of the area without spending too much money, particularly on improved landscaping and improving the parks and open spaces, and in getting some retail and entertainment areas along the main street and connecting better with the lake and the developments occurring along Emu Bank. My specific comments are below:

1. Height Limits.

I support the population densification of the town centres as a way of bringing life to the town centres and reducing the need for urban sprawl. I do however believe that height limits are preferable to uncontrolled development. I think areas in the town centre should be limited to around 12 stories and this would protect against shading and wind tunnels. There is no need to have buildings near 20 stories in an area with plenty of space around it like Belconnen.

2. Streetscape

The streetscape of the major roads around the town centre is very poor. While the southern Section of Benjamin Way is nice with maturing trees planted, the area along Benjamin Way between Cameron Avenue and the Lake is atrocious and urgently needs landscaping including tree planting. The new lakefront development at the end of Benjamin Way is good – however, again the landscaping totally lacks imagination and the area is not conducive to spending time relaxing there, as it could be.

3. A lively town feeling

Unfortunately the Belconnen Mall has been allowed to totally dominate retail in Belconnen, rather than developing some other retail along the main street such as has been done in Gungahlin, which is much better. It would seem that the best opportunity would be to encourage future retail development along the Belconnen main street (Benjamin way) and the Chandler Street intersection, and connect to the restaurants and bars etc along Emu Bank.

4. Public Parks

With the increased population density in the Town Centre, there needs to be some improvement to the main public park, Margaret Stimson Park.

Perhaps the old Health Centre could be demolished to extend the park, to include some children's play equipment. If the area up near the old remand centre is slated for future residential development I think there needs to be a park up at that side of town also (however a lot smaller than Margaret Stimson Park)

5. Parking

A lot of parking areas are disappearing in the Town Centre. Consideration needs to be given to parking in the area.

I look forward to seeing the new Master Plan

Yours sincerely





Office of the Commissioner for
Sustainability and the Environment

Time to Talk Consultation
Environment and Planning Directorate
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

To Whom It May Concern

Submission to 2014 Belconnen Master Plan community consultation

Introduction

I am writing to provide comment on the 2014 Belconnen Master Plan. As you may be aware, the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has four main objectives: investigation and resolution; monitoring and reporting; engagement and advocacy; and capability.

The legislative role of the Office also encourages decision-making that facilitates ecologically sustainable development, and supports the adoption of sound environmental practices and procedures by the Territory and Territory authorities.

This response addresses the issues raised in this Time to Talk consultation document and in doing so draws from, among other things, the Office's work on complaints, investigations and strategic environmental reporting across the ACT.

General Comments

How we design and use our urban areas, infrastructure and green spaces, can significantly affect the quality of the environments we inhabit. Conversely, the condition of the natural environment impacts on our city's quality.

A sustainable city was placed at the heart of the Government's 2012 Planning Strategy. A sustainable city is, arguably, one that balances environmental, social and economic needs. Within this framework, environmental and heritage values are protected; residents also have access to appropriate, affordable housing, with proximity to work and recreational opportunities along with community facilities such as schools, shops, medical and other services. Furthermore, a sustainable city offers an integrated transport network allowing people to move between energy efficient residential and commercial buildings.

Commissioner: Mr Robert Neil
GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601
ABN: 66 893 463 785

T: (02) 6207 2626 F: (02) 6207 2630 E: envcomm@act.gov.au W: www.envcomm.act.gov.au

This Office is independent of, but funded by, the ACT Government.



Belconnen Master Plan

I would encourage the Government to take the opportunity of the Belconnen Master Plan to demonstrate a genuinely sustainable approach, placing sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) at the centre of their decision making.

As outlined in the *Planning and Development Act*, this would mean the effective integration of social, economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes, achievable through implementation of the following principles:

- the precautionary principle;
- the inter-generational equity principle;
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
- appropriate valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

I would encourage the Government in taking this opportunity to shape Belconnen through community consultation on this Master Plan and support demonstrated commitment to thorough and transparent identification and discussion of social, environmental and economic challenges and trade-offs required for such complex decision-making.

The planning process is necessarily a complex one. Previous complaints to this Office have highlighted challenges for the community in understanding the complex planning process. It is important that the Government provides clear, up-to-date and accessible information to the community throughout the process. This should include:

- ensuring relevant documents and maps are updated as appropriate on websites;
- clear outline of statutory process and mechanism;
- clearly identifying when the community can input to the process, on what and how;
- when decisions are no longer available for community input;
- a clear outline of the full process including key engagement and decision-making points in the process; and
- clear communication of the decision-making process identifying how and when concerns have been addressed.

Clear expectations and understanding of what is and what is not negotiable, e.g, there are no third party appeal rights in relation to planning decisions for developments in Town centres.

Public Realm and Design

The Belconnen Master Plan should exemplify Canberrans' commitment to being more environmentally responsible. It is an opportunity to encourage innovative, high quality and environmentally responsible leading edge designs, which can also support a more lively town centre. The link and interfaces between the University of Canberra and Belconnen Town centre are crucial components to the success of the Town Centre.

A town centre's environment, including its liveability and amenity, depends in considerable measure on its green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is the city's natural features such as vegetation, parks, waterways and assets, designed to help improve the quality of the urban environment. The health benefits provided by green infrastructure include positive physical, social, mental and spiritual health outcomes.

In 2013 the Office received a complaint in relation to high rise buildings in Belconnen Town Centre and their close proximity to the lake: *"We have something special here. Something we should cherish and be proud of. We should protect its edges and foreshores as done for Lake Burley Griffin."*

The interface with and importance of Lake Ginninderra has to be a key component of the Final Plan.

The urban open-space system contributes to Canberra's image as the bush capital and provides an attractive environment and opportunities for active and passive recreation. It also performs a utilitarian function as community paths, stormwater drainage and minor public utilities

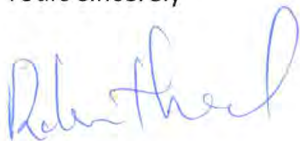
My recent investigation into the *State of the water courses and catchments for Lake Burley Griffin* highlighted that urban areas are likely to have the greatest impact on the water quality in all lakes in Canberra. Increasing urban areas inevitably increases the area of impervious surfaces such as roads, paths and roofs; significantly modifying the natural hydrology of a catchment. This leads to increased water runoff and nutrient exports to receiving waters such as rivers and lakes when catchments are urbanised. There is currently limited monitoring or measurement of the impacts of urbanisation on lake quality and as outlined in the ACT 2011 State of the Environment Report, I would recommended that water management, monitoring and reporting programs are updated to inform:

- actions to mitigate the impacts of urban development on water quality;
- the efficacy of Water Sensitive Urban Design measures;
- improvements in sediment and erosion mitigation actions; and
- management of ACT lakes.

I support you in your consultation and would encourage brave and innovative ideas and action guided by a genuine consideration of all aspects of sustainability and open discussion on the tradeoffs that will need to be made for a dynamic and sustainable future Belconnen Town Centre.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. Please contact my office on 6207 2626 if you would like to discuss this submission in more detail.

Yours sincerely



Mr Robert Neil
Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

January 2015

Submission to Belconnen Town Centre Draft Master Plan



January 2015

1 Introduction

There is significant scope to greatly increase the population of the area, based on current available sites that are currently only surface car parks or very low-rise buildings. Apart from the obvious environmental benefits of a compact community in promoting active transport, greater density can also make 'Belco' a more self-contained community in its own right. This can help the town centre evolve from a primarily drive-in/drive-out destination to instead become a lively destination for people to live, work and relax.

2 Building design and height

2.1 Height

The main factor that impacts on height limits is the extent to which it creates overshadowing for surrounding residents, parks, etc and the potential for creating wind tunnels. In the absence of such factors, as long as the street facing component of buildings relate well to the surrounding area and can support/create active spaces, then the height should not really matter. A key aim should be to foster enough new residents to support a level of amenity whereby people can genuinely walk to all their everyday needs within 5-10 minutes. Where there are issues of shading, impact on north easterly access to sun should be of primary importance for any potentially impacted existing residential buildings.

A key consideration should be its impact on the immediate street environment. For example, a building could be 6-8 stories at the street level and not necessarily dominate the streetscape, if subsequent floors were stepped back or terraced.

Planning rules should allow scope for innovative design solutions that are not excessively restrictive. Because there is 'some' overshadowing should not automatically preclude certain building designs. There are often trade-offs in design, and the whole impact of a new development should be considered in determining whether or not to approve a site.

Ideally all buildings should incorporate retail/hospitality on the ground floor, commercial on the next few floors, and then residential above this. This should aim to facilitate active streets throughout the day.

2.2 Location of new buildings

Section 54

This area is centrally located between the main offices, the shopping mall and lakeside amenities, making it well suited to rezoning to accommodate major population growth. This could include:

- 10 to 15 levels
- Retail shop fronts on the ground level
- A minimum of two floors of commercial (levels 1-2)

- Residential (levels 3-5/10/15)
- Underground parking
- A large allowable building envelope (as opposed to going higher), with consideration of a step-back for levels above 5 or 6 floors so to support a human scale development on the street front level.
- An anchor tenant at street level (i.e. supermarket) to generate increased foot traffic
- Adequate rear service lanes to enable the perimeter of the block to be devoted to active street frontages.
- New expanded community facilities be incorporated into the new buildings.
- Incorporate public and/or affordable housing.
- Redirect foot traffic along Chandler and Swanson Street, where there is better passive surveillance and hence sense of safety for pedestrians.
- The library could potentially be transferred to one of the recently vacated sites on Lathlain Street, opposite Westfield.

Block 46, Section 55

Consideration should be given to making this a higher-density, mixed residential/commercial space incorporating private and public housing. The street level section on Emu Ridge should incorporate retail, which could compliment new retail on the eastern side of a newly developed Chandler street (discussed further in 4.3.1).

3 Active Travel (walking and cycling)

The cycle plan should aim to increase the appeal and safety of riding for people seeking short commutes either for work, recreation or shopping, rather than solely be focused on high speed riders who are happy to cycle long distances. Careful consideration should be given as to which areas provide a legitimate short ride that can substitute car trips (i.e. up to 10 minutes one way). Enhanced off-road bike paths parallel to road access routes from Page, Florey, Macquarie and Canberra University would appear to warrant consideration of separated cycle paths. Alternatively on road cycle paths, but with curbs separating cyclists from cars could be an option.

Traffic calming pedestrian crossings, such as elevated pedestrian crossings the same height as footpath can help provide a more inviting option for walkers. Keeping speed limits low in all but the main streets can also help increase the perception (and reality) of safety.

4 Other Issues

4.1 Link to Canberra University

Consideration should be given to a new prominent entrance road to the University of Canberra extending Emu Bank east into the university campus where currently it ends at Aikman Drive. The aim should be major entrance that highlights the significance of the institution. The street could be accompanied by wide footpaths, attractive native landscaping, on-bike paths, and good lighting. Car movements provide an additional form of passive surveillance for university pedestrians, especially during evenings. This new road could continue straight up the hill and pass through the existing

student accommodation parking area. This would provide a continuous visual linkage between the university and the town centre. Alternatively, the road could wind immediately north just past the intersection with Aikman Drive intersection, and then west parallel to exiting footpath that runs just north of the student accommodation.

The University of Canberra could be encouraged to develop new medium sized student accommodation (or other buildings) on the vacant land on the corner of the new entrance. This could accentuate of 'arrival' to the university and also help link it, in a somewhat of a similar vein to the eastern side development that had occurred at the Australian University.

Section 55

The commercial area bounded by Emu Bank, Benjamin Way and Chandler Street has scope to be a much high density area, which could include similar zoning guidelines to that proposed for Section 54 above. Alternatively, the car park behind the existing buildings could be developed for underground parking and residential.

4.2 Joynton Smith Busway

Consideration should be made of using this space for medium density apartments/townhouses similar to what currently exists on the eastern side of Joynton Smith Drive.

4.3 Creating Destinations

4.3.1 Emu Bank

Taller buildings should be allowed along the area bounded by Emu Bank and Lake Ginninderra in the range of five to six floors (higher if terraced). This would provide an opportunity to provide consistent retail frontage along the full extent of Emu Bank, rather than the current mix of set-back retail and drive-through fast-food stores. The existing fast food stores underutilise the potential of the site.

Zoning should support retail on the ground floor, commercial on levels 1 and 2, and residential on levels 4 upwards. Parallel on-street parking should be on both sides, but customer/office/residential parking should be placed underground. There is nothing to say fast food stores could not be accommodated on the ground floor of new buildings, but these should have commercial and residential uses above them. The Manuka McDonalds for example shows how fast food driveways can still be incorporated into larger scale developments.

Importantly, cafés, bars and restaurants should be fostered even more along the Lake front area adjacent to Emu Bank. However, a crucial element to better linking the lakeside walkway and the alfresco café's restaurants is the have them on the same level as the footpath. The current step-up disconnects the food and café activity from the adjacent footpath pedestrian movements. These sites should be rezoned for larger scale mixed use development, with the new buildings being having hospitality zoned lake frontages on level footing with the adjacent pedestrian path. The width of the Menzies footpath along Lake Burley Griffin provides a good benchmark for distance between the café's shop front and the Lake Ginninderra water edge – with enough space to accommodate both

slow and medium paced walking/jogging/cycling and some alfresco dining. Avoid having too great a distance from the frontage of the buildings to the lake, to prevent a feeling of emptiness.

A new anchor tenant should also be incorporated the newly developed area along Emu Bank. The aim should be able to provide an additional pull factor for the surrounding water front cafes and restaurants.

4.3.2 Belconnen Way

The immediate area of the along Margaret Timpson Park adjacent to Benjamin Way should be converted to 3-4 level low rise retail/office/residential to help provide some shape to Benjamin Way and activate the street. The combination of the park and the inactive street frontage of Westfield Belconnen Mall underutilises what could otherwise be an attractive and active boulevard. The park could be reduced in size to better facilitate a sense of activity and better passive surveillance. The reduced size could also potentially provide more incentive for residents and office workers to better frequent the jewel in Belconnen's crown – the upgraded Lake Ginninderra waterfront, next to the Belconnen Arts Centre.

In the longer term, incentives could also be provided to Westfield Belconnen to redevelop/rehabilitate shops along the along the Benjamin Way street front so as to activate this area, in tandem with new developments across the road. This could require innovative design, but would better link the mall to the surrounding area, similar to what has been done on Lathlain Street.

Tall deciduous trees (10m high) should be planted along the traffic island on Belconnen Way adjacent to the Westfield. This would also help frame the street and provide shape to an area that is currently very sparse. Currently Benjamin Way appears to be primarily a through road, which is a missed opportunity.

4.4 Population Density Goal

Population growth goals should be identified in order to help achieve a walkable community within Belconnen, whereby within 5-10 walk (or less by bike) there can be enough people to support a large range of restaurants/shops/medical/community facilities/employment. The greater the number of people, the more commercially viable it is for this services to be provided. Ultimately, this can have a snow ball effect of making the area a self-sustaining community. Underground parking can also ensure such businesses are easily accessible by residents further afield, and further support their commercial viability.

Ideas for Belconnen Master Plan

Questions about the planning process – where is the evaluation of what/how the previous Master plan was implemented? If no KPIs are developed, how will the new Master Plan come to be evaluated or progress tracked? Concerned that this raises questions about the integrity and likelihood of adherence to future plans by current government. It would also be good to see the compilation of multidisciplinary teams to devise the plan including sociologists, organisational psychologists, engineers, architects etc.

No interconnecting transport links across and around city, transport links tend to end in Belconnen, not connect parts of it. Smaller types of transport could then sustain a connecting tram network by allowing for reduced reliance on cars and reduced need for car parks which could be reclaimed space.

No identifying feature for the city apart from Westfield, not really the lake because very few spaces around the lake dedicated to everyone, not just walking paths or kids like playgrounds so no ownership. No real grass areas or gardens to encourage adults to make better use of the lake. No other parks in immediate town centre that can be used for sports etc. Margaret Timpson park should also be redesigned. It has a beautiful piece of art in the Tumbling Cubes that is positioned on a corner of the park, facing the road with no seats near it to enjoy it. No garden beds either. More broadly, the area doesn't have many gardens/flowers/recreational spaces to provide harmonious spaces for mental wellness and well-being.

No beautification strategy – affects psychological impact of people who live here.

No street art or even small things like painting fire hydrants along the grass strip in the middle of the boulevard on Benjamin Way.

What exactly is the history of Belconnen? Cameron offices have interesting architecture but is not a space dedicated to the public. Wasted in some respects by having it used for uni accommodation. Would have been better to have it reclaimed as the art centre (more centrally located, bigger space, history of being heritage listed for architecture) and space where centre is now could have been used as proper garden with accessible and visible library along the water.

Can we reclaim the old water police station and make it into a multiuse public space such as redesigned funky wharf with street art/shop or café/boat hire for use on lake like LBG? Seats?

No sense of 'quarters' or zones in the town. Economic zone is really only Westfield, disconnection between it and markets, no village in between and no integration with shops leading up lathlain st. 'Entertainment' quarter (Belco community hall/theatre/labor club/arts centre has no direct transport access like bus stops. Library not easily accessible by the public or even easily visible. Would be good to see an independent cinema complex encouraged into the area to foster a more alternative culture.

No sense of community, residential planning based on models of isolation, lots of apartments, no communal living arrangements, no sharing of spaces, balconies too small and often no water connection so not conducive to getting benefit of outdoors, no connecting spaces, backyards look out on backs on streets, not next to neighbours, also issue of safety, no community garden.

Where is the acknowledgment of Belconnen's multicultural community? Or even sense of broader community spirit? No dedication to festivals or even places of worship within town centre? No multicultural centre? how are such communities accommodated elsewhere to help encourage both assimilation and cultural diversity.

How can emu ridge be accommodated and its residents made to feel welcomed and safe? Break up ghettos of public housing to see if it impacts on reduction of crime rate?

Would love to see part of the lake converted into an inner city beach for summer use.

New workplace planning for the area to encourage more offices to move into the area, model for ANZ bank in Melb, more relaxed and convivial way of working.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Belc Master Plan
Date: Friday, 21 November 2014 4:09:39 PM

Hi

Thanks for revising the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan. Since moving to nearby [REDACTED] just after the last revision, Belconnen has changed A LOT, and for the better.

I have one concern i'd ask you to consider:

1. Having started as an office park and shopping mall, Belconnen is now becoming a residential and retailing suburb, with massive amounts of building of residential and retail space. What a contrast with Civic which has seen continual office development over the same timeframe. The only Belconnen offices built were ABS House and the ugly Immigration building, which were basically Knock-Down-Rebuilds of the Cameron and Benjamin Offices.

Is this trend driven by Planning policies? Or is it just a market outcome? I would particularly like to suggest the release of a large-format block which would be suitable for a commercial tower to house a large Federal Dept (eg Environment, which is currently spread over several offices in Parkes and Civic).

As Canberra's largest population district (the Belconnen area suburbs), and the end of the main bus artery, I believe lots of people would like to work in the Town Centre and Departments would prefer to be able to co-locate their staff in a single office park.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Subject: Belconnen : Cohen Street Shaded Walkway
Date: Sunday, 1 February 2015 12:08:01 PM

Cohen Street acts as a funnel for people walking from Page and other Belco suburbs to the Mall and surrounding offices and businesses - and we want to encourage walking.

Cohen Street runs east-west, with a fairly steep slope facing east.

For several years I walked from Page to DIAC via the Coulter St underpass - very pleasant BUT walking down Cohen St at 9am - the sun in your eyes and hot, and walking uphill at 6pm, the sun in your eyes and even hotter, and in summer stinking hot - quite unpleasant.

There used to be several trees providing shade, but most have disappeared over the years. I suggested to ACT government that they replant trees, but they said due to the busses etc, it was not possible.

So I suggest that some other form of shade for pedestrian be provided along Cohen St, to encourage people to walk to the Mall etc. With modern sculptural shade sails, it could be quite attractive!

Sorry for late submission
Regards

Subject: BELCONNEN MASTER PLAN
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 5:14:35 PM

Extend Lake Ginninderra cycle/pedestrian path in Lawson by keeping a wide green belt for parks, children's playgrounds and, more importantly, preserving wildlife habitat for future generations. Link this path with bridges to Giralang and McKellar. As most of the cycle path around Lake Ginninderra is affected by traffic noise, ensure that the road infrastructure plan for Lawson avoids this detraction.

The disused Bus Only road connecting Coulter Drive with Belconnen Mall could be used as a communal garden area, practice cricket pitch, soccer goal nets, basketball hoops and pedestrian/cycle access connecting Florey to the Mall.

Please provide bus stops on Coulter Drive near Joynton Smith Drive and that disused Bus Only road.

Please provide garbage bins to the seating area in the area between Belconnen Arts Centre and Black Peppers. As a collector of litter there is now nowhere for me to put the rubbish since the bin opposite Black Peppers has been removed.

