



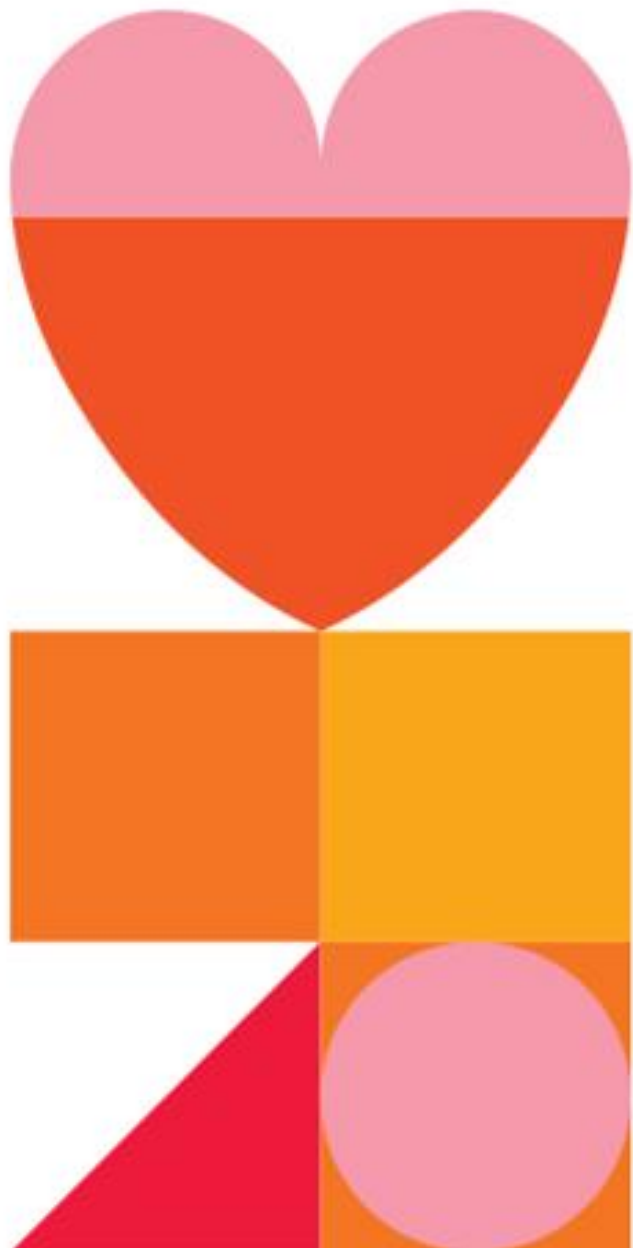
**ACT**  
Government

**CITY  
RENEWAL  
AUTHORITY**

# Acton Waterfront

## Report on estate planning consultation

October-December 2022



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#### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.





## Executive Summary

The National Capital Plan envisages Acton Waterfront as a vibrant cultural and entertainment precinct on a waterfront promenade. The Acton Waterfront is located at the West Basin of Lake Burley Griffin. It is bound by Commonwealth Avenue to the east and extends across Parkes Way to London Circuit. The area will create a new city neighbourhood, extending the city to the lake with a cosmopolitan mixture of shops, businesses, cafes, accommodation, and recreational and tourism activities.

The City Renewal Authority (the Authority) is working closely with the community and stakeholders to transform the Acton Waterfront into a place for all Canberrans to enjoy. We are committed to renewing the Acton Waterfront to make it an accessible, people-focussed area that draws lake users, Canberra residents and tourists down from the CBD to interact with the lake.



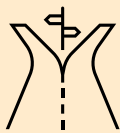
This is a journey that is based on nearly two decades of community consultation and will continue in partnership with the community over phases. The community has indicated that a staged approach is important and that there must be opportunities to provide feedback throughout the project. The City Renewal Authority is also working closely with Traditional Custodians, other ACT Government Directorates, and the National Capital Authority in the delivery of the project.

The project supports the realisation of the strategic planning vision for Canberra and is consistent with the original Griffin Plan. The vision is that Acton Waterfront will have two important roles:

- A destination for everyday life
- A major foreshore recreational destination for the broader Canberra community and tourists.

The purpose of this phase of the project is engagement to progress planning for development of a new residential and mixed use area behind Acton Waterfront park. This engagement phase comprised of two community workshops, two government workshops, two community pop-up sessions, email submissions, and information and surveys on the ACT Government's online consultation portal, YourSay.

This Consultation Report explores the key themes that we heard from across all engagement methods with 168 participants, including:



Roads, parking, and  
transport

We received 258 comments (22% of total feedback) that highlighted opportunities or concerns around public transport (buses and light rail), car parking and cycling routes. Participants also felt that ensuring easy access for active transport was important, such as cyclists and pedestrians.



Landscape, green spaces,  
and wildlife

Participants valued ensuring that green spaces and the natural environment were protected, with 239 comments (21% of total feedback) relating to supporting green spaces, natural landscape, tree canopy, wildlife, views, and the park.





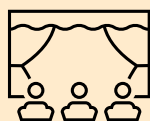
### City planning, infrastructure and maintenance

236 comments (20% of total feedback) related to innovative and adaptive city planning, infrastructure, and maintenance - respecting the history, Griffin Legacy and Plans.

Participants shared that they valued a balance of buildings and open, green space, as well as raising the need for appropriate lighting and noise reduction in the area.

Affordability and budget were raised as a concern, as some participants did not want rates to be greatly impacted by developments, participants also highlighted providing affordable social housing options.

The timings of deliverables were also raised, while some participants felt that the area should be finalised sooner, others highlighted that it shouldn't be rushed.



### Culture, community, and Traditional Custodians

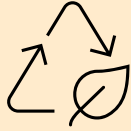
There were 171 comments providing feedback relating to facilities that fostered a sense of culture and community (15% of total feedback). Participants valued seeing art, cafes, restaurants, markets, and retail in the area. As well as amenities for exercise and water activities, such as kayaking and boats.

Ensuring that First Nations and Traditional Custodians culture, history and art was celebrated and shared in this area was also of importance for participants. They valued naming the streets and place after First Nations people, showcasing artwork, interpretive signage telling stories about the history of the area, and using local native plants.



### Safety, accessibility, and inclusion for everyone

150 comments (13% of total feedback) highlighted the need for safety, accessibility, and inclusion for everyone - ensuring that everybody of all ages, ability, and cultural background felt welcomed and included. This also involved easy and readily available access to public facilities, such as toilets, showers, BBQs, drinking water, seating, and shade.



Sustainability, climate  
cooling and net zero

Protecting the environment and community using climate cooling and net zero initiatives was considered important, with 98 comments (9% of total feedback).

Participants felt that showcasing sustainability with renewables, urban heat mitigation, net zero carbon footprint and climate-wise landscaping was important.

Participants want to see innovative and adaptive ways of reaching a sustainable outcome, so that the area can showcase a modern neighbourhood that will support the community for generations to come.

The Authority will continue to work with the community and stakeholders throughout this multi-year engagement process to further understand aspirations and needs for the area, helping us to develop community-led designs that shape the future of the Acton Waterfront.





