



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

3 March 2023

Dear Minister Gentleman,

(Cc Minister Berry)

RE: Phillip Pool – Community Feedback Summary

I am writing to you with some feedback for your consideration as part of the ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project.

A public pool is of high value and high priority to Woden Valley residents.

From January 19th – February 2nd, 2023, I undertook consultation with Murrumbidgee residents regarding the Phillip Pool. The survey received 127 respondents.

Background

The future of Phillip Pool has been of increasing concern over the last few years to Murrumbidgee residents.

The situation developed further in early 2023 when Geocon purchased the site. The current lease conditions stand, and the pool must be re-opened. Geocon have confirmed that they will continue to operate the ice rink and pool.

If, down the track, development was progressed on the site, it would be subject to lease conditions. I wanted to provide input from the community directly to the current ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project on what the community views as the type of facility they would like to see for Woden Valley. This document is a summary of the feedback I have received from the community regarding the future of Philip Pool.



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

Summary of responses

Responses from the Phillip pool survey overwhelmingly indicate the Woden Valley community's commitment to retaining and improving Phillip pool. All of the 127 respondents strongly support the maintenance of a pool in Phillip.

"Phillip pool has been an important part of the local community facilities for the over 30 years I have lived in the Woden area." – Phillip resident

Throughout the survey responses residents reiterated the importance of a swimming facility as essential for both physical and mental health, especially for those who can no longer walk either at all or long distances.

"Being able to swim recreationally has been recognised a vital physical and mental health aid for seniors who can't walk as a means of exercise" – Weston Creek resident

- **A space for community building**

Residents recognise a swimming pool as a space for community building and cohesion, which is especially important after COVID19 lockdowns where people were separated from community support for long periods of time.

"This pool is a great asset to the community encouraging exercise and active lifestyles, learning opportunity for water safety and swimming, and fosters friendships through common interests." – Phillip resident



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

“We critically need a 50 m pool in our local area for young families, teenagers, elderly and those of us who want to stay fit and connected with others while exercising.” – Phillip resident

- **Toddler pool**

Survey responses indicate primary community priorities for the site, among which are the inclusion of a toddler pool, which 75% of respondents viewed as “very important” or “somewhat important.” Additional comments indicate that young families make great use of such facilities.

- **Pool length and type**

An overwhelming number of respondents expressed their desire to retain the current 50m length of the pool. Just 7 respondents, or 5% of responses indicated their wish for a 25m pool.

There lacks a community consensus on the type of pool preferred on site.

Responses indicate retaining the site as an outdoor pool is generally preferred with 47% indicating this, though almost as many, around 38%, would like to see the site transformed into an indoor venue. This survey question uniquely had the highest number of “both” responses, constituting around 15%.

- **Swimming lessons**

Many constituents indicated that access to swimming facilities and swimming lessons was of a vital importance both culturally and for safety reasons.

“Access to swimming amenities and learn to swim services are a vital community aspect of community safety, health and wellbeing.” – Murrumbidgee resident, 2023



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

“Access to a facility that offers swimming lessons to the wider community. This is especially important when taking into account the record number of drownings around our country over the summer of 2022/2023.” – Weston Creek resident, 2023

- Amenities

Among community concerns provided in the comments section is access to free, adequate parking and learn to swim services provided at the pool site. As well as the inclusion of modernised shower/changing facilities and the retention of green space on site.

A common theme expressed in community responses is the incorporation of an age-friendly hydrotherapy pool, sauna and spa, and the inclusion of adequate safety measures by management for pool-users of all ages.

Access to a hydrotherapy pool was of particular importance to persons 50+ and those who stated they were recovering from injuries.

“A heated pool where those with injuries or arthritis etc can walk and regain mobility, strength and flexibility.” – Garran resident

“We need indoor spaces with the climate in Canberra. Woden is changing- older community with need for hydro[therapy].” – Weston Creek resident

- Communication with residents

Of chief concern to all respondents is the clear communication regarding the use of the site. Pool users consistently commented they feel left in the dark regarding the closure and uncertain future of the site and would like clearer messaging. I would like



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

to request that the ACT Government work closely with Geocon to ensure Murrumbidgee residents are informed of any future changes to the Phillip pool.

Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Paterson".

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Member for Murrumbidgee

3 March 2023

Our ref: IRF23/414

Mr Ben Ponton
Director-General, Chief Planning Executive and Utilities Technical Regulator
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra City ACT 2601

7 March 2023

Subject: ACT planning system review and reform project – draft district strategies

Dear Mr Ben Ponton

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed ACT Planning system review and reform project. This submission has been prepared by the Department of Planning and Environment's (the department) Southern Region Planning Team. The Southern Region Planning Team is responsible for undertaking local and regional planning in the South East and Tablelands and Illawarra Shoalhaven regions. This includes the implementation of the *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* (SET Regional Plan).