The long abandoned building located on the water's edge near the Scout Hall on Beissel St could become our very own waterfront restaurant, similar to the Yarralumla Yacht Club.

Please change the design of future BBQ shelters. The current design for BBQ shelters on Lake Ginninderra is unsightly.

They are architecturally disproportionate, being too high for their floor base, thereby negating their primary function of providing shade. Those on the western side of the lake (near Kangara Waters) are oriented the wrong way, providing no shade to summer afternoon sun.

Create a more direct connection to Bunnings from Nettlefold St businesses.

Remove the Chinese Elm trees planted in Beissel St before they grow to maturity and destroy the road. Please, of course, replant with trees more suitable.

Save the open space between the two bridges on Ginninderra Drive until the city grows sufficiently to have a purposeful need for this land, rather than letting the ACT Govt surrender it for short sighted developmental and financial gain.

Thank you for the opportunity to express some ideas on our future beautiful Belconnen.

Subject: Belconnen master plan
Date: Saturday, 31 January 2015 4:00:31 PM

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to comment on the review of the Belconnen master plan:

[REDACTED] and commute to Civic by bicycle most days of the week.

1. Lake Ginninderra

I commend you for the improved facilities for use of the recreational areas around Lake Ginninderra. The lighting on the path is an excellent improvement and the covered BBQ areas encourages people to use the parks. It would be helpful if the toilets were updated as well to make them clean and attractive to young families. More smaller toilets could be placed around the path. I also sometimes find it difficult to pass pedestrians on the narrow walking path around the lake. Perhaps some breakout areas for passing could be paved to allow bikes to pull off the path.

2. Linking of Town Centre to surrounds

I am very keen to ride to the mall and business areas to shop rather than drive. IT is not for lack of desire that I don't ride to the mall more often. I have ridden a few times and even collected milk, etc, carrying it in my pannier. However, I am deterred from using the paths because of the awkward, unclear, or non-existent transitions to the mall and major connecting roads. The paths do not seem to transition or connect with the mall very well. Paths need to fit a bike trailer (equivalent to a pram). We need improved cycle parking close, but to the side of the entrances to the mall; very close to entrances, but out of the way of pedestrians.

Benjamin Way and Eastern Valley Way are a nightmare. Cyclists are forced to ride on the road and on the path with no visible guiding or directional signs and sporadic lane marking. Narrow lanes are scary.

Benjamin and Eastern Valley ways are major connecting roads for cyclists travelling to the arboretum and Lake BG and of course the city.

The paths, both walking and cycling should be improved to the northern suburbs, university, hospital and city. The paths have awkward transitions, often relying on tracks.

3. Emu Bank

I enjoy riding around the lake with my daughter and friends.

Emu Bank could be improved with some tables, more seating, communal areas and of course some simple means of standing and securing my beloved bike.

4. Changes to building codes and heights

Your references to building heights and codes around Emu Bank and Chandler Street read like code for wanting to change so that more high rise buildings can be built. The current high rise buildings are too high and too bleak in design – they overshadow the paths and roads around them; they have very poor ground-level amenity, that is there is not enough space or design to lead people around them or out of them into the surrounding area; they lack any decent cafe or small scale shopping; they seem to be a mechanism to build demand for the mall. I will watch with interest as your 'consultation' delivers more high rises to dominate the area without reasonable supporting outdoor space or amenity.

5. Town centre community space

There is an excellent park on the eastern side of the mall, Margaret Timpson Park, that should be developed with community events or markets or something to bring Belconnen residents together. I think it has considerable potential.

For your consideration.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Belconnen Master Plan
Date: Sunday, 1 February 2015 3:25:53 PM

Good afternoon

Suggestion to use part of the Joynton Smith Busway for visitor caravan parking.

First raised with Minister for Tourism and Events by email dated 8th July, 2013. That email noted that visitors to Canberra towing a caravan often have difficulty finding suitable parking. I suggested alleviating the situation by using part of the busway, at that time used for informal parking.

The Minister responded by letter dated 23 May 2014 forwarded to me as an email attachment noting that Territory and Municipal Services advised the area was being considered as part of future development plans. I further responded by email 29th May 2014 to the Minister and received a further reply again by letter attachment dated 30th June 2014.

The details of all this original correspondence on the subject should still be available for inclusion as appropriate for consideration in the consultation.

I still feel that there is an opportunity to make provision for short term (eg shopping periods) visitor caravan parking near the Belconnen Mall by utilising part of the derelict Busway.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond through the consultation process.

Subject: Belconnen Master Plan comments
Date: Wednesday, 28 January 2015 9:32:37 AM

Hi, please see my comments on issues in the Belconnen Town Centre below. I grew up in Belconnen and have lived and worked in Belconnen for the last 6 years. My daughter also goes to school in Belconnen, so my family has a lot of ideas for how it could be improved.

thanks for the opportunity to provide comments and ideas!

I've tried to put my ideas into headings:

- Building heights. I don't think building height is an issue in Belconnen, but rather the quality of the design, build and the landscaping at the bottom is more important. I would rather see high quality high density tall buildings go up than poor quality medium/low density. We also need to ensure that pedestrian access is improved around any new development, with wide footpaths, street trees and benches provided.

- Active travel. The links for active travel in Belconnen are pretty poor. The paths along Benjamin Way need to be widened so they are consistent the whole way along and provide good cycling connections from the cycling trunk paths to the office buildings. Footpaths also need to be widened around the office buildings, where you get large groups of pedestrians walking together to get to cafes, shops, etc. There are some missing footpaths in Belconnen that need to be addressed, especially near the Oracle building where there is currently a dirt track. Generally there should be a focus on improving the width and quality of paths around Belconnen and making sure there are no gaps in paths.

The paths into Belconnen need to be improved on the Page side of the town centre. There is currently no proper cycle path down Belconnen Way past Scullin and Page and this limits how many people will choose to cycle into work (including myself). The underpasses into Page are also too steep and badly lit for anyone to want to use.

The paths connecting Belconnen to UC also need to be addressed, so that the area has adequate lighting, is wide enough for pedestrians and cyclists and looks attractive and safe to use.

- Parking. The parking situation in Belconnen seems adequate for office workers (I park for work a couple of days a week, and I catch the bus a couple of days), although I'm aware that office workers park in the service area. Maybe there could be a voucher system introduced up there, so only local workers can park there? The parking at the mall seems very crowded at the "fresh food" end, but this could be addressed if proper bus services went into Belconnen on a weekend. My family would be happy to catch a bus into the mall to do grocery shopping, but there are no weekend bus services that go near [REDACTED]. Given the point above (there are also no safe, convenient cycle paths along Belconnen Way), we are forced to drive in.

The other main parking issue seems to be at the lakeside, along Emu Bank. Ideally there would be underground car parking there or a small multi-storey carpark. However, in the meantime, it would be great if the current numerous entries and exits to the carparks along

Emu Bank could be simplified into one entry and one exit and the carparks joined together. This would make it much safer and more pleasant for pedestrians trying to walk along the footpath.

- Public Domain. There isn't enough good quality public space in Belconnen. Margaret Timpson park and the Belconnen Library courtyard are really the only decent public areas, they have shady trees and some public seating. It would be fantastic to have more amenity for children, such as an outdoor playground somewhere in the town centre, probably in Margaret Timpson Park. The playground at the Belconnen Markets is incredibly popular and I know people who go there just so their kids can play "under the mushroom". It would also be good to have a community garden for the people living in the residential towers to access. It could be located on the gravel area behind the old ACT Health building and be run by COGS (like the other community gardens in the ACT).

There is also a need for good quality public space around the new bus interchange next to Belconnen Mall (opposite the Remand Centre). This is the perfect area for people to interact, especially with the Health Centre right next door. It would make a lot of sense to use some of the Remand Centre land for public open space, probably with shady trees, good quality paving and lots of seating and maybe even a grassed area. The interchange is a transport hub, but the landscaping quality is very poor, it is too sunny and there is no pleasant place to sit outside - people are forced into the Mall if they have a long wait for a bus. The quality of the paving is also terrible and constantly needs repair.

The position of large buildings along the street affects the quality of the public domain in Belconnen (ie. the Mall, Immigration building on Chan St). I think it's important to ensure that any future developments address the street properly and at a human scale. The colonnade at the bottom of Sentinel is a good example of new development improving the streetscape, although it would be better if there were some public benches to sit on, too.

- Joynton Smith busway. I think this area of land is in the perfect place for medium density residential development, fitting in with the surrounding development, with a cycle/footpath running through it. It doesn't make sense to keep this area as a road, there is a perfectly adequate road parallel to it.

- Economic activity. I think there is a real opportunity for the ACT Government to encourage small businesses to start up in Belconnen through altering planning and land use regulations. The old ACT Health centre is currently abandoned. This is in the centre of Belconnen and could be leased out to start-up businesses at very reduced rents until a new purpose for the building is decided. This would mirror what has happened in Braddon with Lonsdale St Traders. There is also a great opportunity for hawkers/food caravans along Lake Ginninderra at the weekend, like the caravan near the Carillon at Lake Burley Griffin. The areas near John Knight park and Kate Place are packed with people at the weekend, there is also a lot of scope for more activity near the Arts Centre. I think there could be a focus on reducing regulations and costs for small businesses starting up in Belconnen, and especially creating opportunities for graduates from UC to stay in the area.

- Finally, there needs to be something done about development projects that are started and not finished. The development at the Belconnen Markets is a complete eyesore and has been that way for years. If the development does not go ahead, the least they could do is be made to fill in the massive hole and plant some trees or provide more car parking.

Subject: Belconnen master plan feedback.
Date: Sunday, 30 November 2014 4:16:52 PM

Can we please demolish and rebuild those housing commission flats on college st that meet at the corner of condell st. Funds to rebuild could come from the sale to redevelopers of the current site and building new government housing elsewhere and/or combined with reserving some of the new for government tenants.

Also the stalled development near the fresh food markets needs to be restarted or something. Been just a fenced in hole for years now.

Using emu bank better also needs to occur.

Also needs to be way more bins installed around paths. Particularly at bus stops. Constantly rubbish everywhere and I think it is due to be bins being at bus stops and on frequent paths from schools to the mall.

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Subject: Belconnen master plan suggestions
Date: Thursday, 11 December 2014 7:11:45 PM

Hi

I think it's great that you're consulting about the future of Belconnen. I've lived and worked here for a long time and see a lot of ways in which the town centre (and its immediate surrounds) can be improved.

The biggest problem, as far as I can see, is the weather. I don't care how nice and hipster Belconnen becomes, when my teeth are chattering I **don't** go outside. Having everything so far apart and hard to access (because of sh*t transport, difficult pedestrian crossings, lack of protection from rain and wind) makes it even less appealing. I'm not saying you should change the weather, as much as I wish you could, but planning needs to take the awful winters that extend into December into account. How can you plan Belconnen to reduce the amount of time spent outside? How can they get from one place to another without getting cold? (I'm thinking of tunnels - not dark creepy ones, but something like Town Hall in Sydney). How can people protect themselves from the cold and wind? How can public transport be planned so that people don't have to stand in freezing temperatures while they wait for a bus?

Transport

Buses

The buses in Belconnen are, frankly, hopeless. I'm sitting in the labour club writing this now because I just missed a bus by **one minute** and have to wait half an hour for the next one. I'll probably miss that one too, get the shits, catch a taxi and then avoid coming back here because I can't get home. This is peak hour. I live in Florey. I'm not trying to get to Yass; it shouldn't be this hard. Buses to surrounding areas need to be more frequent (especially at nights and on weekends) for people like me to spend more time in Belconnen (and spend more money in Belconnen). Bus stops, especially the interchange, are too open, too cold and too isolated (I'd like to sit in a heated pub while I wait for my bus, rather than shivering on a cold metal seat).

Alternatives to buses

An underground train network would be the best thing in the world. I'm so jealous of Sydney. Especially Town Hall - those tunnels connect to almost everywhere, without you ever having to go out in the weather or cross a street.

Bicycles

Bicycle access is good, however I'd like to see a focus on bike paths that go **over** or **under** roads, rather than using traffic lights. Canberra drivers are horrendous and it's not that pleasant to cross Canberra's roads. Added to that, two minutes at a red light is long enough for your heart rate to drop, making you feel the cold more and more likely to drive your heated car the next day.

Pedestrian access

Pedestrian overpasses would help pedestrians move around the town centre. Traffic lights take forever to change, it sucks to wait in the cold and the median strips are so wide you only have time to get halfway across the road. Pedestrian overpasses would make it easier to get around (especially the overpass that used to be between the churches centre and the

bus interchange - it was fantastic). I'd also like to see the pedestrian overpass between Westfield and the Department of Immigration carpark rebuilt... it used to go right to the food court.

Social

Belconnen needs more pubs. NOT cafes - there's too many of those overpriced antisocial poky little pretentious things around already. Nice, old, British-style pubs. Pubs are warm, social, open late - exactly what full-time workers like me need to unwind and relax. Bonus points if you put the pubs near the bus interchange or the bus stops at Westfield - the old police station would be the PERFECT location, as long as you don't turn it into an expensive wanky hipster joint. A pub in Florey would also be tops... you can't hang out with your friends at Domino's pizza.

Parking

Lack of parking is a massive barrier to visiting Belconnen. It's hugely expensive, parking inspectors are vultures and those parking areas are really ugly. Why not have multi-storey carparks instead? You could make them look really attractive, put shops around them so it's not wasted space. Have automated gates so people can't get out without paying.

Nettlefold Street and surrounds

The car dealerships and Repcos probably aren't bringing a lot of people into Belconnen. You go to them when you *need* to, not when you want to. The entire area is ugly and not particularly useful (except for Officeworks. Officeworks is wonderful).

Traffic lights

Could they be any slower?

What Belconnen's doing well

The dog park - although one of the locks needs to be fixed.

Bike paths that don't intersect with roads - particularly the one around the lake.

Belconnen fresh food markets.

The mall.

The University of Canberra (although their parking sucks too).

The labour club. Don't get me wrong, it's old and kind of crummy, but it's not overpriced, it's warm and it's near the buses.

Subject: Belconnen Master plan- Feedback
Date: Monday, 5 January 2015 10:30:34 PM

Hi,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Belconnen Master Plan. The points I want to make refer to;

Lathlain Street:

Lathlain street is showing glimpses of its potential to become one of the most exciting and vibrant streets in Canberra let alone Belconnen, but it will take careful planning to ensure that this potential is realised and not lost. The huge site that was the former police station and remand centre is a real opportunity to realise this vision. The street could very well become the restaurant strip that Belconnen so dearly would love to have but so sadly lacks.

Water Police Site on Lake Ginninderra:

I feel that this prominent location is an important community asset that should be set aside for community uses. Public uses could include a Belconnen theatre or museum. Otherwise if no such public buildings could be currently feasible then the land should be restored to public open space and parkland so that the site is secured for public use in the future.

Northern Peninsula- Lake Ginninderra

The northern peninsula is one of the last remaining areas of native bush and grass lands around Lake Ginninderra. People every day are attracted to its unspoilt environment for their walks, exercise and recreational activities. This beautiful land, with its wide open spaces, views, hilly land and the lake surrounding it, is truly an ornament to the whole Belconnen region. Its natural beauty and value is further enhanced by it being in the geographical centre of Belconnen and is easily accessible via Ginninderra Drive. Across the water is the town centre with its high density built form which will only continue with more high rise buildings to come. The serenity of the Northern Peninsula balances out the urbanity of the town centre on the southern shores. The result is delightfully yin and yang.

It would be very tempting to sell off the open spaces of Northern Peninsula land for residential development but that would be short sighted and a tragic loss for the future of Belconnen. As Belconnen's population grows, the value of the Northern Peninsula as an unspoilt haven will grow even further for all of the residents and visitors of Belconnen. Allowing residential development there will make Belconnen just another urban city that has reacted to the pressures of development. On the other hand, preserving the whole of the Northern Peninsula will keep Belconnen special for today and for all future time that Belconnen exists.

New York famously has Central Park. In a 100 or even 200 years' time, Belconnen should have its Northern Peninsula undeveloped by urban infill. Future generations will then marvel with gratitude at the visionary of their Belconnen ancestors.



Subject: Belconnen Master Plan
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 8:14:39 PM

We wish to offer these ideas re the Emu bank area.

1. Leave height limits as is along the LakeFront. This prevents overshadowing, air flow and prevents wind flow change by taller structures. Think of winter.
2. Potentially co locate Hungry Jacks and Red Rooster together, with increased car and bike parking capacity, noting that at both day and night time parking on Emu bank is already close to capacity.
3. Clean up and maintain the path alongside the lake between the Arts Centre and Skate park.
4. Clean up, paint, improve lighting from the footbridge to Emu bank and past the library down to the Mall. These area are poorly lit and feel unsafe.
5. More casual coffee places along the foreshore, with bicycle racks within sight for cyclists.
6. Provide free Wi Fi connection hot spots near cafés.
7. Put in drinking water fountains.
8. Clean up, brighten, add lights and tables to the existing area near the footbridge and wetlands. It's currently too dark, unkept and unattractive, yet there is a lot of foot traffic to the Lighthouse and the Pizza shop. Make it nicer. Look at Neals Yard, London. Great makeover, not expensive.
9. Perhaps more parking at the skateboard end? We are stuck with motor cars, unfortunately.
10. Redesign car parking areas as angle parking (reverse in) along Emu Bank to accommodate more cars within the existing car parking boundaries. You think it out.
11. Reduce speed limit on Emu Bank now, in the interest of safety.
12. Better maintenance. Everywhere.

Subject: Belconnen Planning Comment regarding Lake Ginninderra
Date: Thursday, 20 November 2014 12:24:47 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Belconnen Planners,

I am a local resident and also a distance open water swimmer. I believe that we need a designated reach in Lake Ginninderra for swimming where no power boats are allowed, with appropriate signage, for safe swimming.

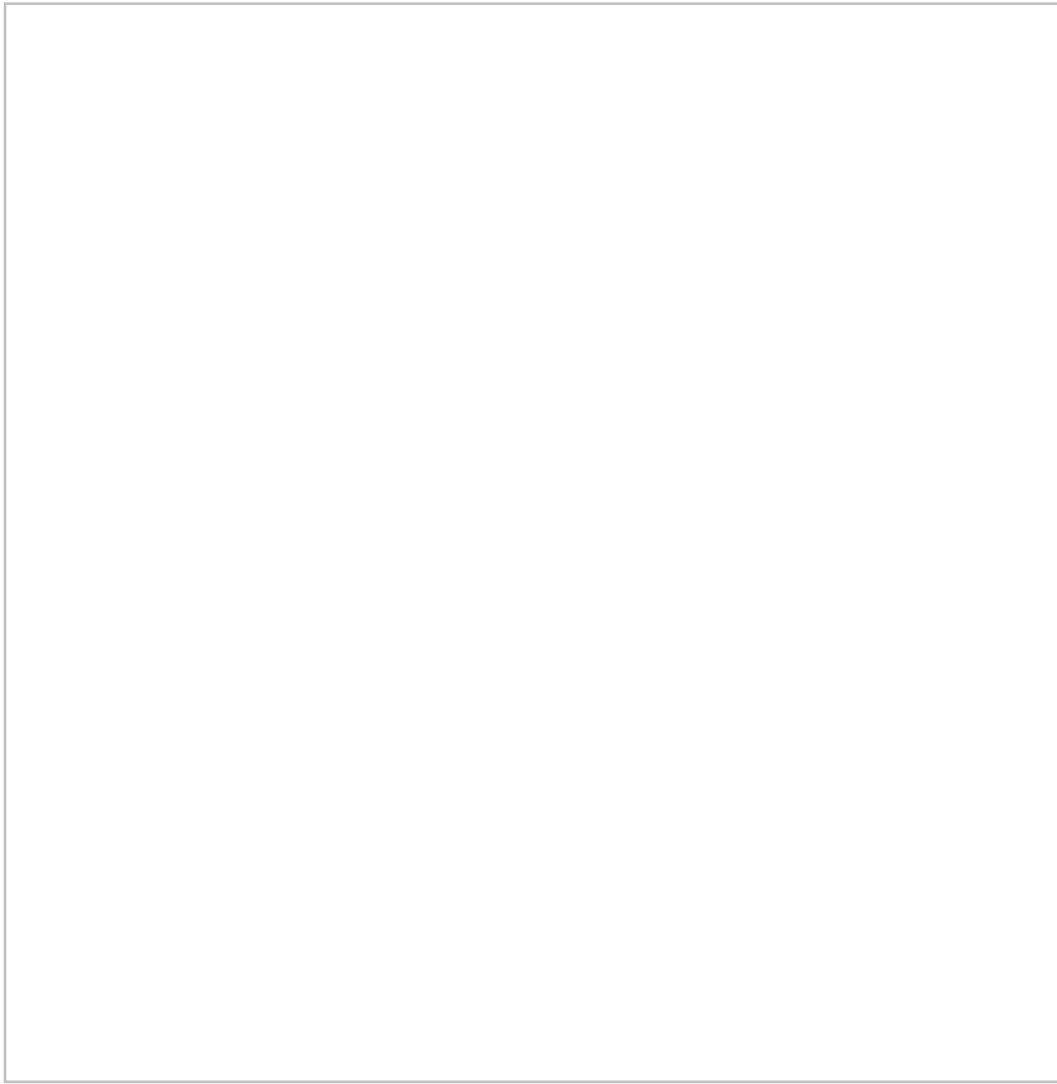
The water skiing groups have the large western reach of Lake Ginninderra set aside for their use, so this negates safe access for swimming out from Yerra, Bargang, Dulwa and Nengi Bamir beaches (which would otherwise be a wonderful area for distance swimming training).

