



ACT
Government

BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Community Engagement Report - Stage 2

SEPTEMBER 2016





Environment and Planning Directorate

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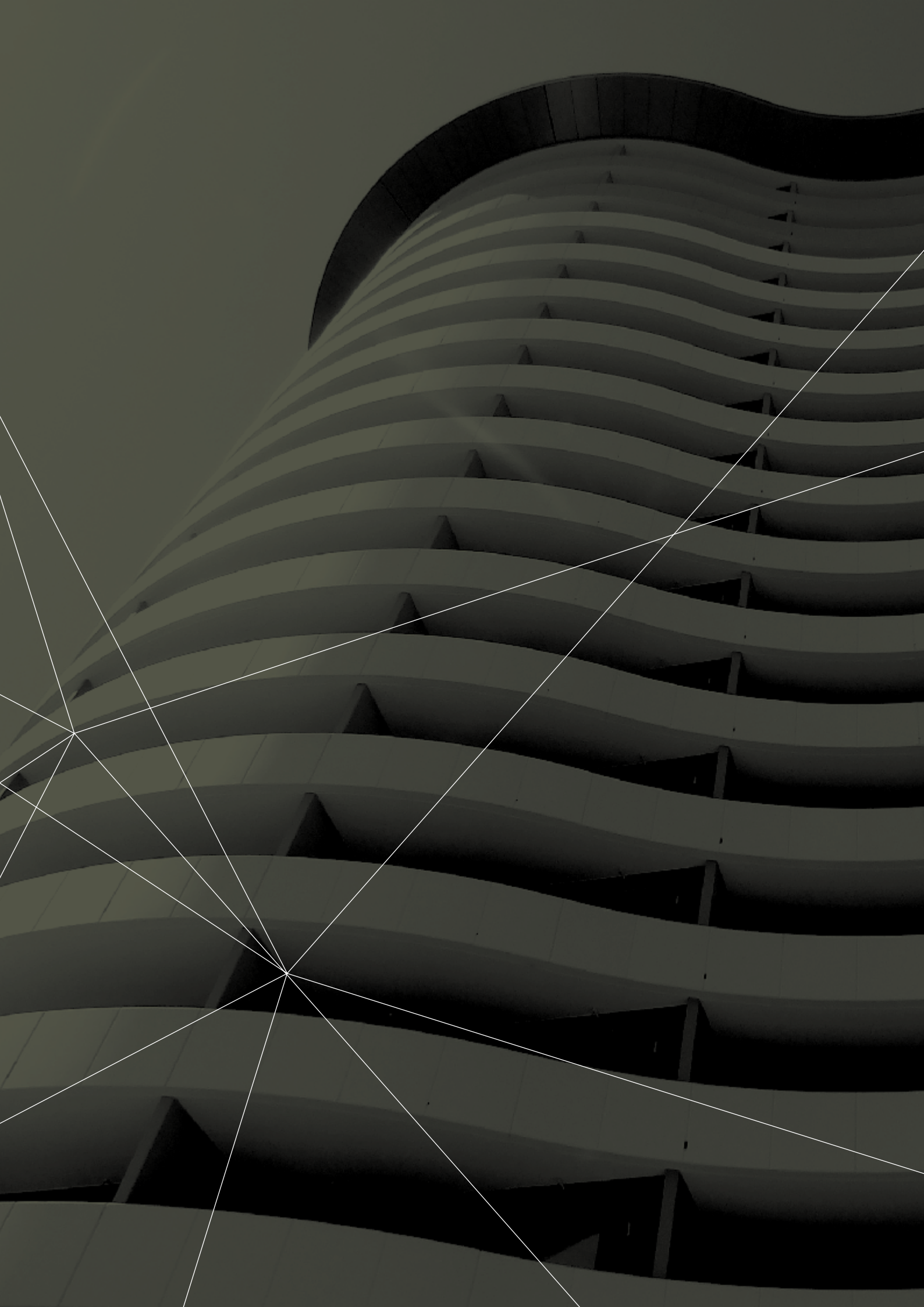


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ACT Government has completed a master plan for the Belconnen Town Centre (the centre). The Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan (the plan) sets out a vision, planning principles, spatial framework, planning strategies and policies to guide growth and development in the centre over the next 10 to 15 years.

The master plan aims to provide strategies to guide the future development and character of the town centre. This includes providing opportunities for urban renewal, employment growth and improvements to the public domain.

The steps to develop a master plan for the town centre commenced in November 2014 with a series of engagement events (Stage 1 engagement) to gain an understanding of the community's concerns and aspirations. The community provided valuable input on the key issues to be addressed. This input, together with a review of previous master plans, and input from other agencies informed the development of the Belconnen Town Centre Draft Master Plan. A report on the key findings of the Stage 1 engagement can be viewed on the [Environment and Planning](#) website.

The draft master plan was released for community engagement (Stage 2) for seven weeks from 26 September 2015 to 20 November 2015. The feedback provided was then used to develop the final master plan.