## Introduction

The City Renewal Authority is progressing the journey of the Acton Waterfront project in consultation with the community and stakeholders - so that this new city precinct reflects Canberrans' vision for their city, connecting the CBD to the lake and providing unrestricted public access to the lakefront.

The vision is that Acton Waterfront will have two important roles:

- A destination for everyday life
- A major foreshore recreational destination for the broader Canberra community and tourists.

## Project overview and phases

The Acton Waterfront is being delivered in phases, as highlighted in Table 1. All works in the Acton Waterfront precinct will be consistent with the requirements of the Australian Government's [National Capital Plan](#) as well as the community's vision for the precinct, captured in the [Acton Waterfront Place Plan](#), and the existing character of the area.

**Table 1.** Project overview and phases

Timeframe	Initiative
2018	The first phase of works was the creation of Henry Rolland Park and construction of the first 150 metres of boardwalk, opened to the public in 2018.
August 2020	<p>Following nearly two decades of planning and community and stakeholder consultation by different agencies, the Acton Waterfront Place Plan was released. The plan captures community and stakeholder needs and aspirations for the waterfront's public spaces and buildings. The place plan proposes themes and principles for future development as well as identifying four different "destinations" as part of an integrated public space network. These were The Heart, Henry Rolland Park, Cultural Landscape and Streets and Lanes.</p> <p>The Acton Waterfront Place Plan is influencing designs for future stages of work, starting with the lakeside park.</p>
September 2020 – November 2022	<p>Construction to extend the boardwalk and realign the lake edge, which is consistent with the National Capital Plan and Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin's intended configuration for West Basin. This includes building a further 500 metres of boardwalk. It has created a new boardwalk along Acton Waterfront that is more than 650 metres long.</p> <p>Alongside the boardwalk, the beach construction was completed in November 2022. The beach was designed for a variety of uses, including triathlons, some small vessel launching and water sport.</p>
January 2022 – mid 2023	<p>Design of a new waterfront park for around 30,000 square metres of reclaimed land.</p> <p>The new waterfront park will be adjacent to the boardwalk currently being constructed, on land reclaimed from Lake Burley Griffin.</p>





Located close to Canberra's City Centre with unrestricted lake access, the park will build on the landscape character surrounding Lake Burley Griffin and provide an accessible and attractive public space for all Canberrans.

August  
2022-  
2025+

Behind the proposed park is an area for future, longer term development which may include shops, cafés, restaurants, community spaces, and commercial and residential development.

The City Renewal Authority is progressing the planning and delivery of the future longer-term development at Acton Waterfront. The City Renewal Authority has adopted a place-led approach incorporating the principles outlined in the Acton Waterfront Place Plan.

All public and private development at Acton Waterfront, which is Designated Land, must meet the statutory planning requirements of the National Capital Plan and are subject to planning approval by the National Capital Authority.

## Purpose of this phase of engagement and report

The City Renewal Authority is using feedback from the community and stakeholders to inform the transformation of Acton Waterfront into a place for all Canberrans to enjoy. This means more open spaces, improved connections with the City Centre, better access for water activities, and a celebration of the site's history and national significance. Importantly, all initiatives are grounded by care for Country, respect for the lake and the lakeshore landscape.

The purpose of this phase of the project is engagement to inform the development of a new built up area behind Acton Waterfront park, in line with the Acton Waterfront Place Plan. This engagement phase comprised of two community workshops, two government workshops, two community pop-up sessions, and YourSay pages and surveys, and email submissions.



## Engagement approach

### Communication and engagement objectives

Targeted and innovative community engagement solutions are crucial to the ongoing success of the Acton Waterfront area.

As a pinnacle ACT Government project, the precinct has a lot of opportunity to shape the future of Canberra and the connectivity of the City Centre and City West to the lake.

The communication and engagement objectives for the Acton Waterfront project are below and in Figure 1:

- To encourage stakeholders and community to view the Acton Waterfront as a whole precinct development, with a long history and an ongoing pipeline of work that will span many years. This will encourage engagement to be an ongoing conversation, centred around the evolving needs of community as Canberra grows and matures.
- To acknowledge and address commitments made under the former “City to the Lake” project and address community concerns raised around the scope and scale of those commitments.
- Maintain engagement with stakeholders and community throughout the long span of the Acton Waterfront precinct. Maintain an active voice in the community that reminds Canberrans of the ongoing conversation and evolution of the project as it progresses through development phases.
- Stakeholders are aware of, and can plan for, impacts related to Acton Waterfront project activities through timely communication about project milestones, impacts and opportunities.

- Stakeholders are aware of the parts of the project that can or cannot be influenced and understand how they can help inform the next phases of Acton Waterfront project activities.
- Create opportunities to seek public input into place design for the park and future estate development in line with the place plan for the area.
- Generate public interest and enthusiasm for the project and encourage exploration as development of the Acton Waterfront emerges over time.



**Figure 4.** Engagement principles

## First Nations engagement

Ngunnawal people are acknowledged as Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region. The neighbouring people are the Gundungurra to the north, the Ngarigo to the south, the Yuin on the coast, and the Wiradjuri inland.

The City Renewal Authority works closely with First Nations stakeholders to incorporate culturally driven outcomes. The Authority has been partnering with Yerrabingin, a First Nations owned and operated design and interpretation company, on the delivery of the First Nations engagement for the Acton Waterfront project. As well as working closely with the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body as a part of the consultation process.

The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee shared with the City Renewal Authority the key principles for engaging First Nations people, which have been embedded into this project, including:

- **Collaboration:** First Nations representatives want to be involved in early conversations and be in partnership. It is not sufficient to present designs or ideas and ask for feedback. Any engagement must be collaborative.
- **Truth-telling:** West Basin, the Molonglo River and Acton Peninsula are significant cultural sites for First Nations. The story telling around cultural elements such as the limestone caves and travel routes is an important aspect of engagement.
- **Nature and natural spaces:** Acton Waterfront offers rare and unique opportunities for increasing visibility of Ngunnawal culture and history, given its proximity to the City Centre. Development requires a careful approach that balances the development with the respect to the natural surroundings of the area.

This project has an opportunity to welcome and inform visitors of the strong First Nations heritage of this area and introduce them to traditional and contemporary ways of seeing, hearing and Caring for Country.

The City Renewal Authority is also seeking a Ngunnawal name for the park, with additional opportunities for First Nations language to be used throughout the park design. This language will be used for way finding, education, artworks and truth telling opportunities engrained within the landscape to support sharing and celebrating the cultural significance of the area. See Appendix A Country Narrative for more information.



## Informing our approach

Our engagement approach is informed by the ACT Government's Communication and Engagement approach which aims to work across all areas of government to make sure our public information campaigns and engagements are targeted, effective and meet the needs and expectations of Canberrans.

The engagement approach aligned to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (Figure 2), which underpins the variety of activities outlined in this report. The spectrum is used internationally and is designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Goal	To provide stakeholders with balanced objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that stakeholder concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision or change including the development of alternatives and the identification of solutions.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public and stakeholders.
Promise	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the strategy. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influences the decisions/strategy.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the strategy as much as possible.	We will implement what you decide.

