



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Freedom of Information Publication Coversheet

The following information is provided pursuant to section 28 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

FOI Reference: CMTEDDFOI 2022-055

Information to be published	Status
1. Access application	Published
2. Decision notice	Published
3. Documents and schedule	Published
4. Additional information identified	No
5. Fees	N/A
6. Processing time (in working days)	35
7. Decision made by Ombudsman	N/A
8. Additional information identified by Ombudsman	N/A
9. Decision made by ACAT	N/A
10. Additional information identified by ACAT	N/A

From: [REDACTED]
To: [CMTEDD FOI](#)
Subject: Re: FOI request - Gungahlin prospectus request to revise/update scope
Date: Tuesday, 8 March 2022 3:08:08 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Madan,

Thank you for your call earlier. I agree to the new scope of my request.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

On Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 3:02 PM CMTEDD FOI <CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au> wrote:

[REDACTED]

Hope you are well

Further to our discussion on the phone, the business unit has come back stating that there is a large volume of internal emails associated with the development of prospectus. They will need to go through over 150-300 documents and remove duplicates. As most of the results of these records would be captured in drafts provided to Ministers, would you consider amending the scope as below?

*“I am writing to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2016 the prospectus prepared by the ACT government for the federal government in an effort to attract a federal public service agency to the Gungahlin town centre, along with any **formal** correspondence about the prospectus and Ministerial briefing about its preparation”.*

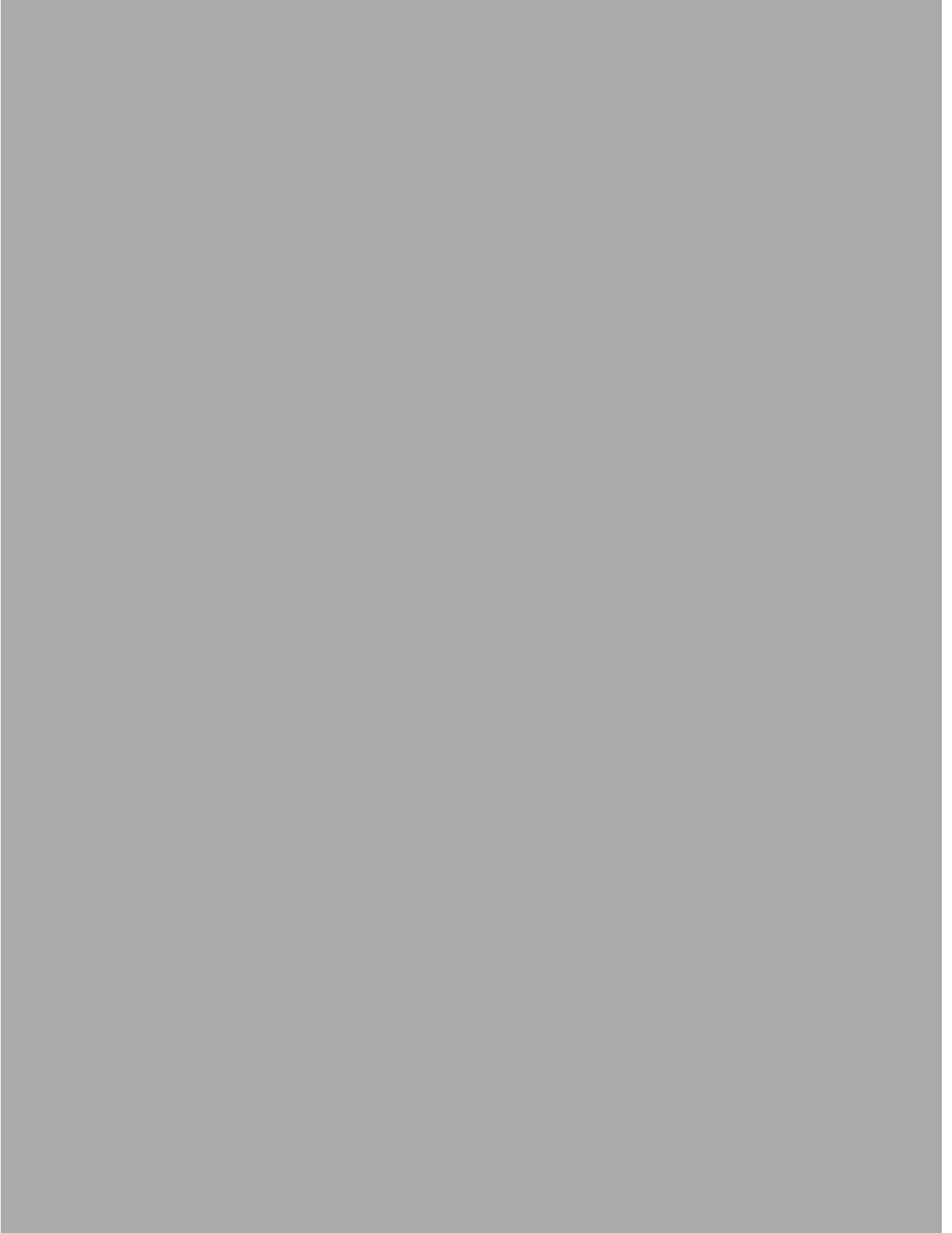
Kind Regards

Madan

Madan Mohan Nagpal (he/him) | Freedom of Information Coordinator | Information Access Team

Phone: 02 6207 7754 | Email: cmteddfai@act.gov.au

Corporate | Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | ACT Government



From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, 24 February 2022 6:56 PM

To: CMTEDD FOI <CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au>

Subject: FOI request - Gungahlin prospectus

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

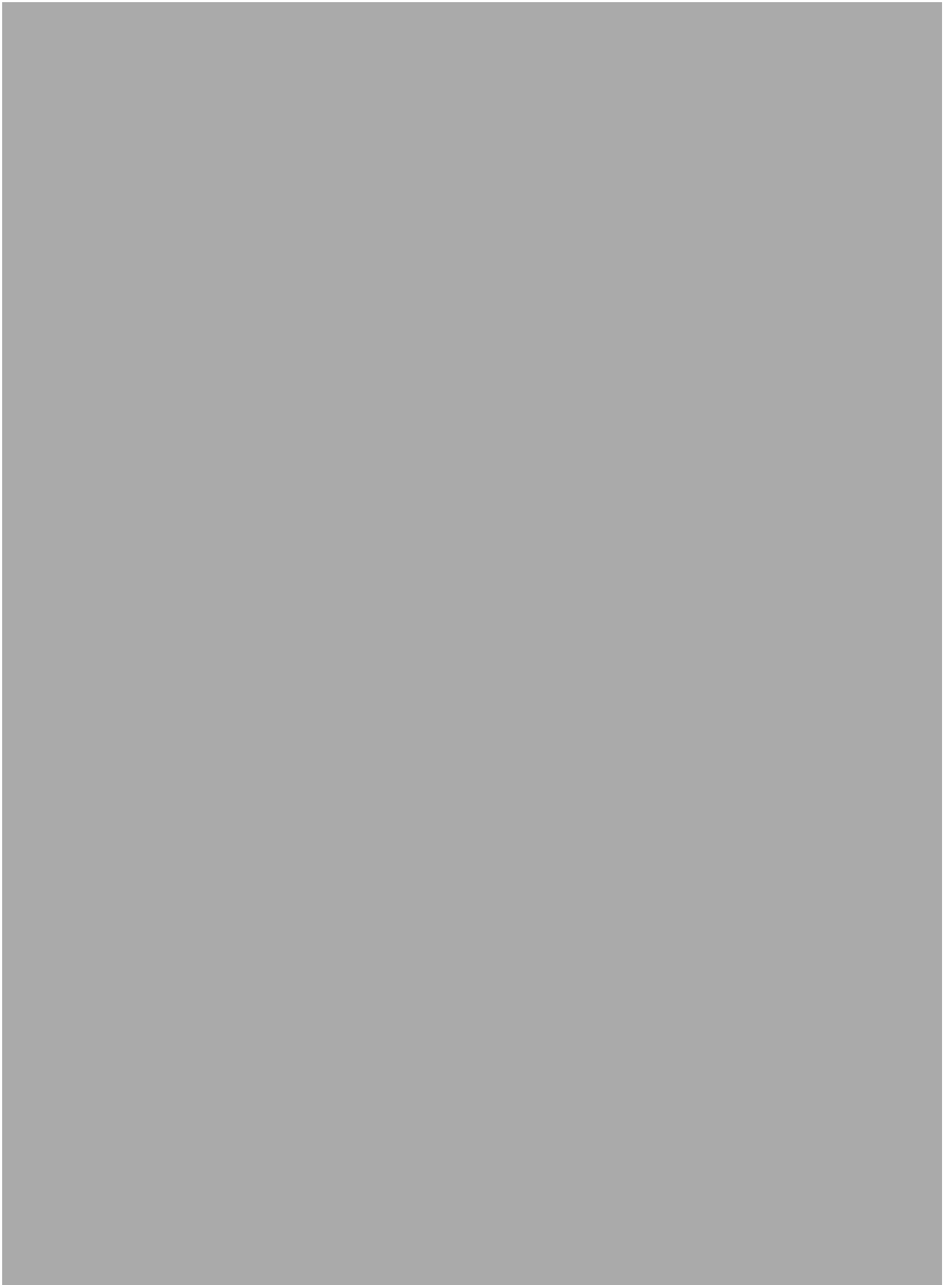
Hello,

I'm writing to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2016 the prospectus prepared by the ACT government for the federal government in an effort to attract a federal public service agency to the Gungahlin town centre, along with any correspondence about the prospectus and other internal communication about its preparation.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance, including negotiating the scope of my request.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]





ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDDFOI 2022-055



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the Act), received by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) on 24 February 2022, in which you sought access to all documents in relation to the prospectus prepared by the ACT government for the federal government in effort to attract a federal public service agency to the Gungahlin town centre.