Could the eastern reach of Lake Ginninderra, as shown below, be designated for swimmers and non-powered boats only. Could this be approved and signs put up there, including at Bimbi Beach and on the cement structure in the lake to the south where which power boat drivers could see. The cement structure is roughly 400 m south of Bimbi Beach and level with the southern end of this reach, level with the southern end of Diddams Peninsula in the west and the end of Joy Cummings Pl in the east?

Lake Ginninderra seems much cleaner and safer than Lake Burley Griffin for distance swimming. Thank you if you would consider this suggestion.

Kind regards,





Subject: Belconnen strategic plan
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 10:49:38 PM

Hi

I have spoken at length with a couple of the planners at the opportunity provided at the Belconnen Markets.

Just to reiterate a few points.

Preserve the trades area. That means not allowing the infiltration of incompatible uses such as residential. Leave this as an area that can also incorporate uses such as loud entertainment so that you don't end up with the 'new comer nimby noise nazis' as has happened in Civic. Do not chase the trades businesses out of the area with changes in land use – I don't want to have to go out to Mitchell to access these businesses.

Ensure that the redevelopment of the police/remand facility includes uses at street level that will assist in having a live street frontage opposite the developed Westfield.

Any solution to the underutilisation of the Emu Bank waterfrontage should include reasonable car parking esp for evening use of the facilities.

Provide better linkages for pedestrian/bike access between Uni of Canberra and Belconnen. The Uni is looking at 20,000 plus students with a large number residing on campus and in the Belconnen Town Centre. The current 'goat tracks' are an inadequate embarrassment.

Good luck!

Subject: Belconnen town centre plan
Date: Friday, 14 November 2014 5:59:01 PM

Hi

As a resident of Canberra since 1943 and of Belconnen since 1973, I would like to make some suggestions about the future planning for the Belconnen Town Centre.

I preface my comments by noting that better cycling and pedestrian facilities are good and fine for younger, healthy people but the population is aging quickly and older people tend often to need to drive their cars and park reasonably close to shops and other facilities. Contrary to this need, the government has been removing parking facilities in this area eg the many parking spaces removed for the community health facility.

Parking is now so difficult around the shopping mall that I can no longer shop there (using either the mall parking areas or the even scarcer street parking spots) at weekends and often not on Thursday and Friday mornings. I have increasing medical issues that make it harder to walk the sort of distances I used to.


My suggestions for easing this massive day to day problem for shoppers is to build large multi story parking stations where the old police station exists (no longer used) and where the soon-to-be-relocated fire and ambulance stations exist.

You might argue that I should use buses. I am unable to walk the distance to the nearest bus stop. I have frequent doctor/physio/scan etc appointments where buses would not be feasible.

A related issue is the appalling state of driving/parking in Lathlain St. It is a very busy street for access to much of the town centre but traffic moves at an agonising pace mainly because there is no coordination of the many sets of traffic lights on the street. These should be coordinated, 2 lanes each way be introduced and parking banned in the street - the new parking facilities I suggest would relieve that problem.

In summary, I ask that you plan for the increasing age of the population, note that many older people have to continue using cars, and not put increasingly serious obstacles in the way of their ability to live the sort of life they deserve, including by driving and parking their cars close to shopping and other facilities. Better traffic movement along Lathlain St should be introduced.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these planning issues



Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 6:49:36 PM

I would like to express my interest in the future development and growth of the Belconnen town centre.

I have lived in Belconnen close to the town centre since 1987 so I have witnessed various improvements including: the influence of the Gungahlin town developments on Belconnen town centre and particularly the consequential growth of Belconnen Mall; redevelopment of government office sites; Belconnen skate park; higher density and high rise residential developments in the town centre; the Belconnen Arts Centre; redevelopment of the bus interchange; redevelopment of the small cove along Emu Bank between the Water Police building and the Belconnen Arts Centre; relocation of the Belconnen Community Health Centre; and various other developments.

Belconnen is a very nice place to live. My wife and I decided a while ago to retire here rather than move away. We now live right in the town centre. However, it reminds me of what Sydney used to be like in the 1960s when at the end of the working day people made the long journey back to the suburbs and the inner city was lifeless. That, of course, changed and the planners got to work and turned Sydney into the vibrant colourful city it is today. I do not expect Belconnen to be a copy of Sydney nor as vibrant but I think some improvement should be achievable.

The Belconnen town centre has a reasonable number of restaurants and there is a cinema facility and other minor avenues of entertainment but on a Saturday night you could forgive tourists for thinking that Belconnen is lifeless. The cinema, for example, is secreted inside Westfield Belconnen and basically only the locals know where it is. Belconnen Mall itself looks like it is closed (which it is at the eastern side along Benjamin Way). I think a restaurant/entertainment precinct with street appeal should be considered. Emu Bank has some aspects of this but can be seen as a place for takeaway food.

I think the town centre needs more high density residential development perhaps along Lathlain Street and the ambulance and fire brigade facilities should be relocated to a less commercially valuable area. Street level shops should be incorporated within new residential developments. I often hear about or see good retail stores and other businesses having to close down in Westfield Belconnen due to the excessive conditions of their leases. Surely there should be lower rental retail facilities available within walking distance of the mall and bus interchange to encourage small businesses and specialty shops to the area. Many of the small businesses are stuck away out of sight in Oatley Court and other streets away from easy walking access from the bus interchange at the mall.

I very much like Glebe Park in the city. It has a lot of appeal as a leafy green place to relax and enjoy the beauty of its trees and environment. I would like to see Margaret Timson Town Park transformed into something similar to Glebe Park with an old fashioned steel fence around it and beautiful beech, oak and other such exotic trees planted there. I would like to see flower gardens and other plantings. In its present configuration the park is a little small so it is suggested that the former Community Health Centre be demolished and its site as well as the adjacent unused gravel car park be added to the Margaret Timson Town Park site.

I regret not being able to prepare something more substantial regarding this matter but I have been overseas for many weeks and I hope this expression of interest might be of some help in the consideration of a new master plan for the Belconnen Town Centre. Thank you.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject:
Date:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan - submissions
Friday, 30 January 2015 10:44:08 AM

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I wish to put forward that something be done urgently about the continuing problem of litter along Chandler Street, Emu Bank Road and John Knight Memorial Park.

I walk my dog daily everywhere as we live in the [REDACTED] and I am appalled and disappointed at the state of my neighbourhood. There is daily alcoholic beverage glass bottles, cans, take-away containers and plastics littered everywhere. Yesterday, there were 6 glass beer bottles lined up on one jetty by a thoughtless person. We disposed of it by walking to one of the hard-to-find bins in John Knight Park. Also, plastic bottles are bobbing around everywhere in the lake. A whole collection with other litter becoming a home to the water fowls next to where Ride 365 used to be on Emu Bank Road. This litter has been there for as long as we have lived here [REDACTED]

It seems the litter-pickers are in revolt - looks like they've given up! There is so much broken glass everywhere. At the time of writing there is broken glass on the steps of Library Walk and take-away food packaging that has not been removed since Christmas!

I have written to Mary Porter who had made representations to Shane Rattenbury - but despite all the words in the Ministerial reply I received - nothing has changed at all! I wrote to Mary concerning the Achilles Running Club (for people with disabilities) and the problem of glass on the footpaths.

What has happened to all the good work that the people in Waste Management of the former Dept of Urban Services in the 1990s strived towards? Especially with the Litter Act and enforcement. We used to have at least a presence re Litter enforcement on our roads. Shame ACT Government!

Also, on my walks I encounter numerous tourists. They photograph the lake and I often talk to them. The litter is an eye-sore and an embarrassment.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 20 November 2014 2:10:16 PM

UNOFFICIAL

Hello,

I would like to make a brief submission into the Belconnen Master Plan.

Suggestion – consider establishment of a primary school in the town centre.

- It can be a small school that cater to children of residents in the town centre and then workers in the area.
- The town centre has enough residents equivalent to a suburb like Latham. Amenities such as access to a primary school should be supported given the number of residents.
- There are locations (old police station site or old health centre site etc) within the town centre where a school can be sustained with playgrounds similar to the Ginninderra Childcare centre and Belconnen Council badminton courts.
- The school design can be innovative and creative.
- It will also promote that Belconnen Town Centre is for families and children and not just workers.
- The family environment should be promoted with the increase of residential capacity within the town centre.

Thank you

Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan 2015 submission
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 4:30:15 PM

To Whom It May Concern

I would like to express some opinions about planning for the future 'desired character' of Belconnen Town Centre, so that its historical legacy and natural amenity are preserved, so that sustainable development is promoted at a density appropriate for a town centre, and so that an enlivened precinct is developed for all the Town Centre's users. 'Desired character' is a criterion for Belconnen Precinct development approval, according to the Territory Plan.

I would like the desired character to:

Historical legacy

- Continue Canberra's urban planning concept as a Garden City by planting the treeless Benjamin Way median strip with perennial native flowers, similar to those along Daley Road at the Australian National University
- Restrict new buildings to having light and neutral coloured facades, constructed of largely unadorned masonry, to be compatible with existing buildings such as the heritage-listed Cameron Offices and the Benjamin offices and the new apartment buildings
- Respect "Canberra's unique landscape setting", according to the Territory Plan, and have no further residential or commercial development within 200 metres of Lake Ginninderra shore, except for the redevelopment of the old water police site into a low-rise function centre

Natural amenity

- Ensure that future developments have minimal interference to views to Lake Ginninderra and to Gossan Hill
- Ensure that future developments do not affect the uninterrupted view along Benjamin Way to Lake Ginninderra
- Ensure that Gossan Hill and the entire Lake Ginninderra shore are preserved as vantage points and "quiet refuges from urban living", as mentioned in the National Capital Plan

Sustainable development

- Promote the provision of walkable, compact and complete services for the 5 000 plus existing and the future residents of Belconnen Town Centre

- Promote bicycle-friendly, well-lit recreational and commuter travel, including the provision of racks and signage, especially for cyclists from University of Canberra and the college and for the new high-rise residents
- Encourage the installation of kerbside wetland filters for stormwater, similar to those along Childers Street at the Australian National University
- Encourage the construction of 'green wall' buildings and diverse landscaping projects

Density

- Ensure that the total plot ratio of all buildings is no more than one tenth that which is allowed in Civic, to avoid congestion in Belconnen Town Centre and to ensure that the "dominant role of Civic is maintained in the hierarchy of centres", according to the National Capital Plan
- Ensure that there is no more than one high rise building (defined as over eight storeys and with a footprint of no more than one hectare) per five hectares of the CZ2 precinct in Belconnen Town Centre, so that building density is of human scale

Enlivened precinct

- Promote the creation of a 'town-and-gown' partnership with University of Canberra, which fosters distinct and welcoming connections between Belconnen Town Centre and the University
- Provide easy, convenient and safe short and long term car parking for all users, preferably in parking stations
- Promote the creation of frequently changing shop front displays from the community; for example, from Belconnen Art Centre, Belconnen Library, University of Canberra, the college, Belconnen Community Centre, Belconnen Health Centre, and the Mall, so that more destinations are created in Belconnen Town Centre and social interaction is encouraged
- Plan for better recreational use of Margaret Timpson Park, similar to Green Square in Kingston
- Plan for more small-scale public art, preferably made by local Belconnen artists

I would like to further expand on some aspects of Belconnen Town Centre planning.

Joynton Smith Drive

- I would prefer that this road is left as it is, in case it is needed for access to the Westfield Mall and its apartment development, and that it is used for all-day parking and parking for a function centre on the old water police site.

Services zone

- I do not want any residential development in this zone. Belconnen Town Centre's residential population has already passed the 2031 forecasted number for Woden Town Centre precinct (which was established about the same time). Wayfarer (235 apartments and 96 serviced apartments) and Westfield (319 apartments) have been approved but not yet built. I believe that it may not be long before Belconnen Town Centre services are unable to cope with more residents. The downturn in Belconnen Town Centre liveability will be further affected if the Department of Immigration re-locates its offices and these employees have to commute to work outside Belconnen Town Centre. I would like Block 2 Section 23 Belconnen (former police station and remand centre) to be redeveloped into a parking station to serve the new health centre and to provide overflow parking for the Mall and all-day parking for Park & Ride and Town Centre employees. Another childcare centre and a roof-top park could also be located here.

Parking

- Belconnen's population is forecast to increase by 30 000 people by 2051, if the Riverview development goes ahead in west Belconnen. Belconnen Town Centre is expected to remain the centre of employment and retail trade for the town. In my opinion, we cannot continue to rely on Westfield Mall to provide parking that will be lost if development on car parks at Block 17 Section 152 (servicing the library, community centre, senior citizens' club and Park & Ride), Block 17 Section 152 (behind the Labor Club) and Block 2 Sections 22 (Park & Ride, near the old road safety track) goes ahead. The proposed stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre containing a theatre will also have no additional on-site parking. The Mall is regularly unable to provide sufficient parking at peak times.

Natural amenity

- Belconnen is probably the 'bushiest' of all the town centres in our Bush Capital, with kangaroos grazing within one kilometre on the University of Canberra campus and on Gossan Hill. The threatened Superb Parrots have been seen feeding on elm trees on Benjamin Way and Canberra Ornithologists Group are able to conduct bird watching walks along Lake Ginninderra shore. I would like see more legislative protection against development for the grasslands around Lake Ginninderra, and also more plantings which encourage the greatest possible wildlife diversity in Belconnen Town Centre and its surrounds. That way it will be recognised as a "discrete urban area within a landscape setting", as laid out in the Territory Plan.

Margaret Timpson Park

- I would like to see cafes fronting directly onto the park, perhaps operating from the old health centre in Swanson Court (which should be offered to the Belconnen Community Service), removal of the two grassed pyramids to make the space more usable, and moving the "Tumbling Cubes" sculpture, which Bert Flugelman said was "put in the worst possible location" to a more appropriate site in the park where it can be better appreciated.





Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan Comment
Date: Wednesday, 26 November 2014 1:05:32 PM

Hi,

I just wanted to comment on the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.

ACT government needs to look at applying force to Westfield to adhere the original scope of the upgraded bus interchange as part of the centre and not the tacked on one we have now, and re-open the busway, with an extension along the busway reserve to west Belconnen.

The current setup is a shambles, with cross traffic flows with regular traffic crossing with bus traffic.

The other problem is that there's a lot of conflicting pedestrian traffic crossing outside designated crossing areas to access the bus interchange.

More free parking also needs to be considered as well, especially with the increase of larger capacity buildings. Not everyone has easy access to public transport thanks to Network 14 changes, and shouldn't be penalised because they've had their bus access downgraded or cancelled entirely.

Belconnen could also benefit from better traffic signal coordination as well.

Redevelopment of the old police station / remand centre also needs to be accelerated, it's becoming a bit of an eyesore through neglect.

Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master plan ideas
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 11:10:30 PM

Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for giving Canberrans the opportunity to comment on the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.

I have lived in the Belconnen Town Centre for the past 8 years and have enjoyed seeing the new and evolving changes that have happened so far!

Please find below some ideas / comments for your consideration (in no particular order):

- Joynton Smith Busway: Convert into a linear park / nature walkway (similar to New York Highline but on the ground), removal of the metal fences on both sides of the busway and incorporating the makeshift pathways/tracks that pedestrians/bikes have made and make them a part of the linear park. Include art or sculpture installations. Secondary use following conversion to linear park could be having market stalls etc.
- The Emu bank shops: Should absolutely make use of the lovely lake views, and encourage shops to face the lake with alfresco dining options. Possible renovation or invigorating the existing Emu Bank shop facades. More local cafes / restaurants along the Emu Bank lakeside, reduce fast food options. A rooftop bar perhaps?
- Lake Foreshore: Regular market stalls along the foreshore walkway, Weekend/Sunday Arts/food/farmer's mobile markets (perhaps this could also sprawl across to the Arts Centre), paddle boating/canoe hires
- Lake Ginninderra: Water skiing/wakeboarding competitions!?
- John Knight Park: Comprehensive and extensive play equipment options for children, food vans/trucks
- Margaret Timpson Park: Reinvigorate plantations, perhaps convert into a Botanical Garden, a fountain!, should this be the town square meeting area?
- Improved/Repave pathways and bike paths along Benjamin Way and Emu Bank
- Introduction of Bike Share stations around Belconnen, with main bike station at the Lake Foreshore (next to Arts Centre) and integrating with the MyWay card payment system. On a side note: expand the MyWay card to pay for items at retail stores (similar to the Octopus card in Hong Kong).
- Multi level car parking options: Good candidates are the car parking spaces next to the Community Health Centre / behind Immigration departments.
- If Light Rail is introduced to Belconnen, the track would run within the median strip on Benjamin Way.
- Energy efficient buildings and offices, general 'greening' of Belconnen
- More Belconnen-based celebrations (significant days in Belconnen's history?, that bring

out people to the town centre.

Thanks for your time, hope this helps and all the best with the Master Planning :)




From: [KSt](#)
To: [Belconnen](#)
Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan ideas
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 8:52:50 PM

Good evening

Thanks for the opportunity to submit ideas for the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.

Increased security through a more visible police presence or additional CCTV cameras would encourage pedestrians to safely walk around the town centre. At the moment, skateboarders and shopping trolleys dominate highly concreted areas around the bus interchange and walkways down to the lake. Improved monitoring and education could turn the situation around to a more pedestrian friendly and mobile town centre. Weekend markets down by the lake may also encourage people to walk down to the nice lake space that could be better used.

I also appreciate the hard work of the Belconnen Community Council in bringing about community engagement and spirit. Some sort of community food initiative based out of the Belconnen Community Centre or the old ACT Heath Centre may also bring people together more regularly (eg healthy wholesome meals or meals on wheels).



Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Plan
Date: Friday, 9 January 2015 5:07:45 PM

Pedestrian connectivity in Belconnen seems to have been ignored in the last decade or so. Footpaths that allow good pedestrian access are cheap to build in comparison to roads and even cheaper to maintain. They are economically sustainable. They improve health and fitness and with a growing obesity epidemic, they are essential to good health and reduced obesity.

But you know all this, don't you?

So please make Belconnen more walkable by making it more accessible. We have some lovely walking trails such as around Lake Ginninderra. These are frequently used by persons wanting to improve fitness, take the dog for a walk or just enjoy their environment. But these pretty walkways do not get you to the Mall, the university, Lake Ginninderra college, from upper to lower Belconnen and surrounding suburbs efficiently. Walking to work needs to be encouraged along practical footpaths, with the shortest possible distance and maintaining safety at the same time.

Some examples:

- * Walking from upper Belconnen to lower Belconnen or back may require the pedestrian to negotiate through car yards, along grassed verges where footpaths could be laid, going around the old Police Remand Centre due to the closure of the connection between Rae and Lathlan Street
- * The lights at the corner of Coulter and Joynton Smith have pedestrian lights that enable pedestrians to safely cross. However there are no footpaths leading to these lights from any direction!
- * The old busway from Coulter Drive to Belconnen Mall was a safe and practical walk or ride from Coulter Drive / Florey to Belconnen Mall. But now it has been closed!
- * On approaching Belconnen Mall and the Bus Interchange there are few safe pedestrian crossing places from the north, south or east side.
- * Great path along Lathlan Street but crossing the entry into and exit from the upper level carpark is dangerous due to lack of pedestrian crossings and dodging drivers who consider they have right-of-way without looking first. (Please refer to ACT Road Rules Handbook: Giving way when entering a road-related area or adjacent land from the road.)

Belconnen will move forward. It will change. But when changes are made please consider the pedestrian.

Subject: Belconnen Town Centre Plan
Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2014 11:49:02 AM

My thoughts on the plan are below.

JOYNTON SMITH BUSWAY

The Joynton Smith busway currently serves no function. It is fenced off making access difficult. The busway has future potential for use as a public transport link, possibly as a reserve for light rail to the Westfield Mall. It would be a mistake to close off this option now.

The busway could be used to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access for Florey residents who currently have inadequate links to the Westfield Mall. Many Florey residents currently use Joynton Smith as an access route using a dirt track on the northern side of the road between McDermott Place and Coulter Drive. The track is difficult for parents with strollers.

