



KIPPAX COMMUNITY HUB

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

BACKGROUND

A new Kippax Community Hub is part of the ACT Government's plan to revitalise the area through the Kippax Group Centre Master Plan to meet the future needs of the growing and changing West Belconnen community.

From 2014 to 2019, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) facilitated extensive community consultation to inform the 2019 Kippax Group Centre Master Plan (Master Plan) and subsequent planning changes to the Territory Plan.

In line with community support, the Master Plan created an opportunity for a new community centre building (community hub) on Block 7 (previously part of Block 5), Section 88 Holt and to future proof the site for community use. The planning changes allowed for a community hub of one to two storeys and up to three storeys to the very south of the site.

Figure 1 below shows the site of where the community hub is being proposed. The final site location for the building will be determined by considering the outcomes of community consultation, planning and site investigations and if necessary, the replacement of existing infrastructure.



Figure 1. Proposed Community Hub site

THIS PROJECT

From 3 July to 20 August 2023, EPSDD sought community feedback on the development of a new community hub at the Kippax group centre in Holt.

Community members, including key stakeholders within the community sector, were invited to have their say about what could make the new community hub a great space for everyone in the local community.



The proposed new building will be an important place for the community to connect and undertake activities as groups or individuals. Feedback was sought to understand how the community would like to use the future facility so that it can be complementary to existing facilities and services in the group centre, designed to be fit-for-purpose, operate well, and meet the needs of the West Belconnen community into the future.

Feedback received will help inform the concept design of the building. Subsequent project stages and the timing of these, including the detailed design of the building with further community consultation and construction, will be considered through ACT Government processes.

THE CONVERSATION

Community members and key stakeholders were invited to have their say on how they might like to use the new building and to help shape the concept design.

Three main questions were asked for the community to consider:

1. What community programs and activities could the community hub be used for?
2. What is the best way to operate the community hub?
3. How can we make the community hub a great space for everyone in the community?

An Information Sheet provided the background, purpose and the indicative timeline for the project. Community consultation was centred around the online YourSay page, with this feedback mechanism replicated through in-person engagement opportunities including a Kippax Library stand, two information 'pop ups' at the Kippax Fair, and one public forum. Consideration was made for the school holidays, which ran from 3-16 July 2023, to ensure people were available to have their say. Key stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through two further forums, and various targeted key stakeholder conversations.

PROMOTION

The consultation was promoted through a variety of channels including:

GETTING THE WORD OUT			
2119 people were reached via YourSay	4 media promotional activities: Canberra Weekly Involved Canberra The National Tribune ABC Radio	195,000+ households received the July edition of Our Canberra	70 nearby businesses and organisations were visited, and received project information
50,000 people reached through social media audience through 5 social media posts	130+ organisations and businesses received an email about the project	1,400+ were reached through the Office of Disability's <i>Involved</i> newsletter	



Project information was also shared through a media release on 6 July 2023 and with the Office for Multicultural Affairs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and ACT Education Directorate for distribution through newsletters and other appropriate channels. An ABC Radio interview on 9 August 2023 with EPSDD also promoted the consultation.

A letterbox-drop was also undertaken along Starke Street and Moyes Crescent. Although there was a large number of people reached to promote the consultation, some members of the community advised that a broader letterbox-drop would have captured those who do not have access to the internet.

WHO WE ENGAGED

The project sought feedback from a comprehensive range of key stakeholders, ensuring a representative cross-section of the community's interests and perspectives.

This engagement encompassed the general community, ACT Government users and stakeholders, including a meeting with the EPSDDs Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee secretariat, and peak organisations, community groups, local businesses, residents, the Belconnen Community Council and property owners. The feedback provided was predominantly received from community groups and peak bodies that advocate for various interests within the local area.

By including these diverse stakeholders, the engagement process aimed to capture a wholistic view of the community's needs, concerns, and aspirations, to better align the proposed development with the broader values and priorities of the Kippax community and to inform a concept design for the new community hub.

WHAT WE HEARD

Key insights from the community

Design considerations

Visual appeal and design of the proposed hub was important to community members, with desire expressed for an aesthetically interesting, welcoming, inviting, modern, and sustainable space. Flexible, multi-use spaces were a priority to meet the varied needs of potential future users. The inclusion of open, restful, free-use spaces was seen as important to create a welcoming place with opportunities to find someone to talk to, a place to gain support, and meet people. Finding a way to manage acoustics, with spaces for quiet, and spaces for being vocal were noted as important considerations.

Landscaping and green space was valued by participants, who noted there is limited green space in the Kippax group centre currently. The connection and integration of the building and the landscape was important, including the ability to see the green space from inside the building, the integration of an upgraded playground, large windows, and sunlight. The importance of plant choice was noted, including native plantings, shade trees, and water sensitive urban design. The opportunity for the proposed community hub to host gardening and environmental groups, and have roof-top green space was suggested. Connection to country and outside space was also noted as important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to meet with family and hold events.