**Figure 5.** IAP2 spectrum for public participation





## Communication and engagement activities



**Figure 6.** Overview of communication and engagement activities

## What was delivered

To encourage a diverse cross-section of the community to participate, the following engagement activities in Table 2 were conducted, with the insights and findings from the engagement highlighted in the following section, What we heard.

**Table 2.** Communication and engagement activities

Communication and engagement activity	Description and deliverables
Community pop-ups and drop-in sessions	<p>A pop-up consultation event provides a spontaneous opportunity for people to hear about the project during key consultation periods and give their immediate feedback. These events were held in high-traffic areas in the area at Henry Rolland Park and Garema Place.</p> <p>The two pop-ups included engagement materials to gather feedback which was recorded.</p>
Community workshops	The objective of these workshops was to enable accessible, grass-roots feedback from stakeholders and interested

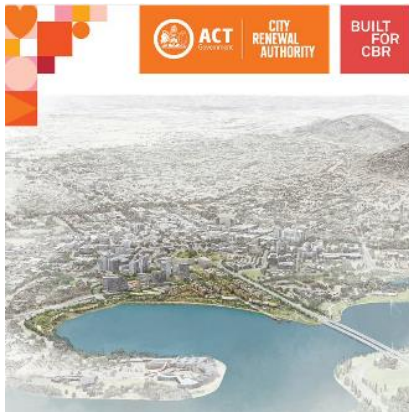


Communication and engagement activity	Description and deliverables
	<p>members of the community with respect to the development of the next phases of the Acton Waterfront, including the design of the park and planning for the future estate. Two workshops were held in person at 220 London Circuit and online via Teams.</p>
Government workshops	<p>Stakeholder workshops provide the opportunity for those who may be directly impacted by a project or program of work to receive information relevant to their circumstance and have candid and robust discussion about implications.</p>
Key stakeholder meetings and First Nations engagement	<p>Presentations to key stakeholders and key Community Councils provided an opportunity to promote key consultation periods and milestones, and seek feedback from attendees, including the Lake User Group, Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.</p>
YourSay, surveys, and social media	<p>YourSay provides a conversation page for users with an overview of the Acton Waterfront precinct and the work undertaken to date. It also features current projects for consultation, as well as precinct and project related surveys to keep stakeholders and community engaged and informed.</p> <p>Additionally, promotion and commentary on via the City Renewal Authority's social media channels ensures that the community can stay up to date on the project timeframes and activities, as well as ask questions around the details.</p>
Email promotion and submissions	<p>Email invitations were sent to identified government key stakeholders whose projects may have a direct impact on the Acton Waterfront project or may need to consider the planning at the Waterfront during their own infrastructure project delivery, including Events ACT, Transport Canberra and Community Services, Major Projects, and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.</p> <p>Promotion in e-newsletters, such as OurCBR, was also utilised to reach a broad group of the community.</p> <p>In addition to YourSay feedback, submissions via email were also received by community members and stakeholders, as highlighted in the Attachments.</p>



## Promotion

Various digital and print channels were used to engage the community and stakeholders, including newsletters, social media, signage, factsheets, and websites highlighted below:



### Social media and newsletters

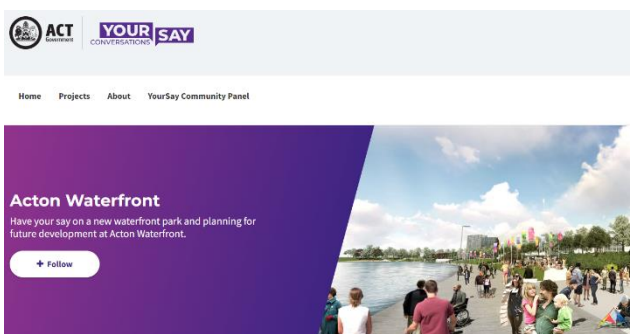
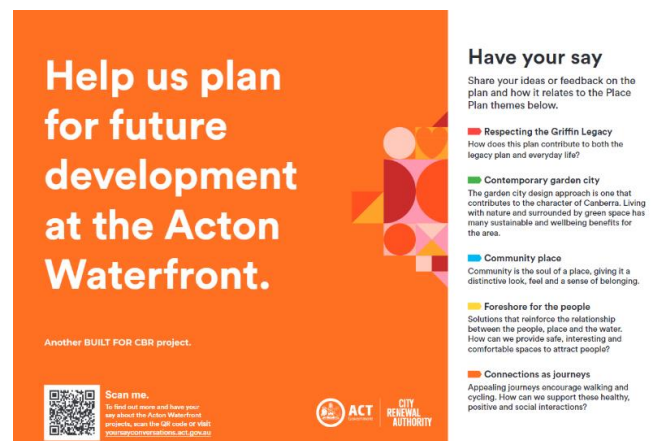
Social media announcements and promotion throughout October–December on the Authority’s social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, provided key project milestones and announcements of the project and key areas of engagement activity and how to participate.

Newsletters such as OurCBR were used to update the community and stakeholders on key project milestones and opportunities to provide feedback.

### Signage and factsheets

Interactive corflute signs and posters were used to provide a jumping off point for prompting conversations with community at consultation pop-ups, workshops and onsite in the Acton Waterfront area.

A summary factsheet was also provided as an overview of the consultation program, project objectives and feedback avenues.