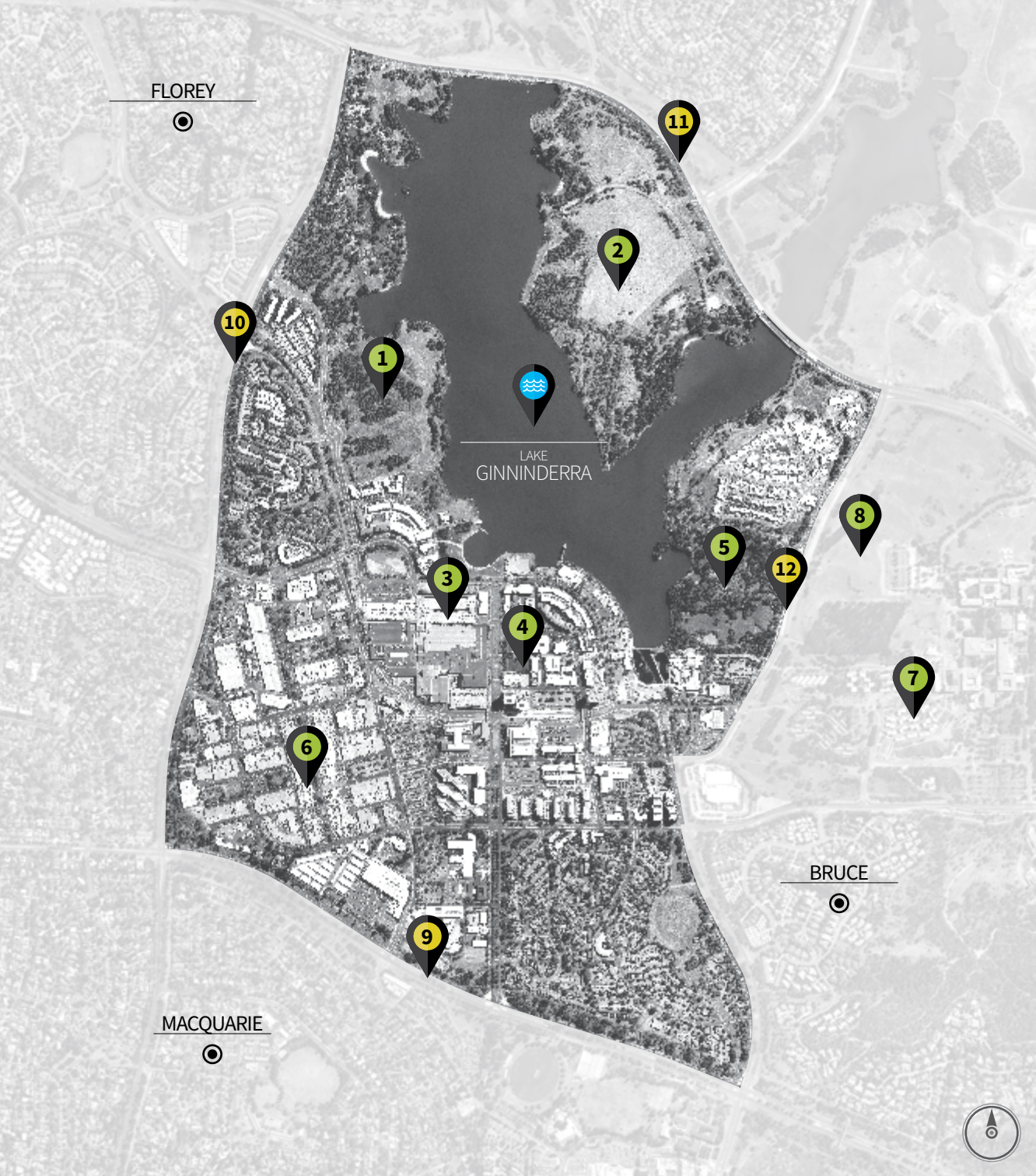
Input from this second stage of community engagement was gathered through a range of activities including the use of information displays, feedback forms, two 'meet the planners' sessions, individual written/emailed submissions, meetings with community groups and individual stakeholders and government interagency meetings. This report documents the key findings of these activities.

The ACT Government would like to acknowledge the organisations that helped raise community awareness of the draft master plan, particularly the Belconnen Community Council and Pedal Power.

Consistent messages received from Stage 2 engagement on the draft plan included the following:

- Support for the active transport proposals, including path priorities, dedicated cycling lanes and more signage. Many responses specified improving linkages and connections within the town centre (particularly east/west) and also to the suburbs, Lake Ginninderra other facilities (e.g. University of Canberra, Bruce Ridge). Cycling and walking infrastructure should also enable easy access to public transport.
- A strong desire to improve the amenity of the built and open space environments, for example new developments should include upgrades to the public domain/placemaking opportunities, and urban open space and green spaces around Lake Ginninderra should be preserved for recreational, cultural and ecological value. There should be more shade trees, which add colour and variety to the landscape, and entertainment/leisure in parks such as splash pools, water playgrounds and opportunities for outdoor cafes/restaurants near the lake and Margaret Timpson Park.
- Strong support for the proposed plans for Emu Bank and potential for this area to evolve, in time, into a mix of casual outdoor cafes/restaurants and a more cultural precinct which makes better use of the lake's edge. Many people supported the idea for a promenade for walking, cycling along the lake's edge, though some raised concerns about infilling a small section of the lake and the expense/impact on the natural environment (e.g. birdlife).
- Comments on the proposals for Lathlain Street were generally supportive, but there were mixed views about the height of buildings. A few people thought the buildings heights could be much higher than proposed while others felt the maximum should be six storeys or retained at current level. A common comment was that development should be of a high quality (like Braddon, which was given as an example a few times).

Map 1: Master plan study area



PLACES

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Western Foreshores | 5 | John Knight Memorial Park |
| 2 | Diddams Close Park | 6 | Services Trades |
| 3 | Westfield Belconnen | 7 | University of Canberra |
| 4 | Belconnen Town Centre | 8 | University of Canberra Public Hospital |

ROADS

- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 9 | Belconnen Way |
| 10 | Coulter Drive |
| 11 | Ginninderra Drive |
| 12 | Aikman Drive |



Altitude building, Chandler Street

Issues that generated mixed views and concerns for the town centre included the following:

- There were a wide range of views about the proposed building heights. Feedback forms showed about a third of respondents thought the proposed heights were “too high”, another third thought they were “too low” and yet another third thought they were “about right”. This message was reflected in other engagement activities. A key message from the other engagement activities by those in favour of the proposed heights was that development would need to be of high quality, with sustainable design outcomes that address various impacts such as solar access and wind tunnel effects.
- There was concern that higher density/an increase in building heights would impact correspondingly on both traffic and parking. Most people agreed parking is reaching capacity in and around the town centre and more parking is required. Increasing residential density was considered to compound the problem and create more parking challenges. Some people noted that parking for the elderly and those with a disability also needs to be considered.
- Many felt that public transport could be improved and more information was required about light rail and its potential impact on infrastructure and development.

All feedback received was considered and used to inform the development of the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.



Shared path on Ginninderra Drive.

INTRODUCTION

The last Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan was released in 2001. Since then, the centre has experienced considerable growth and key strategic planning documents for the ACT have been introduced.