The following comments focus primarily on the draft district strategies and their relationship with the Draft *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* (SET Regional Plan) and *Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041* (RM Regional Plan), which was made in January 2023. This submission also notes opportunities for continued collaboration between the ACT and NSW Governments to support strategic cross-border planning and infrastructure matters under the guidance of the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration.

The department recently exhibited the SET Regional Plan, which applies to 9 local government areas (LGAs) including some with strong links to the ACT in Goulburn Mulwaree, Queanbeyan–Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley. While not considered under the remit of the SET Regional Plan, the ACT sits within the plan's boundary due to Canberra's influence across the Region. The RM Regional Plan includes the Snowy Valleys LGA, which borders the ACT to the west.

Both Regional Plans set a framework, vision and direction for strategic land use planning to meet the future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment and connected communities. The Plans have been informed by current drivers of change, opportunities and relevant policies, including:

- the influence of Canberra on the growth of jobs and housing in the region, and
- the importance of cross government collaboration between the NSW and ACT governments.

The department notes that each draft district strategy includes key directions and initiatives that are informed by 5 big drivers, 10 targets and 12 implementation pathways that bring together key ACT Government policies and translate them into a planning context.

Several of these initiatives are complementary to the objectives, strategies and actions of both Regional Plans, providing opportunities for continued collaboration between the ACT and NSW Governments to aid the implementation and delivery of the draft district strategies and NSW Regional Plans.

Initiatives to preserve and expand the ACT's blue-green network are considered complementary to objective 6 of the SET Regional Plan and objective 1 of the RM Regional Plan. The department supports

these initiatives and notes the direction to enhance, restore and re-connect priority grassland, woodland and aquatic habitats across the ACT, including in areas with linkages into NSW.

In accordance with Action 6 of the SET Regional Plan, the department will establish a green and blue grid for the region to identify opportunities for improvements in green and blue infrastructure. The ACT Government has been identified as a key supporting stakeholder in this process and the department will seek to actively collaborate with the ACT Government to support the implementation of this project and the district strategies. This will be done in accordance with the regional approach to the environmental matters under the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration.

Directions and initiatives to guide strategic movement and support city growth are considered complementary to objectives 22 and 23 of the SET Regional Plan. The department supports these initiatives, particularly with respect to the directions under the East Canberra draft district strategy - *to partner and collaborate with the NSW Government and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council to investigate a coordinated, strategic approach to cross-border infrastructure and road connectivity to support anticipated housing and employment growth, particularly in South Jerrabomberra.*

The department also notes that the East Canberra district includes several possible “change areas” identified as potential sites for new employment areas, including along two strategic investigation corridors with linkages to cross border communities in the Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA. The department also notes the CSIRO Ginninderra “change area” identified in the Belconnen district strategy which adjoins the Yass Valley LGA and understands this area is under investigation for urban use in the long term.

The department welcomes further discussion and collaboration with the ACT Government, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Yass Valley Council and other government stakeholders, such as Transport for NSW. This can support the future planning of those areas, particularly at the interface of the ACT/ NSW border and with access to strategic cross-border transport links such as the Barton Highway, Canberra Avenue and the Monaro Highway/ Lanyon Drive.

The department also notes the ACT will require an anticipated 57,800 new dwellings by 2046 and the draft district strategies include initiatives relating to planning for future housing and employment, as well as integrated infrastructure planning to support this growth.

In addition to anticipated growth within the ACT, the capital subregion (identified in the SET Regional Plan as Goulburn Mulwaree, Yass Valley and Queanbeyan–Palerang LGAs, and parts of Upper Lachlan and Snowy Monaro LGAs), is expected to grow to over 150,000 people by 2041, which will require approximately 19,000 new dwellings.

To aid strategic land use and infrastructure planning in the capital subregion, the department has committed to establishing an urban development program (UDP) with the ACT and surrounding LGAs to better identify, coordinate and prioritise enabling infrastructure for new housing, employment land and monitor delivery. As part of this project, the department will also deliver Action 19 of the SET Regional Plan by undertaking an assessment of the type and capacity of services accessible to communities within 30, 60 and 90 minute road-based trips of a strategic centres and clusters, including those within the ACT.

Establishment of a UDP for the capital subregion, is consistent with Direction 1.4 of the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018* and the department would welcome working in partnership with the ACT Government on this and other collaboration activities identified in the SET Regional Plan, RM Regional Plan and draft district strategies to deliver consistent outcomes for the region.

The department is working with the ACT Government, NSW councils and other NSW State agencies to facilitate cross border water to support the development of housing within NSW, which will contribute to meeting the needs of the growing region. We appreciate the ACT Government's ongoing commitment to this work, which supports both ACT and NSW government policy.

Should you have any questions, you are welcome to contact Mr [REDACTED], Manager, Local and Regional Planning - Southern Region at the Department on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Jones".

7 March 2023

[REDACTED]
Executive Director
Local and Regional Planning