On 8 March you agreed to narrow the scope of your request to: *"I am writing to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2016 the prospectus prepared by the ACT government for the federal government in an effort to attract a federal public service agency to the Gungahlin town centre, along with any formal correspondence about the prospectus and Ministerial briefing about its preparation"*.

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Director-General under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CMTEDD was required to provide a decision on your access application by 25 March 2022. Following third-party consultation, the due date was revised to 19 April 2022.

Decision on access

Searches were completed for relevant information and eight documents were identified that fall within the scope of your request.

I have included as **Attachment A** to this decision the schedule of relevant documents. This provides a description of each document that falls within the scope of your request and the access decision for each of those documents.

I have decided to grant access in full to six documents relevant to your request. This includes access to Ministerial Brief CMTEDD 2021/6271. Please note this brief has five

attachments (A, B, C, D, E). Attachment C contained eight letters which were identified as not in scope.

I have decided to refuse access to two documents as I consider them to be contrary to the public interest information under schedule 1 of the Act.

My access decisions are detailed further in the following statement of reasons and the documents released to you are provided as **Attachment B** to this letter.

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act a statement of reasons outlining my decisions is below.

Statement of Reasons

In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the Act, in particular Schedule 1, section 1.6,
- the content of the documents that fall within the scope of your request.

Exemption claimed

My reasons for deciding not to grant access to the identified documents and components of those documents are as follows:

Contrary to the public interest information under Schedule 1 of the Act

Documents 1 and 2 (refer schedule) refer to the proposed ACT Government response to the Standing Committee Report on the Draft Plan Variation 364. These documents were prepared for Cabinet deliberation and considered out-of-session during 2-4 November 2021. The government response was tabled with a Ministerial Statement in the Assembly on 10 November 2021.

This information is considered to be contrary to the public interest under section 1.6 of Schedule 1 of the Act and therefore has been withheld from release. The primary purpose of the 'cabinet exemption' is to maintain the confidentiality of the cabinet process and to uphold the principle of collective ministerial responsibility. This was discussed in *The Commonwealth v Northern Land Council* [1993] HCA 24; (1993) 176 CLR 604 (21 April 1993). Paragraph 6 of the decision, states that:

... it has never been doubted that it is in the public interest that the deliberations of Cabinet should remain confidential in order that the members of Cabinet may exchange differing views and at the same time maintain the principle of collective responsibility for any decision which may be made.

In reviewing the documents, I consider they contain information which has been developed as part of the Cabinet consideration process (s 1.6(1)(a)) or is directly related to the deliberation and considerations of Cabinet (s 1.6(1)(d)). I am satisfied that release of this information would disclose information which has not been 'officially disclosed'. In making this decision, I note the decision of Deputy President Forgie in *Re Toomer and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Ors* [2003] AATA 1301 who stated:

.... deliberations are its thinking processes, be they directed to gathering information, analysing information or discussing strategies. They remain its deliberations whether

or not a decision is reached. [Cabinet's] decisions are its conclusions as to the courses of action that it adopts be, they conclusions as to its final strategy on a matter or, its conclusions as to the manner in which a matter is to proceed.

Accordingly, I have decided to withhold documents 1-2 from release under the Act. The remaining information will be released to you in full.

Charges

Pursuant to Freedom of Information (Fees) Determination 2018 processing charges are not applicable for this request as the number of pages released is below the charging threshold.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CMTEDD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. Your original access application, my decision and documents released to you in response to your access application will be published in the CMTEDD disclosure log between 3-10 days of the decision date. Your personal contact details will not be published.

You may view CMTEDD disclosure log at <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/functions/foi>.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in CMTEDD disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

We recommend using this form [Applying for an Ombudsman Review](#) to ensure you provide all of the required information. Alternatively, you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact me by telephone on 6207 7754 or email CMTEDDFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Stuart', written in a cursive style.

Katharine Stuart
Information Officer
Information Access Team
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
14 April 2022



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST SCHEDULE

WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST

Reference NO.

"I am writing to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2016 the prospectus prepared by the ACT government for the federal government in an effort to attract a federal public service agency to the Gungahlin town centre, along with any formal correspondence about the prospectus and Ministerial briefing about its preparation".

CMTEDDFOI2022-055

Ref No	Page number	Description	Date	Status	Reason for Exemption	Online Release Status
1	N/A	21/482/OOS	4 November 2021	Exempt	Schedule 1 – 1.6 Cabinet Information	No
2	N/A	21/756	2 February 2022	Exempt	Schedule 1 – 1.6 Cabinet Information	No
3	1-2	Letter from Mr Andrew Barr to Mr Simon Birmingham	15 July 2021	Full Release	N/A	Yes
4	3-4	Letter from Mr Ben Morton to Mr Andrew Barr	27 August 2021	Full Release	N/A	Yes
5	5-21	Ministerial Brief CMTEDD 2021/6271	10 January 2022	Full Release	N/A	Yes
6	22-31	E-mail from Mr Andrew Barr to Mr Ben Morton and Finance Minister	24 January 2022	Full Release	N/A	Yes
7	32	Letter from Gungahlin Community Council to Mr Andrew Barr	10 June 2021	Full Release	N/A	Yes
8	33-40	Letter from Mr Andrew Barr to Gungahlin Community Council	28 February 2022	Full Release	N/A	Yes
Total No of Docs						
08						



Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham MP
Minister for Finance
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Our ref: CMTEDD2021/2527

Dear Minister Birmingham

Simon

I am writing to you about the recent announcement made by the Commonwealth in its 2021-22 Budget advising that over 5,000 additional positions would be created within the Australian Public Service.

I understand there has not been any advice on where these positions will be located at this stage. I am writing to request that you consider locating some of these positions within the Gungahlin Town Centre in the Australian Capital Territory.

The Gungahlin Town Centre is the newest town centre in the Territory and one that has grown significantly from its humble beginnings. The ACT Government has significantly invested in Gungahlin, and is supporting the Town Centre in particular, by locating a hub of up to 780 public servants in the ACT Government building, Winyu House. It is well serviced by public transport, including through light rail.

While the ACT Government continues to invest in Gungahlin, increasing the presence of Australian Public Service workers in Gungahlin would provide additional economic activity and support to the Gungahlin Town Centre.

I note that the traditional approach to town centre development in Canberra has seen a large Australian Public Service department located within each town centre. However, Gungahlin appears to have been overlooked by successive Federal Governments with no large Australian Public Service employer moving into the town centre.

We encourage the Commonwealth to undertake ongoing consultation with the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and other relevant worker representatives to ensure any changes to work arrangements would be to the benefit of Australian Public Service employees.

For your information, the ACT Government is in the process of developing a summary Prospectus on the relative financial, transport and commercial benefits of the Australian Public Service considering locating more staff in Gungahlin, which I will provide to you in the near future.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing this proposal and any aspect of the Prospectus in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barr', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

15 JUL 2021



THE HON BEN MORTON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reference: MC21-002375

Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister of the ACT
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Chief Minister

Thank you for your letter dated 15 July 2021 to Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Finance, proposing that some of the Australian Public Service (APS) positions announced in the 2021-22 Budget be located within the Gungahlin Town Centre. I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for Commonwealth property policy and administration.

As you are aware, the Australian Government has taken action to support the Gungahlin Town Centre, with the 2018 announcement that Defence Housing Australia's head office will relocate from Barton to Gungahlin which is the first time a Commonwealth agency has been relocated to Gungahlin. This relocation is scheduled to occur in the first half of next year, following the construction of a new office building. Senator for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Zed Seselja, championed this relocation as a 2016 election commitment and I am pleased that we are on track to fulfil another important commitment to the people of Canberra.

As you may also be aware, the Australian Government made decisions to maintain the Department of Social Services in Tuggeranong, and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in Belconnen, ensuring that both of those town centres were supported despite attempts under the previous Federal Labor Government to relocate both agencies. We have also made substantial investments in our facilities in Woden, including major refurbishments of Discovery House and Charles Perkins House, to preserve the Commonwealth APS footprint in this town centre.

