



# ACTON WATERFRONT PARK

## REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

**The City Renewal Authority is starting work on the design of the Acton Waterfront Park. This listening report covers initial community engagement on the 'design principles' for the park. It lays the groundwork for future community engagement and work on the park.**

The City Renewal Authority is continuing the transformation of Acton Waterfront by progressing designs for a new public park. The new Acton Waterfront park will be situated adjacent to the boardwalk, on land reclaimed from Lake Burley Griffin as part of the previous stage of works.

The new park will provide a tourism and recreation destination, offering space for events, exhibitions, community gatherings and activities in a high-quality setting that is easily accessible. The site has the potential to provide a recreational and cultural focus to the lake's West Basin, and that it becomes a popular destination for Canberrans.

## THE CONVERSATION

**The conversation about establishing the design principles for the Acton Waterfront Park took place through a series of workshops, held in three sessions over two days on 16 and 17 May, 2022.**

The workshops were framed around three themes:

1. Caring for Country with First Nations leadership
2. Government and institutional stakeholders
3. Community and community organisation stakeholders

The discussion was a blue-sky exercise focusing on first principles, community needs and aspirations for this park. It was not focused on detail or implementation. The project team heard a lot of exciting ideas about what kind of place could be created at Acton Waterfront, and this information will be used by the design team to develop concept designs for the site.

## WHO WE ENGAGED

**The City Renewal Authority engaged a broad range of stakeholders including First Nations, government, institutional, and community representatives in this important first principles design work. These representatives brought a significant range of experience and expertise from diverse backgrounds into the design principles process.**

The workshops involved over 50 participants who were asked to think about the project from their own perspective, and how others may want to use and be in the park. The two days of workshops involved dynamic and wide-ranging conversations and the team is thankful for the constructive and thoughtful guidance stakeholders provided.



## Key insights from the community

### Workshop 1 – Wanganni Dahayar/Caring for Country

- Ngunnawal culture must be the foundation of the place
- Create a place of respect, sharing and learning
- Tell the many stories (of the sunken river, meeting places, colonisation & dispossession, and the plants and animals of the region) in diverse, creative, and contemporary ways
- Ensure opportunities for Indigenous enterprise
- Use natural water treatment and filtration to heal, cool and enliven the park
- Link land and water and bring life back to the lake
- Use plants that are endemic to the Canberra region - this will also help native animals, birds, and aquatic life
- The park should be a meeting place where everyone is welcome
- Acton Waterfront Park should be a place where we all connect with country, connect with culture, and connect with each other

### Workshop 2 - Government stakeholders

- Recognise the unique feature of Acton Waterfront is that it is an urban park where the city meets nature and the water
- Connect the park back to the CBD, National Museum of Australia, ANU and the Botanic Garden through good access and wayfinding
- Make the park inviting and intuitive to navigate
- The scale of the park should enable both large events as well as simple everyday “low key” use
- Design should be inclusive and welcoming to all
- Resilience should be designed into the park to cope with the impacts of large events
- Use water to soften the landscape and naturally treat water so that it is healthy when it enters the lake
- Create a diversity of spaces to support a diversity of uses including passive use
- Ensure there are plenty of green spaces
- Support healthy active living
- Create opportunities to engage with and touch the water
- Seamlessly incorporate event infrastructure into the park environment for a wide range of community uses and celebrations