These include the ACT Planning Strategy (2012), Transport for Canberra (2012), AP2: A new Climate Change Strategy (2012) and the Canberra Business Development Strategy (2015). The ACT Planning Strategy encourages a more compact city by focusing urban intensification in town centres and along major transport corridors.

The master plan sets out a vision, planning principles, spatial framework and planning strategies to guide growth and development in the centre for the next 10 to 15 years, depending on the progress of development and budget constraints. The process used to prepare the master plan is outlined in **Figure 1**.

A master plan outlines how a particular area could develop into the future. It is a long-term plan that sets out objectives and strategies to manage development and change over time. Community engagement forms an important part of the research and helps identify what is important about a place and how its character and quality can be conserved, improved and enhanced.

During the master planning process, two stages of community engagement are held. The first stage identifies the issues, challenges and opportunities that inform a draft master plan. The second stage responds to the draft master plan, as shown in **Figure 1**. This engagement report presents the findings from the Stage 2 engagement for the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan. It summarises the activities undertaken and the key outcomes that were used to inform the development of the master plan.

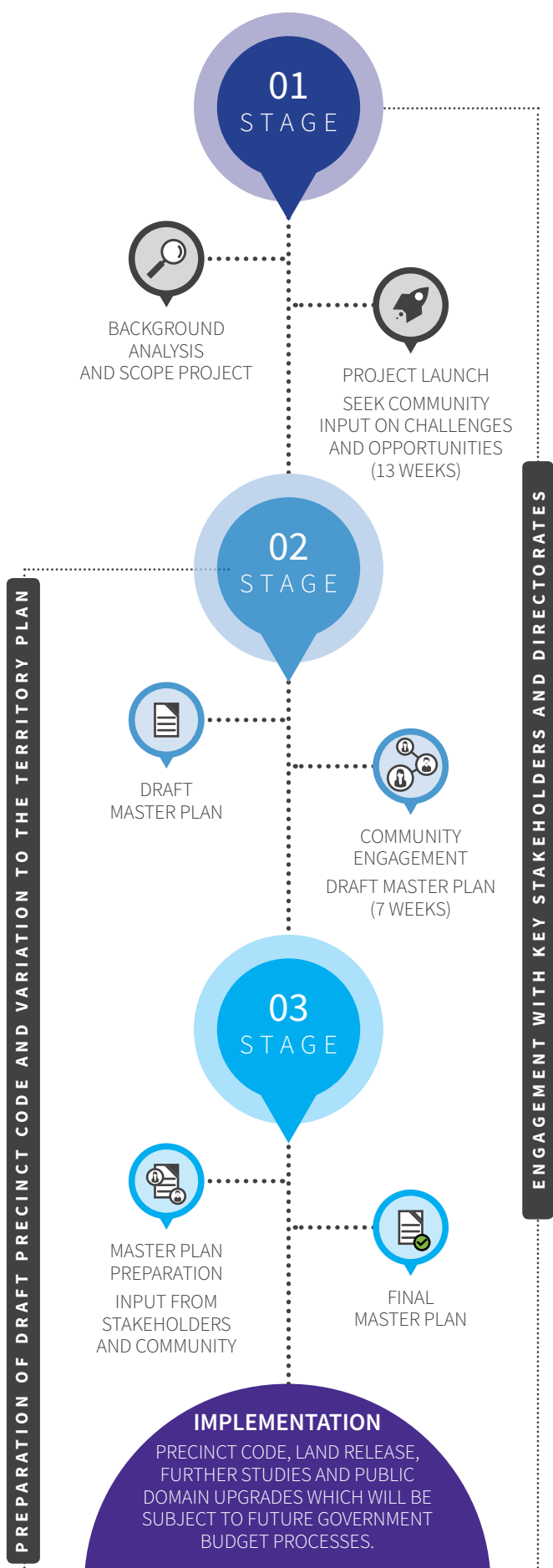


Figure 1: Engagement Process



Emu Bank Foreshore

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The community engagement process for the master plan aimed to inform, consult and involve key stakeholders and the community at important stages of the planning process.

The master plan team engaged with businesses, building owners and lessees, community groups and residents to ensure concerns and aspirations were understood for the development of both the draft and final versions of the master plan. Engagement provides the opportunity to inform the community about what a master plan can and cannot do. The aim is to create constructive settings for the community to meet with planners to discuss and understand the complex and interrelated nature of planning. While all feedback received was considered, it should be noted that consensus cannot always be achieved and not every comment could be accommodated within the master plan.

All engagement activities reflect the ACT Government's policies and guidelines on community engagement. Please refer to <http://yoursay.act.gov.au> for information on our approach to engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of community engagement on the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan have been to:

- Gather information from the community to inform the preparation of the master plan.
- Receive feedback on the draft master plan about the issues of interest for the master plan.
- Inform the public about the master planning process and what a master plan can and cannot do.
- Inform the public about how the master plan will implement key ACT Government policies, such as the ACT Planning Strategy, Transport for Canberra and the ACT's climate action plan, AP2.
- Offer everyone an opportunity to raise their ideas and concerns upfront, so the master plan is informed by community input.
- Identify and consult with all key stakeholders.
- Communicate and consult with users of the centre and the community surrounding the centre, including all suburbs within the Belconnen District.
- Consult with the whole of Canberra community via online engagement techniques.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Consultation for the development of the Belconnen Town Centre master plan included two main stages. Each stage informed the plan as it evolved. Community engagement in Stage 2 of the Master Plan process specifically sought community feedback on the draft master plan. This feedback was used to help refine the draft plan before it was finalised for government consideration.

The table below provides an overview of the number of people who participated in the different engagement activities in Stage 2 of community engagement.