Under the Commonwealth Property Management Framework, individual entities are required to occupy existing Commonwealth leased or owned office space before sourcing new accommodation. This supports the operational requirements of entities, and delivers value for money as required by the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

While the Budget Papers note fluctuations in staffing levels across the APS over the forward estimates, staffing requirements and their locations will vary by entity and be determined according to their business needs. It is not possible to arbitrarily dictate the location of additional positions across the entire APS without regard for the staffing profile and operational requirements of individual entities.

Within the constraints outlined above, and taking into account the need to maximise the use of the existing Commonwealth footprint across the ACT, the Australian Government is open to considering any agency or departmental-led proposal to relocate or establish operations in Gungahlin. Furthermore, I can advise that Senator Seselja is in frequent communication with me regarding the need to support further growth in Canberra's town centres, including in Gungahlin.

I note that the ACT Government is in the process of relocating 2700 ACT public servants to new precincts in Civic and Dickson. This represents a missed opportunity to deliver jobs to the Gungahlin Town Centre as you are advocating the Commonwealth should do, and I would be interested to better understand your government's property policies and how your decision to centralise such large staffing numbers reflects those policies.

Thank you again for writing. Once you have completed your prospectus on the relative benefits of the APS considering locating staff to Gungahlin, I would be happy to share this with the Commonwealth's Strategic Property Adviser.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Morton', written over a horizontal line.

BEN MORTON

27/8 /2021

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

To:	Chief Minister	Tracking No.: CMTEDD2021/6271
Date:	10/01/2022	
CC:	Minister for Planning and Land Management Head of Service	
From:	Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet	
Subject:	Gungahlin Town Centre Prospectus	
Critical Date:	24/01/2022	
Critical Reason:	Normal course of business	

Recommendations

That you:

1. Agree to provide the Gungahlin Town Centre Prospectus (Attachment A) to the Commonwealth Government in line with the motion moved by Mr Andrew Braddock MLA, ACT Greens Member for Yerrabi in the Legislative Assembly on 15 June 2021;

Agreed / Not Agreed / Please Discuss

2. Sign the letter at Attachment B to the Minister for the Public Service, the Hon Ben Morton MP, providing the Gungahlin Town Centre Prospectus for his consideration; and

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

3. Sign the letters at Attachment C to all ACT Government Ministers, providing them with a copy of the Gungahlin Town Centre Prospectus for information.

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

Andrew Barr MLA  21./1./22

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

1. On 15 June 2021, Mr Andrew Braddock MLA, ACT Greens Member for Yerrabi, moved a motion in the Legislative Assembly regarding planning, land release and development in the Gungahlin Town Centre.
2. In response, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution calling on the Government to:
 - a. prepare and submit a prospectus (the Prospectus) to the Federal Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, on the relative benefits of moving new or growing Federal Government agencies to/in Gungahlin, to support further economic development in the region; and
 - b. to report back to the Assembly by October 2021 on implementation of the Resolution.
 - i. This requirement was subsequently extended to December 2021.
3. The ACT Government response to the resolution was agreed by Cabinet on 4 November 2021 (21/482/OOS refers) and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 10 November 2021.
4. In parallel with this process, you separately wrote to the Federal Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham on 15 July 2021 regarding the announcement made by the Commonwealth in its 2021-22 Budget advising that over 5,000 additional positions would be created in the Australian Public Service. Your letter (Attachment D) requested that the Minister consider locating some of these positions within the Gungahlin Town Centre.
 - a. The Hon Ben Morton MP, the Minister for the Public Service responded to your letter on 27 August 2021, as he has portfolio responsibility for Commonwealth property policy and administration (Attachment E).

Issues

5. CMTEDD led the preparation of the Prospectus with input from relevant areas across government.
6. The Prospectus promotes the Gungahlin Town Centre as an investment proposition for the APS as it would allow the Federal Government to significantly save on leasing costs, compared to other sites in the city centre or the Parliamentary Triangle. It also outlines other benefits of the Gungahlin Town Centre, including transport

accessibility, land availability, regional investment, skills and innovation opportunities and flexible work arrangements.

7. The Prospectus concludes by confirming the ACT Government's commitment to making significant investments in Gungahlin to develop a thriving local community.
8. The letter to the Minister for the Public Service, the Hon Ben Morton MP (Attachment B), outlines the requirement from the Legislative Assembly for you to provide the Prospectus to the Commonwealth, while also reiterating the ACT Government's willingness and commitment to work with the Commonwealth on the potential opportunities available in the Gungahlin Town Centre.
9. The letter to all ACT Government Ministers (Attachment C) advises them that you have provided a copy of the Prospectus to the Commonwealth, in line with the Legislative Assembly's resolution and also provides them with a copy for their information.

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications associated with the Prospectus.

Consultation

Internal

11. CMTEDD Communications, CMTEDD Workforce Capability and Governance, Macroeconomic and Federal Financial Relations Branch, the ACT Property Group and artsACT were all consulted on the Prospectus.

Cross Directorate

12. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, Suburban Land Agency and Transport Canberra and City Services were all consulted on the Prospectus.

External

13. Nil.

Work Health and Safety

14. Nil.

Benefits/Sensitivities

15. The growth of and Government investment in the Gungahlin Town Centre has received a considerable amount of attention over the past twelve months from members of the Legislative Assembly, the media and the Gungahlin Community Council. Any steps to further the economic potential of the Gungahlin district will be welcomed by these stakeholders.

Communications, media and engagement implications

16. CMTEDD Communications contributed to the development of the Prospectus.

17. Should any further media and engagement opportunities arise, further communications materials will be created.

Signatory Name: Wilhelmina Blount

Phone: 6207 0835

Action Officer: Sophie Carmody

Phone: 6205 7377

Attachments

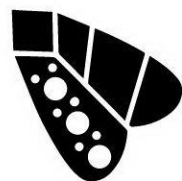
Attachment	Title
Attachment A	Gungahlin Prospectus
Attachment B	Letter to the Hon Ben Morton MP
Attachment C	Letters to ACT Government Ministers
Attachment D	Letter to Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Attachment E	Letter from the Hon Ben Morton MP



Gungahlin Town Centre

A Prospectus for APS Investment





Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the Canberra Region and acknowledges that the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.

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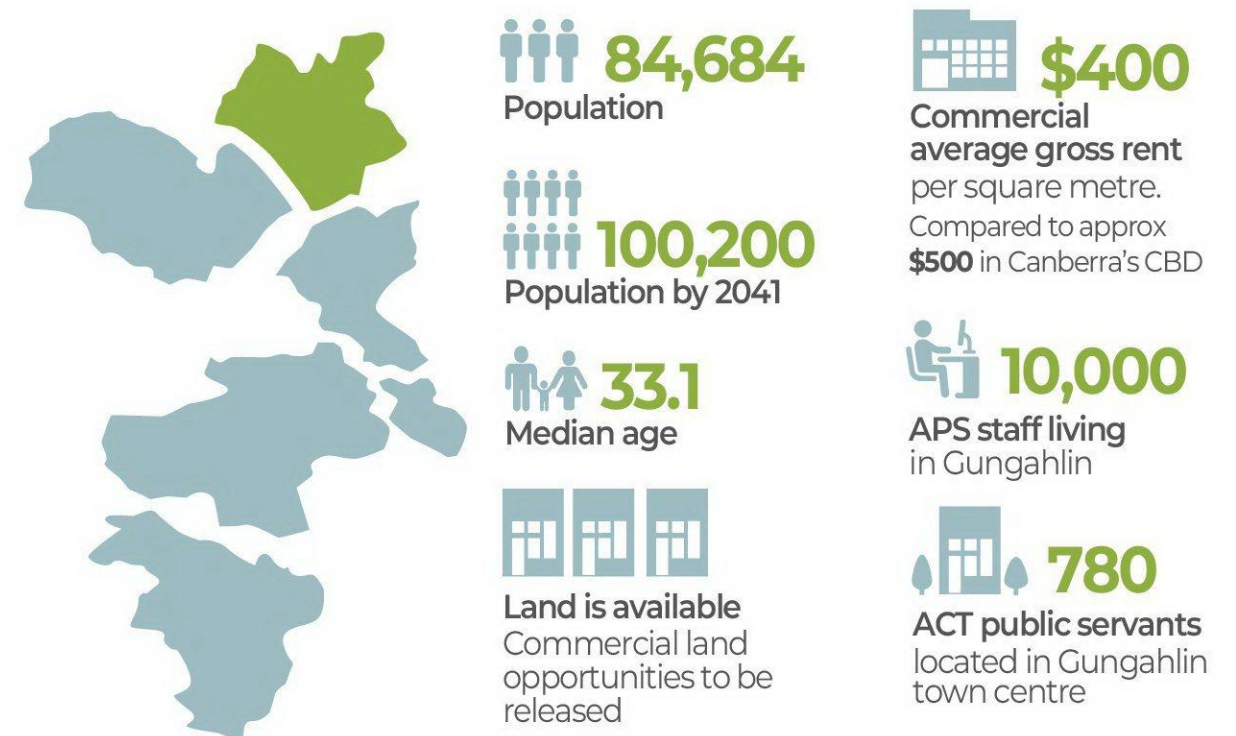
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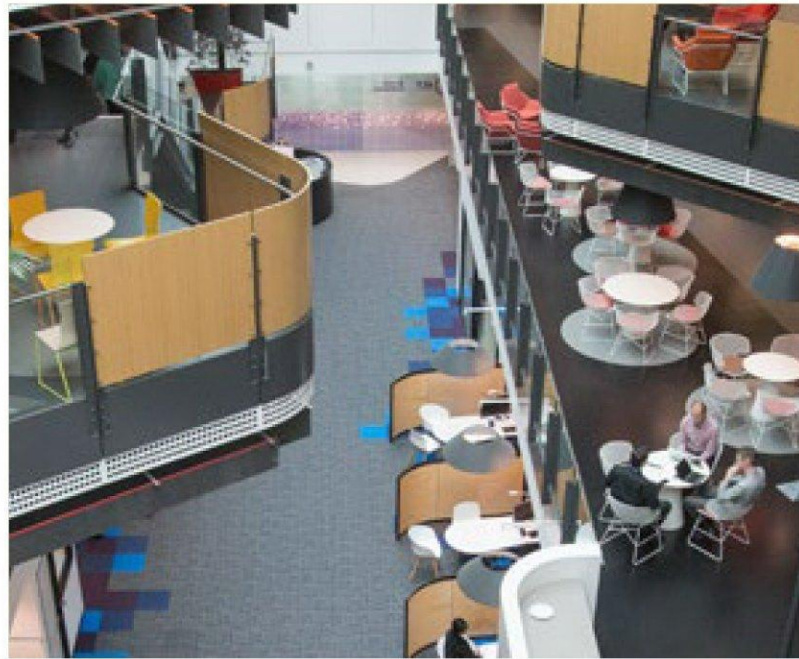
Introduction