Connection between Florey and the Belconnen town centre can be greatly improved by converting the busway into a pedestrian and cycle path. A pedestrian crossing would need to be installed at the intersection of the busway and Coulter Drive. Improved access from Coulter Drive to the track behind the Florey houses backing on to Coulter Drive is needed for the proposal to work. Better still would be the construction of a sealed bike path along the route of the existing track.

Landscaping of the busway would make it an attractive and welcoming approach to the Westfield Mall.

Subject: BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 1:11:42 PM

Belconnen had great potential and great people, but I feel Belconnen Town centre is a collection of buildings that do not express much soul, development has been haphazard and I feel does not encourage an organic social environment/structure.

I do what I need to in the Town Centre and then leave as the atmosphere is sterile and busy. I would like to see future development bring people together to create community and to break down stratification of people in Canberra - There are cultural and economic ghettos even in the small area of Central Belconnen, Canberra as a whole needs a more organic social structure. I would like to see:

- A 'Greener' Belconnen
 - More deciduous trees allowing shade in summer and sun in winter
 - Flowers - perhaps perennial bulbs along the centre median on ?? Street - eg some small towns in The Snowies have drifts of daffodils planted, very easy care, they mow around them when they come up and mow over them when they are finished = grass again.
 - More street furniture - not facing roaring traffic but to make people linger a while, not just questionable looking youths (who most often aren't questionable, but just look that way).
 - Westfields is a large ugly monolithic building sitting on the edge of a lovely lake and needs to take responsibility to contribute back to the surrounding area, I suggest they for a start grow tall green trees and more gardens along their perimeter.
 - Perhaps businesses/Government Depts in Belconnen could volunteer to look after a patch of their street? Lunchtime/guerrilla gardeners who show a bit of creativity? In Paris some corporate greening has become a tourist attraction.
 - The old police station/fire/ambulance precinct must be redeveloped very carefully lest a new opportunity to bring soul/community into the place is squandered, this area needs to connect the bulky goods area with the town centre and draw people there (not more empty shops or more of the same that puts other similar businesses out of business as Westfields does)
 - The view along Benjamin Street to the lake is barren, the eye is drawn to the concrete dam wall across the lake, I feel trees and lush landscaping should continue along Benjamin Way past Westfields.
 - On street parking - more and for shorter periods of time, how about angle parking where possible - will revitalise shops outside the mall and recreate a high street - High streets are vital for healthy communities and economic
 - Encourage people into town centre in the evenings, Emu Bank is alive at night, but this life does not extend right into the town centre.
 - The town centre needs to feel vibrant and living for greater periods of the day, shops like Asian grocers and small independent restaurants that are open late are pushed up into the 'bulky goods' part of town - Dickson is a fine example of a great main street/plaza shopping
 - Parking! More encouragement for Govt workers to bus it in, they take up a great deal of parking/bring vehicular traffic into the town centre
- Open spaces:
 - Recent native grass landscaping in new parts of the town centre is washing away/is already unkempt and full of weeds/rubbish - barkchips/dirt is washing onto paths/weeds are sprouting- I would like to see more sustainable/cost

- effective landscaping in future that encourages birdlife and a greener view eg more trees.
- Allow pop up vendors/good quality buskers in open spaces on weekends - coffee carts, icecream etc. We have a rich cultural population in Belconnen, how about some street food carts or a street food evening once a month. Could draw minorities out with hidden talents (a short CIT course would set them up for food hygiene)
- I feel there has been is no flow of design in the town centre as it has developed, many spaces do not draw people and life into them - eg Returning books to the Library is a logistical problem - find a parking space, pay parking, up/down steps sometimes in the dark etc to avoid parking problems and the open space in front of library feels unsafe at times.
- The parking app advertised on pay parking machines is a bit unreliable ...
- The Lake
 - The lake foreshore - new grass in front of Westfields lake shore not particularly welcoming, it is so sparse, haven't seen the space used well yet.
 - The foreshore in front of Belconnen Art Gallery- why does the walking/bike track not continue along the shoreline? I want to walk along a lake, not up onto the noisy street again.
 - Not sure why fast food outlets like McDonalds/Hungry Jacks/Red Rooster with drive throughs are located on the lake's edge, they draw cars into a pretty spot, businesses like this would be better up in the bulky goods area - they create noise and rubbish, people are drawn drive throughs/fast food chains no matter where they are.
- Residential areas in Central Belconnen:
 - Lake access from the Totterdell Street high density housing needs to be improved, please a gate through the old bus road, the walking path from Florey etc stops dead at the bus road, to get to the lake that is in sight from this point takes another 15 minutes!
 - The old bus road skirting Totterdell Street needs to be torn up and used for either housing or landscaping, it is an eyesore.
 - The bus depot - time for it to be moved out of the centre of town or to go underground = noise and pollution
 - Totterdell Street shops - long grass, rubbish and deep piles of leaves/bark, noise from the Tavern (most patrons are not from the immediate area, the tavern brings vehicular traffic to this residential street) - we need something to fill the vacant shop there that benefits the whole community.
 - I cant understand why residential areas are built along busy roads but minimal traffic noise barriers/dirt banks are in place to increase quality of life - Further development must include such measures, it doesn't take much money to raise dirt, plant a few trees along the generous spaces between Canberra's arterial roads and residences.
- Other:
 - Post office in Cohen Street - Ugh! Bad/limited parking, not enough PO Boxes
 - Traffic around Bunnings/Belconnen Markets is quite a snarl in peak hours.
 - I feel Westfields sucks the life out of the place! We need to support small businesses through good urban planning, not just more franchises in a big concrete shopping mall.
 - Vacant shops - maybe use for little pop up businesses in the very short term, to test their worth/give them a leg up, until the premises are leased to long term businesses

I really do like living in Belconnen, there are a lot of opportunities, it is affordable, I love the lake, I am close by to shops and restaurants, but I feel we can do more, I went to Uni here and stayed [REDACTED] I have seen many changes in that time, both the good and not so good. Belconnen needs a bit of tidying/patching/reorganisation to

consolidate the place into one truly living and breathing place so we can all live well.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Kind regards



Subject: BTC MP Suggestion
Date: Thursday, 22 January 2015 5:46:21 PM

Hi

This is an idea that I would like to see worked into the Master Plan (and adopted elsewhere if that were possible): that apartment buildings either be obliged (or perhaps just supported by the government) to create additional parking floors that are then operated as commercial parking garages.

The reason for this is that most new sites identified for land release are significant ground level car parks. Perversely the stock of publicly available (I stress this point) parking is reduced at the same time that attractors to the town centre are increased.

By encouraging or obliging new builds to add a level of parking that can be accessed by the public for a fee, such buildings can enjoy a revenue stream while also ensuring that their impact on parking stress is reduced.



Subject: changes to Belconnen Draft Plan and route 45 Belconnen bus time-table changes
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 12:28:06 PM

On November 10th 2014 I sent a letter to 'ACTION' buses - see below - regarding the change of bus timetable that affects those on route 45.

I still have not received a reply to this email, and as it is almost 3 months since I sent it. I would like a reply.

Further to that email, I would like to put my support behind a submission from [REDACTED] of Belconnen, regarding the unused bus lane that goes from Coulter Drive, to the Belconnen Mall. [REDACTED] suggests that the bus lane be used for a pedestrian walk to the Belconnen Mall. It would be beneficial for the locals to have a pleasant walkway as an alternative to walking along Joynton-Smith Drive where the footpath is very hit and miss! (It peters out before the Mall on both sides of the street and pedestrians are required to walk on the road to reach our destination). It is very difficult negotiating this route when one is carrying shopping and almost impossible if you were pushing a pram or stroller (or wheelchair/seniors motorised carts/scooters).

Now that the bus timetable has changed to every 2 hours, walking is the only thing to do (other than drive and I know the Government is trying to get people to catch Action buses, but reducing the frequency of them, I don't think is the way to do it!) My suggestion of another bus (eg no. 12 to McKellar/Evatt/Spence or 315 which goes to Melba/Flynn and Spence) or some other route to be rerouted along Joynton-Smith Drive, or alternatively, a new bus stop on Coulter Drive near the old bus way. There are already traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at the intersection. This way, we have a choice and not having to arrange our lives to fit in with the infrequency of a particular bus.

I hope that my letter suggesting these changes will be regarded as helpful to future planning of Belconnen.

[REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, 10 November 2014 4:52 PM
To: 'action@act.gov.au'
Subject: route 45 Belconnen bus time-table changes

Dear Sir/Madam

It is with great distress to us that our bus service has been severely cut.

Not long after we moved into our townhouse almost 10 years ago, I campaigned for a bus stop to be located nearby so that we could get to and from the Belconnen Mall relatively easily. That happened, and we were delighted and used it as often as we could. There are approximately 80 apartments or townhouses in this development, and some of these residents use public transport on a regular basis.

It is only now, a few years later our bus service has been severely cut and the new times of the buses are completely useless to us. A bus every 2 hours during the day does not suit our needs - or anyone else's needs, here in our complex. We would often go to see a movie in the city and go by bus each way, as it was easier for us to do rather than to drive into the city. I know you campaign to get more people to use the buses, but they have to be available at the times people want to use them. We also have to be back at the Belconnen Mall by 5pm as there are no buses after that time!

My husband who is 86 [REDACTED], but recently he has had to give it up because he prefers to go there by bus. He doesn't drive much these days. He has to take 3 buses each way, and to get there and home again, is a logistic nightmare. Not only our bus time-table has changed but also the bus connection to the War Memorial from Civic has been cut with only an hourly service instead of half hourly. [REDACTED]

I have looked at other routes that could somehow be adapted. There are a couple of routes which go down Coulter Drive that maybe could be diverted to include Joynton-Smith Drive. Or maybe even, a bus stop near the corner of Coulter and Joynton-Smith on Coulter Drive to pick up any of us in this particular backwater, who may be in need of some transport.

We are a retired couple - my husband is 86 and I am 74 years old, and our health the past year or so has been not the best so to be able to walk down to the Mall and catch the bus back was ideal for us, especially in the summer when it is too hot to walk in the midday sun. We were known to some of the bus drivers and they always greeted us with a cheery word and if one of us (my husband or myself) was catching the bus alone, they would always comment in a friendly way.

I would be grateful if you could look into this for us and maybe make a change or two when you are thinking of making up new time-tables for this area - or even to tweak it a little so that a bus stop could be erected on Coulter Drive so that we could hop on a bus that was going to the Mall/City. It would be very nice to have other options or choices without too much changing of routes or expense. I'm sure that people wanting to go to visit the lake would be grateful for a stop as well. An ideal stop would be near the old bus lane that went behind our 'development'. There are traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at the intersection, so crossing the roads wouldn't be a problem.

I hope that you give my request some consideration and I would be grateful if you would reply to this letter - hopefully in a positive way.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Subject: Comment on master plan
Date: Sunday, 23 November 2014 10:41:51 PM

Hi

I live in near the Belconnen Town Centre and would like to submit a few comments on the Belconnen Town Master Plan.

1. My biggest concern with land development is that ACT planning laws only consider the impact of the development within the block they're working on. It seems that developers just want to cram as many people as possible into one particular block without consideration of the impact on the surrounding spaces, e.g changes to traffic flow, the loss of parking spaces from surrounding areas. This why parking around the town centre has become so scarce recently and it's causing problems in the surrounding residential areas. Meanwhile workers park in Hennessy and Condell Sts, which have become so crowded that they block visibility for drivers trying to turn in and out of side streets. Same problem at CISAC. Too bad if you're a cyclist. Plus these workers are leaving work every 2 hours to move their cars.

Other issues include what's happening on the vacant of land between the Luxton street traffic lights opposite the Waterside Apartments. I understand there will be a 10 story building for parking and retail. Something like this should have been located within Westfield Mall on the Emu Bank side, inside of just making it a carpark (which was a waste of waterside frontage).

Canberra is myopic about issues like these because It's not where profits are be made and it always seems to be someone else's responsibility to fix.

2. It's inevitable that higher density living will involve more high-rise apartments. That's ok as long as the buildings aren't eyesores, are well-designed, e.g. don't cause wind tunnels or overshadow other buildings and have adequate on-site parking for residents and visitors.

There should also be restrictions on how close a high rise can be to Lake Ginnindera, so that they don't block the view for existing dwellings.

I'd also like to see a mix of townhouses and apartments on smaller blocks (e.g. 10-20). It seems that if you want to buy a place in Canberra, your main choices are either a MacMansion or an apartment in a high-rise complex. I'd like to see the options where people can own smaller houses on smaller blocks of land. This might also help build a sense of community amongst residents.

I'd be interested to see how the Loop project in Belco Fresh Food Market will be implemented without causing traffic congestion.

3. Streets should be designed to have proper bike lanes and be wide enough to accommodate off street parking. I like how some streets in Harrison and Wright have designated parallel parking bays for visitor parking that don't get in the way of traffic. There's no reason for streets to be as narrow as those off Condell Street, which don't even have footpaths.

4. It's great to see Belconnen amenities such as the Arts Centre, the Interchange and the Emu Bank area being upgraded. I'd like to see these areas populated with community

events and festivals. For example:

A community garden (like The Dirty Beanstalk in New Acton) either at Belconnen Fresh Food Market, or the vacant gravel patch next to Margaret Timpson park behind the old Belconnen Health Centre.

Afternoon outdoor music or movies at Margaret Timpson Park or by the lake (similar to what happens at Kingston Foreshore)

Redevelop the jetty as a cafe/restaurant

A night market along the Emu Bank path by the lake.

Use one of the old buildings, e.g. the old Belconnen Health Centre as a co-working space (most are based around ANU and Kingston) in partnership with UC and local business, to help business development and innovation for Belconnen.

Subject: Comment on the Belconnen Laster Plane
Date: Sunday, 11 January 2015 6:41:12 PM

Congratulations on the look so far achieved for the Belconnen Town Centre. The skyline viewed from the lake is impressive in its aesthetics and architectural design. The existing foreshore development offers great lifestyle amenities for all to enjoy. The public facilities and services of the Town Centre are extensive and easy to access.

I believe there is need for a building covenant which ensures no further buildings being permitted where they would block views of those in existing high rise apartments. These people have paid premium prices for their apartments and should not now be disadvantaged. Such a covenant could be a model for developers in other jurisdictions.

Subject: Comments on Belconnen Master Plan
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 8:51:14 PM

I have lived and worked in Belconnen for over 34 years and my husband and I have raised our four children here. We are now retired and still enjoy living in the area.

Please find my comments below on development ideas for the Belconnen Town Centre.

I live in [REDACTED] and we have good paths for walking and cycling to the Mall. However, we have family members who live in [REDACTED] and there is currently no proper cycle path down Belconnen Way past Scullin and Page and this makes it difficult for people who wish to cycle into work or to the Mall. The underpasses into Page are also very steep and badly lit which puts people off using them. The paths connecting Belconnen to UC also need to be improved by ensuring that the area has adequate lighting, is wide enough for both pedestrians and cyclists and looks attractive and safe to use.

The access from the Belconnen Mall to the lake also needs to be opened up in some way. It is very difficult to access the area near the Black Pepper Café without going through car parks which don't have safe pedestrian pathways. The whole lake area near the Arts Centre feels very cut off from the rest of the Belconnen Town Centre.

There is a need for good quality public space around the new bus interchange next to Belconnen Mall (opposite the Remand Centre). This is the perfect area for people to interact, especially with the Health Centre right next door. Perhaps some of the Remand Centre land could be used for public open space, with shady trees, lots of seating and maybe even a grassed area and a kids playground. The interchange is a transport hub, but it can be very sunny and hot and there is no pleasant place to sit outside - people are forced into the Mall if they have a long wait for a bus.

The Joynton Smith bus way area of land should probably be used for medium density residential development, with a cycle/footpath running through it. At the moment it is just a wasted area and an eyesore. Another area that needs to be fixed is the unfinished development near the Belconnen Markets. The area looks terrible. If the development is not going ahead they should be made to fill in the hole and plant some trees or provide more car parking.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Comments on Belconnen Town Centre Draft Master Plan [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 5 December 2014 12:14:42 PM

UNOFFICIAL

Given the expensive rates charged in Canberra, an invitation to provide comments should have gone out with the last rates notice. Here are my comments about the plan.

1. Belconnen Mall is badly designed with not enough parking. Canberra drivers are the rudest and worst drivers in Australia and trying to fight through that nonsense to get a park is a nightmare. The mall itself is badly designed, \$125 million dollars and it still looks like a dump. The walkways force people into throngs and Canberra people are rude and have not been raised properly. So there is stress negotiating crowds at the mall.
2. The town centre is not at all pedestrian friendly. The traffic lights are not geared for pedestrians, so people have to wait a long time to cross roads. There are few pedestrian crossings. The humps have forced the Canberra clowns to slow down in the block surrounding the mall.
3. There is little green space in the town centre. Four ugly high rise buildings were inflicted on the town centre, but no green space was provided and no traffic planning to account for the extra traffic. I note that plans are afoot for the ACT Government to flog off the car park opposite the Community Centre to developers, rather than use the space as either a carpark or develop some green space.
4. Margaret Timpson Park has old, broken seats that need repairing and painting. There are no picnic tables and it looks shabby. The "nature strips" in Belconnen have couch grass and unattended native trees. Flowers and landscaping are practically unheard of here. There is no sense of pride in the town centre, given the lack of landscaping, greenery and the shabby appearance of Westfield. The footpaths have uneven paths with overgrown grass.
5. The 40km/h zone is the best thing to have happened in Belconnen, but it needs to be extended from the Lake to College Street. There needs to be a pedestrian crossing across College Street. There needs to be speed humps erected in Hennessy Street and Oakley Circuit.
6. Civic has decent shops and services, but not Belconnen. To get my shoes repaired, I am told that I have to go to Civic. To get my watch repaired, I am told to go to Civic. If I want decent clothes, I have to shop at Civic.
7. Belconnen is extremely pedestrian unfriendly. I would like at least one pedestrian bridge (like the red one that was pulled down when the ACT Government decided to extend Cohen Street) to help people get around. The old bus depot was daggy, but there was a pedestrian overpass from it to the mall, which was really convenient and it was covered so people did not get wet in the rain.
8. There is no civic pride in Belconnen. For example; three years ago I reported that the Belconnen Library sign needed repairing (facing Belconnen Westfield). It currently reads "Belnne Libra, instead of Belconnen Library. It still has not been repaired. Footpaths are cracked and dangerous. The medium strip down Benjamin Way is a disgrace. Why not have a landscaper put in nice flowers or shrubs along the main strip in Belconnen? For some reason the ACT Government edges all of the grass on the footpaths, but does not plant lawn to cover the bald patches. Given the inconvenience to pedestrians from the imposition of Oracle, with motorists speeding in and out of the driveways (again, no speed humps), there is no footpath on the northern side of College Street, making it dangerous to walk along. I hope that the ACT Government gets sued when someone slips in front of Oracle.



Subject: Comments on Master plans for Belconnen town centre
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 12:11:14 AM


Attention: Master plan team in EPD


Thank you the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed, new master plan for the Belconnen town centre.

My first comment concerns housing. Considering the lack of affordable housing in the ACT, at least for households with below-average household income (by ACT median household income standards), I would hope that the master plan can incorporate the increase in affordable housing, or even public housing, as part of that process. This could perhaps entail building medium-density, affordable housing and/or public housing in Joynton Smith busway location. This is especially apt considering the short supply of public housing in the ACT (even though the ACT has high number per capita compared to other jurisdictions).

My second comment concerns the predominance of the Westfield shopping centre. Despite the benefits of that centre, it does have a detrimental effect. For one, the behaviour Westfield management towards its tenets can be quite mercenary; and this most likely behaviour is facilitated by the monopolistic advantage Westfield enjoys. Also, the Westfield shopping centre is monolithic in its physical presence, exacerbated by the lack of shops with fronts facing out to the streets. Therefore, countervailing the monopolistic and overbearing presence Westfield has on shopping in the area would be appropriate. This could be perhaps achieved by enhancing the environment for shopping on the streetscape, nearby the Westfield shopping centre, that allows for a greater range of retailing outside, but nearby the shopping centre.

My last comment relates to be a lack of new medium density housing generally in the area. There has been a large in increase in high-density housing, but not medium-density. I suggest focussing on the supply of more medium-density housing in the Belconnen centre. The population density does not seem to justify this situation whereby the supply of high-density dwellings seems to have been favoured over medium-density. This has resulted in an oversupply, or at least an over-preponderance, of high-density dwellings in the Belconnen centre.





Subject: Draft master Plan submission
Date: Wednesday, 28 January 2015 10:07:13 AM
Attachments: [Submission by AW on Belco Master Plan.docx](#)
[APPENDIX A.docx](#)
[APPENDIX B.docx](#)
[APPENDIX C.docx](#)
[APPENDIX D.docx](#)

Good morning,

The attached submission – with all appendices – for the Belconnen Town Centre Draft Master Plan has been mailed on 23 January 2015 to the Strategic Planning Division of the Environment and Planning Division. This email is in case the submission is not received by the deadline.