Table 1: Overview of number of people who participated in Stage 2 engagement activities

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
Postcards Mailed to residential addresses in Belconnen district	7–11 March 2016	35,260 households
Letters Mailed to commercial lessees		300 lesses (approximately)
‘Meet the planners’ Seminars	22 October 2015 24 October 2015	120 visitors (approximately)
Display Posters Belconnen Library	30 September–20 November 2015	unknown
Westfield Shopping Centre	19–25 October 2015	
Online		1366 interactions » Engaged ¹ : 94 » Informed ² : 481 » Aware ³ : 791
Feedback		117 submissions » 92 online responses » 25 hardcopy responses
Other submissions		40 submissions » email and/or phone

Note: 1 - participated in forum and/or provided feedback, 2 - downloaded items, 3 - page views

INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Meetings were held with key stakeholders to gain further insight and follow up Stage 1 input into issues that could be addressed in the master plan.

Table 2: Stakeholder engagement

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANTS
Two presentations to the Belconnen Community Council	30 September 2015 (approximately 10) 20 October 2015 (approximately 40)
Meeting with the Belconnen Arts Centre, Belconnen Community Services and Belconnen Community council representatives	6 October 2015 (approximately 15 attended)
Meetings with major stakeholders	Westfield Belconnen, University of Canberra, and Pedal Power

ACT GOVERNMENT

Agencies responsible for service delivery and consequently the implementation of the master plan in the long term include the following:

- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) identifies Territory-owned land appropriate to release for sale.
- The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) maintains road infrastructure and urban open spaces, including playgrounds and parkland.
- The Territory Plan unit within the Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) translates the final endorsed master plan recommendations into the Territory Plan in the form of renewed precinct codes.
- The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) considers noise pollution and relationships between different uses, particularly the interface between residential, commercial and service areas.
- The Education and Training Directorate (ETD) is responsible for public schools in the area.
- The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) is responsible for the Emergency Services property.

INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The internet and social media were used throughout the community engagement to provide project information, ‘meet the planners’ session details and opportunities for engagement and feedback.

Engagement material was available to the public on the Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan project page on the Environment and Planning Directorate website. The project page provided a ‘Have your say’ button that directed the public to a new online Engagement HQ web tool that became available in May 2015. This site allows for more interactive engagement and fosters discussions on important issues.

The Engagement HQ web tool hosted the engagement material including the Belconnen Town Centre Draft Master Plan, information display posters and access to an online survey and discussion forum, photos and interactive map.

Information was also provided on the ACT Government’s Time to Talk website which included a link to the Engagement HQ web tool.

Links to relevant engagement websites included:

- EPD project web page www.act.gov.au/Belconnen
- Have Your Say website
- Time to Talk
- Facebook facebook.com/actgovepd
- Twitter [@EPD_Comms](https://twitter.com/EPD_Comms)
- Project email Belconnen@act.gov.au



Community Engagement

“ACTIVE TRAVEL
PLANS WERE
SUPPORTED,
PARTICULARLY
FOR IMPROVED
CYCLING
FACILITIES...”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The outcomes of all stages of community engagement, and in particular the outcomes from engagement on the draft master plan are summarised below. Key messages from earlier engagement are outlined first followed by how the draft master plan responded to these messages. The feedback received during the draft master plan engagement then follows, each with a summary and analysis.

Some comments may not be able to be resolved through the master plan process and require the Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) to discuss further with the responsible ACT Government directorates. Therefore, not all community feedback received throughout the process may be directly reflected in the master plan.

OUTCOMES FROM STAGE 1 OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following table summarises the key messages from the community during Stage 1 of community engagement and how these issues were addressed in the draft master plan.

Table 3: Key messages from Stage 1 of community engagement and the draft master plan responses

KEY MESSAGES	DRAFT MASTER PLAN RESPONSE
Create active destinations, particularly at Emu Bank, where the lakeside location should be better utilised for uses including outdoor dining.	Emu Bank: Suggest possible controls and incentives to encourage the redevelopment of underutilised sites and provision of outdoor dining areas. Lathlain Street: suggest rezoning and revised height controls to encourage better redevelopment outcomes in this area.
Improve the public domain and public amenity	Recommend using a modified version of the ‘Canberra Central Design Manual’ as the basis to providing a consistent suite of paving and street furniture. Focus improvement on the core areas of the town centre and emerging high density residential area. Recommend a comprehensive street tree planting program to improve amenity and mitigate climate change impacts. Recommend upgrades to the public domain in the service trades area, including the provision of public toilets.
Green space within the town centre needs to be protected and maintained.	Recommend development be limited to the existing built area of the town centre. Rezone four remaining open space areas in the town centre to ensure they are retained and improved as local parks. Suggest improvements to Margaret Timpson Park to increase its usage and amenity.

KEY MESSAGES	DRAFT MASTER PLAN RESPONSE
Improve pedestrian and cycle connections into and particularly across the town centre.	Recommend a clear cycle network that utilises existing opportunities to create legible connections between key destinations across the centre, including signage. Recommend a program of pedestrian infrastructure improvements that focus on missing paths and pedestrian safety, including signage.
Improve the provision of both short and long stay parking	Identify remaining sites suitable to accommodate structure parking stations. Recommend measures to provide better parking management, including adopting the 'smart parking' initiative and increase parking enforcement to free up short stay spaces.
Establish clear height limits for the town centre. While the heights of existing taller buildings were supported, this was qualified by the need to ensure a high quality design outcome.	Recommend building heights for the town centre core of up to a maximum of 27 storeys. Maximum heights would be conditional on developments meeting criteria such as improvements to the public domain and high quality design outcomes being achieved.

OUTCOMES FROM STAGE 2 OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INFORMATION DISPLAYS

Information displays included a series of posters illustrating the key proposals included in the draft master plan. The displays also provided information about the various options available to provide feedback and hard copy feedback forms were made available on-site.

Table 4: Details of information displays

LOCATION	DISPLAY DATES	LENGTH OF TIME
Westfield Belconnen	19–25 October 2015	1 week
Belconnen Library	30 September–20 November 2015	7 weeks

'MEET THE PLANNERS' SESSIONS

Two 'meet the planners' sessions were held, with attendees encouraged to complete the feedback forms (available on site in paper copy and online via an i-pad).

Table 5: Details of the 'meet the planners' sessions

VENUE	DATE HELD	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Westfield Belconnen	Thursday 22 October 2015 (10am – 2pm)	50
	Saturday 24 October 2015 (10am – 2pm)	70



Emu Bank Foreshore

‘MEET THE PLANNERS’ FEEDBACK

The key messages received from the two ‘meet the planners’ sessions are shown below.