- Gungahlin Town Centre is the newest town centre in Canberra. The ACT Government has made significant investments in the Gungahlin region and has supported the Town Centre in particular, by locating a hub accommodating up to 780 public servants in the ACT Government building, Winyu House. It is well serviced by transport connections and public transport, including through Canberra's light rail.
- Gungahlin has also been the site of significant residential growth in recent years, creating an opportunity for accompanying commercial expansion. While the Gungahlin region accounts for 19.6% of Canberra's population, only 6.3% of Canberra's employment opportunities are based in the region.
- One of the fastest growing regions in the country in recent years, Gungahlin's population has grown by 75.2 per cent since 2011, and is now home to almost 85,000 people. Much of this growth has been made up of young families buying their first homes, making Gungahlin one of our city's youngest regions.
- As Gungahlin's population is forecast to continue to grow towards 100,000, and given its proximity and accessibility to growing regional towns and settlements, there are significant opportunities for locating new work hubs in Gungahlin whilst delivering mutual benefits for the National Capital, and the Canberra Region, as a whole.
- While the ACT Government continues to invest in Gungahlin, increasing the presence of Australian Public Service (APS) workers in Gungahlin would provide additional economic activity and support the Gungahlin Town Centre as a key regional work hub in the National Capital.
- The Commonwealth Government's announcement of an additional 5,000 APS employment positions in the 2021-22 Budget provides a timely opportunity for the Commonwealth to consider the merits of locating an APS department or a flexible work hub in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Gungahlin District - A Snapshot



Benefits to the Commonwealth



- Gungahlin is an attractive investment proposition for the APS as it will allow the Commonwealth to save significantly on leasing costs compared to sites in the city centre or Parliamentary Triangle. The March 2021 Canberra Office Market Report published by Knight Frank notes that A Grade office space in Canberra's CBD has an average gross rent per square metre of around \$500 compared to around \$400 per square metre for equivalent office space in Canberra's town centres including Gungahlin.

Benefits - Transport Accessibility

- Gungahlin is well supported by public transport links and road infrastructure into the city from regional towns via the Barton and Federal Highways.
- With disruption and longer journey times anticipated for the city centre for a number of years during the raising of London Circuit, the construction of Light Rail Stage 2A and Commonwealth Avenue bridge strengthening, Gungahlin provides an attractive alternative for the potentially large workforce residing in and around the region.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is serviced by 11 local bus routes and 2 rapid routes (including light rail into the city every 5 minutes in the peak and a rapid route to and from Belconnen every 30 minutes).



- The ACT Government is also making further improvements to transport in Gungahlin, including the Gundaroo Drive Stage 2 duplication, the Horse

Park Drive duplication, and investigation of a new park and ride facility on the north-eastern corner of Well Station Drive and Flemington Road.



Benefits - Land Availability

- Gungahlin Town Centre includes large holdings of undeveloped but high-quality serviced land (around one third of the town centre or approximately 13.5ha), providing the Commonwealth with significant choice for a new development.
- Each year the ACT Government prepares an Indicative Land Release Program (the Land Release Program) to set out the Government's intended land releases of residential, mixed use, commercial, industrial, and community and non-urban land.
- The Land Release Program plays a strategic role in catering for our population growth, building a compact, liveable city, attracting investment in the ACT land market and strengthening economic advantage in the ACT region.
- Several commercial land opportunities are, or will become available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. For example, the most recently published Land Release Program identifies Block 1 Section 228 in the Gungahlin Town Centre is to be released in 2021-22 (see Map 1). This block has a site area of over 10,000m² and is zoned to permit a range of uses, including offices.
- Gungahlin Town Centre also contains other large commercial sites available for employment purposes that could be brought to market quickly to respond to demand or interest (see Map 1). These sites are located immediately adjacent to light rail. Land can also be subdivided or consolidated to fit any specific site area or building need.

Benefits – A significant existing local APS workforce

- ACT Government Treasury estimates that there are 10,000 APS staff already living in Gungahlin, indicating significant potential demand for a flexible work hub facility.
- The most recent Land Release Program specifies that between 2021 and 2026, there will be around 4,000 new residential dwelling releases in the Gungahlin district. This is around a quarter of all anticipated residential dwelling releases across the ACT over that period, which will support expected population growth and a growing potential local workforce.



Benefits - Regional Investment

- Investing in Canberra means investing in the Capital Region.
- As well as being a fast-growing city in its own right, Canberra has become the regional services hub for some of the fastest growing communities in south-east NSW.
- Today, Canberra provides key social services like health and education, good jobs, transport and trade links for a region that is home to around 750,000 people within and around the ACT.
- A significant percentage of the working population in Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley travel to the ACT for work; 63 percent and 50 percent respectively.



- Gungahlin is the closest ACT location to growing populations in surrounding NSW including towns such as Murrumbateman, Yass and Goulburn, providing cost effective commuting and employment opportunities both during construction and for future workforce fulfilment.
- Investing in Gungahlin would therefore be a demonstration of Commonwealth leadership in contributing to economic development in the Capital Region by improving access to good jobs not only for those living in Gungahlin, but also those living in the surrounding regional areas.



Benefits – Skills and Innovation

- Investment in Canberra offers unique advantages over other regional areas such as access to skilled labour and infrastructure within a constrained labour market.
- The ACT Government has worked hard to attract and facilitate investment for a growing and vibrant centre to create great places where people thrive. Canberra is attracting national and international talent and expertise lured by excellent employment opportunities combined with world leading liveability ratings.
- Gungahlin provides a compelling opportunity for the Commonwealth to invest in innovative and sustainable building design, construction and fit out methodologies to meet its own workforce wellbeing and sustainability objectives.
- With ready access to Australia's highest rated secure data centres, immediate and future IT infrastructure needs could be easily incorporated into new Gungahlin facilities.
- In addition to Light Rail infrastructure, innovative transport and other inclusions (such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure) could easily be incorporated to support Commonwealth operations and vehicle fleet in the area to meet green credentials.
- With the availability of a diverse range of housing, APS offices located in Gungahlin would provide realistic accommodation options for graduate recruits and new hires to meet lifestyle and liveability choice for employees.



Flexible Work Arrangements

- If the APS were to pursue flexible work arrangements and establish a flexible workplace hub, it could secure additional significant cost savings, and attract and retain the best staff by providing flexibility.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government adopted flexible work arrangements for all ACTPS staff. The significant benefits of these arrangements have led to the ACT Government retaining and attracting staff both during and following lockdown periods.
- Emerging research suggests that access to flexible working arrangements will be a key factor in attracting and retaining talent in a post-covid workforce.
- The ACTPS is building its flexible capability through an initiative to refit vacant accommodation in Belconnen and Tuggeranong to establish 'flexi offices', providing bookable workspace for staff who live in those regions as an alternative to their primary place of work.
- Additionally, a scoping exercise is underway to determine how key ACT Government locations, such as Winyu House in Gungahlin and Bowes Place in Woden, could be adapted to better support flexible working arrangements for ACTPS employees.
- The establishment of a flexible APS workplace hub in Gungahlin would present a cost-effective means of accommodating a local workforce. This would deliver financial benefits for the APS, benefit Gungahlin residents, and help to attract and retain talent in the Gungahlin region – potentially leading to the Commonwealth strengthening its reputation as an 'employer of choice'.