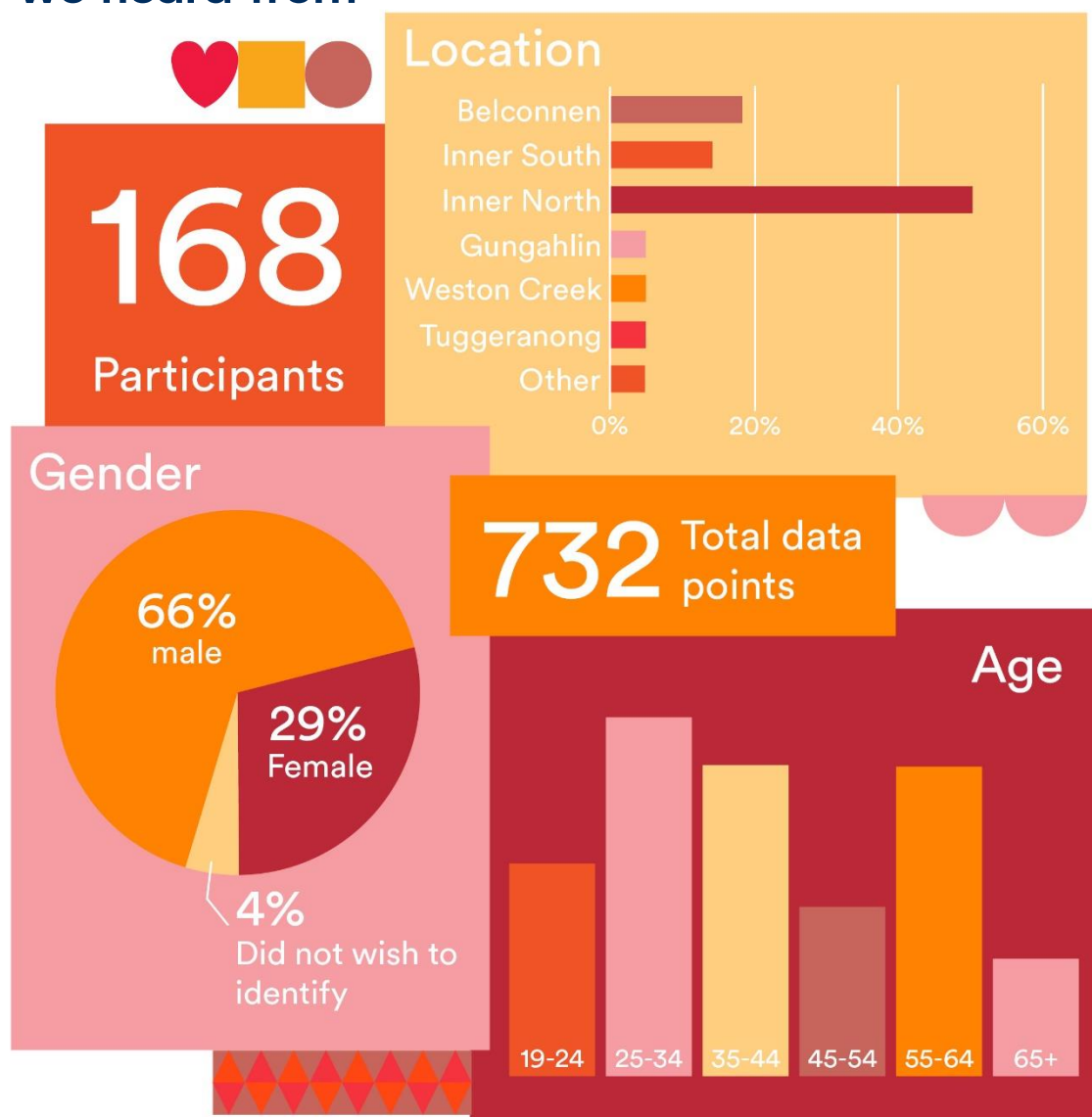
### YourSay and websites

The City Renewal Authority website is used to house all Acton Waterfront project information. Whereas the purpose of YourSay is to house all the engagement activities including surveys, interactive maps and contact details and project updates.





## Who we heard from



\*Diversity statistics based on YourSay data

**Figure 4.** Overview of who we heard from



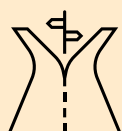
## What we heard

In this section, we explore the feedback and insights we received from participants across all the engagement opportunities, which is collated by the overarching themes then detailed by each engagement activity.

These themes as associated percentages are based on an analysis of the data points generated across all engagement activities. An individual piece of feedback or correspondence may make more than one suggestion or raise several issues – each of these individual ideas is treated as a data point. As shown in the figure above, across all engagements, 732 data points were generated.

## Key themes

Across all forms of engagement, there were several key themes that participants highlighted as important values that they wanted to see reflected in the Acton Waterfront area, as highlighted on by the following:



Roads, parking, and  
transport

We received 258 comments (22% of total feedback) that highlighted opportunities or concerns around public transport (buses and light rail), car parking and cycling routes. Participants also felt that ensuring easy access for active transport was important, such as cyclists and pedestrians.



Landscape, green spaces,  
and wildlife

Participants valued ensuring that green spaces and the natural environment were protected, with 239 comments (21% of total feedback) relating to supporting green spaces, natural landscape, tree canopy, wildlife, views, and the park.

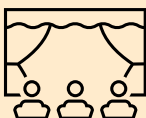




City planning,  
infrastructure and  
maintenance

236 comments (20% of total feedback) related to innovative and adaptive city planning, infrastructure, and maintenance - respecting the history, Griffin Legacy and Plans.

Participants shared that they valued a balance of buildings and open, green space, as well as raising the need for appropriate lighting and noise reduction in the area.

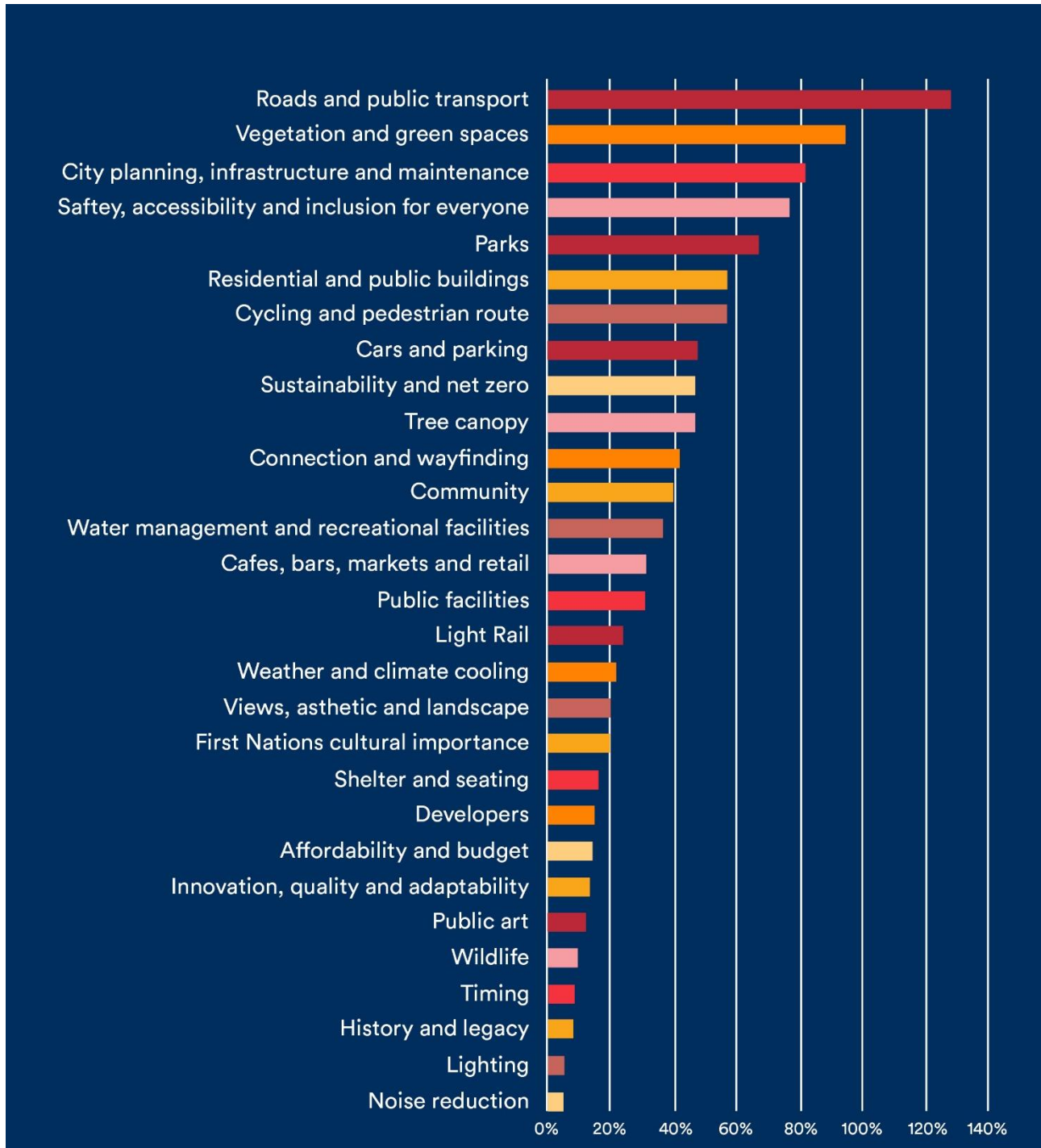
Affordability and budget were raised as a concern, as some participants did not want rates to be greatly impacted by developments, participants also highlighted providing affordable social housing options.