The relationship with existing services and the proposed community hub, such as the Kippax Library, Kippax Uniting Church, Kippax Fair, and the broader Kippax precinct was important. The Kippax Library, West Belconnen Child and Family Centre and the Kippax Uniting Church were also seen as valued service



providers, and being complementary to the proposed hub. It was identified that there are a number of community service providers in the area, and to prioritise complementing, rather than duplicating services. Opportunity was also noted by the community for the proposed community hub and the Kippax Library to be physically connected.

Meeting rooms of a variety of sizes for group activities, meetings, and workshops were desired. Opportunity for small rooms to be able to be converted into larger rooms was suggested. High ceilings to create an open feeling was seen as desirable.

Mixed views were expressed about whether **commercial/ business space** should be included within the hub, with a preference for the co-location of community service providers. If office space is included, it was noted that these spaces should be self-contained and include separate bathrooms and kitchens. The inclusion of a café was suggested to create a welcoming environment, encourage conversation, and encourage people to stay longer.

Kitchen and bathroom facilities that are accessible for all was prioritised. Key stakeholders noted that there can be issues with kitchens being in a separate room as it creates bottle necks, and an open kitchen/ buffet against a wall was seen as a better alternative. The opportunity to include a commercial kitchen space for cooking classes, or for the preparation of food for events, or those in need was suggested.

Suggestions were made for **facilities to support specialist activities** including:

- A hall with enough space for physical activity, and robust flooring suitable for jumping, dancing, and exercise
- Youth centre area
- Parents / playgroup rooms with associated toy libraries
- Activity and support services for older members of the community
- Spaces for mess and creativity including art, sewing, maker, and community shed spaces, with associated machinery and tool libraries
- Outdoor spaces for Scouts to light a fire or set up a tent outdoors
- Performance and practice spaces for theatre and music
- Spaces to host functions
- Gallery / display areas
- Workstations and focus nooks for study
- Computer, internet, and phone access as well as projectors
- Large and small, lockable, hireable, storage spaces for the use of groups regularly using the facilities
- Access to flyers and community noticeboards with information about complimentary services within the community
- Areas for board games, card games, and digital games
- An upgraded, dynamic, and safe playground supporting a wider range of ages and abilities, with potential for fencing and water play
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
- A police presence

Mixed views were expressed about the **height of the building**, with community members seeing it as important to balance inclusions within the building, and a potential disconnected feeling of spaces and



facilities on higher levels. Ground floor space was seen as desirable for lead tenancies and casual communal spaces, providing opportunity for dedicated access doors for selected spaces / services.

Community use and inclusion

Creating human connection was seen as the main goal of the space, whether this be through the offering of programmes, or the management of the centre. Participants felt that the community hub should always have on site staff to support bookings, manage the site, facilitate connection and support the values of the facility. It was also felt that to create a sense of belonging and inclusion, there should always be something on, and always have someone there to talk to, in a physically and emotionally safe space, preventing isolation.

Accessibility supports were desired for those with a disability or who are elderly, including disabled parking and lifts, flashing smoke alarms for deaf people, vehicles to pick up those with mobility issues, sensory spaces, accessible change rooms, connection to the retirement village, wheel chair access, wayfinding considerations, and supports for people with memory and cognitive issues. It was also noted that flexible furniture needed to be light weight to prevent injuries.

The creation of **inclusive**, sensitive, and culturally considerate spaces was valued to support people of all ages, cultures and genders. It was noted that some of the potential users of the proposed community hub are disadvantaged or isolated, and may visit the facility seeking support, community and inclusion. There are members of the community who do not have access to the internet or smart phones, creating the need for options for bookings to be made in-person on site, with physical information / flyers available.

Programming and use suggestions from the community were varied, indicating the need for flexibility to be an important design consideration. The participants desired for the hub to be dynamic and lively, a place with many activities occurring, including those led by community organisations as well as available for the use of general community members. The need to create complimentary services, and prevent overlap with the services provided by existing organisations was seen as important.

Community hub uses proposed included:

- **Interaction with peers** creating opportunities for people with similar ages or interests to come together and connect. Suggested groups included a mothers group, an LGBTQI+ ally group, programs that connect the elderly with young children, school holiday activities, child and family activities, and environment or gardening interest groups. It was suggested the strongest need for programming and communal spaces was for adolescents, noting there is no comfortable, safe and supervised place for them to gather and socialise, and the elderly who need accessible places to meet, undertake activities, and interact socially to prevent isolation.
- **Supports for the disadvantaged** members of the Kippax community was recognised as a need, including food programs, dementia care, migrant and refugee services, and case workers. The opportunity for the community hub to provide services for families in need and No-Wrong-Door support for mental health was also valued.
- **Physical and mental health supports** and opportunities for all ages and genders such as exercise (including tai chi, yoga, dance, pilates, self defence, and seniors exercise groups), meditation, drop-



in and outreach programs to support medical and psychological care, pet therapy, and supports for those with a disability.