The ACT Government's commitment

- The ACT Government is committed to making ongoing investments in Gungahlin to develop a thriving local community.
- As part of the 2021-2022 Budget, the ACT Government committed to a significant investment in Gungahlin's infrastructure, ensuring the community can continue to grow and meet the growing demands of residents.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is already home to some of Canberra's major infrastructure investments including an ACT Government office block which accommodates up to 780 ACT Government employees, and the City to Gungahlin Stage 1 Light Rail.
- Gungahlin Town Centre offers great shopping and recreation experiences in its retail precinct, including Gungahlin Marketplace and Gungahlin Village, hardware and bulky goods stores and a sports club and hotel.
- Other community services include Gungahlin College, a public library, childcare centres, medical centres and open space to enjoy including the Valley Ponds, the Gungahlin Enclosed Oval and the Gungahlin Leisure Centre.
- By locating an APS Department in Gungahlin, the APS would directly benefit from these significant investments, not only through more affordable and accessible office space but through facilitating of the APS to respond and adapt to future ways of working that enable staff to live, work and play locally – ensuring a better work-life balance, it will also provide a better quality of life for many APS employees and their families.
- The ACT Government is committed to working with the Australian Government to identify sites and opportunities for the location of APS staff in the Gungahlin Town Centre and would welcome further discussions on this proposal.

Key Contact

The ACT Government is looking forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth on the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre as a critical hub of the National Capital.

To discuss this proposal, please contact: **Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Wilhelmina.Blount@act.gov.au**



Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

The Hon Ben Morton MP

Minister for the Public Service

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Morton 


Thank you for your letter in response to my correspondence to the Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, proposing the relocation of some Australian Public Service (APS) positions announced in the Commonwealth's 2021-22 Budget to the Gungahlin Town Centre.

As I conveyed in my letter to Minister Birmingham, on 15 June 2021 the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a resolution calling on the ACT Government to prepare and submit a prospectus to the Commonwealth on the relative benefits of moving new, or growing Federal Government agencies to/in Gungahlin, to support further economic development in the region. In line with this resolution, I am pleased to provide you with the attached document, *Gungahlin Town Centre – A Prospectus for APS Investment*.

The Prospectus promotes the Gungahlin Town Centre as an attractive investment proposition for the APS as it would allow the Federal Government to significantly save on leasing costs, compared to other sites in the city centre or the Parliamentary Triangle. It also outlines other benefits of the Gungahlin Town Centre, including transport accessibility, land availability, regional investment, skills and innovation opportunities and flexible work arrangements.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the ACT Government's willingness and commitment to work with the Federal Government on the potential opportunities available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. Should officials wish to further discuss our proposal, I ask that they please contact Ms Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, in my Directorate. Ms Blount can be contacted via email (wilhelmina.blount@act.gov.au) in the first instance.

ACT Legislative Assembly London Circuit, GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

 +61 2 6205 0011

 barr@act.gov.au

 @ABarrMLA

 AndrewBarrMLA

 andrewbarrmla

I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing this proposal and any aspect of the Prospectus in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Barr".

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

24 January 2022

cc: Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham



Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham MP

Our ref: CMTEDD2021/2527

Minister for Finance

PO Box 6100

Senate

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Birmingham *Simon*

I am writing to you about the recent announcement made by the Commonwealth in its 2021-22 Budget advising that over 5,000 additional positions would be created within the Australian Public Service.

I understand there has not been any advice on where these positions will be located at this stage. I am writing to request that you consider locating some of these positions within the Gungahlin Town Centre in the Australian Capital Territory.

The Gungahlin Town Centre is the newest town centre in the Territory and one that has grown significantly from its humble beginnings. The ACT Government has significantly invested in Gungahlin, and is supporting the Town Centre in particular, by locating a hub of up to 780 public servants in the ACT Government building, Winyu House. It is well serviced by public transport, including through light rail.

While the ACT Government continues to invest in Gungahlin, increasing the presence of Australian Public Service workers in Gungahlin would provide additional economic activity and support to the Gungahlin Town Centre.

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AndrewBarrMLA

andrewbarrmla

I note that the traditional approach to town centre development in Canberra has seen a large Australian Public Service department located within each town centre. However, Gungahlin appears to have been overlooked by successive Federal Governments with no large Australian Public Service employer moving into the town centre.

We encourage the Commonwealth to undertake ongoing consultation with the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and other relevant worker representatives to ensure any changes to work arrangements would be to the benefit of Australian Public Service employees.

For your information, the ACT Government is in the process of developing a summary Prospectus on the relative financial, transport and commercial benefits of the Australian Public Service considering locating more staff in Gungahlin, which I will provide to you in the near future.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing this proposal and any aspect of the Prospectus in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barr', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

15 JUL 2021



THE HON BEN MORTON MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reference: MC21-002375

Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister of the ACT
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Chief Minister

Thank you for your letter dated 15 July 2021 to Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Finance, proposing that some of the Australian Public Service (APS) positions announced in the 2021-22 Budget be located within the Gungahlin Town Centre. I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for Commonwealth property policy and administration.

As you are aware, the Australian Government has taken action to support the Gungahlin Town Centre, with the 2018 announcement that Defence Housing Australia's head office will relocate from Barton to Gungahlin which is the first time a Commonwealth agency has been relocated to Gungahlin. This relocation is scheduled to occur in the first half of next year, following the construction of a new office building. Senator for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Zed Seselja, championed this relocation as a 2016 election commitment and I am pleased that we are on track to fulfil another important commitment to the people of Canberra.

As you may also be aware, the Australian Government made decisions to maintain the Department of Social Services in Tuggeranong, and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in Belconnen, ensuring that both of those town centres were supported despite attempts under the previous Federal Labor Government to relocate both agencies. We have also made substantial investments in our facilities in Woden, including major refurbishments of Discovery House and Charles Perkins House, to preserve the Commonwealth APS footprint in this town centre.

Under the Commonwealth Property Management Framework, individual entities are required to occupy existing Commonwealth leased or owned office space before sourcing new accommodation. This supports the operational requirements of entities, and delivers value for money as required by the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

While the Budget Papers note fluctuations in staffing levels across the APS over the forward estimates, staffing requirements and their locations will vary by entity and be determined according to their business needs. It is not possible to arbitrarily dictate the location of additional positions across the entire APS without regard for the staffing profile and operational requirements of individual entities.

Within the constraints outlined above, and taking into account the need to maximise the use of the existing Commonwealth footprint across the ACT, the Australian Government is open to considering any agency or departmental-led proposal to relocate or establish operations in Gungahlin. Furthermore, I can advise that Senator Seselja is in frequent communication with me regarding the need to support further growth in Canberra's town centres, including in Gungahlin.

I note that the ACT Government is in the process of relocating 2700 ACT public servants to new precincts in Civic and Dickson. This represents a missed opportunity to deliver jobs to the Gungahlin Town Centre as you are advocating the Commonwealth should do, and I would be interested to better understand your government's property policies and how your decision to centralise such large staffing numbers reflects those policies.

Thank you again for writing. Once you have completed your prospectus on the relative benefits of the APS considering locating staff to Gungahlin, I would be happy to share this with the Commonwealth's Strategic Property Adviser.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Morton', written over a horizontal line.

BEN MORTON

27/8 /2021

From: "BARR Reception" <BARR@act.gov.au>
Sent: 24/01/2022 11:57 PM
To: "Ben.Morton.MP@aph.gov.au" <Ben.Morton.MP@aph.gov.au>
Cc: "financeminister@finance.gov.au" <financeminister@finance.gov.au>
Subject: Correspondence from the Chief Minister
Attachments: Correspondence from the Chief Minister.PDF, Att - Gungahlin Town Centre – A Prospectus for APS Investment.PDF

Good Morning

Please see attached a letter from the ACT Chief Minister.

Kind regards

Iris Eagar

Office of Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong





Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

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The Hon Ben Morton MP

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CANBERRA ACT 2600

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I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the ACT Government's willingness and commitment to work with the Federal Government on the potential opportunities available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. Should officials wish to further discuss our proposal, I ask that they please contact Ms Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, in my Directorate. Ms Blount can be contacted via email (wilhelmina.blount@act.gov.au) in the first instance.

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 andrewbarrmla

I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing this proposal and any aspect of the Prospectus in more detail.

Yours sincerely

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Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

24 January 2022

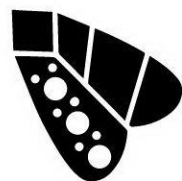
cc: Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham



Gungahlin Town Centre

A Prospectus for APS Investment





Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the Canberra Region and acknowledges that the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.