	<p>The timings of deliverables were also raised, while some participants felt that the area should be finalised sooner, others highlighted that it shouldn't be rushed.</p>
 <b>Culture, community, and Traditional Custodians</b>	<p>There were 171 comments providing feedback relating to facilities that fostered a sense of culture and community (15% of total feedback). Participants valued seeing art, cafes, restaurants, markets, and retail in the area. As well as amenities for exercise and water activities, such as kayaking and boats.</p> <p>Ensuring that First Nations and Traditional Custodians culture, history and art was celebrated and shared in this area was also of importance for participants. They valued naming the streets and place after First Nations people, showcasing artwork, interpretive signage telling stories about the history of the area, and using local native plants.</p>
 <b>Safety, accessibility, and inclusion for everyone</b>	<p>150 comments (13% of total feedback) highlighted the need for safety, accessibility, and inclusion for everyone - ensuring that everybody of all ages, ability, and cultural background felt welcomed and included. This also involved easy and readily available access to public facilities, such as toilets, showers, BBQs, drinking water, seating, and shade.</p>
 <b>Sustainability, climate cooling and net zero</b>	<p>Protecting the environment and community using climate cooling and net zero initiatives was considered important, with 98 comments (9% of total feedback).</p> <p>Participants felt that showcasing sustainability with renewables, urban heat mitigation, net zero carbon footprint and climate-wise landscaping was important.</p> <p>Participants want to see innovative and adaptive ways of reaching a sustainable outcome, so that the area can showcase a modern neighbourhood that will support the community for generations to come.</p>

The following graph outlines the number of data points recorded per feedback category.



## Participant feedback in total by frequency of mentions



## Community workshops

The two community workshops were held on Saturday 26 November 2022 at 220 London Circuit building and 1 December 2022 online via Teams. The objective of these workshops was to enable accessible, grass-roots feedback from stakeholders and interested members of the community with respect to the development of the next phases of the Acton Waterfront, including the design of the park and planning for the future estate.

The workshop included a presentation on both the park and updated estate planning, an opportunity for questions and discussion, and capture of feedback using the online software Slido.

A total of 27 community members participated in these workshops from across Canberra, but predominately residents or people who work in the Acton area.

### Key insights from community workshop 1

- The key themes of discussions and feedback highlighted that the park, vegetation, and landscaping were areas of focus.
- 82% of participants felt that the current design of the park had areas for improvement. Areas suggested for improvement included expanding the width of the park to greater than 50 metres, areas for markets, parking capacity and transport access.
- 89% of participants would like to see the community park built first, ahead of the arrival point, lake structures, playground, plaza, and terrace.
- 75% of participants felt that the proposed estate plan reflected the theme ‘Respecting the Griffin Legacy’, in the Acton Waterfront Place Plan.
- Participants suggested BBQ/picnic areas, pop-up markets, coffee/food vans, sports area (e.g. volleyball) and concerts/festivals to temporarily activate the future park site prior to construction commencing.
- Participants said that for these types of developments they value trees, grass and would like to see more park area and green spaces with native species and shade than is currently proposed. It was also highlighted that potentially a lot of construction would be happening at the same time and that staging of construction and integration was important.

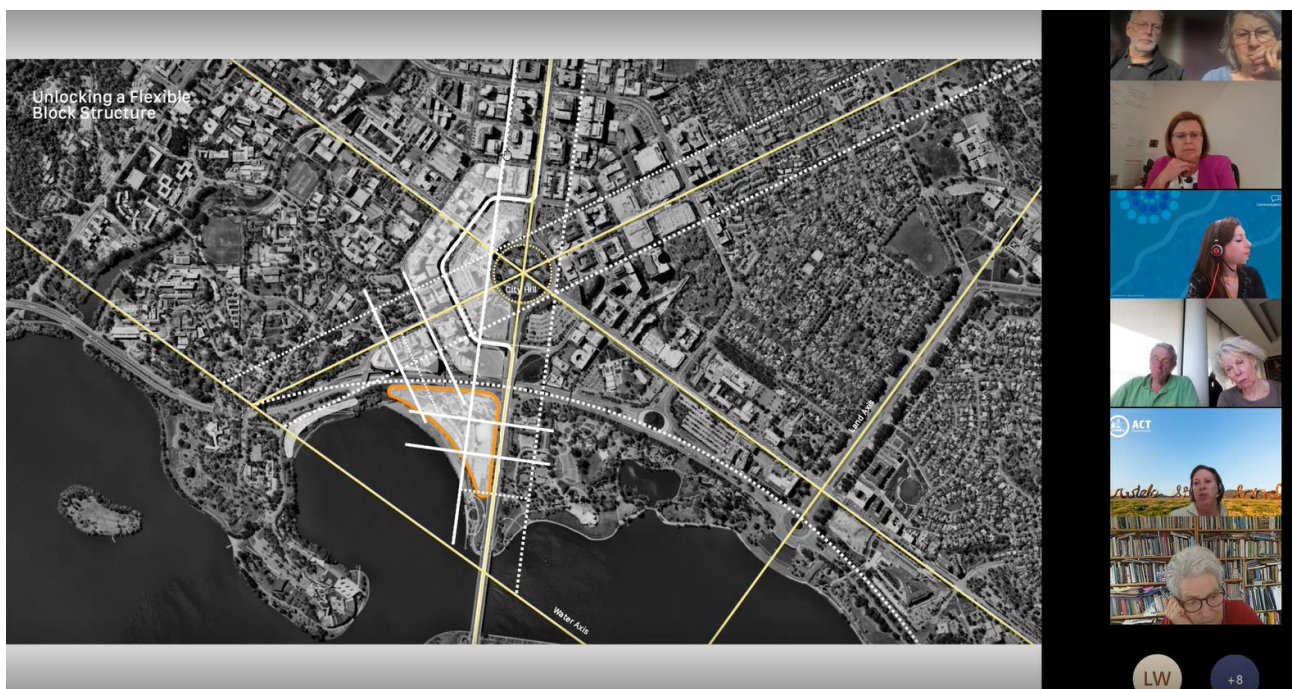
“Cycling, walking and shaded areas should be included. Take advantage of large open space for concerts and festivals.” – Community workshop participant



## Key insights from community workshop 2

- The key themes of discussions and feedback highlighted that vegetation and landscaping, the mix of residential and public buildings, and transport access were areas of focus.
- In contrast with community workshop 1, 67% of participants did not feel that the proposed estate plan reflected the themes in the Acton Waterfront Place Plan of respecting the Griffin Legacy and felt that the current design of the park had areas for improvement in terms of the balance between built versus natural environment.
- Participants felt that before construction starts, they would like to see trees, pop up food festivals, cycling events, and pop-up markets to temporarily activate the future park site.
- Participants said that for these types of developments they value trees, green spaces, and community spaces.
- Participants preferred to see playground and terraces built first, ahead of the arrival point, lake structures, playground, plaza, and community park.
- Participants also shared that they would like to see water features and fountains, charging stations for electric bikes and cars, as well as considerations for LGBTIQ+ inclusive signs, artwork and gender-neutral toilets.