Three further Appendices are not attached due to reaching the allowable transmission limit. They are mainly photos of the former Health Centre, the roads surrounding the park and a sketch indicating proposed land use.

[Redacted]
Subject: Emailing: Belc Masterplan
Date: Saturday, 10 January 2015 10:59:06 AM
Attachments: [Belc Masterplan.docx](#)

The attached comments are submitted for consideration in the development of the Belconnen Town Centre Plan.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

■

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

■

Subject: FW: Update to Belconnen Town Centre feedback
Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2015 10:00:46 AM

Jess-

I've received some additional feedback.

Could you please treat the text below & the attached word doc as two separate submissions. Maybe as 'unnamed submission provided to Belconnen Community Council' (?)

Thanks.

Chris.

Hi Chris,

I have sent my draft summary of the sticky notes to Tara so the document should be with you soon.

In the meantime, please note the below and attached additional input to the consultation process from different people. They do not need to be published.

Thanks!

Scope of the study

The map of the Belconnen Town Centre is known. It would be beneficial for the town centre boundaries for this and future studies to not be barriers to the planning process; that is, the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan should seamlessly integrate with surrounding regions. For example, community feedback has included the desire for increased pedestrian and cycle access from Page to the Belconnen Town Centre, and one suggestion was a bridge from Bavay Place over Coulter Drive to the site currently occupied by the Belconnen Bus Depot (assuming that function will be relocated at some stage in the future). The Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan, now and into the future, should recognise the need to include surrounding areas in the planning process to a) enable integration with surrounding areas while b) appropriately including affected residents in the consultation process.

For the purpose of the Master Plan, connecting the Belconnen Town Centre with the University of Canberra, AIS, CIT and Calvary Hospital in Bruce is important for business as well as residential amenity. If these areas within Bruce are not to be subject to the Belconnen Town Centre

Master Plan, they should be subject to their own regional planning process that allows integration with bordering surrounds. While recognising the relative planning autonomy of these agencies on their own premises, the impacts on traffic flows (public and private, vehicular and pedestrian), housing and businesses.


Particular Suggestions

- Commercial properties should have less restrictions on the type of business allowed to operate at each premise. For example, why does the planning process only allow restaurants or office space within specific locations? The market should have some role in what businesses should operate where, so there is a greater incentive for property owners to invest and a reduced likelihood of vacant shops.
- Opportunities exist for enhanced traffic flow and pedestrian amenity, such as by making use of one-way street (for example, facilitating one-way traffic flow along Emu Bank). Such an approach could facilitate more street parking (angled).
- If the ACT Government wishes to encourage vibrancy in the Belconnen Town Centre, it should examine laws pertaining to noise pollution and associated issues. For example, new residential apartments built near hospitality venues should be required to have double-glazed windows, and there should be a recognition of prior or envisaged function (whether it be residential or business) to provide increased certainty to investors.
- The disused busway along Joynton Smith Drive should be reserved for future generations as a public transport corridor, as originally intended by Belconnen's first planners; this requires the continued reservation of vacant public land in Florey that runs from Coulter Drive, along John Cleland Crescent and meets Ginninderra Drive. While this area is reserved, the bitumen should be removed or covered to enable grass or gardens and free access of pedestrians between Beissel Street and Florey.
- The shared bike lane and footpath running from the corner of Lathlain and Luxton Streets to Florey (under Totterdell Street) should be extended to cross Joynton Smith Drive to meet up with the pathway north of Beissel Street.
- There should be public access to Lake Ginninderra along its entire perimeter. Current public space, such as that around Diddams Close, should be reserved, yet land management plans should be in place both to protect native fauna and flora and to reduce the risk of fire.
- Margaret Timpson Park is underutilised. Given the increased presence of residential apartments in the town centre, we suggest expanding Margaret Timpson Park by demolishing the ACT Government building on the corner of Benjamin Way and Swanson (the former ACT Health building). Such a move would open up the park visually to residents and workers in the town centre. The local community should be consulted to determine an enhanced design of Margaret Timpson Park in light of increased space. One suggestion is that it could be utilised as a town square.
- Some of the green space between the lanes of Benjamin Way are often harmed by

pedestrian use (such as north of Chan Street). The planting of shrubs (with dedicate pathways through) would help protect the visual amenity of the space and prevent the land from becoming a dust-bowl.

- Ginninderra House, formally the Water Police Station on Lake Ginninderra, is a high-value location and should be better utilised by the public, perhaps as a restaurant or bar.
- The Belconnen Bus Depot might one day cease operations at its current location. If this occurs, the ACT Government should consult the community regarding future use. One suggestion is that the bus route currently operating along Cohen Street could be redirected from the Westfield Bus Station up Gillot or Purdue Streets to a new bus station on the site of the old depot; from there, the new route could be directed to the major intersection on the intersection of Southern Cross Drive, Coulter Drive and Luxton Street. Such a suggestion would a) facilitate greater investment around the former bus depot site and b) remove the current bus route bottlenecks which exist west of the Westfield Bus Station and West of the Cohen Street Station.
- The ACT Government land north of the corner of Cohen and Lathlain Streets should not be developed until future use of the Belconnen Bus Depot site is determined, as there might be an opportunity to reduce bus route bottlenecks by making use of this site.
- Parking remains an issue in the Belconnen Town Centre. Cars will always exist within the town centre. The ACT Government should facilitate multi-level parking, yet the placement of such parking in the middle of the town centre would increase traffic congestion. Such developments should be adjacent to major roads surrounding the town centre to reduce the town centre traffic congestion and encourage people to walk where possible. If the Belconnen Bus Depot is relocated and a bus station is established on that site, we would suggest the placement of a multi-storey car park on that site. Where possible, multi-storey carparks should be built into the side of an incline to reduce potential visual pollution. Walking and bike paths would be influenced by the location of these carparks.
- A free town centre shuttle bus would facilitate the movement of people into and within the town centre (potentially from multi-storey carparks), which is likely to boost businesses and encourage patrons to leave their cars outside the town centre.
- The vacant lot of land on the corner of Luxton Street and Coulter Drive should be reserved for future development. Any decision on the type of development should be made after a decision regarding the current Belconnen Bus Depot site.
- Development of high-rise should not be discouraged in principle, although height expectations should be advertised by the ACT Government so the community is not surprised. As a general principle, the height of buildings should reduce as the location moves higher up the hill from the town centre towards Page so as to reduce the creation of shadows.
- The Town Centre needs to maintain its dedicated services/ trades area; these businesses should not be forced out, otherwise local residents would need to travel very far for

commensurate services.




Subject: Fwd: Safer cycling in Belconnen
Date: Monday, 10 November 2014 9:12:08 PM

Hello,

A quick submission to the Belconnen Plan:

As a cyclist, it currently feels very unsafe to cycle down Lathlain Street, with all the distracted traffic entering and exiting the road all along its length. Safer cycling options to the centre would be appreciated. As part of this, a reconfiguration of the lights at the corner of Southern Cross Drive and Lathlain would be good. Currently, cyclists wishing to turn into Lathlain have to wait through two cycles of the traffic lights, and most opt instead to cross Lathlain on the red after waiting to cross Southern Cross on the green. As this is a T-intersection, all it would take to fix this would be the option of crossing Southern Cross at the lights on the other side of Lathlain, so that we wouldn't need to cross Lathlain at all.

It would also help if I could safely bypass the centre of Belconnen when commuting, rather than having to ride through it and add to the traffic issues. A safe path along Coulter Road in both directions would facilitate this. There is currently an on-road path in one direction, which I take on the way home, but no path in the other direction.



Subject: Ideas for Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 10:36:17 AM

UNOFFICIAL

Good morning,

A couple of things that I would like to see long term to add life to Belconnen town's centre:

- More natural light inside Westfield shopping precinct. More large skylights to "open" up inside.
- Redevelop Westfield shopping precinct so faces north with cafes on paved areas. Braddon, New Action, Melbourne style.
- Remove fitness centre and carpark section near lake. An eyesore in completely the wrong spot. A huge opportunity here to get it right with north facing café precinct.
- Apartment blocks with cafes at ground level and arcades to public areas.

Many thanks,

Subject: Ideas for next Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan
Date: Monday, 1 December 2014 4:58:38 PM

Good afternoon,

My partner and I would like to contribute to the ideas being considered under the activity to revise the Belconnen Town Centre (BTC) Master Plan.

We would be very keen to see the following ideas included in the scope of future development in the BTC:

- 1) Reclaim some of the lake adjoining the take away food places on Emu Bank to enable nicer restaurants / cafes to be built so that they can offer water views and nicer outlooks than what is currently provided by the fast food joints currently occupying the area. This idea would not require the fast food joint to vacate any land either.
- 2) Install safer disabled access to enter the Level 2 of Belconnen Mall from the Benjamin Way side.

has to use a mobility scooter to get to the mall and move around the shops, but access is not straight forward as per the following examples:

- During normal business hours up to 6pm can enter the mall from the Level 1 Benjamin Way entrance and access the supermarkets on Level 2 by riding either the lift or the inclinator to other levels.
 - After 6pm when access to the Benjamin Way entrance is closed off, can only get to the Level 2 supermarkets via: (i) the car park entrance off Cohen street; or (ii) the Level 3 entrance at the bus station.
 - o The Level 2 access is currently unsafe as has to drive scooter on the road through the ticket barriers as there is no ramped guttering on the inside of the parking area for to exit off the western side pathway, so must drive through the ticket barriers and hold up cars trying to enter the car park, in order to get to the ramped guttering closer to the Level 2 Supermarket entrance. This is very dangerous for despite the hazard lights uses on scooter.
 - o The Level 3 route is simply the longest distance compared to what I can do by climbing a stairwell between Levels 1 and 2 nearest to Benjamin Way.
- 3) Install picnic tables and playground equipment in Margaret Timpson Park to encourage more use by families in the nearby multi-unit developments. Also need to demolish the old Health Centre building and adjoining dirt patch to improve the appeal of the green strip that comprises the Park.
 - 4) Build a wide cycle path down the centre nature strip of Benjamin Way to join the lake to Belconnen Way. The current pathway system on either side of Benjamin Way is narrow between College Street and the Lake.

Regards,



Subject: Input into Belconnen Master Plan
Date: Thursday, 13 November 2014 11:20:29 AM

Resending as this email address did not work last week.

Dear Planners

As a long time resident of [REDACTED] and also other [REDACTED], I wish to lodge the following comments for consideration in the Belconnen master planning process 2014-15.

1. Private car access to be maintained to retail centre from the north east and north west.

1a. Whilst I appreciate the government has a focus on preventing both local residents and commuters from using private motor vehicles, the fact remains that Belconnen is one of the best places in the world to live and to drive. It would be to the great detriment of the citizens of Canberra if this were changed in favour of "pedestrian friendly" or "cycle friendly" changes to our trunk roads. There are ample walking paths and bicycle paths to get from the suburbs into the town centre. We have been using these for decades, just as cars and trucks have been using the roads. Separately. Keep them separate. Allow drivers to save fuel, expense and greenhouse gas emissions by driving short uninterrupted distances as this is much more fuel efficiency than the constant acceleration and deceleration around traffic lights and roundabouts and for almost all cars driving in higher gears at 60kph is more fuel efficient than in lower gears at 40kph.

1b. In addition, this retail centre is the major retail centre for both Gungahlin and the communities of Yass and Murrumbateman. Public transport is not the ideal means to do a fortnightly grocery shop, nor to stop in to buy a 'quick few items' from a Belconnen town centre store on the way to somewhere else in Belconnen unless you happen to also work there. For the 90,000+90,000+10,000 (Belconnen + Gungahlin + Yass area) people in this situation, only a few thousand will be within a shopping-trolley-push of the Belconnen mall which is where we choose to do this shopping. Retain sufficient all-day and three hour parking spaces.

1c. I request that serious consideration be given to LEAVING Joynton Smith Drive as a clear, 60kph road (with the one roundabout) access from Coulter Drive directly into a decent sized carpark. Definitely DO NOT install road calming measures on those roads. You may like to joke about scrambled eggs, spilt drinks and broken cakes, but we do not. I do not think that the retailers of Belconnen town centre would approve their trucks having to navigate a slower and more windy road either. It causes economic inefficiency and irritation that can also be measured by people choosing to shop or work elsewhere.

1d. I also request an improvement to private motor vehicle access to the southern area carparks for residents of Bruce, Kaleen and Lawson. At present the route along Aikman Drive requires diversion through several traffic lights, around a roundabout and through informal pedestrian zones as well as the poorly timed left turn lights "underneath the old pedestrian bridge" on Belconnen Way which causes traffic to bank up if there are lunchtime office workers strolling across at every turn of the lights. Can cars use the 'new bus way'? If not, please open up a better route, maybe get rid of the roundabout on Chandler St in favour of traffic lights? Do not add cyclists to this route and please try to divert pedestrians away from it.

2. Public transport from Evatt to Belconnen

The Belconnen Town Centre is almost inaccessible from the current ACTION Route 12 in terms of time. It takes so long, costs so much, and is so infrequent that our family never catches that service. As an example, it is faster to drive from our house to the [REDACTED] and park our car, than it is to catch a bus to Belconnen Town Centre. I make no suggestions, I am merely pointing out that no matter what you propose to do regarding busways and reducing parking in the Belconnen Town Centre, alternative arrangements for getting to commercial shops exist and will be used, to the detriment of other government policies.

Bicycle and footpaths in the area are perfectly adequate and do not need adjustment. From the northern suburbs, there are simple connecting paths travelling close to Lake Ginninderra to the parts of the town centre that a person would want to access by bicycle or on foot. Again, the 'trades' area must remain accessible by car because patrons only go there if they are looking to buy something that then needs to be carried! Or getting their car fuelled or serviced.

3. Public transport from the Barton Highway to Belconnen

Consideration is desperately needed to be given to placing a bus stop at Gold Creek Village (on the actual Barton Highway not a side road) for a direct non-stop service to Belconnen Town Centre interchange then City Bus Interchange. This will take a lot of commuters cars out of Belconnen streets and have a greater impact on the quality of life of Belconnen residents than slowing our cars down within Belconnen. Commuters who want to carry goods like their fortnightly shopping will be able to drive and park in the town centre on those days, and catch buses on other days. This would also remove vehicles travelling along Copeland Drive which is currently under consultation due to rat-running complaints. That has always been a major route so cars are better doing 60kph along it than being slowed. I suggest to remove the extra commuter cars by providing a cheap, direct bus service from the Barton Highway.

4. The old bus way

The most obvious use of the old bus way parallel to Joynton Smith Drive is as an all day commuter carpark. A small investment by government would recoup a lot of parking fees, free up the shopping mall and roadside parking spaces, and acknowledge that commuters come from all across Canberra, Yass, Goulburn and Queanbeyan to work in Belconnen and many of these workers are unable to catch public transport for numerous reasons.

I look forward to your responses. I have no comment on height of buildings, materials, tree plantings, toilets, irrigation, University of Canberra access etc.

██████████

██████████

Subject: Input to Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 1:24:45 PM

I would like to provide rather brief input as follows:

I would like to see a plan for building heights to govern development in the Town Centre, rather than let individual developers put in plans for whatever height they think they can get away with, despite impacting adversely on adjacent blocks and overall vistas.

I also think that it is unfortunate that unpaid community representatives have been left to point out the obvious disadvantages associated with some recent development proposals (particularly the high rise proposal behind McDonalds), when these should have been ruled out by sensible planning restrictions.

I would also like the Town Centre Master Plan to focus on better use of areas adjacent to the Lake - with some minor and low rise private sector development such as coffee shops or putt-putt golf permitted, as long as bike path, walking access and a reasonable amount of public access green space is maintained.

I would also like to suggest that no further grants/sale of land to Westfield Belconnen be permitted, as they already dominate development and have not effectively used their prime site so close to the lake in a way that provides community benefit from this location.

[REDACTED]

Date: Friday, 16 January 2015 11:14:06 AM

Attachments: [Planning for knowledge-based urban development - global perspectives.pdf](#)

I am, of course, very much against the Department of Immigration moving out of the Belconnen area - and so I have signed Andrew Leigh's petition to that effect.

I think, though, that there needs to be some planning for the event that it does move. We are faced with a government that is intent on decimating the aspects of the public sector economy in this town which are not concerned with the Defence, security and intelligence sectors.

Lack of concern for public stability at the federal level, and therefore, locally within this town means that consideration needs to be made for alternative jobs and - fortunately or unfortunately - those jobs are coming from the private sector at the moment.

We also need to consider that technological, economic and other challenges to the retail sector mean that life might be moving away from malls in the future. It's also possible that in the future we're moving away from a society that is largely organised around cars and private transport.

Perhaps planning for the Belconnen sector can be about providing a space that is attractive to knowledge workers and industries. It may be one which, while not abandoning the mall, reconsiders what its likely utility will be. Our office and retail spaces and the amenities we'll provide here can and should take this into account.

We already have some of the infrastructure in place to create this kind of environment - an arts centre, the university and so on. If we can create a network that will bring people like this together and allow them to interact in more effective [ways.as](#) well as attractive ways to bring more of this activity into Belconnen, we will create opportunities here. Making Belconnen into a knowledge hub may also be a valuable way of integrating our broader community more equally and effectively .

I have attached an article about knowledge-based urban development for your consideration, and I hope that you will view this submission seriously.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: master plan
Date: Friday, 9 January 2015 2:38:08 PM


re: Belconnen Masterplan

Could you please consider cycling in your plans for Belconnen town centre?

There are good paths around the lake and from Benjamin Way to the outskirts of Belconnen and Westfield Mall but these just end in crowded footpaths or busy streets with parked cars and traffic.

In particular in the east there is very poor connection for cycling between Westfield and the Churches Centre and bus interchange on Benjamin Way, and in the west the path that used to run from Coulter Dr/ Lake G. across Luxton St and into Westfield has gone. The top carpark entrance is now a hazard for cyclists to cross. It is very awkward cycling between Westfield, the markets and Bunnings with no safe path or cycle lanes.

It is a shame that people could easily cycle to this town centre but are reluctant to do so as it feels anti-cycling once there.



Subject: Master Plan Issues
Date: Friday, 9 January 2015 6:58:17 PM

It seems inevitable that the density of population in the Belconnen Town Centre area will increase. It also seems likely that the median age of residents in the area and surrounding larger Belconnen will continue to increase. With this in mind I would strongly urge that the revised master plan give due recognition of the need for facilities to meet the needs of a maturing population which may remain active but be less dependent on motor vehicles as a primary means of transport.

Consequently I would suggest that it would be inappropriate to dispose of the "Joynton Smith " dedicated transport lane-way. It may be currently unused but it could be re-purposed as either a future LRT extension through Florey to Kippax allied with a parallel bike/pedestrian pathway. There seems to be a reserved corridor across Coulter Drive leading to Florey shops and Gininderra Drive already, so loss of the existing bus-way would be perverse. If it is essential to dispose of the land, perhaps some compromise could be reached such as the lease of the airspace above it to allow development to use unrequired land on the lake side while preserving the corridor for public access by transport modes.

Increasing density also seems to indicate that the population will be more inclined to move within the town area without resort to motor vehicles which suggests that better cycling infrastructure should be factored in. This would seem to indicate a mandated requirement for new development to include bicycle parking/securing and things to make cycling acceptable like signage to indicate off road access ways. Belconnen already has a considerable array of lanes between and behind buildings which is little used and somewhat derelict in appearance and maintenance, but which could be improved and integrated to provide a consistent and recognisable alternative access network. There are, for example lanes linking Jolly St, Oatley Court, Park St and Josephson St which are hardly used or known about, but which could make good and easy access to the town centre for cyclists or walkers if enhanced and encouraged. Similar lane-ways should be incorporated in any future development as an integral part of the area and perhaps landscaped and maintained to ensure they are recognisable and welcoming transit routes for PEOPLE not cars.

The height of buildings in the town centre is not really a matter of consequence. Commercial forces will dictate what is acceptable and feasible, but any new high-rise developments should be revenue positive for the community as far as provision of services is concerned. Therefore it is not acceptable to have a high-rise which attracts excessive motor vehicles into the area requiring enlarged roadways and parking on unappropriated land. If added parking is required it should be within the envelope of commercial developments and not at public expense. If additional parking is inescapable, multi-storey car parks should be provided on a cost recovery basis on land already used for car parking such as Weedon Close or Oatley Court. The disused police station site on the corner of Lathlain and Cohen streets is another possible location for a pay car parking facility although this could probably achieve greater value as a mixed

development with parking under a residential building. While there has been a recent decline in fuel prices, one cannot be confident that this will continue or that government policy ignoring the effect of carbon emissions will continue indefinitely. Therefore one should accept the likelihood of increasing carbon-intensive fuel prices in the longer term and a modal shift to public transport in a foreseeable future. Public transport should be enhanced to accommodate the needs of residents of any large scale development in the area. In this regard it makes good sense to preserve the Joynton Smith bus-way for public transport needs of whatever form.