- Generally, most people supported height limits being introduced, but concerns were raised about views being built out, impact of tall buildings and increasing traffic.
- Generally, most people supported the plans for Emu Bank.
- There was concern and support for building heights (almost 50/50); a minority of people were flatly opposed to high-rise development. A small number of people requested that apartments should be available for families (i.e. 3 and 4 bedroom).
- Many people had concerns about parking and with the existing parking provisions, including short stay parking for local businesses. There was support for the identification of sites suitable for structured carparks.
- Public transport was not viewed to be convenient to the suburban areas and some people felt there was not enough information provided about light rail.
- Some people wanted more opportunities for social interaction (e.g. cafes/bars) and were very supportive of the proposals for Emu Bank and Lathlain Street.
- Locals value their open space and support the need to retain it, particularly around Lake Ginninderra. A few people were keen to see public realm improvements in the service trades area.
- Active travel plans were supported, particularly for improved cycling facilities to allow safe movement within the town centre.
- There were a number of concerns raised about litter/rubbish in and around the fast food area (Emu Bank).

“...MOST PEOPLE
SUPPORTED HEIGHT
LIMITS BEING
INTRODUCED...”

FEEDBACK FORM/ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

Feedback forms were made available in paper copy format to the public at the information display in Belconnen Library, at the ‘meet the planners’ sessions and also as an online survey. All comments received during the community engagement period were considered during preparation of the master plan. Not all questions were mandatory, so not all questions were answered by participants.

A total of 117 people completed the feedback form, with 92 people completing the survey online and 25 submitting paper forms. Data from the paper forms was entered online, so the results are inclusive of all responses.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA – GENDER, AGE AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF SURVEY/FORM RESPONDENTS

Of respondents who completed the gender question (110), 45% were female, 52% were male and 3% were “X”. A total of 116 people answered the demographic question. There was strong representation from the 20–39 age bracket (more than 50%), followed by the 60+ age bracket (19%), the 40–50 age bracket (14.7%) and the 51–60 age bracket (13.8%); 2.6% fell into the 19 years or less age group. The gender and age demographic results are shown in **Figures 2 and 3**.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS

The household composition of the respondents was primarily split between the category ‘couple with no children’ (38.7%) and ‘couple with children’ (31.5%). The “lone person household” ranked third with 17.1%. **Figure 4** shows the results. A total of 111 people answered this question.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

A key outcome of the master plan will be to establish clear building height controls. The draft plan proposed: limiting development to the town centre’s existing footprint and retaining open space; incentives to produce better building and public domain outcomes; and a variety of maximum building heights, up to 27 storeys. Respondents were asked to consider whether the proposed building heights were generally: too low; about right or too high. A total of 110 people answered this question. The results are shown in **Figure 5**.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make further comments on this question. The key messages are summarised below:

- Many respondents raised concern about the local amenity of high rise development – in particularly in relation to the quality of the spaces around it. (13)
- Several specified there should not be any building height limits. (11)
- Others suggested building heights should be lower than proposed in the draft plan. (10)
- Others said high rise should have varying heights and unique designs/ shapes, all based on high quality architectural design. (10)

Figure 2: Gender of respondents

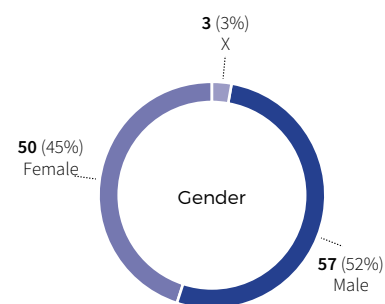


Figure 3: Demographics

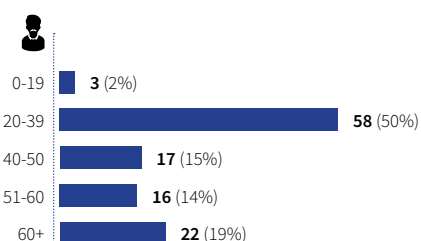


Figure 4: Household composition

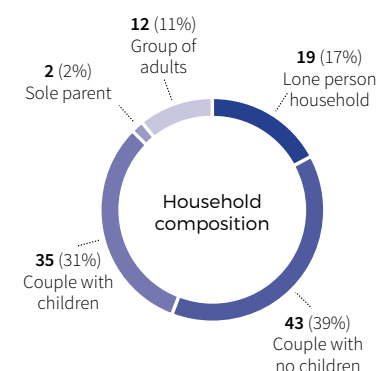


Figure 5: Building heights

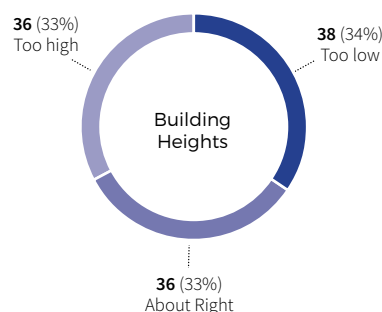


Figure 6: Cycle routes voted for priority improvement



- Several raised specific concerns about the impacts of solar access (overshadowing), light, wind and temperature and these aspects should be carefully considered in the master plan. (10)
- Some said that views should not be compromised. (8)
- Some acknowledged that higher density/taller buildings are more sustainable and would support public transport, local business and help minimise urban sprawl. (5)
- Some support for the building heights was specifically indicated (but without specifying a height). (5)

CYCLE ROUTES THAT SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

The feedback form and survey asked respondents to consider a number of statements about cycling links within and around the town centre and rank the statement options in order of preference (1 for highest, 5 for lowest).

Figure 6 presents these results.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make further comments on this question. The key messages are summarised below.

- Some were opposed to the provision of additional on-road paths because they believe the purpose built, off-road paths are safer, more pleasant and can be shared with pedestrians. (5)
- The link with the University of Canberra and the town centre should be improved. (4)
- It was recommended that the links between O'Connor and Belconnen could be improved. (2)

DAY AND NIGHT-TIME USES ALONG EMU BANK

Emu Bank has strong potential to become a more attractive destination.