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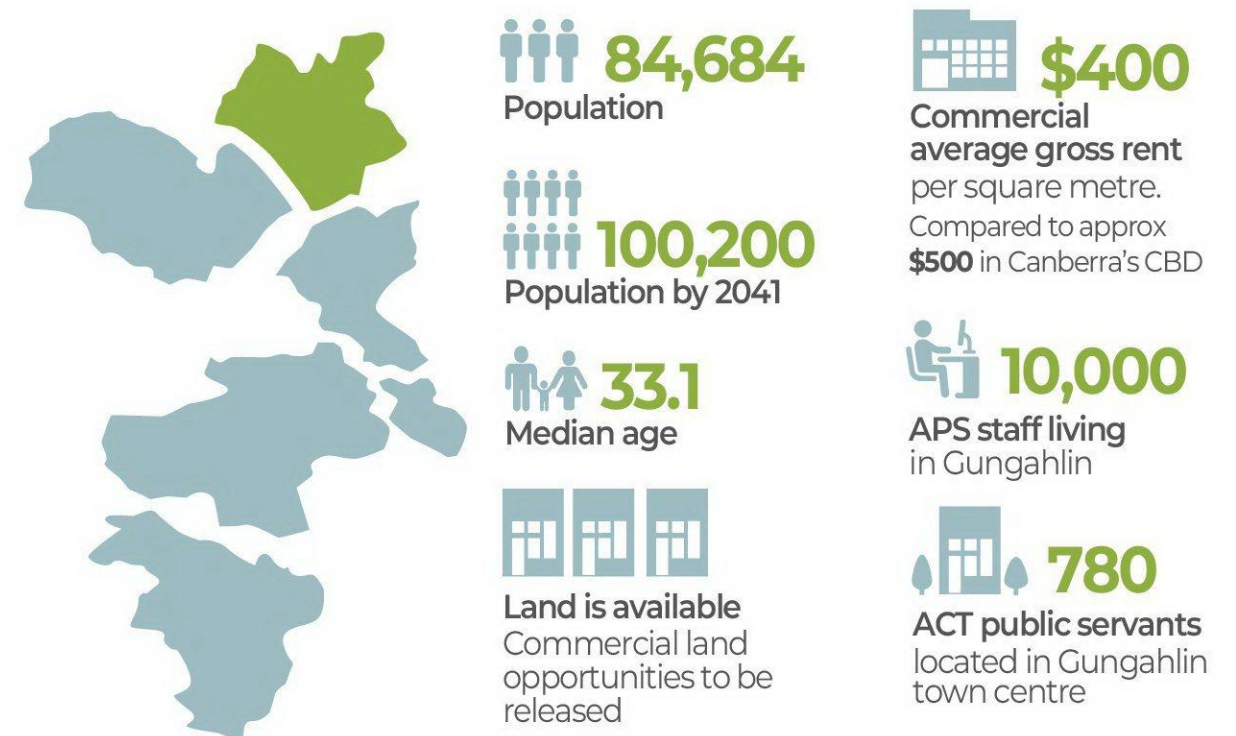
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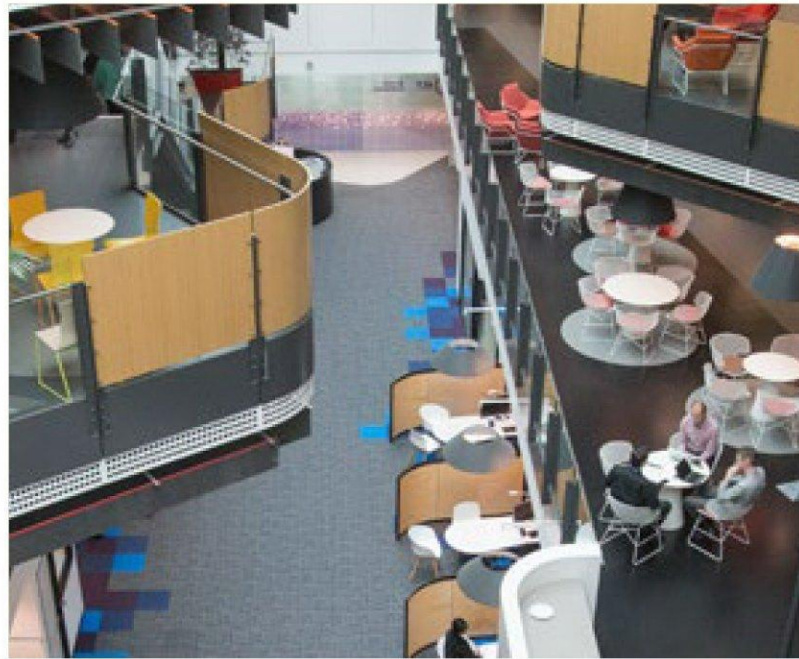
Introduction

- Gungahlin Town Centre is the newest town centre in Canberra. The ACT Government has made significant investments in the Gungahlin region and has supported the Town Centre in particular, by locating a hub accommodating up to 780 public servants in the ACT Government building, Winyu House. It is well serviced by transport connections and public transport, including through Canberra's light rail.
- Gungahlin has also been the site of significant residential growth in recent years, creating an opportunity for accompanying commercial expansion. While the Gungahlin region accounts for 19.6% of Canberra's population, only 6.3% of Canberra's employment opportunities are based in the region.
- One of the fastest growing regions in the country in recent years, Gungahlin's population has grown by 75.2 per cent since 2011, and is now home to almost 85,000 people. Much of this growth has been made up of young families buying their first homes, making Gungahlin one of our city's youngest regions.
- As Gungahlin's population is forecast to continue to grow towards 100,000, and given its proximity and accessibility to growing regional towns and settlements, there are significant opportunities for locating new work hubs in Gungahlin whilst delivering mutual benefits for the National Capital, and the Canberra Region, as a whole.
- While the ACT Government continues to invest in Gungahlin, increasing the presence of Australian Public Service (APS) workers in Gungahlin would provide additional economic activity and support the Gungahlin Town Centre as a key regional work hub in the National Capital.
- The Commonwealth Government's announcement of an additional 5,000 APS employment positions in the 2021-22 Budget provides a timely opportunity for the Commonwealth to consider the merits of locating an APS department or a flexible work hub in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Gungahlin District - A Snapshot



Benefits to the Commonwealth



- Gungahlin is an attractive investment proposition for the APS as it will allow the Commonwealth to save significantly on leasing costs compared to sites in the city centre or Parliamentary Triangle. The March 2021 Canberra Office Market Report published by Knight Frank notes that A Grade office space in Canberra's CBD has an average gross rent per square metre of around \$500 compared to around \$400 per square metre for equivalent office space in Canberra's town centres including Gungahlin.

Benefits - Transport Accessibility

- Gungahlin is well supported by public transport links and road infrastructure into the city from regional towns via the Barton and Federal Highways.
- With disruption and longer journey times anticipated for the city centre for a number of years during the raising of London Circuit, the construction of Light Rail Stage 2A and Commonwealth Avenue bridge strengthening, Gungahlin provides an attractive alternative for the potentially large workforce residing in and around the region.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is serviced by 11 local bus routes and 2 rapid routes (including light rail into the city every 5 minutes in the peak and a rapid route to and from Belconnen every 30 minutes).



- The ACT Government is also making further improvements to transport in Gungahlin, including the Gundaroo Drive Stage 2 duplication, the Horse

Park Drive duplication, and investigation of a new park and ride facility on the north-eastern corner of Well Station Drive and Flemington Road.



Benefits - Land Availability

- Gungahlin Town Centre includes large holdings of undeveloped but high-quality serviced land (around one third of the town centre or approximately 13.5ha), providing the Commonwealth with significant choice for a new development.
- Each year the ACT Government prepares an Indicative Land Release Program (the Land Release Program) to set out the Government's intended land releases of residential, mixed use, commercial, industrial, and community and non-urban land.
- The Land Release Program plays a strategic role in catering for our population growth, building a compact, liveable city, attracting investment in the ACT land market and strengthening economic advantage in the ACT region.
- Several commercial land opportunities are, or will become available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. For example, the most recently published Land Release Program identifies Block 1 Section 228 in the Gungahlin Town Centre is to be released in 2021-22 (see Map 1). This block has a site area of over 10,000m² and is zoned to permit a range of uses, including offices.
- Gungahlin Town Centre also contains other large commercial sites available for employment purposes that could be brought to market quickly to respond to demand or interest (see Map 1). These sites are located immediately adjacent to light rail. Land can also be subdivided or consolidated to fit any specific site area or building need.

Benefits – A significant existing local APS workforce

- ACT Government Treasury estimates that there are 10,000 APS staff already living in Gungahlin, indicating significant potential demand for a flexible work hub facility.
- The most recent Land Release Program specifies that between 2021 and 2026, there will be around 4,000 new residential dwelling releases in the Gungahlin district. This is around a quarter of all anticipated residential dwelling releases across the ACT over that period, which will support expected population growth and a growing potential local workforce.