Higher residential density should not imply a decline in landscaping standards. Indeed the capacity of trees and the like to enhance the liveability of the environment and the uncosted benefits to people should not be unrecognised. Meaningful, not token, plantings interspersed with high-rise development should be encouraged. And we should not rely on native eucalypts for our tree coverage in a future Belconnen. One of the great problems of Canberra at present is the almost uncontrolled outbreaks of algae in the lakes. Algae thrive on nutrient rich water and the ACT Government does little to remove any massive influx of organic materials (for that read *tree leaves*) from stormwater systems. Many suburban streets have been planted since the 1970s with Eucalyptus species which shed leaf and bark litter almost continuously. This ineluctably washes into drains and eventually lakes. This does not inhibit algae. The ACT Government is unwilling to increase frequency of street sweeping with the result that as trees mature more litter is deposited into stormwater. Therefore, to ensure cost and environment protection while enhancing shade in an expanded Belconnen development, plantings should be confined to exotic deciduous varieties which need only be dealt with in autumn.

I trust this assists in developing thinking on the master plan.



Subject: Master Plan submission
Date: Monday, 26 January 2015 5:20:30 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

This is my two cents' worth.

1. There needs to be proper cycle ways along Belconnen Way from Kingsford Smith Drive to Coulter Drive.
2. Emu Bank is not bad, but very chaotic traffic-wise, and dangerous for pedestrians moving along the restaurant strip. Not sure how to solve this. It's a shame prime lakefront land is occupied by cheap and ugly fast food restaurants and their accompanying car parks.
3. Former Remand Centre site could and should be converted to green space, perhaps with a childrens' playground. This would enliven and soften the western side of the shopping mall, but a pedestrian crossing from the mall to such a space would be necessary.
4. High Rise Accomodation: There is nothing wrong with high rise construction as long as the architectural and build quality is good, but street level landscaping is vitally important, i.e. street trees to make the area attractive and pleasant to walk/cycle through.

That's all from me for now.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Master plan
Date: Tuesday, 23 December 2014 3:24:09 PM

My ideas for the master plan are:

We need a large parking station in Belconnen before any more spare land is taken for apartments.

Please don't build it overlooking the lake!

The corner of land near Immigration could be made into a small park like the Veterans' Park in Civic.

[REDACTED]

Email: belconnen@act.gov.au

Comments on Planned Draft Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan

Hi,

I would like to offer thoughts and suggestions on the planned Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan:

1. **Building heights.** The higher level buildings should be limited to 12 storeys except in a central core that exists between Eastern Valley Way and Benjamin Way in an existing east west alignment. I am aware you have approved a couple of buildings elsewhere which are higher.
WHY? Belconnen should be considered an integral part of Canberra and have the same essential control applied as for central Canberra and the other town centres.
2. Further high rise should be limited to the area mentioned above with some options maybe closer to Eastern Valley Way to be included.
3. Areas closer to the Lake should have lower height limits ie 6-8 storeys phased down from the higher levels further away from the Lake. This is similar to your 8-10 storey proposals along Benjamin Way south of Immigration.
4. Please discard the concept of **marker buildings** at places around Belconnen. They are not needed. They don't make Belconnen any more aesthetic nor obvious.
5. **Areas around the Lake should be protected from significant development** except for that area along Emu Bank & Beissel St. Some areas close to Emu bank already have 3, and 7 storey structures whilst right along the shore line it seems to be limited to 2-3 storeys. I think right on the lake edge 2-3 storeys is adequate and sensible. We do not need to emulate Kinston foreshores in this regard.
6. **Lake Ginninderra parklands need more protection especially the Western Foreshores and the Diddam's Close area.** These are the main open spaces left around the Lake with Diddam's Close also hosting kangaroos and the odd wallaby and even snake. However it might be feasible to have a community facility along the edge of Ginninderra Drive without impacting too much on the peninsula.
7. **Café/Restaurants are suitable along Emu Bank and Beissel St** to the old Police Boating site. Lake Ginninderra foreshores already has more cafes & restaurants than any other Lake except for Burley Griffin's Kingston foreshores area.

8. **The Lake Foreshores could be beautified a little more.** E.g. that area opposite the Mall, the old Emu Inlet Park could have some nice gardens and deciduous colourful trees added to provide colour and vibrancy.
9. **The Lake, not the Town centre, is the natural centre of Belconnen.** (Even one of the planners publically stated that). It's the recreation centre of the area being used extensively for walking, running, cycling, and kayaking plus picnicking and children's playgrounds and parties. For many of us it the central hub of our well-being experiences.
10. **Parking.** I know most new buildings will have parking included within and maybe some for public use at a price. However it's become a serious issue for most people that Belconnen now does not have enough parking at peak periods. Why not consider a dedicated parking building or two near the Mall which could be used for parking for people going to offices, movies, art centre, dinner, gym, doctor, etc. Surely one of those sites along Emu Bank (ie the current government paid parking site next to the mall) could be sold for a dedicated 6 storey car park with ready access from Luxton St, Emu Bank, Joynton Smith Drive. By making this a dedicated parking building it would be an obvious choice for many to head to and could have easy access to it. This is nearly a no brainer.
11. **The old bus route along Joynton Smith alignment** could be used for a bike/walking link through to Coulter Drive. The section closest to the mall could be used to make a further Park/Ride facility or just paid parking. Some of the section west of the Totterdell St roundabout might be suitable for medium density housing in places.
12. **Cycling routes through BTC need improving.** The old Bus route through to Coulter Drive could be redeveloped to include a dedicated cycle path, then connected over Coulter Drive through open space in Florey, the across Connah St, Florey then along a large grassy easement along John Cleland Drive down to Ginninderra Drive creating a faster link between BTC and West Belconnen. There also needs to be a better connection from the Mall Area to the bike path that starts on the south side of Belconnen Way opposite the south end of Benjamin Way and continues on to Glenloch and Civic. Also the old route up from John Knight Park through the University of Canberra quadrangle, then out to College St and eventually connecting up with the path behind the CIT and on to Civic needs review and better access as well across Hyden Drive.
13. **Belconnen does not really have a vibrant town centre plaza like facility** whereas Woden has its plaza and Civic has Garema Place and City walk. I guess this is a hard thing to create. However there is the option of another plaza near the old police and ambulance facilities. When they are all vacated they could possibly be linked across Rae St to the area between Purdue and Walder St and east to Lathlain St could be developed as another Town Plaza. It might be possible to re-create an underpass under Lathlain St and into the Mall. However to be successful we need such plazas to be

more for the people and more open and not closed in by buildings all around them unless the building are of lower height. I heard a person from LDA articulate some of this and he made perfect sense.

14. **One thing that needs more thinking is the aging of the population.** The Town Centre does have one Retirement facility on the eastern shore of the lake. Maybe a similar facility could be hosted along Ginninderra Drive on the north eastern edge of Diddam's Close Peninsular.
15. **Cheaper Commercial Space.** The Mall and any new building nearby will no doubt be structured on the premise that the office/retail space is A grade and thus attracting a higher rental. Much of the office/retail accommodation in the West Belconnen Trades Area is of a lower standard and usually cheaper rental. You need to think in your zoning how this cheaper commercial rental accommodation can be retained if you're serious in Government about supporting small business development.
16. **Use of Cars versus Other Transport Means.** You state in your overview document that the Government wants to encourage people to other forms of transport than cars. I think this is too simplistic and quite naive really. Most people have a car or two and this is their main means of transport. Some still get the bus to work. However most families drive the kids to school and use the car for their major shopping trips. How can a woman with two children and a heap of shopping get the bus? When you look at walking and cycling infrastructure in Central Belconnen you can see that it has not been developed that much in recent years, except on road cycle lanes.
You also need to start thinking about more enviro-friendly cars. The future of cars in many cities will probably move more to battery and/or fuel cell vehicles and these of course will still need somewhere to park. Thus I think it's likely that in the future, and with the road system we have in Belconnen there will always be a large demand for car parking in the BTC. It's not Sydney nor London and the road system is relatively good.
17. **Inclusive Community.** A lot of the development in BTC has been simply apartments with a more transient population than one might get in others part of suburban Canberra. Future development needs to consider how housing can be structured to make them more family friendly so as to foster a greater community spirit.
18. **Max Yield!** The current development theme in the BTC seems to be to squeeze the maximum number of apartments into the smallest spaces possible to achieve the maximum yield for LDA. Its justified as it improves the economic return to the ACT and makes it more attractive for developers. It then reduces the need to have higher density in the surrounding suburbs. But is it the right way to go? Do you want Canberra to look like the Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, etc?
19. If you look at Jamison Group Centre you'll note how the original developers tried to squeeze in the maximum number of units with minimal parking. It was approved against the wishes of the community. Now the new developer has come up with a

more community friendly lower height and less apartment's solution. This shows with the right will and sensible development solutions can be achieved.

20. **Vision Statements.** I think a future Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan needs some overarching vision statements that discuss Belconnen being an integral part of Canberra and retaining the overall aspects of Canberra bush capital with lots of green space and retention of distant landscapes and vistas as much as possible. One of your planners (Chris I think?) suggested at a BCC meeting we should reconsider whether we need to retain such concepts. I think the answer essentially revolves around do we wish to remain a unique Canberra or just become another city with large residential and commercial boxes with interlinked roads and footpaths.

21. **End to Development.** Somewhere we need to consider how big Belconnen Town Centre can be? Why does it have to keep growing? Belconnen will grow a bit, with Lawson and West Macgregor etc. However there must be a limit otherwise our quality of life will seriously impacted. Many European cities are not growing much and people there are happy with that.

Do we really need massive growth at BTC? The local Government seems fixated on the Metro Light Rail and I am sure will be pushing redevelopment along that transport corridor as the number one priority. It's also clear that Canberra will be going through a lower level of growth in the future years as the Federal Government (both previous and current) were and are keen to curtail the public sector growth. Canberra will most likely be less attractive a place to come if jobs growth is limited.

I have attached extracts from two recent articles in the Australian press by reputable Australians who argue for the benefits of green and open space and for building well planned inclusive cities. I have found that cycling and walking around Lake Ginninderra, amongst other places, does provide some of the wellbeing elements that Ross Gittins talks about below. If we can retain that '*close to nature experience*' around Lake Ginninderra then we will all benefit over the long term.



For your mental health, get back in touch with nature

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/dr-jeremy-dean-knows-best--for-your-mental-health-get-back-in-touch-with-nature-20141223-12cnv2.html>

Ross Gittins. You can listen to him talk on the above link

In this article published 24th Dec 2014 in the Canberra Times and other Fairfax press their economics guru Ross Gittins outlines the benefits of nature to city people:

“There's plenty of evidence that contact with nature is very good for both our feelings of wellbeing and our health. Ross Gittins comments.

.....Same as most years: heading for the bush. This time we're going to the mountains.

As a denizen of the inner city I've long had a great desire to get out into the country whenever possible. Get into the grass and trees, where the air is clean and the sleeping seems better.....

There's a place we rent not far up the coast that backs onto a national park. I call it Lyrebird Lodge. And even when we go overseas I often find the country towns beat the big cities.....

But cities have their dark side and insufficient grass and trees is it. That's more than just a personal preference. Environmental psychologists and others have been gathering impressive evidence of the health-given properties of greenery.....

Research published last year found that people who live in urban areas with more green space tend to report greater wellbeing - less mental distress and higher life satisfaction - than city dwellers who don't have parks, gardens or other green space nearby.....

A different study followed the experience of more than 1000 people over five years, in which time some moved to greener urban areas and some to less green areas. The results showed that, on average, people who moved to greener areas felt an immediate improvement in their mental health. This boost could still be measured three years later.

"These findings are important for urban planners thinking about introducing new green spaces to towns and cities, suggesting they could provide long term and sustained benefits for local communities," the lead author of the study said.

A study from Canada began by summarising all the various benefits from contact with nature that other research had found: it can restore people's ability to pay attention, improve concentration in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and speed recovery from illness. It may even reduce the risk of dying.....

Many studies find health benefits from contact with nature. The Norwegian paper says a key element in this may be nature's stress-reducing effect. Stress plays a role in the causes and development of cardiovascular diseases, anxiety disorders and depression.

Contact with nature may help "simply by being consciously or unconsciously 'pleasing to the eye'". Office employees seem to compensate for lack of a window view by introducing indoor plants or even just pictures of nature. One study found that having a view to plants from the work station decreased the amount of self-reported sick leave.

One of my favourite blog sites, PsyBlog, conducted by the British psychologist Dr Jeremy Dean, notes research estimating that people now spend 25 per cent less time in nature than they did 20 years ago. Instead, recreational time is often spent surfing the internet, playing video games and watching movies.

But this is more up my line: Dean reports a study finding that taking group walks in nature is associated with better mental wellbeing and lower stress and depression. The study evaluated a British program called Walking for Health, and involved nearly 2000 participants, divided into two matched groups of those who took part in the walks and those who didn't.....

Those who seemed to benefit most were those who'd been through a recent stressful life event, such as divorce, bereavement or a serious illness.

"Our findings suggest that something as simple as joining an outdoor walking group may not only improve someone's daily positive emotions but may also contribute a non-pharmacological approach to serious conditions like depression," one of the study's authors said....."

Governments can't create community spirit, but they can support inclusion
[Anthony Albanese](#)

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/24/governments-cant-create-community-spirit-but-they-can-support-inclusion>

In this article published 24th Dec 2014 the alternative federal opposition leader articulated various aspects about inclusion, society and planning etc. The relevant words for the BTC Plan seem to me to be:

"..... For too long, Australian governments have shown inadequate interest in urban policy and the way in which well-designed cities facilitate the human contact that people crave and which enriches their lives.

We spend so much time designing our buildings that we give inadequate thought to the spaces between those structures. If properly designed, these spaces can provide focal points for local communities that encourage interaction and inclusion.

It might be as simple as providing more shade around buildings and more parks in our neighbourhoods. Greater use of mixed precincts that include residential and public or entertainment space would also help bring people together.

We need more parks, public areas and entertainment options that deliver the environment in which communities flourish.....

And we need to do all we can to ensure that hubs where people cross paths most often - like shopping centres and train stations – also include places where people can interact.

When governments don't value communities and when they treat people as little more than economic units, people become alienated....."

Subject: Parking for Retirement Village Buses
Date: Saturday, 27 December 2014 12:10:03 PM

Several years ago a plan was released that promised a Reserved Parking Bay for Retirement Village Buses.

In the event nothing happened and such buses are hard put to find legal parking.

Retirement Village Residents many of whom have limited mobility or poor eyesight have no idea of precisely where they will be downloaded or precisely where to wait to be picked up. Frequently they find themselves in a hazardous scramble from one side of Benjamin Way to the other.

I am one such Retirement Village Resident, typically dependent on my Village Bus for shopping because I no longer drive a car.

I would be grateful to be contacted at a later stage in your deliberations.

Thanking you for the opportunity to make a submission,



[REDACTED]

Subject: Public toilet in Margaret Timson Park
Date: Tuesday, 9 December 2014 7:40:25 PM

Hello:

To whom it may concern, [REDACTED] near Margaret Timson Park (near the Westfield shopping Mall) every day people all come to ask for the Public toilet, is none around the Swanson Plaza or Northpoint Plaza, they all seem desperately need to go to a toilet, as we are try to serve our customer, we have to tell them where to go to a public toilet, it have interrupting our service with our customer, so a public toilet around the Park is urgently needed.

Also around Westfield shopping mall is not enough lift to go for every one, sometimes you try to go up stair have to wait for a while it is a lots of pram around, so it have wasted all time by waiting for the lift to be vacant, so you can use, the mall certainly have more shop more people, but not enough lift. I have shop every day there so I know those things is need.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Belc Master Plan
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 12:29:56 AM

Hi again

I'd like to make another submission to the Master Plan process.

I live in [REDACTED] which is an adjacent suburb to Belconnen's commercial zone. My thoughts are:

Building heights

I would prefer if Belconnen had no building height limits. If people want to live/work in high rise then let them have it. I don't mind seeing tall buildings. I don't mind the shadows, even in winter. I hope tall buildings will reduce the pressure to redevelop the spacious blocks in my RZ2 area of the [REDACTED] into high-density groups of tiny townhouses. Let them have their tiny flats in the town centre towers. But I do have concerns with...

Building quality

Tall buildings can be pretty nice. Altitude on Chandler St is not ugly (though its 8-storey section facing the Community Centre has some concrete bleed which is gross). But those Baghdad-style cheapo blocks over on Beissel backing Luxton are UGLY. Looks like a Soviet central planning disaster. I know you can't knock them down but for God's sake let's not let that happen again!

Bike connections

[REDACTED] has lousy cycling connections into the Town Centre. Which is a shame because being so close, I'd ride/walk there with my kids more often, especially to avoid the parking chaos in Belconnen Mall.

Another cycle route we use from [REDACTED] to Lake Ginninderra is via Florey's Southern Cross Drive bike path and this also has a problem with connection to the Town Centre. This problem is caused by...

...That crazy bus road

We need to get rid of the bus road. It cuts the cycle way from South Eastern Florey, through Totterdell St area to the lake. This bike path needs to flow through to Lake Ginninderra. What to do with the bus road land? I have no idea. sell it for houses? I don't mind, so long as you allow for pedestrians and bikes to get through that barrier, safely across Joynton Smith Dr and maybe meet up with Beissel St and to the lake.

Trees

The treescape of Belconnen from Lathlain St up through the commercial zone is dismal. Let's switch from Eucalypts to deciduous trees and take over road verges like they did on Chandler St.

Footpaths

The bitumen footpaths in Oatley Court and surrounds are really ugly. Is there a better paving option available?

Belconnen has heaps of potential, let's make it better. thanks for updating the master plan.

Cheers,




Thank you for your submission to inform the development of the draft master plan.

Generally development of land within Canberra is market driven. Planning policies stipulate zoning and any height controls that may exist, but as long as development complies with these guidelines, it is subject to market forces. I hope this information is useful.

At the end of the consultation period we will develop an engagement report to document the outcomes of our engagement. Usually all submissions made are included as an appendix. I would like to seek your permission to make your submission public in this report. All personal identifiers such as your name etc. will not be included in this report.

If there is anything else I can help you with please don't hesitate to contact me.


Regards,

Jessica Lintern | Planning and Heritage





Hi


Thanks for revising the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan. Since moving to nearby  in 2002, just after the last revision, Belconnen has changed A LOT, and for the better.

I have one concern i'd ask you to consider:

1. Having started as an office park and shopping mall, Belconnen is now becoming a residential and retailing suburb, with massive amounts of building of residential and retail space. What a contrast with Civic which has seen continual office development over the same timeframe. The only Belconnen offices built were ABS House and the ugly Immigration building, which were bascially Knock-Down-Rebuilds of the Cameron and Benjamin Offices.

Is this trend driven by Planning policies? Or is it just a market outcome? I would particularly like to suggest the release of a large-format block which would be suitable for a commerical tower to house a large Federal Dept (eg Environment, which is currently spread over several offices in Parkes and Civic).

As Canberra's largest population district (the Belconnen area suburbs), and the end of the main bus artery, I believe lots of people would like to work in the Town Centre and Departments would prefer to be able to co-locate their staff in a single office park.



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Subject: Submission
Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2015 9:27:32 AM

Please find this short submission to the consultation process on the Belconnen Town Centre Mater Plan.

As a regular cyclist living in the Belconnen area, I tend to avoid cycling in the town centre due to the traffic density, on-road parking and the lack of clear and safe cycling routes. My preference is to use Coulter Drive to move between Belconnen and Lake Burley Griffin and other related areas. However, the on-road bike path on the southbound side of Coulter Drive disappears between Southern Cross and Belconnen Way when Coulter Drive becomes a three lane road. The narrower vehicle lanes make it more difficult for the cars to pass cyclists. The absence of a clearly marked on road path significantly increases the risk for cyclists. The need to complete the on-road path to allow safe riding from Ginninderra Drive to William Hovell is long overdue and would appear to be possible at a moderate cost.

Subject: submission - master planning for Belconnen
Date: Wednesday, 14 January 2015 9:37:19 PM

Hi Belco Council

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute! I strongly recommend having a look at SplashAdelaide and 5000+ for a couple of reasons:

- a) there is a lot of research available on their sites about place making and designing cities for people, so you don't have to do it!
- b) some of the projects they've undertaken are cheap and cheerful but have had massive impacts - Adelaide just made the NYT places to visit list because of its progress.