A number of recommendations were made in the draft master plan.

Respondents were asked to decide whether they agreed with the proposal to create a more active range of day and night-time uses along Emu Bank.

The results are shown in **Figure 7**.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make further comments on this question. The key messages are summarised below.

- There was good support for the Emu Bank proposal with several respondents specifically stating that they support the proposal, and four of those adding words to the effect “the sooner the better”. (17)
- There were suggestions for more waterfront venues (e.g. bars, attractive cafes/restaurants, boutique shopping, venues which make the most of the views/lakeside setting, more night-life and outdoor markets). (12)
- There was quite a lot of concern about the availability of parking in this area with some providing suggestions (eg provide multi-storey/ underground, angle parking). (9)

- A few respondents suggested the fast food businesses should be relocated. (5)
- Some raised concerns about personal safety and potential for undesirable behaviour in this area and suggestions were made to improve safety (eg better night-time lighting, more CCTV security cameras). (5)

LATHLAIN STREET

Lathlain Street presents an opportunity to become the main shopping street of the centre. This area also has considerable potential to support an increased range of uses (e.g. residential, retail and community). The feedback form asked respondents to consider whether Lathlain Street should enable better use of infrastructure and to create a more active destination. The results are shown in **Figure 8**.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make further comments on this question. The key messages are summarised below.

- There was relatively strong support for the Lathlain Street proposal. Several respondents specifically stated that they support the proposal to redevelop this area. (14)
- A few commented that development on Benjamin Way should have priority as this road is a much wider corridor and more suited to high density development, but should have active frontages, timed street parking, cycleway and, in time, a boulevard with light rail. (3)
- Concern was raised about the potential impact of redevelopment/relocation of the Belconnen Library and Belconnen Community Service on small businesses in the area (e.g. the gym, pet shop, op shops) and the car and service yards. (3)
- A few respondents thought the proposed building heights are too low and should be much higher. (3)
- A few respondents wanted an improved streetscape/landscape and more greenery/colourful/lush vegetation offering shade. (3)

SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IN THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN

Four specific proposals were detailed in the draft plan and participants were asked to rank the proposals according to whether they agreed, disagreed or were neutral with those proposals. **Figure 9** shows the voting results.

Figure 7: Emu Bank Proposal

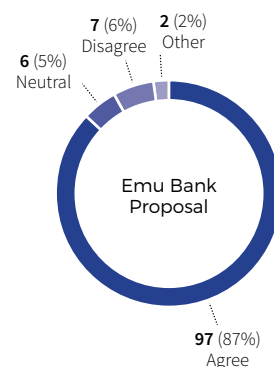
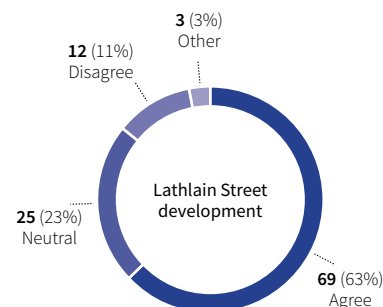
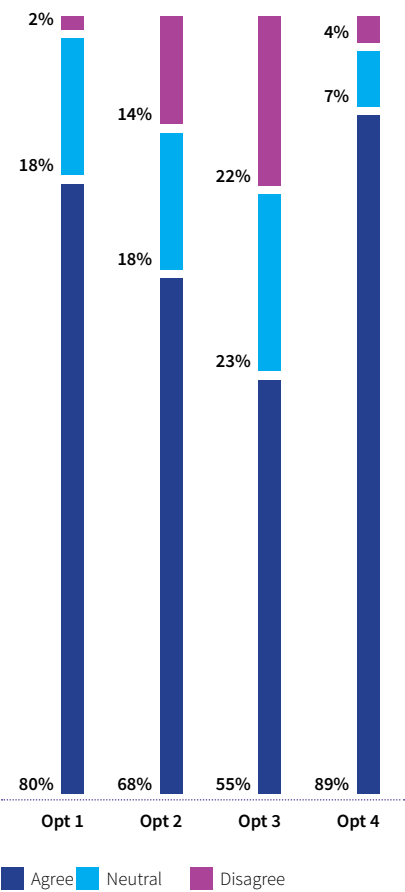


Figure 8: Lathlain Street development



“LATHLAIN STREET PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME THE MAIN SHOPPING STREET OF THE CENTRE.”

Figure 9: Specific proposals



OPTIONS

- 1.) Retain the remaining open space at Oatley Court and Purdue Street as parks.
- 2.) Retain the existing two storey height limit and restrict ‘residential’ as an allowable use from most of the service trades area.
- 3.) Increase the maximum height of buildings fronting onto Margaret Timpson Park to 6 storeys to increase surveillance and activity.
- 4.) Promote a greater integration of the town centre with the University of Canberra, through improved connections.

FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE OTHER COMMENTS

The key messages are summarised below.

- There was a broad feeling that the public spaces look bland and tired. Open spaces are highly valued and many would like to see these spaces enhanced, landscaped and preserved; with some suggesting these spaces could provide opportunities for artworks, socialising, leisure, culture and playing. (17)
- A number of concerns were raised with respect to building heights (e.g. interrupting views, too high), and suggestions were made to reduce the impact on amenity (e.g. ensure active street frontages and quality open spaces are integrated into developments). (7)
- Parking was raised as a concern and some suggestions were offered (e.g. retaining the free two-hour parking, providing access to parking for elderly and for all new residential accommodation). (5)
- A few mentioned that public transport could be improved in the town centre. (4)

ONLINE FORUM QUESTIONS
(‘HAVE YOUR SAY’ WEBSITE)

The online forum asked two questions. The first question was ‘Planning for Emu Bank – have we got it right?’

One person responded and commented that height limits should be restricted to 2–3 storeys.

The second question asked ‘What have we missed?’