**“We need planning that benefits a national capital, not a small-scale country town. We have to lift our game. Many Canberrans feel that planning in this city has dramatically declined in recent years, leading to a great deal of discontent” – Community workshop participant**





## Government workshops

The two Government workshops were held online via Teams on Tuesday 1 November and Friday 2 December 2022. The objective of these workshops was to engage with other areas of Government to better understand the infrastructure opportunities and challenges that the Acton Waterfront area may face during planning and construction.

29 participants attended and contributed to feedback. Attendees of these sessions represented ACT government areas such as the bus network, light rail, urban trees, asset management, event and public space, urban development, city planning, sustainability, and housing.

### Key insights from government workshop 1

- There was discussion around public transport and bus routes. Noting Light Rail is adjacent to the site, there was support that a bus would not run through the neighbourhood.
- There was discussion around planting options and the impact these could have on infrastructure and water quality. Municipal infrastructure design standards (MIS25) planting list was mentioned as a reference for the development of the planting schedule.
- Water management and stormwater options were also discussed at the meeting. Particularly in relation to access and maintenance of assets as a key point for further consideration as the design develops.
- There was also discussion around how many car parks would be permitted, and the number of nearby light rail stops. Noting the neighbourhood is adjacent to public transport route, there was support to challenge the parking generation rates.

“Should include targets and low carbon or net zero living with demonstration developments that have a showcase character.” - Government workshop participant

### Key insights from government workshop 2

- The key themes of discussions and feedback highlighted that transport, vegetation and landscaping and sustainability were areas of focus.
- Participants felt that the current design of the park reflected the feedback previously provided, although it was noted by several people that they hadn't provided feedback before.
- Participants highlighted the following for infrastructure services as a part of the Urban Design Framework:
  - Showcasing sustainability with renewables, urban heat mitigation, net zero carbon footprint and climate-wise landscaping.
  - Reducing car usage through transport planning, building design, and increasing usage of electric scooters and bikes.
  - Emergency services accessibility to and from the precinct.



- 75% of participants suggested there was room for improvement for the revised estate plan to reflect a better design outcome for the neighbourhood, including:
  - Improving water quality and providing other water amenities for the area.
  - Providing additional community power services (which could be solar) for activities like markets.
  - Considering increasing trees in streetscapes and open spaces to meet canopy targets.
  - Maintaining views across to Dairy Farmers Hill from Commonwealth Avenue and across Henry Rolland Park.

**“I’m really pleased to see the vision canvassed in workshop one’s starting to come together in these prelim designs, simple and legible connections between light rail and parklands.” – Government workshop participant**



## Pop-up sessions

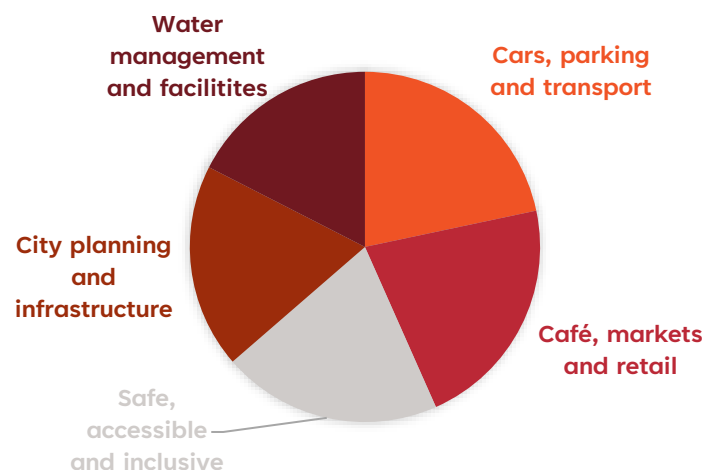
Two community pop-ups sessions were held on 18 November 2022 at Garema Place and 19 November 2022 at Henry Rolland Park with 44 participants in total. Participants were given an overview of the project and asked to provide feedback on draft designs.

Key themes from feedback provided at the pop-up sessions were:

- 31% of participants highlighted that it is important to effectively utilise transport and car parking, particularly for things like events, visitors, or tradespeople.
- 31% of participants felt that having cafes, markets, and retail opportunities available in the area was important to attract people.
- 29% of participants shared that making sure the area was accessible, safe, and inclusive for everyone was essential, particularly pedestrians and cyclists.
- 27% of participants highlighted that they valued city planning and infrastructure that supported the community, noting that they didn't want the area to be over developed with buildings.
- 25% of participants shared that wanted to see amenities that supported water activities such as kayaking and boats, as well as water amenities, including drinking water, showers, fountains, and toilets.
- The timings of deliverables were raised, while some participants felt that they should be finalised sooner and that they would like to see the project come to life, others highlighted that it shouldn't be rushed.
- Several people also commented around having design competitions for the area to foster creative design outcomes.

See Appendix B for the comments provided in the pop-up sessions.

### FEEDBACK FROM POP-UP SESSIONS



“Have design competitions - not just allowing consultants to make the proposal.” – Pop-up participant



## YourSay

YourSay consultation was opened on 31 October 2022 and closed on 12 December 2022. In total there were 2,585 YourSay visitors with 27 contributions specifically for the Acton Waterfront estate. 66% of YourSay contributors were local residents or use the Acton Waterfront area frequently. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the following areas via an interactive survey and rating tool:

- What is important to consider to appropriately connect the Acton Waterfront estate to the Canberra City?
- What amenities do you think are important for people recreating or living in the area?
- How can the natural environment be enhanced in this proposed urban development?
- What do you value in larger-scale developments in the Canberra City?
- How might the theme of Caring for Country be incorporated into the design of the open spaces throughout the estate?

The feedback provided via YourSay highlighted that:

- 90% of participants would use the public park or transit though the area as a part of walk or bike ride.
- 80% of participants would use other public amenities and facilities, such as BBQs, drinking water, play equipment, seating, shade, and toilets.
- Around 70% of responses emphasised the importance of green spaces, ample lighting, reducing cars and traffic, but ensuring easy connection and access from other parts of the city.
- Participants also shared the importance of Caring for Country and respecting the Traditional Custodians. They valued naming the streets and place after First Nations people, showcasing artwork, interpretive signage telling stories about the history of the area, and using local native plants.
- Affordability and budget were raised as a concern, as some participants did not want rates to be greatly impacted by developments.