My key takeaways from those projects that I think have greatest applicability to the master planning of Belco:

-
- use place management governance model
- Put people at the heart of the street, design public space with shared spaces, walking/bikes and better pedestrian facilities
- Change movement hierarchy to pedestrians / bikes / transit / freight / cars
- More people = vibrancy. Work towards a density that instills a sense of safety and vibrancy - people attract people.
- Day / night activation will support and be supported by higher density living - consider the night-time economy - bars/lounges/retail are vital for success. What are the legislative barriers/red tape to small businesses opening outside of traditional business hours?
- Streets to foster community as highest priority - community gardens, green walls, dog parks, art walls or installations to promote up and coming artists, spaces to gather, landscaping to reduce infrastructure hardness - reduce visual clutter and make psychological space for people
- Services and activities for teens and young adults are poor in ACT in general - this might be a niche market
- Improved accessibility (and signage)
- Good quality public realm - including durability and quality of infrastructure - top notch street furniture is worth the investment, people will use it if it is attractive. I can't emphasise that enough.
- Safe, walkable links across the suburb - link high density residences to parks, the lake, retail by FOOT not car!
- Street level activation / activities - see Splash Adelaide for some great, affordable ideas
- Services and facilities within close proximity OR in close proximity to public transport so people can get to them! WIFI!
- Design for diversity eg children as well as adults, the elderly etc eg the playground at the Arboretum, water features as toys, art that doubles as seating or shading, little libraries
- develop policy around the use of vacant or underused spaces eg Renew Adelaide, Renew Newcastle projects
- PLEASE USE THE LAKE, and make it easy to get to... its such an underused asset. Some ideas that worked in Adelaide: a footbridge to link the water to the retail precinct, free deck chairs on grassed areas, free bikes to traverse the main area, pop up cafes along the water front or any type of food truck novelty (eg Fork in the Road), free movie screening during summer. In winter, live acoustic music,

markets, rubber duck races, geocaches, lending library. Small bar licensing, laneway games/activation.

I hope this is helpful. If you would like some contacts in Adelaide or beyond for key people that worked on Splash and 5000+ let me know, I'll happily link you up. Best of luck!



APPENDIX A

RECOGNITION PLAQUES TO MARGARET TIMPSON AM.



Images of Margaret Rose Timpson (1941-93)



Margaret Timpson is in charge of user contact and dissemination. She spends much of her time on the telephone listening to users' questions and suggestions and supplying statistics on Australia's population.

Source: Bureau of Stats newsletter of November 1977.



Source ex internet – original verifiable source unknown.

[NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, photos in Appendices are by Alistair Wilson.]

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC INFORMATION BOARDS

1. Current Belconnen 'Civic Guide'on Benjamin Way - out of date and in poor condition.



2. Current Ainslie Shops information boards – easily accessible and easy to read.



The Executive Director,
Strategic Planning Division
Environment and Planning Directorate,
ACT Government, Canberra.

SUBMISSION FOR THE BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE DRAFT MASTER PLAN

TO UPGRADE MARGARET TIMPSON PARK and SURROUNDS

DATE: 23th January 2015

Although this submission is submitted privately I should declare that I am the Chairperson of the Sentinel Apartments Owners' Corporation Executive Committee, 39 Benjamin Way. The north side of the two towers of apartments (approximately 120 units) overlook Margaret Timpson Park, across Swanson Court.

With all members of the Executive Committee and many other residents having expressed their concerns about Margaret Timpson Park and its surrounds, I write on their behalf, certain of their support for this submission.

As the 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Sentinel Owners' Corporation is scheduled for 28 January 2015, there is insufficient time to obtain an official vote of support to include in this submission or indeed to gather a petition of support, before the submission deadline of 30 January.

SUBMISSION PURPOSE:

To propose upgrading the quality of presentation of Margaret Timpson Park, at 35 Benjamin Way, Belconnen and its surrounds, to provide further and up to date community-accessible facilities and more public information, plus consider extending the park boundary by adding an attractive community asset and children's playground.

PEOPLE BENEFIT:

The Belconnen Town Centre is now enjoying a rapid rise in population. In 2011 it has 4438 people. By 2015 it can be estimated to be in excess of 5000.

As indicated above, the Sentinel Executive Committee and many residents of the Sentinel Apartments support this submission believing they and their families would benefit. There are 240 apartments in the Sentinel complex of which 70% have been sold in the first year since construction [source: Morris Property Group, Canberra]. In addition there are the residents of the recently built

Altitude (350 units) and the Miramar apartments in Chandler Street, Oracle apartments in Benjamin Way (multiple blocks), Linq apartments in Eastern Valley Way has recently completed (200 apartments) and other Belconnen local residents and their families would benefit. So since the last Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan a great many new residential units in the area have become occupied. Add to that the approved (and on hold) apartment buildings further along Swanson Court between Sentinel and Chandler Street (currently a car park) and the approved apartments between Westfield Shopping Centre and Emu Bank adjacent to Lake Ginninderra.

Customers to Westfield Shopping centre will benefit more, as will staff and clients of nearby Federal and ACT Government departments, and owners and customers of the increasing number of small businesses adjacent to the park.



View of Margaret Timpson Park from Level 11, Sentinel Apartment; Photo A. Wilson.

HISTORY:

Margaret Timpson Park was originally developed in 1984, then known as Belconnen Town Park, as a way to connect the surrounding buildings – such as the Belconnen Library, nearby church, the Belconnen Community Centre, with Benjamin Way and the shopping precinct. The park was originally envisaged as a significantly larger green space until the proposed shopping mall, now Westfield, was moved from on top of the nearby ridge to the low flat ground of its current position, so encroaching on the proposed park site (ACT Heritage Council report 2013 & Olds, 1999).

In 1994 the Park was dedicated to Margaret Timpson AM, an important campaigner for women's issues, the year after her death. Margaret Rose Timpson was a statistician with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (now the closest Federal Government offices to the Park being at 41 Benjamin Way). Margaret was a business owner, a sportsperson, President of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women, and member of the National Women's Consultative Council. She was particularly active in social statistics and was able to use her role to highlight issues with employment and marginalised groups.

Margaret Timpson was the inaugural ACT Woman of the Year in 1990 and in 1991 was recognised as a Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia. A small plaque near the centre of the

park records the official naming on 10 March 1994 by the then Chief Minister Rosemary Follett. Nearby, on a boulder donated by the Women's Consultative Council, is a plaque inscribed "*Margaret Timpson AM (1941-1993) Inaugural ACT Woman of the Year 1990. An important inspiration to all women.*" [see Appendix A].

In December 2002 the Park was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register but rejected, amongst other reasons, because it did not meet the criterion of '*...valued by the community or by a cultural group...*'.

A small seating area near the centre of the park was developed as part of the "Australia Remembers 1945-95" program, but there is no recognition of this fact on the seats.

A visitor survey conducted in 1997 by Market Attitude Research Services, and an informal survey for the book *Park Voices* in 1999, found that the park is not well known and that the majority of its users were just passing through while the rest lived or worked in the surrounding area and would go to the Park during their lunchtime to get outside. This suggests that the Park is used due to it being in a convenient location, but that it is not valued or recognised in, and of, itself.

MENTIONS IN BELCONNEN MASTER PLANS:

A public park and its potential has been mentioned or shown in each Belconnen Master Plan since 1975.

1. In 1975 the open space/park was located across Benjamin Way on the low land now occupied by Westfield shopping mall.
2. The 1986 plan had a definite Belconnen Town Park located in a portion of the present Margaret Timpson site. Under the heading of *Impetus for Change* in that report was the clause on community concern:

The community is concerned at the deficiencies in the town centre and is pressing for remedial action, particularly to improve the centre's attractiveness, amenity, convenience, safety and vibrancy.

3. It was noted in the 2001 Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan (Urban Projects, Planning and Land Management) that the Park '*...needed upgrading to encourage more use and higher visitation rates.*' Barbara Olds (in Deller-Evens, 1999) notes that the Park is incomplete and that plans for water features, lighting and public artworks were never completed. The 2001 Executive Summary makes several references to the need to upgrade the Park:

12. Pedestrian activity and retailing will be balanced between the Mall, Benjamin Way/Emu Bank and the Mixed Uses Area with active retailing, facilitating changes to Lathlain Street and improving the viability of Margaret Timpson Park.
13. Benjamin Way will be developed as the 'Main Street' of the town centre, focusing public transport, encouraging pedestrian activity at ground level, creating stronger links to the park and with upgraded landscaping.
14. Margaret Timpson Park will be enlivened with increasing pedestrian activity around its periphery, a stronger entrance and appropriate cultural and recreational development within the park.

26. An upgraded and complete pedestrian network will be established by:
 - reinforcing and upgrading the east-west spine (University Walk),
 - extending this system through Belconnen Mall to Lathlain Street,
 - linking the Mixed Uses Area, the retail mall, the town focus (Margaret Timpson Park), the community – cultural area, and the lake foreshores in a continuous system,
 - linking redevelopment of Cameron Offices, a redeveloped bus interchange, and the eastern edge of Margaret Timpson Park,
 - reinforcing the north-south pedestrian route through the centre of Benjamin Offices,
-

Whilst every Master Plan called for Margaret Timpson Park to be upgraded and more use encouraged, development has been slow to say the least.

CURRENT STATE OF THE PARK AND SURROUNDS & SUGGESTED UPGRADES:

A stroll through Margaret Timpson Park reveals the unsatisfactory care of this public facility. Whilst the lawn mowing contractor does a good job and the daily litter patrol by the ranger is satisfactory, much is to be desired as images at Appendices B and C show.

1. The attention to **garden maintenance** can be greatly enhanced by regular and more thorough maintenance to the park and its surrounds. As the images at Appendix C portray, the main entrance way is overgrown, grassed areas have not been trimmed, garden beds are left empty (full of weeds) or overgrown, hedges are not trimmed, the Wisteria walkways – such an attractive feature in spring – are left bedraggled and unkempt and even dangerous with hanging vines (evidence of poor pruning during autumn).
The seats badly need repainting and the rubbish bins need upgrading from the ancient unsightly concrete versions currently in use. Additional bins on walkways would assist the ranger.
2. The current Belconnen '**Civic Guide**' on the park boundary adjacent to the entrance from Westfield is not only way out of date and in poor condition, but the perspex is now perished preventing a visitor being able to read street names or features. None of the business advertisements are for Belconnen businesses at all (most being for Kingston, Civic or Mitchell). The map is dated 2012. The Guide seems unrelated to Belconnen as there are no photos, references to Belconnen history or to Margaret Timpson. It is far from being an adequate Civic Guide! An upgrade is urgently recommended to a style indicated on Appendix B.

Features such as the Bert Flugelman sculpture (see Appendix D) must have an identification board about this significant Australian artist...especially connecting this to Flugelman's other major locally situated work in the National Gallery's Sculpture Garden. The panel should feature his picture and biography plus the history of the sculpture's movement from the Immigration offices to the present site.

The time capsule identification should be obliged (see Appendix D). Set in 2001 it was due for opening in April 2011. Perhaps once the park has been upgraded the capsule might be reopened

by a local politician. Then refilled with appropriate contemporary items, resealed for the future and new plaque affixed.

3. Motorists and pedestrians using roads, pedestrian crossings and paths around the park would benefit from attention by the Roads and Transport Directorate.

The walkway from the Action Buses Belconnen Community interchange northwards past Sentinel towards Margaret Timpson Park and on through to lower Chandler Street should have a pedestrian crossing over Swanson Court. Increased pedestrian movement from the interchange, from the adjacent car park to Canberra Connects' office in Swanson Plaza, plus now from the Sentinel Apartments, across Swanson Court, make this section of roadway very busy at times.

I recommend that the current 40kph limit on Swanson Court outside Sentinel Apartments (see Appendix E) be extended right up to Chandler Street (towards Altitude Apartments). The whole of Swanson Court should to 40kph limit. This would provide protection for the many people crossing the road to the Belconnen Community Centre and Theatre from the adjacent car park and bus interchange. This speed limit should be extended into Swanson Lane behind the Belconnen Library and to access to ACT government offices.

Lower Chandler Street along the north side of Margaret Timpson Park, at the Benjamin Way intersection, also needs a pedestrian crossing.

Plant trees in the centre median strip of Benjamin Way (see Appendix E). An avenue of attractive trees has been planted from Belconnen Way north as far as Chan Street. Continue this feature through to the end of Benjamin Way at Emu Bank facing Lake Ginninderra. Consider creating a walkway down the centre of the median strip to encourage pedestrians to walk beneath the trees.

4. The former Health Centre building on the corner of Benjamin Way and Swanson Court stands and derelict. This building – now approx. 40 years old – would have to undergo substantial and costly refit to make it habitable. I suggest demolishing the building to ground level and as it stands on land zoned Community Use, convert the basement car park into an attractive sunken garden with water feature, so creating a feature centre-piece and meeting place, a place of quiet contemplation amidst the hectic surroundings. The basement would already have a drainage facility and there is a ramp down to it.

See an example at Appendix G of a recycled building site in England converted into a beautiful sunken garden.

I recommend extending the ridged line of Casuarina river oak trees that currently face Benjamin Way on the western bo [redacted] of Margaret Timpson Park, through to Swanson Court and around to the down ramp into the basement. Other areas could be created to replicate the large groups of English elms and London Plane trees which feature elsewhere in the park.

I am sure there are many design specialists, architects and design students in Canberra who would jump at the opportunity to create such a feature.

Adjacent to this old building is a vacant block of land – currently zoned CZ2. It has stood vacant forever. It has been utilised briefly as a carpark for visitors to Canberra Connect in the Swanson Plaza and to the Health Centre when operating. Now it is a weed filled refuse pit for rubbish, and discarded furniture (see Appendix C) etc. Its perimeter is overgrown with weeds. The adjacent footpath on Swanson Court is hardly passable due to weeds and a poor path surface. Rezone the block into Community Use and convert it into a children’s playground and parent rest area with seats and tables, maybe a sail shade similar to the one in the park centre, for facilitating lunching etc.

I recommend widening the pathway along the eastern boundary and adding garden beds and trees to match the eastern boundary of Margaret Timpson Park.

I further recommend creating a number of time-limited right-angled car parking spaces off Swanson Court to service the limited parking needs of parents and visitors to the park and playground and to Canberra Connect.

Surely these two sites would make a far better community feature than selling them off to a developer for short-term financial gain resulting in yet another high-rise apartment block (restricting lake views from Sentinel unit owners).

5. The centre median of Benjamin Way is crying out for trees to be planted between Chan Street and Emu Bank at Lake Ginninderra...a simple task ignored after repeated calls over the years. A walkway through the centre would encourage visitors and local resident to utilise the median strip as a feature rather than just a roadway to cross.

PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

This submission offers a number of recommendations for consideration by various ACT Directorates:

1. Attend to basic park maintenance more thoroughly, i.e. gardening, plantings, seat painting etc.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

To urgently schedule remedial work to gardens, pathways and seating facilities in and around Margaret Timpson Park.

2. Upgrade the park public information boards similar to those on Ainslie Shops Park; and make the identification of features such as art works and plaques.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

*To replace the existing Civic Guide with a new map and at least two angular information panels portraying the district and park's history, featuring prominent features and people.
AND identify the Flugelman sculpture in appropriate fashion;
AND highlight the work of Margaret Timpson AM to advance women's issues.*

3. Make changes to surrounding roads and access ways, i.e. add pedestrian crossings, widen pathways, extend vehicle speed restrictions, and add short-term parking for visitors.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

*To add two pedestrian crossings for safer entry and egress to the Park – across Swanson Court and lower Chandler Street;
AND widen the eastern exit pathway from the park towards Swanson Court;
AND extend the 40kph vehicle speed limit for the full length of Swanson Court and into Swanson Lane;
AND add right-angled short-term parking along the northern side of Swanson Court from near Benjamin Way to the walkway adjacent to Swanson Plaza.*

4. Extend Margaret Timpson Park eastwards to Swanson Court by encompassing the now derelict former Health Centre site [Block 41 Section 54 currently zoned Community Use] by demolishing the existing structure to create a sunken garden in the basement carpark;
PLUS rezone and convert the adjacent vacant land [Block 40 Section 54 zoned CZ2] into a children's playground and parent rest area.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

*To demolish the former Health Centre to create a sunken garden;
AND amend the zoning of adjacent vacant land to community use to allow for the creation of a children's playground and parent rest area.*

5. Make Benjamin Way more attractive by planting more trees in the grassed median area and include a walkway.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

*To extend the avenue of trees in Benjamin Way north from Chan Street to Emu Bank;
AND create a pedestrian walkway through the middle.*

CONCLUSION:

The Margaret Timpson Park has, for several decades, been recognised as a centre-point of the Belconnen Town Centre. Its necessary upgrade has featured in subsequent Town Centre Master Plans since 1975. Yet recommendation after recommendation has been overlooked.

It was identified on more than one occasion as just a thoroughfare. Yet opportunities abound still, especially as current suggestions for the 2015 Master Plan indicate a need to make stronger people-movement passageways both north-south between the bus interchange and the Mall and lake, and east-west between the shopping complex and the Canberra University.

There are now many more people residing in the confines of Belconnen Town Centre, especially in the several new high-rise complexes and on the University of Canberra campus. All this activity demands a centre-point facility that can be a resting place as well as a thoroughfare. There really is no place for children to frolic, yet they are everywhere. The nearest children's playground (other than inside Westfield) is John Knight Park, some distance from the Centre.

I can assure those considering this proposal that the hundreds of residents of the Sentinel Apartments plus many others in surrounding complexes would support greater development of the park. I am prepared, as the Chair of the Sentinel Owners' Corporation, to facilitate gathering such support, by way of a petition, if required.

Finally, as a delegate to last October's Older Persons Assembly that MLA Mick Gentleman chaired, I recall the topic of restful places being raised, for elderly citizens to meet or just sit and watch the world go by. A carefully designed sunken garden with water feature would be warmly welcomed in an extended Margaret Timpson Park.

The park might still be a thoroughfare – as it has been judged over the years – but surely it can be a destination for our citizens to enjoy. With vision such is possible.

I submit these recommendations for your consideration.



APPENDICES:

Appendix A – plaques and images of Margaret Timpson AM.

Appendix B – images of current and proposed public information boards.

Appendix C – images of current poor condition of the park.

Appendix D – features of the park.

Appendix E – recommended pedestrian crossings, speed restrictions and trees.

Appendix F – the former Health Centre building, now derelict, and vacant land.

Appendix G – suggested uses of land.

Subject: Submission concerning Belconnen Town Centre planning
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 2:57:09 PM

To whom it may concern:

Please do not allow the construction of buildings higher than six stories. Preferably, new buildings should be lower than this. Tall buildings, such as exist in Woden Town Centre, create strong winds, which make conditions unpleasant for pedestrians.

Also please explore ways in which pedestrian access to the service areas west of the Mall can be improved.

There should be easy access for all to and along the lake foreshore. Please do not allow commercial buildings to block such access or views of the lake.

Subject: Submission for Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan
Date: Sunday, 25 January 2015 9:29:16 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am frequently in the Belconnen Town Centre, being an employee of an organisation based in Belconnen. I also use childcare in Hawker and Florey and have walked, ridden my bike and driven around many different routes in and out of Belconnen for many years.

I would like to make a submission against a few different points.

General planning

Belconnen is very spread out for the day-time population it supports, and this spread is increasing with more development heading towards UC and away from the so-called 'service trades area' close to Page. It tends to feel like a number of disconnected precincts that don't really come together in terms of access or flow. Even walking the short distance from Westfield to the Belconnen Markets feels awkward and 'wrong' in some way.

I am sure a higher working and living population would help this a little bit, and perhaps more thought needs to be put into filling in the gaps with buildings, landscaping, footpaths and design improvements.

However, I really think that the sustainability of having such a spread out area needs to be reconsidered. In particular, I don't think the service trades area can stay viable. I feel very sorry for the businesses that are struggling to survive up here. Are there currently limitations on the land use in this area? The layout of streets is actually quite good and it has so much potential to be like a new Braddon or Phillip. Can apartments, Federal government offices or other government services make their way up here? Can it become more pedestrian friendly to encourage people out of the Westfield Mall and up the hill? Can more density be encouraged in nearby Page and Florey and walking access improved?

Pedestrian access

I am a big fan of the 40kph speed limits along some roads in Belconnen, such as Benjamin Way. However there are many other improvements that could be made to make pedestrians feel safer and more welcome.

The traffic lights along Benjamin Way, in particular at the corner of Chan Street, are extremely pedestrian unfriendly. Benjamin Way is a very wide road and the way the traffic lights have been programmed mean that pedestrians usually have to wait two whole cycles to cross the road, sometimes longer if they need to end up diagonally to where they started. This leads to people crossing against the lights or crossing at the median strip to avoid the lights altogether. These lights could be programmed to always allow a green light for pedestrians rather than wait for someone to press the button to request permission to cross; they could change the order of priority to allow people to cross in one go; and they could even allow scramble crossing, as I've seen used in places like Toronto or even Albury.

There will always be people who cross the road at the median strip away from the lights, and this fact should be recognised by paving and properly landscaping all the median

strips on Benjamin Way rather than leaving them as a muddy or dusty mess - check out the front of ABS House for a very horrible-looking median strip.