Four people responded to this question as summarised below:

- General support for the Master Plan. (1)
- Support for the proposed development of vacant land fronting Luxton Street and Emu Bank, to the north of Westfield Belconnen (Block 1, Section 151 & Block 26, Section 52).
- Improve maintenance and amenity of the area (including the skate park and surrounds for litter, shade trees, more green plantings rather than the current grey/brown colours, uninviting appearance/appeal of underpasses, Margaret Timpson Park, Emu Inlet Park). (2)
- Provide more detail about tree plantings in the final plan. (1)
- Retain the open space adjacent to the lake. (1)
- No sale and commercial development of the former Water Police site. This should be integrated into the adjacent parkland and retained for public use. (1)
- No support for a bridge across the inlet or a floating stage or infilling part of the lake for bicycle access. (1)
- Make the town centre more family friendly—more amenities to attract young couples (e.g. primary school, playgrounds). (1)

EMAIL/WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS AND PHONED IN FEEDBACK

A project website was created and project specific email addresses were provided as follows:

Websites: www.act.gov.au/belconnen, Have your say website and Time to Talk, the former whole of government consultation website

Email: belconnen@act.gov.au

The project email address and information on the webpage allowed people to raise individual concerns and submit their proposals in more detail. There were 40 submissions (38 written; 2 received by phone). All ideas and proposals were considered as part of the preparation of the final master plan. All comments have been categorised in Table 6 under common themes. Where there are a number of feedback items repeatedly raised by separate individuals, these numbers have been identified.

All emailed/phone in submissions received can be viewed on the following website

<http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/>

Table 6 categorises the main themes of responses to each question. A summary of the key findings from the responses is as follows:

Table 6: Common themes of comments

THEME	COMMENT	COMMON RESPONSE
General comments	Generally support draft master plan.	9
	Concerns with accuracy/currency of maps within the document.	6
Parking	Concern that parking is reaching capacity.	7
	Other, separate, individual suggestions made about parking.	11
Public transport	More detail is required on public transport (including light rail and its implications on adjacent infrastructure and future developments).	7
	Improve public transport (e.g. to Belconnen Markets, University of Canberra, Emu Bank).	6
	Other, separate, individual suggestions made about public transport.	9
Active transport (walking and cycling)	Specifically support proposed improvements to shared paths in the draft master plan.	14
	Concern about making paths safe and attractive for users (e.g. lighting in underpasses, better maintenance).	9
	Improve connections/links (e.g. east/west; between service trade area, retail core and bus interchange; to the library and community centre; to the University and college/university; the promenade near lake front; and an east west cycleway linking the Bruce institutions with the town centre.)	6
	Ensure signage on shared paths through and around the town centre to key attractions; name laneways (like Melbourne), ensure all are included on the map.	3
	Create a path from the University of Canberra to Bruce Ridge and provide safe pedestrian access across Aikman Drive.	3
	Other, separate, individual suggestions made concerning active transport.	11

THEME	COMMENT	COMMON RESPONSE
Building heights	Ensure good/high quality design outcomes (including no wind tunnels, sustainable buildings).	6
	Generally support for the proposed building heights.	4
	Don't support the building heights proposed.	4
	Need to clarify heights which are limited to say they may not end up at the proposed maximum height.	2
	Don't like the existing tall buildings in Belconnen town centre.	2
	Concerns about heights of buildings and impact on traffic, solar access, wind tunnel effect.	2
	Don't increase height of buildings fronting Margaret Timpson Park.	2
	Other, separate, individual concerns raised about building heights.	6
	Other, separate, individual suggestions made about building heights.	5
Traffic	Higher density/tall buildings will impact and increase congestion in the immediate area.	3
	Some areas around the town centre already have traffic/congestion/safety issues (e.g. Lathlain Street, Bunnings and the markets, and near CISAC).	2
	Other separate, individual suggestions made concerning safety, traffic calming.	4
Public Domain	Undertake more public domain upgrades (e.g. improve spaces and place making; work with and fund improvements via TAMS).	7
buildings and open spaces/lake	Support urban open space (e.g. around lake, Northern Peninsula) for recreational and ecological value.	7
	Improve amenity of spaces (e.g. more colour, variety of trees).	5
	Support 50% shade coverage of streets in the core and improved street trees on Belconnen Way and near the lake.	4
	Provide greater capacity for leisure and recreation (e.g. theatre, splash pools, water playground).	3
	Other, separate, individual suggestions made regarding the amenity of open spaces.	18
Residential development in the service trades area	This area is not ideal for quality residential development and will limit potential future office space.	2
	Supports residential development in this area.	1
	Other, separate individual suggestions made about residential development in the service trades area.	2
Relocation of facilities	Ensure there is adequate parking for users of these facilities when relocated.	3
	It is unclear whether the facilities (e.g. Library, Community Centre, CIT) will move. Will future planning be carried out on the basis that these moves will proceed?	3
	Support the relocation of facilities (but with a lot of consultation first).	2
	Other separate, individual suggestions were made regarding relocation of facilities.	4

THEME	COMMENT	COMMON RESPONSE
Emu Bank	Need to consider parking if creating more day/night-time uses.	5
	Currently, waste management (e.g. litter from fast food outlets) is an issue.	4
	Oppose lake fill – not good value for money. Boardwalk/bridge is referred.	4
	Specific comments which support the proposed plans for Emu Bank.	3
	Retain foreshore as public space – extend pathway and infill the bay.	3
	Other, separate individual suggestions/concerns about Emu Bank proposals.	10
Lathlain Street	General support for proposal to redevelop Lathlain Street.	3
	Don't agree with proposal to redevelop Lathlain Street.	2
	Don't agree with the height limits.	2
	Other, separate, individual suggestions regarding the proposed plan for Lathlain Street.	2
Other comments	Conduct more studies (e.g. why aren't people using public transport and walking more; how to make cycling facilities international best practice).	3
	Other, separate, individual suggestions and concerns (on a range of topics such as employment opportunities, desired character, emerging technologies).	11



SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

The following summary highlights the key messages from Stage 2 of community engagement on the draft master plan for the Belconnen town centre and how they are addressed in the final master plan.

Overall, the feedback received during this stage of engagement was predominantly supportive of the proposals in the draft master plan.

Table 7 summarises the key messages heard during this stage of engagement and how the master plan responds to these.