Participants were asked to scale from 1-5, how they felt the proposed estate reflected the Place Themes of 1) Respecting the Griffin Legacy, 2) Contemporary garden city, 3) Community place, 4) Foreshore for the people and 5) Connections as journeys. Feedback suggested that while there is general support for the proposed designs, there is also room for improvement, with the weighted average of how people felt that the proposed estate developments highlighted below and in Appendix C:

**Figure 7.** Average responses to ‘How well do you feel the propose estate reflects the following place themes?’

Respecting the Griffin Legacy	Contemporary garden city	Community Place	Foreshore for the people	Connections as journeys
3.6/5	3.3/5	3.4/5	3.36/5	3.16/5

“There must be balance in amenities for everyone from 8-80. This might include, kids play space like arboretum, skate park, basketball court, live music amphitheatre with specific controls that allow late night activation, arts facilities including bookable workshops, cafes, bars, restaurants, grocer, chess boards or similar activities that can be accessed by the elderly.” – YourSay participant

## Email and formal submissions

The City Renewal Authority received 17 emails and formal submissions in total providing feedback for the Acton Waterfront. The majority of the emailed feedback was from NewActon residents, people who either attended pop-up sessions or workshops, or government stakeholders. The following community members and stakeholder organisations provided formal submissions via email:

- Lake Burley Griffin Guardians
- Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group
- NewActon residents and the broader community

Emails and formal submissions were treated in two ways in this report, the first way is that they were turned into data points and incorporated into the data that generated the overarching key themes, and the second way is the emailed feedback has been summarised in the following section. See Appendix D for all the emailed feedback provided and Attachments 1-3 for the formal submissions received.

## Key themes from feedback provided by email and formal submissions

### Green spaces and heritage

52% of responses highlighted the importance of ensuring that the views, green spaces, trees and canopy, wildlife, landscape, and heritage in line with the Griffin Plan were all upheld. The Lake Burley Griffin Guardians felt that the current plans do not adequately reflect the Griffin Plan.

Stakeholders also shared that they felt the waterfront should be retained as a “genuine greenbelt” - to preserve natural environments and wildlife within the city footprint and insisting on greater than 30% tree canopy targets.

“The area to the west of the planned Waterfront Parks and beach is home to many silver birch trees, grass running to the water and is itself a magnificent ‘green space.’” - Feedback from email submission

### Active travel and connection to the city

23% raised concerns around the area not recognising the importance of active travel and opportunities to improve connection from the city and other parts of Canberra.

Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group raised the concern that the designs did not appear to have considered the large volume of cycle traffic through the area that is likely to come as the city grows.

Meeting the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) MIS05 design standards and Active Travel Practitioner Tool maps was also highlighted as a concern in a number of emails and submissions.

The broader Canberra community would be best served by a total re-think of the value of well-maintained, low-density waterfront development in keeping with the original vision for Australia’s capital city.” - Feedback from email submission



## Developing the area

There were concerns raised around over-developing the area, with around 50% of feedback sharing that they did not value high-density residential or commercial buildings. Alternatively, a resident raised that they felt there was an opportunity for a significant public facility in the estate, such as a museum.

Several community members and stakeholders shared their lack of support for developers building the area and preferred the government to oversee the development. A NewActon resident's formal submission also shared that they valued innovation and sustainability to develop the area - making the precinct smoke free, pedestrian priority, NABERS 6 Star rated building, and electric vehicle-supported.

“Don't repeat the experience of Kingston Foreshore where developer-provided public facilities were not delivered.” - Feedback from email submission

## Social media comments

There were 24 social media comments that related to the engagement of the Acton Waterfront shared either via Twitter, Facebook or the RiotACT.

Key themes from feedback shared via social media were:

- 54% of comments were related to concerns around roads and public transport, particularly around light rail, parking, cycle routes and impacts to London Circuit traffic with developments.
- Around 16% of comments highlighted concerns around social housing, affordability and the budget associated with the developments.





## Next steps

The Authority will continue to work with the community and stakeholder engagement to understand community aspirations and needs for the Acton area, helping us to develop community-led design principles to shape the design moving forward.

The next step is planning approval by the National Capital Authority will be sought, as a part of the statutory planning requirements for developments in Acton. Work in the area will commence late 2023/24 to future proof the delivery of the park and future development behind the new park. All works will be subject to works approval and budget bids. Further community consultation will occur as these processes progress.

Future updates about the project will be made on [cityrenewal.act.gov.au](https://cityrenewal.act.gov.au)



## Appendices

### Appendix A – Country Narrative

# Country Narrative

## Ngunnawal Narratives

- 1 Welcome to Ngunnawal Country**

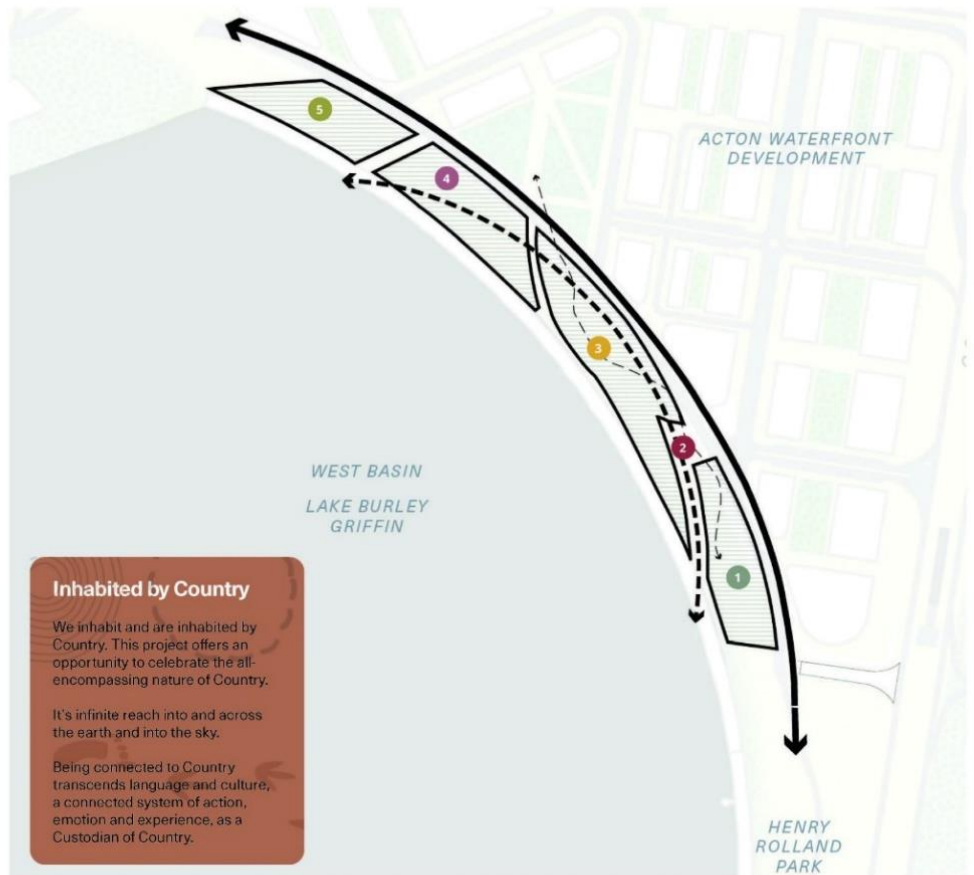
Visitors are welcomed to Ngunnawal Country at the main entry to the park as they pay their respects to the traditional owners of the land and acknowledge they are on Ngunnawal Country. They then begin their journey through the landscape, contributing to the Ngunnawal story and learning about the culture.
- 2 Traveling Country**