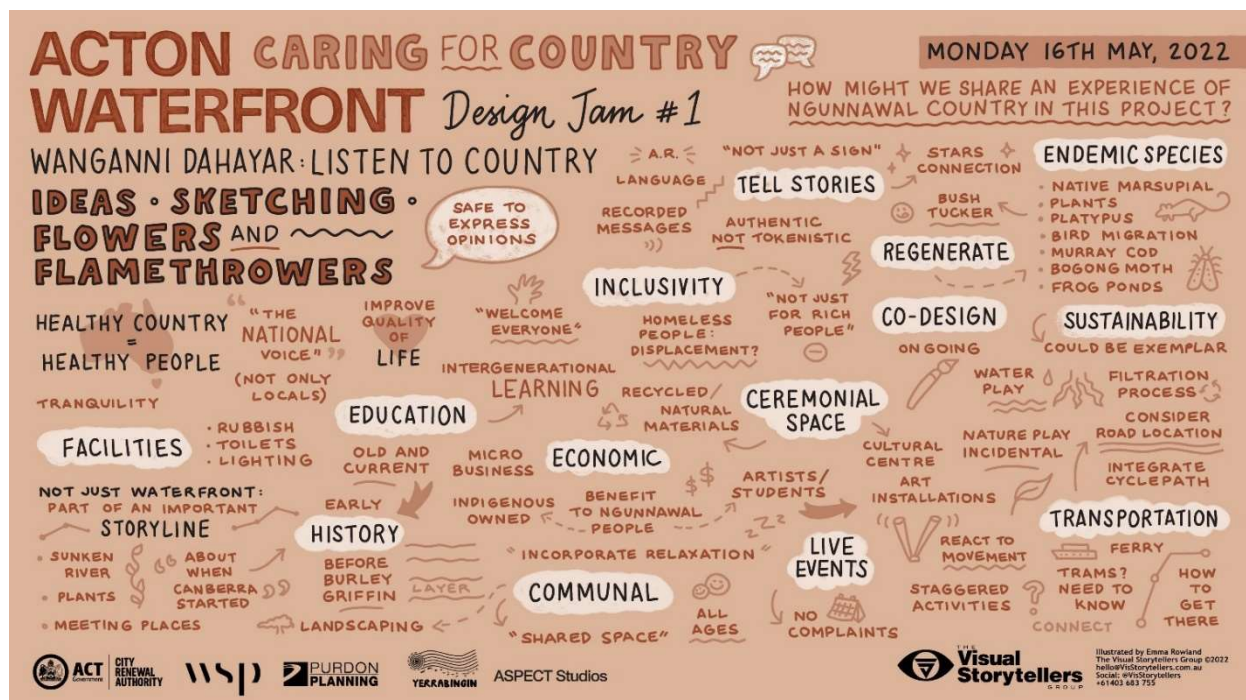
### Workshop 3 – Community groups

- Design needs to respond to the microclimate of the basin and Canberra’s extremes
- Create an inclusive and safe place where people feel they belong
- The park should be truly accessible to all
- People should be able to enjoy themselves here without having to spend money
- Give priority to pedestrians not cars
- Use the scale to ensure a diversity of spaces from busy and interesting urban spaces to quiet and tranquil natural places
- As a major civic space the park should be the “go to” place for community events but also have plenty of green areas for low key community use
- Make the park safe at night with animal friendly lighting and evening activation
- Residents in the adjacent development need to recognise this will be an active and busy precinct for all Canberrans
- Create a place where visitors can “meet Canberra”



- Integrate land and water and bring water up into the park through the beach, natural water filtration and treatment, and water play
- Soften the hard edge of the boardwalk and provide points where animals can get in and out of the water
- Balance hard and soft landscaping with a focus on green
- Opportunities for water play and nature play that enables kids to be healthy, free, and creative
- Get the basic amenities right - toilets, Wi-Fi, shade, water stations, barbecues and picnic facilities, play areas, diversity of food and beverage, seating and resting points, and undercover meeting areas
- Programming that lets people make the park their own - backyard concerts, nature walks, community workshops and community celebrations

The sessions were also captured graphically, to capture organically the ideation process at work through the course of the facilitated sessions.







# ACTON GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER WATERFRONT Engagement WORKSHOP

TUESDAY 17TH MAY, 2022

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE NGUNNAWAL PEOPLE, THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE GATHER.

### WHAT COULD IT ADD TO THE EXPERIENCES AROUND THE LAKE?

**THE VIEW**  
PANORAMA  
GATHERING PLACE  
ENGAGE WITH WATER ACTIVITIES  
WATER RATS  
"I WANT TO KNOW"

**FOR ALL AGES**  
RESPONSIVE TO HISTORY  
LIKE COPENHAGEN  
"BLUR THE EDGE"  
REJOICE IN INTERACTION OF CITY & NATURE  
CELEBRATION & CONTEMPLATION  
BIG & SMALL SCALE

**PLAYFUL OBSTACLE COURSE**

### WHAT IS CRITICAL TO MAKING ACTON WATERFRONT A SUCCESS?

**VOCAL ABOUT NOISE**  
UNIQUE  
PUBLIC SPACE LIKE EUROPE  
DESTINATION ACTIVITIES "NOT FIXED"  
COPE WITH CROWDS  
HUMAN SCALE

**ACTON LOCALS**  
KIDS FOCUS  
CANBERRANS  
"PRIDE" IN OUR CITY  
VISITORS  
STORIES HISTORY  
NEARBY INSTITUTIONS  
NAVIGATION DIFFICULTY

**IT'S THEIR BACKYARD**  
VIBRANCY  
MINI SPACES  
A MEETING PLACE  
PLACE TO "JUST BE"

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE MANAGED AS IDEAS ARE REFINED?

**WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY**  
HOW IS IT A SUCCESS? FIRST 5 YEARS  
HIJACKING BY LOCALS  
"ACTIVITY DISTRICTS"  
TENSION: NATURAL VS. BUILT  
WORK TOGETHER

**TO BE THOUGHTFUL**  
OWN PROBLEMS  
"IT IS AN EVENTS SITE"  
IDEA OF BUSH CAPITAL  
IMPACT OF NEW BUILDINGS ON VIEW  
HOW DOES IT BECOME A TEMPLATE?



CITY RENEWAL AUTHORITY



ASPECT Studios



Visual Storytellers GROUP

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# ACTON COMMUNITY GROUP WATERFRONT Engagement WORKSHOP

TUESDAY 17TH MAY, 2022

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE NGUNNAWAL PEOPLE, THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE GATHER.

### WHAT COULD IT ADD TO THE EXPERIENCES AROUND THE LAKE?

**VIEWS OUT**  
"THE WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN CONCEPT"  
DIVERSE/ LGBT ETC INPUT  
CANBERRA IS A RESETTLEMENT AREA: CONSIDER  
"A PHOTOGRAPHER'S DREAM"  
BRIDGE TO NOWHERE  
"A SPECIAL PLACE"

**CITY CONNECTION**  
PROXIMITY NOT ACCESSIBILITY  
ALL TIMES OF DAY  
INSPIRATION FOR ARTISTS  
NEED TO EXPRESS PRIOR HISTORY = UNDERSTANDING  
EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

### PERSONAS: WHAT MAKES IT A GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR THEM? AND WHAT COULD MAKE IT A 'GREAT' EXPERIENCE? BE AWARE OF ASSUMPTIONS.

**ALEX**  
COFFEE: POST ON SOCIALS  
KAYAK  
"PADDLE BY CAFE"  
INTERFACE WITH WEST BASIN  
SOLITARY OR GROUP  
WATER  
CHOICES / OPTIONS  
"NOT JUST A BLUE COLOUR FILL..."

**ANU STUDENTS**  
"STUDY PICNIC"  
COMFORT: SEATING/ DESKS  
WIFI/ POWER  
FLEXIBILITY OF SPACE

**RAJ**  
ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCALS: INFO KIOSK  
VISITOR  
BACKYARD CONCERT SERIES  
SIGNAGE... BUT IT SHOULD BE  
ENRICHING INTUITIVE  
DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE

**ASH**  
NON-TRANSACTIONAL TEEN SPACE  
"CREATE A MEMORY"  
INTERACTIONS E.G. SKATE PARK  
COMBINE WITH TECH  
RISK



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## WHAT'S NEXT?

The workshops delivered some great guidance to the team about what needs to be considered when designing Acton Waterfront Park. The design team will now develop some preliminary concepts which respond to the wide range of aspirations and needs articulated in the early workshops.

These concepts will be brought back to the community for another round of input prior to final refinement and a draft plan being placed on exhibition for additional community comment.

Acton Waterfront Park is a park for people. The plans for the park will be strengthened by broad community input and we welcome your involvement. You can register to receive project updates and share your thoughts with us at any time at the [YourSay website](https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au).

To find out more about the City Renewal Precinct, what's happening in the City Precinct and other initiatives, policies and projects in Canberra visit [www.yoursay.act.gov.au](https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au) or follow us on social media @CityRenewalCBR.

### Key Timings

May 2022 – Initial engagement to establish community needs and aspirations for Acton Waterfront Park

June 2022 – Progress design of the Action Waterfront Park and seek further input on emerging concepts

July 2022 – Formal public consultation on designs for Acton Waterfront Park.

2023 – Anticipated commencement of construction of Acton Waterfront Park.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

**80+**

We sent emails to 80+ individuals and organisations

**3**

Targeted workshops facilitated

**50+**

We spoke to 50+ people

**350+**

Ideas gathered from participants