- **Education opportunities** were desired, including presentations, informational sessions and workshops. Topics suggested included mens health, job readiness, mental health, skin cancer/sun safety, IT education, how to use supports for the deaf, and online/ e-safety education for families and kids
- **Event and celebration space** was desired to host parties, functions, and memorials, as well as events to celebrate days of significance including Christmas, New Year, Chinese New Year, and multiculturally significant celebrations, providing an educational opportunity
- **Connection with support organisations** including Arthritis ACT, Council on the Ageing (COTA), Kippax Uniting Church, West Belconnen Child and Family Centre, Maternal Child and Family Health (MACH) Nurses, Neighbourhood Watch, Scout groups, University of the Third Age (U3A), and Volunteering ACT.
- **Creation and creativity** opportunities such knitting, quilting, music, arts, crafts, and building / making groups were desired.

To support **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**, the de-colonisation of the community hub, and cultural inclusion and representation were seen as important. A suggestion for a yarnning circle and opportunities to connect the building to the surrounding landscape was made.

Antisocial behaviour, particularly in adolescent groups, was an area of concern for participants. Feedback provided indicated that antisocial behaviour regularly occurs within the area around the proposed hub location. Consideration for security needs including quality lighting, security controls, anti-graffiti treatments, and maintaining passive surveillance were seen as important, as well as providing them with a desirable alternate source of entertainment / meeting place.

Day-to-day operation and management

Participants felt that the hub should be **opened 7 days a week, with extended hours of operation** as there are limited venues accessible in the evenings and on weekends. This was seen as particularly important for youth spaces and activities.

In-person, and on-site management and support for the community hub was desired by participants. It was preferred that the site be managed under a set of core values and to provide a personal approach through an on site reception for visitors, the coordination of activities, supporting programming, and providing support to those in need. It was seen as beneficial if these people were also case workers, carers, or trained to provide specialist support services.

Generally participants felt that the building shouldn't be managed by the ACT Government, although there was some suggestion that Government management can be useful to avoid dominance of any one community organisation.

Funding considerations were raised including the costs associated with running the community hub, and the opportunity for grants and sponsorships from the ACT Government to support initiatives and activities. Two key options were put forward about how the proposed new facility could gather **funding to support management and maintenance** of the building, including:



- A tenancy, or multiple tenancies, who are focused on providing community support services, occupy some of the spaces and lease them from the ACT Government
- Fees charged for hiring community spaces. It was noted that pricing needs to be accessible, and that it could vary depending on the type of group seeking to hire it (eg: higher price for corporate use)

Interest was expressed by some organisations to be the **lead tenant**, providing management, maintenance, and programming services, and allowing them to reach new community groups, or expand their service offerings in West Belconnen.

Consideration was put forward for a **board to provide oversight** of hub management, potentially including representatives of each tenancy.

In person and online booking models were seen as important, as accessing information online can be a barrier for those who don't have access to e-technology.

Access to the building was important, and it was suggested that trusted partners could have keys, or that doors could be programmed with access codes for easier access and reduced coordination in advance of using the space. An after hours support contact was noted as important.

Transport and movement

Parking was seen to be a challenge in the area, with parking not being available in peak use periods, and overflowing into the parking areas of private organisations. Additional conveniently located free parking was seen as important for Kippax.

The current location of the **bus interchange** was seen as valuable, supporting easy access to shops and local support services. Concern was raised about unintended issues associated with relocating the bus interchange, including loss of parking and access for those with mobility issues. The opportunity for transport services to be put in place specifically to support connection to the proposed new community hub was suggested.

Changes were desired to support safer **active travel** in the area surrounding the hub, with safety issues relating to crossing roads, creating more level and less obstructed walkways, reducing trip hazards and injuries. It was suggested that improving the pavement and walkways surrounding the community hub be included as part of this project, including the pedestrianisation of Hardwick Crescent.

Other

Additional feedback provided by the community included:

- Alternate locations for the location of the community hub.
- The need for better care and maintenance for Kippax as a whole.
- Concerns about the masterplan and vision for Kippax.
- A couple of people questioned the need for a community hub in Kippax, and were concerned that Kippax wasn't big enough to support another building.



- Interest in strategies to manage the contamination from a dry-cleaning service formerly located on the proposed site. Frustration that an upgrade of the Kippax Fair shopping centre has not yet occurred.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

64 surveys completed

A YourSay survey was open from 3 July to 20 August 2023)

5 feedback cards filled out

A feedback stand operated at Kippax Library from 3 July to 20 August 2023

30+ drop-in session attendees

Drop-in sessions were held:

- > 10am to 1pm, 19 July 2023 at Kippax Fair Shopping Centre
- > 10am to 1pm, 12 August 2023 at Kippax Fair Shopping Centre

6 public forum attendees

A public forum was held from 4.30pm to 6.30pm, Monday 24 July 2023, at the Holt Community Hall

14 stakeholder forum attendees

Stakeholder forums were held:

- > 2pm to 4pm Monday 31 July 2023 at Kippax Library
- > 2pm to 4pm Thursday 3

2 submissions received

Submissions were received between 3 July to 20 August 2023

WHAT'S NEXT ?

Feedback received, with the outcomes of planning and site investigations and impacts to existing infrastructure will inform the development of a concept design for the proposed community hub, and proposed models for operation.

Future stages of the project, including detailed design with further community consultation and construction of the building are subject to future ACT Government processes.