Benefits - Regional Investment

- Investing in Canberra means investing in the Capital Region.
- As well as being a fast-growing city in its own right, Canberra has become the regional services hub for some of the fastest growing communities in south-east NSW.
- Today, Canberra provides key social services like health and education, good jobs, transport and trade links for a region that is home to around 750,000 people within and around the ACT.
- A significant percentage of the working population in Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley travel to the ACT for work; 63 percent and 50 percent respectively.



- Gungahlin is the closest ACT location to growing populations in surrounding NSW including towns such as Murrumbateman, Yass and Goulburn, providing cost effective commuting and employment opportunities both during construction and for future workforce fulfilment.
- Investing in Gungahlin would therefore be a demonstration of Commonwealth leadership in contributing to economic development in the Capital Region by improving access to good jobs not only for those living in Gungahlin, but also those living in the surrounding regional areas.



Benefits – Skills and Innovation

- Investment in Canberra offers unique advantages over other regional areas such as access to skilled labour and infrastructure within a constrained labour market.
- The ACT Government has worked hard to attract and facilitate investment for a growing and vibrant centre to create great places where people thrive. Canberra is attracting national and international talent and expertise lured by excellent employment opportunities combined with world leading liveability ratings.
- Gungahlin provides a compelling opportunity for the Commonwealth to invest in innovative and sustainable building design, construction and fit out methodologies to meet its own workforce wellbeing and sustainability objectives.
- With ready access to Australia's highest rated secure data centres, immediate and future IT infrastructure needs could be easily incorporated into new Gungahlin facilities.
- In addition to Light Rail infrastructure, innovative transport and other inclusions (such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure) could easily be incorporated to support Commonwealth operations and vehicle fleet in the area to meet green credentials.
- With the availability of a diverse range of housing, APS offices located in Gungahlin would provide realistic accommodation options for graduate recruits and new hires to meet lifestyle and liveability choice for employees.



Flexible Work Arrangements

- If the APS were to pursue flexible work arrangements and establish a flexible workplace hub, it could secure additional significant cost savings, and attract and retain the best staff by providing flexibility.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government adopted flexible work arrangements for all ACTPS staff. The significant benefits of these arrangements have led to the ACT Government retaining and attracting staff both during and following lockdown periods.
- Emerging research suggests that access to flexible working arrangements will be a key factor in attracting and retaining talent in a post-covid workforce.
- The ACTPS is building its flexible capability through an initiative to refit vacant accommodation in Belconnen and Tuggeranong to establish 'flexi offices', providing bookable workspace for staff who live in those regions as an alternative to their primary place of work.
- Additionally, a scoping exercise is underway to determine how key ACT Government locations, such as Winyu House in Gungahlin and Bowes Place in Woden, could be adapted to better support flexible working arrangements for ACTPS employees.
- The establishment of a flexible APS workplace hub in Gungahlin would present a cost-effective means of accommodating a local workforce. This would deliver financial benefits for the APS, benefit Gungahlin residents, and help to attract and retain talent in the Gungahlin region – potentially leading to the Commonwealth strengthening its reputation as an 'employer of choice'.

The ACT Government's commitment

- The ACT Government is committed to making ongoing investments in Gungahlin to develop a thriving local community.
- As part of the 2021-2022 Budget, the ACT Government committed to a significant investment in Gungahlin's infrastructure, ensuring the community can continue to grow and meet the growing demands of residents.
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- The ACT Government is committed to working with the Australian Government to identify sites and opportunities for the location of APS staff in the Gungahlin Town Centre and would welcome further discussions on this proposal.

Key Contact

The ACT Government is looking forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth on the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre as a critical hub of the National Capital.

To discuss this proposal, please contact: **Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Wilhelmina.Blount@act.gov.au**



Gungahlin Community Council Inc.
PO Box 260 Gungahlin ACT 2912
10 June 2021

Andrew Barr
Chief Minister
barr@act.gov.au

CC: Yerrabi MLAs

Expanding Employment within the Gungahlin Town Centre

Dear Chief Minister (Andrew)

Recent media reports ([ACT will seek new city infrastructure deal with Commonwealth](#), Canberra Times, 6 June 2021) indicate the ACT government is actively pursuing a city deal with the Federal government and in particular that "the territory would also push for more Commonwealth employment in the Gungahlin town centre."

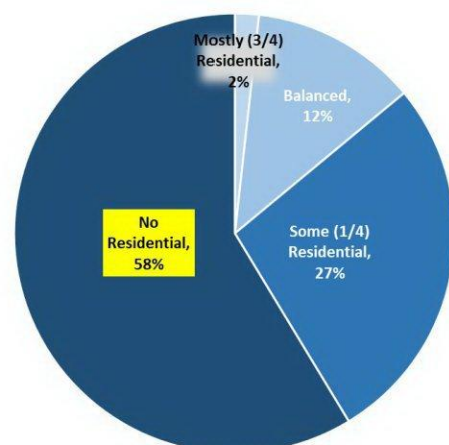
The Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) welcomes and strongly supports this initiative and encourages the ACT government to explore options beyond simply a "push" to expand the employment base in the Gungahlin Town Centre. The GCC believes explicit and concrete incentives need to be extended to Federal agencies to establish themselves in the town centre such as "peppercorn land rental" (eg. as provided to the University of NSW for the former CIT Reid site), and/or innovative approaches to new workspaces, such as the Smart Work Hub proposed in the lead up to the 2016 Election (see attached).

Gungahlin residents expect employment opportunities within the Gungahlin Town Centre to be expanded, and are strongly opposed to excessive residential development, as reflected in the GCC's 2019 Survey. In response to the question, "How much of the remaining Open Space in the Town Centre should be Residential?" over 85% of responses supported $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the remaining space be committed to commercial or retail.

We look forward to assisting the ACT government in their efforts to secure a city deal for Canberra and in improving employment opportunities in the Gungahlin Town Centre,

Regards

Peter Elford
President, GCC
0401890387, president@gcc.asn.au





Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister
Treasurer
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Economic Development
Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Peter Elford
President
Gungahlin Community Council
president@gcc.asn.au

Dear Mr Elford

Thank you for your letter about the inclusion of a Commonwealth public service hub located in Gungahlin in a potential Canberra City Deal with the Commonwealth Government.

I have recently provided a copy of the attached document, *Gungahlin Town Centre – A Prospectus for APS Investment*, to the Minister for the Public Service, the Hon Ben Morton MP, for his consideration. I have also provided a copy of the document to the Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, and all ACT Government Ministers, for information.

The Prospectus promotes the Gungahlin Town Centre as an attractive investment proposition for the APS. The Prospectus also reiterates the ACT Government's willingness and commitment to work with the Federal Government on the potential opportunities available in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

I look forward to continuing to engage with the Gungahlin Community Council on how we can achieve a bright future for Gungahlin.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