Many of the footpaths along Benjamin Way are very narrow, despite many people using them in the mornings to walk to work. An example is the path out the front of the Winchester Centre. These paths should be widened, particularly because people riding bikes also have to use these paths.

Some new footpaths should be created where there are none but are heavily used by pedestrians. One example is next to the Oracle Apartments on College Street.

As I mentioned above, it always feels like I'm doing something wrong when trying to walk any distance within the Town Centre. There is usually at least one section where I have to walk along a dirt track or cracked footpath, or navigate over bollards or low wooden fences. It is pretty off-putting and I tend to stay within my own little precinct at lunchtimes as a result.

Bicycle access

On-road cycle lanes should be created on both sides of Benjamin Way for the full length of the road. This is a crucial missing section of the Canberra cycle network, joining the Macquarie and Belconnen Way bike paths at one end, and the Lake Ginninderra bike paths at the other. There should be bike paths going all the way through from East to West as well. For example, Chan Street, College Street Luxton Street, Emu Bank.

There is a big issue with access in and out of Belconnen on a bike. For example, heading towards UC there should be a cycle lane all the way along College Street up to and continuing along Hayden Drive. The one existing bike path into UC is very much out of the way - going via the Lake - and is very poorly maintained. It also fails to continue onto the CIT and the hospital.

On the opposite side of the Town Centre, there is no on road or off road bike path on Belconnen Way between Kingsford Smith and Coulter Drive. This missing section leaves all residents of Hawker, Weetangera, Page and Scullin (not to mention Higgins, Holt etc) without any safe and direct bicycle access to get to their nearest town centre. This is a huge oversight in terms of bicycle infrastructure in Canberra. It was one of the main reasons I chose to stop riding my bike to work in Belconnen and started driving my car instead. If I could pick my highest priority improvement for Belconnen, adding this missing bike lane along Belconnen Way (both sides) would be the one I choose.

Car access

I have never had any trouble with accessing Belconnen Town Centre by car. There are always plenty of available car parks at whatever time I arrive. I am not concerned that future development of apartments will affect parking very much.

Buildings and streetscapes

I don't have any issues with building heights in Belconnen. I think there should be a diversity of building heights and styles to make it more interesting. For example, it would be disappointing to see the old Belconnen Health Centre being knocked down to match the apartments in the next block. A better idea would be to refurbish it for a new occupant.

I am happy that Westfield has outward-facing shops on Lathlain Street. I hope that they can be forced to do this on the Benjamin Way side again as was originally intended. This would improve the street life on Benjamin Way.

Green space

Margaret Timpson Park is a great asset, as is the lake. Another site for a park should be found on the other side of Westfield. For example the old Belconnen Remand Centre could be turned into a very interesting community green space, especially with its deep underground parking area.

Playgrounds could be added to more areas in Belconnen to encourage people to stay longer in the area.

Thank you for allowing me to make this submission and for considering it in the development of the new Belconnen Master Plan.



[REDACTED]

Subject: Submission on Belconnen Master Plan Update
Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2015 10:34:37 AM
Attachments: [New BTC Master Plan - Hutchison.docx](#)

Hullo

Please find my submission to this update of the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan

Thanks

[REDACTED]

Subject: Submission on Belconnen master plan
Date: Saturday, 31 January 2015 3:29:03 PM

Town centres are where families including children have the opportunity to develop active transport habits, so we should plan an offroad cycle network (grid) through the town centre, from all major suburban access points on all sides and to the lake. On-road paths are insufficient. Currently it feels like cyclists are 2nd class citizens navigating a minefield of hazards

As part of this grid, safe wide off-road shared cycle-pedestrian paths are required along the Benjamin Way axis linking Belconnen Way to the lake path and from UC and CISAC to Westfield and onto Coulter Dve, also along Lathlain St to the Belconnen markets.

We recommend that the planning consider replacing on-road car parking along both sides of Benjamin Way with 2m each way "Copenhagen" style off-road bike paths, separate from the footpath and existing naturestrip. Currently the offroad paths are not wide enough (eg along Benjamin Way from Belconnen Way to Cohen St), they get blocked by trees and new bollards outside the front of recent new buildings (eg along Benjamin Way from Cohen to College St).

Offroad paths should be clearly defined and continuous. Riders move faster than pedestrians and need more visual cues as to where the safe path goes. Existing offroad routes have numerous breakpoints and driveway giveways; eg the path on Cohen St south side from Benjamin Way stops at Lathlain. Only narrow disconnected footpaths connect Coulter/Belconnen Way lights to the top of Cohen.

Co-ordinate this master plan with offroad bike path links to the Belconnen town centre from surrounding suburbs; eg; (i) west along Belconnen Way, (ii) from Benjamin Way to Jamison, and (iii) Joynton Drive is another obvious contender.

Providing access width for the active transport network must be a priority when approving developments (not like Kingston!). Make the Lake path wider almost right around to reduce conflict between users, as highest priority where pedestrian numbers are highest. eg (i) path along the lake at Emubank from Beissel to the Skate park (suggest removing the lakefront garden beds there which generally aren't maintained well); (ii) along Knights Park. Separate walkers from cyclists in high-volume zones like Knights Park.

Use high quality concrete or coloured surfaces; the paving along the lakefront path near emubank is too uneven.

Give visual priority or signage to bike parking so we don't need a map to find our way around; eg new health centre parking is good but tucked away, the market has inadequate and almost hidden rails. Parking at the Benjamin Way end of Westfield is woeful. Parking at Library entrance is well positioned, although 2 rails is not nearly enough.


Reserve some of the former bus interchange site for bike parking and light rail; the interchange will be alot more crowded one day.

Plan the light rail corridor now! Is Joynton Busway needed for that?

Highrise developments should not overshadow or overlook neighbours and the lake. Planned 16 stories for Loop seems much too high to me considering those on the south side of Belconnen Way (<10 seems more appropriate), ditto "part Section 52" at Westfield (<12 appropriate).

Given the active transport goals of the ACT government I reckon the new hospital should be built on the major transport corridor to the city rather than in a cheaper but car-dependent location. Why not build the hospital on the site of the oval on the cnr of Haydon and Battye, and build a new training oval at UC instead? Any game involving crowds happens at the stadium anyway.

Thanks for the opportunity,



wn Centre Master Plan

Date: Monday, 19 January 2015 9:53:01 AM

Attachments: [Grenfell Submission - Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.docx](#)

Good morning

I refer to the review of the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan and attach my comments for your consideration, please.



Subject: submission on draft Belconnen Master Plan - former busway Joynton Smith Drive.
Date: Friday, 30 January 2015 6:25:58 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.
My submission relates to the former Joynton Smith busway, and Joynton Smith Drive.

I would like the former busway to be turned into a nice pedestrian walk path to encourage residents of Florey, Totterdell St, and the Morell Close houses and apartments to walk to the Belconnen bus interchange to catch public transport. The busway route is much shorter and therefore faster than the lakeside path, and there are no streets to cross (between Coulter Drive and the Mall) to gain entrance to the bus interchange. There is currently only bus route 43 (to Charnwood) on Joynton Smith drive for Morell Close residents to use. A safer and shorter access to Belconnen mall interchange will give nearby residents more options and therefore greatly encourage the use of public transport.

Subject: submission on draft Belconnen Master Plan - former busway Joynton Smith Drive.
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2015 8:30:37 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.
My submission relates to the former Joynton Smith busway, and Joynton Smith Drive.

I would like the former busway to be turned into an attractive and shady pedestrian amenity to encourage residents of Florey, Totterdell St, and the Morell Close houses and apartments to walk to the shops and the Town Centre rather than drive.

This route would be preferable to the two currently available routes (Joynton Smith Drive and the Western Foreshore District Path) for the following reasons:

1. Walking along Joynton Smith Drive is quite unpleasant because of traffic noise and traffic proximity to the footpaths.
2. There are no footpaths on the section of Joynton Smith Drive between the Luxton Street underpass and the entrance to the Westfield shopping Mall. This makes it unsafe for pedestrians and particularly for pushing prams or personal (wheeled) shopping carts, or using wheelchairs.
3. The busway route is much shorter and therefore faster than the lakeside path, and there are no streets to cross (between Coulter Drive and the Mall) to gain entrance to the mall.

I think this is important for residents of Totterdell St and Morell Close, many of whom are older people, who would be able to walk to the supermarkets and carry their provisions home.

Provision would need to be made for pedestrian ramps to give access from these streets to the former busway. It would also be nice if trees were planted to provide shade in summer.

The draft plan raises the possibility of selling the space for commercial use or residential use. I cannot see how this space low narrow space could be appropriate for either; and if it were, it would have a negative impact on nearby residents.

Subject: Submission on town centre
Date: Wednesday, 21 January 2015 9:08:07 PM

Hi,

I've put together some comments on the town plan.

Bus stations<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

Joynton Smith busway – I think this land could be developed. There is no reason for it to be left vacant and it is compacted and boring land.

Belconnen Community Bus station is awful. It is a huge concrete desert. It is ugly and uninviting. Boiling hot in summer, windswept, freezing cold and wet in winter. The shelters provide minimal protection and very little protection from wind and rain. The gaps between the shelters are so huge you are exposed to the elements walking between them. To get to this interchange you must wheel your shopping trolley across roads and up and down footpaths. And you have no protection from the elements. No wonder people use the Westfield interchange. But the Westfield one doesn't have dedicated platforms for particular buses so it is really hard for people with vision impairment or other disabilities to know which bus has just pulled up. There should be more covered walkways to and at the Community bus station. There should be shelters with more protection. There should be more next bus displays because you have to walk so far to see the display and if it was raining you would get wet.

The community interchange needs to be remodelled. Shelters giving more weather protection need to be introduced and covered walkways between them. Platforms need to be closer together. The land that is now a concrete desert could be repurposed into a park or something nicer. There needs to be better priority pedestrian access from the mall and nearby office buildings.

Cycling and walking

Regarding cycling lanes, they should be painted on every road leading into the Belconnen town centre, and in every road in the centre of the towncentre where the road is wide enough. A focus should be on identifying where existing on road cycle lanes "disappear" and no line is painted but should be painted. For very little money this cycle lane network could be dramatically improved. Hotmix surface should be laid over any cycle path where the aggregate is rough. For example, the cycle lane on the east side of Benjamin way is patchy and rough in many places.

Aikman Drive – There is a cycle lane from Ginninderra Drive through to Eastern Valley way on the Canberra University side. In places the surface is very rough aggregate and it should be surfaced with hotmix. The dividing line for on-road cycling is rubbed off, particularly down where the buses pull over. The dividing line should be clear because there is plenty of room for a cycle lane and cars. Where Aikman Drive becomes Cameron Avenue heading towards Chandler St there is no on-road cycle path. So the Aikman Drive path disappears and bikes are now mixing closely with traffic. A cycle lane needs to be created on Cameron Avenue.

There is a closed off under-road walkway between old police station and ambulance station from Rae St to Westfield (Aldi doorway). This is anti competitive. Westfield should

open up this connection again. It will encourage walking and cycling and commerce in the non-Westfield area and encourage people to walk to Westfield, not drive. It will reduce unsafe road crossings on Lathlain Street by people who don't want to walk all the way down to the lights. I actually shop less in Westfield because access is poor and Westfield appears to be doing everything they can to get people to pay for parking and drive around and around for hours looking for a park.

We need pedestrian lights on the corner of Luxton and Lathlain St (the Belconnen Mall corner) because pedestrians cross here all the time and there are no pedestrian lights.

All pedestrian crossings should be upgraded to include cycling crossing lights. It would be better if there were more underroad crossings.

The cycle path along Emu Bank between the Emu Bank / Beissel St corner and the Art centre needs to be fixed because the path is rough, has no dividing line, and on the corner at Beissel St there is poor visibility for bikes or pedestrians coming in the other direction and I have been involved in a crash here with a bike coming around the corner on the wrong side of the path.

On Lathlain St there needs to be cycle lanes for the full length of the road all the way to the markets and from Belconnen way to the markets. This is a key destination for cyclists and pedestrians and it should be accessible by walking and cycling.

At the Belconnen Markets there should be more seating in the vacant undercover areas between the shops. So people can rest with their heavy bags and then continue shopping.

Build shelters over key bike parking areas, for example on the East side doorways to Belconnen Mall, at the Library.

All pram ramps on footpaths need to be revised to ensure there is no difficult to navigate step that catches the wheels of prams and wheelchairs. Pram ramps should be gently graded and totally smooth.

Vision impaired people and their mobility trainers should be invited to review tac tiles and placement of obstacles in key locations (bus stops, road crossings, entries to key buildings) to ensure these aids are placed in the best locations. For example, in the Westfield bus station there are places where tac tiles are needed but don't exist or wander off to nowhere and then disappear.

On the lake side of Belconnen Mall, ie, near Beissel Street there is very poor pedestrian access to the mall. Basically you have to walk on narrow paths through carparks and pick your way to the front door. Really unpleasant.

Speed controls are good in the town centre. Less room could be given for cars. More for cycling and walking. And ensure easy access from more remote carparks through to Westfield and such areas so people park and walk and get some exercise.

Emu Bank

The restaurants and shops along Emu bank really don't work. All the buildings are surrounded by ugly concrete carparks. To access these shops and restaurants you must walk through carparks. Footpaths cross carparks and driveways. No priority is given to pedestrian access. If you think about Manuka or Kingston the nicest places have shady trees, outdoor seating, some wind protection. People congregate, enjoy the pleasant atmosphere out in the sun but with shade, and they are not sitting beside carparks. Emu Bank simply doesn't have this. There is not enough space for pleasant garden settings for outdoor cafes. There are no pleasant outdoor cafes There is no atmosphere or

community feeling. You drive there, fight for a carpark, go to an indoor restaurant – can't even see the lake, and then hop in your car and go home. Your view is of the carpark, overlooking the lake from such a height that you feel no connection with the lake. Or squished on a park bench down on the path hard up against the lake. No natural access or flow from the restaurants down to the lake. The open concrete areas where you could put seating have no shade and are ugly heat islands. No wonder buildings are empty. Who approved these developments? More pedestrian islands needed on Emu Bank road to encourage people to walk there from any location.

Thanks



Subject: Submission to Belconnen town centre review
Date: Friday, 23 January 2015 8:07:30 AM

Hi

I'm a home owner in the town centre and would like to make the following suggestions :

- The Emu Ridge area could be made so much nicer. It is in an excellent position, but has a poor reputation due to the neglect of the eastern valley oval, weeds and graffiti along Hennessey etc.
- More bicycle lanes for the town centre, particularly Chandler St, Benjamin way, and Chan St. Lots of commuters cycle to the town centre for work and it is often a close call between motorists and cyclists
- An emphasis on environmentally friendly initiatives. Focus on solar power, more trees in the town centre (particularly Benjamin way at the mall end), sustainable usage of power, water etc.
- More information made readily available about community events. Often difficult to know about what is going on.
- Replace the playground on the eastern valley oval. Don't just remove it - put in a new one. I would start taking my daughter if something decent was put in.
- Please lobby to ensure the light rail links the Belconnen town centre to Civic. I hope it will make a difference to the congestion on Belconnen Way in peak hour traffic.




usinesses

Date: Wednesday, 28 January 2015 1:10:14 PM

Dear Council Members,

There needs to be more spaces for members of the community to start a small business. I was looking for a small shopfront that I could lease in order to open a small retail centre but the shophouse space that I was offered were too large and too expensive. You would notice the abundance of empty commercial premises but they are too large. I would like to suggest that in order to attract small businesses that target just the Belconnen community there needs to be small and affordable shophouses that can rented. In that way small businesses can commence and thrive in Belconnen,



Subject: Suggestions for Belconnen development
Date: Monday, 8 December 2014 8:54:42 AM

Hi: Unfortunately I was not able to attend your consultation meeting on 4th December about the future of Belconnen.

I have lived in the area since 1999 and own two properties in the area very close to the Town Centre [REDACTED] My suggestions would be:

1. increase the population density close to the town centre and along the major projected transport routes (including the 300 bus route from the town centre to Civic past UC and the hospital as well as Belconnen Way and Ginnenderra Drive towards Kippax). Need to do this to make current and future public transport infrastructure viable in the long term and also to create real sustainable retail precincts.
 2. Remove the height restrictions on buildings in the core town centre area - including Cohen Street and the area up to or bounded by Coulter Drive. I think the hill where Officeworks, the Ginnenderra Medical Centre and Bing Lees are is the perfect site for high-rise apartments and hotel development. It has amazing views and is close to the commercial and transport hub of the town centre. I think that Belconnen is ideally placed for high rise because Civic is probably too close to the airport and also the "Parliamentary Triangle" to ever take off vertically. Belconnen does not have those constraints and so I think it could go skyward without problems. And if the top of Cohen Street were to be developed for high-rise hotel/apartment development, then the rest of Cohen Street leading down to the Mall should be developed into an inviting retail precinct so as to make it an attractive thoroughfare for visitors/residents in the hotels/apartments at the top of the hill.
- [REDACTED]

Subject: Suggestions for Belconnen planning
Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2015 10:22:49 AM

To whom it may concern,

my main concern about Belconnen is that it is dominated by the large, autonomous shopping mall which effectively excludes other aspects of life. In other words a disconnect exists, for example, when you are in the mall, it is only possible to see the lake from the car parks or access other business by crossing busy roads.

Lake Ginninderra is a very attractive and underdeveloped resource. I would like to see a far better connection between the mall and town centre to Lake Ginninderra through sensitively planned development. This would include redeveloping Emu Bank between the mall (including the strip of restaurants) and lake into parks, walkways, cycle paths, playgrounds etc.

The Belconnen park (off Benjamin Way) should also be redeveloped so it is a lovely area to be in rather than just a walk way. It is another area where a busy road effectively cuts it off. It should be able to be accessed more easily by foot from the Mall and could be redeveloped by making the offices residential to encourage more people there. This type of development works well in Europe and would entice restaurants and a bit of life into this rather dead area.

Another space requiring a rethink is the library - wonderful resource but terrible to access, particularly for parents with small children in prams, the elderly or disabled.

Thank you for the opportunity to make suggestions into planning Belconnen, it has been a frustration for me for a long time and particularly having traveled extensively recently I have seen many other cities that attract people into areas by having wonderful pedestrian areas. Essentially you need people in the space!

Subject: Suggestions for belconnen
Date: Friday, 23 January 2015 11:59:15 AM

Hello,

I have been a belconnen resident my whole life. I am 31 years old.

I would like to see a more cultural experience brought to belconnen. To do this, the lake should be integral to this.

My suggestions are as follows:


Jazz/blues in the park (picnic where residents can come along and watch some jazz near the lake)

Homemade markets (stalls along the foreshore where home made and grown businesses can come along once a month).

Less apartments, more restaurants, cafés, pubs and bars. Belconnen still doesn't have sufficient bars or pubs or quality restaurants. Lighthouse, la di da and ho ha are ok, but there is little competition so they aren't places people look forward to. They just go because it's convenient. These new bars and pubs should do live bands and trivia during the week to attract numbers.

Less traffic lights. It is frustrating that there are so many traffic lights on lathlain, Benjamin way and eastern valley way and there is not sufficient traffic. I avoid belconnen for this reason. They are not synced, nor are some required on wknds. Please consider how they can be reworked on wknds so they can improve flow of traffic.

Those are all my suggestions. I look forward to hearing more about the progress.



Subject: Town centre feedback
Date: Wednesday, 14 January 2015 6:50:48 PM

Hi,

I've just read an article on facebook stating that you are looking for ideas for Belconnen town centre? I think the lake area is absolutely wasted. It needs a cafe where you can sit, have a coffee, cake, sandwich etc on the water. In summer, nobody wants to sit and eat hot Asian food, hungry jacks or pasta, and not everyone wants to go to the lighthouse. A nice simple cafe on the water would be perfect. The waterfront is massively under-utilised and basically hidden away behind a series of restaurants. In regards to restaurants, more variety of restaurant types that maximise the waterfront would also be beneficial. Eating at these restaurants now, you would barely know there is a lake right behind them. Look at the sort of restaurants and eateries going into Braddon and the Kingston waterfront, as well as the atmosphere at Kingston waterfront. That could be like g! Restaurants in Belco are dull and outdated. Bad pasta, tacky 80s decor Asian, fatty unhealthy fast food or rough Lighthouse, not cool.

Subject: Town Centre ideas [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 8 December 2014 11:52:45 AM

UNOFFICIAL

Hello,

I recently attended the community consultation workshop for the Belconnen Town Centre master plan, and had one idea I didn't get a chance to share.

I'd like to see measures implemented to entice families to live in the town centre. If families can be convinced to live there, then the demand for supporting functions such as supermarkets, playgrounds, child care, schools etc will be greater and would significantly contribute to a walkable, transit friendly neighbourhood. Perhaps more well designed townhouse and terrace style developments that we see in older cities such as Beacon Hill in Boston and Surry Hills in Sydney, where dwellings of 4+ bedrooms are accommodated in a dense urban setting, could be the impetus we need.