Table 7: Summary of key messages and how the master plan responds

KEY MESSAGES FROM ENGAGEMENT	PROPOSALS AND ACTIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN
<p>ACTIVE TRAVEL</p> <p>There was a high level of support for the proposals in the draft master plan to improve the pedestrian and cycle connections to and within the centre. Several improvements to the draft master plan were suggested, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear connections through the University to link with other uses and Bruce Ridge,• All proposed on-road cycle lanes must be physically separated from traffic,• An outline of the Active Travel Framework policy and how it will apply to the centre. <p>It was also felt that there was too much focus on cycling and more attention should be given to pedestrians.</p>	<p>The master plan has been amended to provide a greater emphasis to on-road, one way separated cycle lanes, rather than the previously suggested shared cycling and walking paths. These are considered to provide a greater level of safety, legibility and reduce conflict with pedestrians.</p> <p>Several routes on the proposed cycle network have been amended in response to feedback and discussions with TAMS, particular the suggested route through the University of Canberra.</p> <p>Increased emphasis was given to improving the legibility and amenity of key pedestrian routes.</p>

KEY MESSAGES FROM ENGAGEMENT

PROPOSALS AND ACTIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN

BUILDING HEIGHTS

The suggested range of height limits for individual sites, including some with a maximum limit of 27 storeys attracted a wide range of opinions, however there was an even split between the ‘too high’, ‘too low’ and ‘about right’ in the survey responses.

Numerous submissions from lessees requested alternative maximum height limits on their blocks.

Where higher development was supported it was often on the condition that it be of a high architectural quality, with consideration of street interface, scale, amenity, wind and overshadowing. Loss of existing views was also raised.

Several people raised concerns about the potential increase in parking demand and traffic congestion in the local vicinity of new high rise developments.

Some misinterpreted the draft master plan that the maximum height would mean that all buildings be 27 storeys high or that buildings could be higher than 27 storeys if they met certain conditions.

A few mentioned that high rise residential developments should cater for families – offering several bedrooms and spaces for children to play outdoors.

Given the even split of opinions on building heights, it was considered the suggested maximum heights are appropriate at this time. These were supported by analysis of how these heights would relate to the surrounding landscape. Suggestions that greater architectural quality could be achieved with an increased height limit were not supported.

Although it is important that the town centre is not ‘undercooked,’ it is considered there is ample development capacity remaining in the town centre and additional height is not currently required.

Requests for additional height for individual sites were carefully considered in regards to a range of issues including the streetscape, overshadowing and relationship to surrounding buildings. This has resulted in adjustments to some sites.

The impacts of new development on parking and traffic congestion are considered prior to approval of new developments.

The master plan clarifies the additional height incentives that are proposed to encourage a range of better outcomes.

References to maintaining views in the draft master plan were removed to avoid any issues with interpretation.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Some felt that public transport could be further improved. While the three stations are a substantial improvement over the old Belconnen Interchange, several areas including the Belconnen Markets, Emu Bank and University of Canberra are difficult to reach. There was opinion that the Westfield bus station is reaching capacity and more detail was requested about Light Rail.

Suggestions to provide a shuttle bus loop to service the wider area of the town centre have been addressed through the revised master plan.

Statements regarding the need for a public transport study were reinforced, covering aspects such as additional platforms at Westfield, consideration of additional local routes and the suitability of current routes to accommodate light rail as well as buses.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The concern that parking is reaching capacity was restated through comments, particularly the need for additional parking around Westfield. A few commented parking for seniors/those with a disability needs consideration.

Some concern was raised about congestion along Lathlain Street, near Belconnen Way. Concerns were raised about safety for all road users (including pedestrian and cyclists) in these areas.

The draft master plan identified sites suitable for structured car parks and the need to better manage parking. The master plan identifies an additional opportunity for a parking station in Walder street.

OPEN SPACE

The proposal was strongly supported.

Several respondents wanted better maintenance of open spaces, particularly at the Emu Bank foreshore.

There was strong community support for retaining areas in the Service Trades Area for pocket parks, as well as retaining the open space around Lake Ginninderra.

There was a request that the central area of the northern peninsula be identified for a study for residential infill.

There was strong support for improved street trees, with requests made to provide trees on the Benjamin Way median and for more colourful trees.

Maintenance was clarified as a TAMs (now TCCS) issue, however the text was amended to suggest additional bins be provided in the Emu Bank area.

The central area of the northern peninsula has potential for a range of uses, including open space and residential. Given the current capacity for additional development in the town centre core, the master plan proposes to retain the existing open space zoning of the northern peninsula for the time being.

Following discussions with TAMS, it is likely that median trees will now be able to be provided for the length of Benjamin Way.

EMU BANK

The majority of respondents supported the proposed incentives to encourage redevelopment of sites at Emu Bank.

However, the need to clarify and ensure sufficient parking was raised. There was general support for continuing the shared path to run on the lake side of the Arts Centre, however the expense and impact of infilling to achieve this was a concern.

Further analysis of parking in the area was undertaken, including estimates of future demand and available capacity. Alternative locations for a parking station to serve the area were considered.

The master plan now clarifies that the proposed path on the lake side of the Arts Centre will be subject to a budget bid prepared by ArtsACT.

LATHLAIN STREET

While most respondents supported the proposals for Lathlain Street, there were significant concerns with the suggested building heights of up to 18 storeys as well as the impact residential uses may have on retaining existing uses. There was strong support for providing a park and it was suggested this would be more effective if it fronted Lathlain Street.

This area was reconsidered with the urban park area now fronting Lathlain Street. Building heights were reduced, with one area indicated as 18 storeys and two sites allowing heights up to 12 storeys. These buildings will be setback over six storey high podiums, which will enable a much better relationship with the surrounding streets. These changes will result in a more appropriate scale, better access and reduced overshadowing of adjacent streets.

NEXT STAGE

All comments and submissions received from the community, stakeholders and government agencies have been analysed and considered in the development of the final Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan.

Information on the Master Plan is available at www.act.gov.au/belconnen

APPENDIX

Emailed/phone in submissions received can be viewed at <http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au>



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