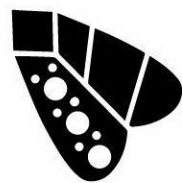
28 February 2022



Gungahlin Town Centre

A Prospectus for APS Investment





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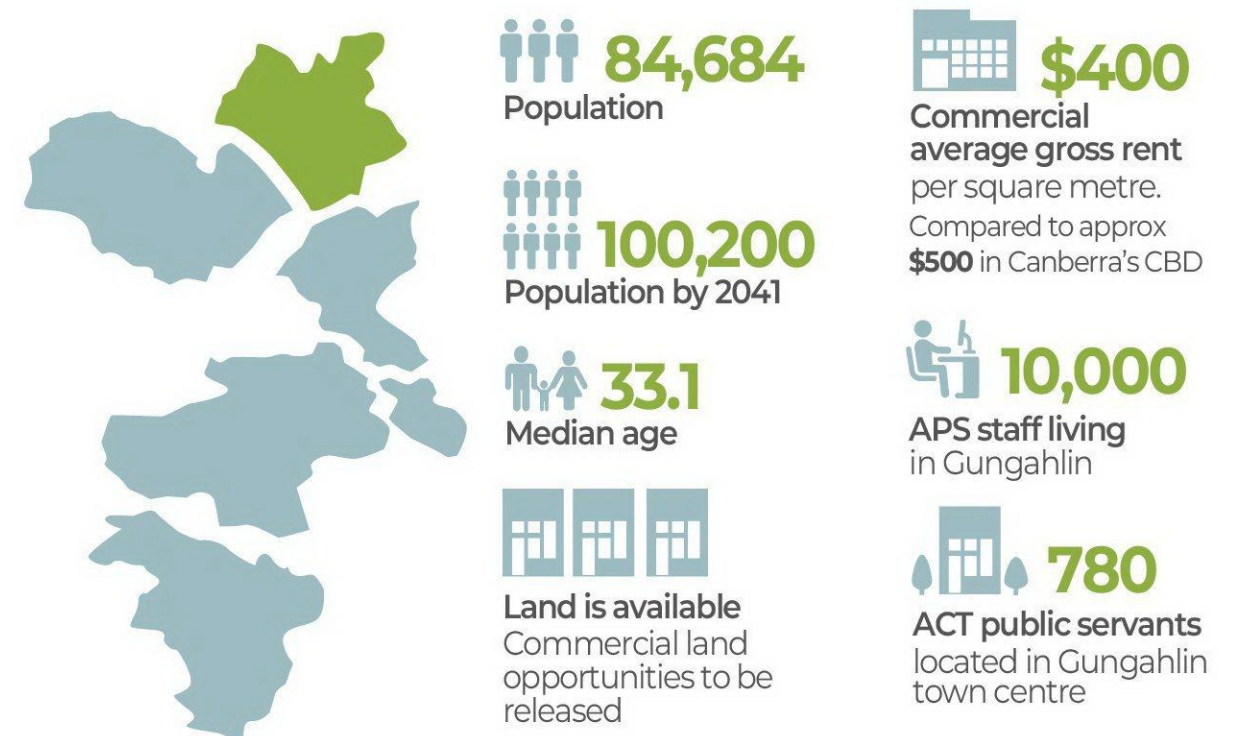
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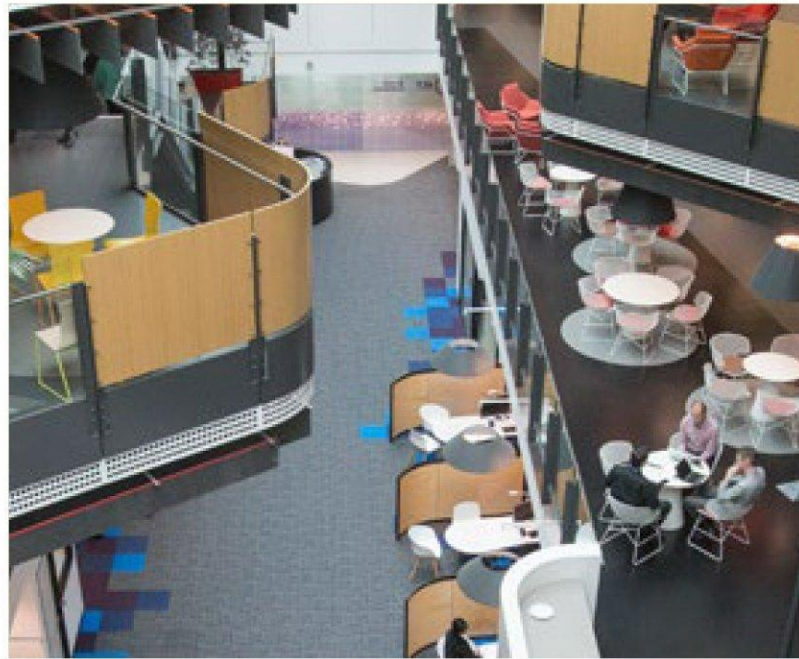
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Commercial Land Opportunities in the Gungahlin Town Centre



Benefits - Land Availability

- Gungahlin Town Centre includes large holdings of undeveloped but high-quality serviced land (around one third of the town centre or approximately 13.5ha), providing the Commonwealth with significant choice for a new development.
- Each year the ACT Government prepares an Indicative Land Release Program (the Land Release Program) to set out the Government's intended land releases of residential, mixed use, commercial, industrial, and community and non-urban land.
- The Land Release Program plays a strategic role in catering for our population growth, building a compact, liveable city, attracting investment in the ACT land market and strengthening economic advantage in the ACT region.
- Several commercial land opportunities are, or will become available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. For example, the most recently published Land Release Program identifies Block 1 Section 228 in the Gungahlin Town Centre is to be released in 2021-22 (see Map 1). This block has a site area of over 10,000m² and is zoned to permit a range of uses, including offices.
- Gungahlin Town Centre also contains other large commercial sites available for employment purposes that could be brought to market quickly to respond to demand or interest (see Map 1). These sites are located immediately adjacent to light rail. Land can also be subdivided or consolidated to fit any specific site area or building need.

Benefits – A significant existing local APS workforce

- ACT Government Treasury estimates that there are 10,000 APS staff already living in Gungahlin, indicating significant potential demand for a flexible work hub facility.
- The most recent Land Release Program specifies that between 2021 and 2026, there will be around 4,000 new residential dwelling releases in the Gungahlin district. This is around a quarter of all anticipated residential dwelling releases across the ACT over that period, which will support expected population growth and a growing potential local workforce.



Benefits - Regional Investment

- Investing in Canberra means investing in the Capital Region.
- As well as being a fast-growing city in its own right, Canberra has become the regional services hub for some of the fastest growing communities in south-east NSW.
- Today, Canberra provides key social services like health and education, good jobs, transport and trade links for a region that is home to around 750,000 people within and around the ACT.
- A significant percentage of the working population in Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley travel to the ACT for work; 63 percent and 50 percent respectively.



- Gungahlin is the closest ACT location to growing populations in surrounding NSW including towns such as Murrumbateman, Yass and Goulburn, providing cost effective commuting and employment opportunities both during construction and for future workforce fulfilment.
- Investing in Gungahlin would therefore be a demonstration of Commonwealth leadership in contributing to economic development in the Capital Region by improving access to good jobs not only for those living in Gungahlin, but also those living in the surrounding regional areas.



Benefits – Skills and Innovation

- Investment in Canberra offers unique advantages over other regional areas such as access to skilled labour and infrastructure within a constrained labour market.
- The ACT Government has worked hard to attract and facilitate investment for a growing and vibrant centre to create great places where people thrive. Canberra is attracting national and international talent and expertise lured by excellent employment opportunities combined with world leading liveability ratings.
- Gungahlin provides a compelling opportunity for the Commonwealth to invest in innovative and sustainable building design, construction and fit out methodologies to meet its own workforce wellbeing and sustainability objectives.
- With ready access to Australia's highest rated secure data centres, immediate and future IT infrastructure needs could be easily incorporated into new Gungahlin facilities.
- In addition to Light Rail infrastructure, innovative transport and other inclusions (such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure) could easily be incorporated to support Commonwealth operations and vehicle fleet in the area to meet green credentials.
- With the availability of a diverse range of housing, APS offices located in Gungahlin would provide realistic accommodation options for graduate recruits and new hires to meet lifestyle and liveability choice for employees.



Flexible Work Arrangements

- If the APS were to pursue flexible work arrangements and establish a flexible workplace hub, it could secure additional significant cost savings, and attract and retain the best staff by providing flexibility.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government adopted flexible work arrangements for all ACTPS staff. The significant benefits of these arrangements have led to the ACT Government retaining and attracting staff both during and following lockdown periods.
- Emerging research suggests that access to flexible working arrangements will be a key factor in attracting and retaining talent in a post-covid workforce.
- The ACTPS is building its flexible capability through an initiative to refit vacant accommodation in Belconnen and Tuggeranong to establish 'flexi offices', providing bookable workspace for staff who live in those regions as an alternative to their primary place of work.
- Additionally, a scoping exercise is underway to determine how key ACT Government locations, such as Winyu House in Gungahlin and Bowes Place in Woden, could be adapted to better support flexible working arrangements for ACTPS employees.
- The establishment of a flexible APS workplace hub in Gungahlin would present a cost-effective means of accommodating a local workforce. This would deliver financial benefits for the APS, benefit Gungahlin residents, and help to attract and retain talent in the Gungahlin region – potentially leading to the Commonwealth strengthening its reputation as an 'employer of choice'.

The ACT Government's commitment

- The ACT Government is committed to making ongoing investments in Gungahlin to develop a thriving local community.
- As part of the 2021-2022 Budget, the ACT Government committed to a significant investment in Gungahlin's infrastructure, ensuring the community can continue to grow and meet the growing demands of residents.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is already home to some of Canberra's major infrastructure investments including an ACT Government office block which accommodates up to 780 ACT Government employees, and the City to Gungahlin Stage 1 Light Rail.
- Gungahlin Town Centre offers great shopping and recreation experiences in its retail precinct, including Gungahlin Marketplace and Gungahlin Village, hardware and bulky goods stores and a sports club and hotel.
- Other community services include Gungahlin College, a public library, childcare centres, medical centres and open space to enjoy including the Valley Ponds, the Gungahlin Enclosed Oval and the Gungahlin Leisure Centre.
- By locating an APS Department in Gungahlin, the APS would directly benefit from these significant investments, not only through more affordable and accessible office space but through facilitating of the APS to respond and adapt to future ways of working that enable staff to live, work and play locally – ensuring a better work-life balance, it will also provide a better quality of life for many APS employees and their families.
- The ACT Government is committed to working with the Australian Government to identify sites and opportunities for the location of APS staff in the Gungahlin Town Centre and would welcome further discussions on this proposal.

Key Contact

The ACT Government is looking forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth on the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre as a critical hub of the National Capital.

To discuss this proposal, please contact: **Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Wilhelmina.Blount@act.gov.au**