Aboriginal people are travelers and traveled across lands for vast distances. They traveled to share knowledge, to trade resources, to find water, hunt for food, and gather resources. Aboriginal people were guided by Country, following water ways and ridge lines. King Andy Lane was a known traveler in this region and a significant person to the Ngunnawal people.
- 3 Living Country**

At the heart of Country is people and community, where our spirituality is embedded in environmental consciousness. This is the point where people gather, camp, cook their food and share with each other. It's a community gathering area, camp site, water hole and high ground to see coming threats. It's a place of coming together, a place for people.
- 4 Acknowledging Country**

A journey interwoven with Aboriginal social and cultural narratives, a holistic mosaic of stories, knowledge and experiences that can be explored and shared across the site. Acknowledging the surrounding landscape and where the park sits within that context.
- 5 River Country**

Rivers and waterways are living entities; they are alive, capable of decisions, interactive and independent. Aboriginal cultural heritage in this regard is intangible as well as tangible, it is the knowledge. Water Country is the giver of life, it is what connects and defines landscapes, carrying salt and fresh water stories.



ACTON WATERFRONT PARK

Refer to Acton Waterfront Community Engagement Report  
Design Jam - 16.05.2022

 YERRABINGIN

ASPECT Studios 22

## Appendix B – Pop-up sessions feedback

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General feedback provided in pop-up sessions 1 and 2

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Foot bridge (pedestrian and bikes)

Height of buildings (4-storey 16 metres) along parkway (7-storey 25 metres)

Obstruction of view of current apartment on the 7th floor - New Acton South and Capital Residents

Concern with mixed development - residential / commercials / restaurants

Height of the residential on Commonwealth Avenue proposed apartment buildings

View of the lake / obstruction

Timeline: 2-4 year plan

Residents on the lower floors are going to be concerned with the obstructed views of the lake and looking down on the rooftops of the building in front of their apartments

Reflected glare

Soften rooftops with greenery

EV power charging stations

Where would the development start from?

Henry Rolland Park - keep it simple, no need for structure (shade), or keep it simple Alain De Botton - 'Architecture of Happiness'.

Put things that people will like, like a successful urban design - example in Sydney (look at this example)

Good examples of successful urban design: Garema Place, umbrellas, rope bollards, courtyard space e.g. National Film and Sound Archives, Hyatt Hotel, Acton Hotel (old Acton), University House, a single storey courtyard that allows the view of the sky, National Art Gallery, Carillion and National Portrait Gallery, Forecourt to Parliament House, Glebe Park, Gorman House

Have lots of eateries - e.g. at Regatta Point restaurant, the view of the lake is great

Needs to be lively

Put / design the dock over the water

La Cantina in Narrabundah - for atmosphere

Have design competitions - not just allowing consultants to make the proposal. It's got to work for the developer / construction



Cocerned about what goes into the development

Planting - e.g. Kingston Foreshore

Go with two rows of trees / not one in the middle

Acton Waterfront Park - sport equipment. Have a couple of stations across the site so that groups don't monopolise the area

Acton Waterfront Park - showers. Add showers for watersports in pavillions - outdoor

**PARKING!**

Cyclist - well done. Shade and bike charging station

Shade structures - simple ones that don't age

Henry Rolland Park - too complex

Alain De Botton - Architecture of Happiness. School of Life - what adults don't understand about architecture

Café on the water

Examples - Glebe Park, Gorman Park, Courthouse

Eateries are important

University courtyard, Hyde Hotel courtyard, Forecourt at New Parliament House

Planting - Kingston Foreshore is a good example - two rows of trees

Making any development to retain access better for the community

Integrity bike hire building and grounds to be retained - it is better for the community. The development looks to make it all private

Kayaking - sporting activities for the community

Hub not a club

Sheltered from the elements

Parking - people don't use public transport enough

Minimum park too much development

Parking needs to be free

Overdeveloped - make it a bit more like New Acton





Maintenance has to be primary

People in Nishi Estate - interested in more retail at the lake

People in Nishi Estate - wanted to know what the timing is on development

People in Nishi Estate - will council rates increase? Of there's new development, would that trigger higher rates?

People in Nishi Estate - Timing of the park - when will there be a park?

Estate - lots of cars will come down

Estate - parking

Estate - need minimum sizes

Estate - some of the developments are so poor

Estate - need private space and balcony

Estate - need bigger apartments

Estate - interested in housing choice e.g. affordable housing

Design competitions to make the buildings interesting

Estate - interested in how First Nations integrates into estate

Estate - noise is going to be horrendous. But that's urban living

Estate - green space on roofing is lovely

Estate - take your time and don't rush it

Estate - cafes on the lake will be nice

Sustainability - B&R discussion, SDA - disability accommodation

Outdoor exercise equipment - Perth Swan River

Corporate teams take over

Cater across ages

Don't need buildings on it

Estate - affordable housing. Particularly for the elderly

Look at more sustainable development - green roof, light coloured surfaces

Walkways - greenery, keep it cool in summer



**Make the most of the sun**

**Loop buses**

**Park: dog park - test?**

**Water play. Bins. Fountains to fill water bottles. Toilets**

**Needs more wayfinding signage (temporary) - for toilets, water fountains etc.**

**Grocer - Woollies express**

**Green roof: access for bars**

**CRA conversation notes: Design competition for buildings to ensure good design outcomes.**

**CRA conversation notes: Building heights and impact on New Acton**

**CRA conversation notes: Connectivity to the area from the city**

**CRA conversation notes: Rooftop reflection / glare will cause issues for New Acton if not addressed**

**Estate - cafes and bars on the ground floor would be fantastic**

**Happy with the design, just get on with it.**

**Equal access for all lake users to ensure there isn't a backlog of people try to access the park from the lake**

**Ensure accessible connections throughout the park**

**Look to activate the park with food trucks, coffee stall on weekends etc**

**Clear wayfinding for lake and land users of the park. Identify where users go to get off the lake into the park, where toilets are, local amenities etc**

**A destination activity for all - ferris wheel or zipline / paddle boats**

**Estate - Accessible connections for pedestrians and bicyclists**

**Estate - Diversity of product mix and delivery of social outcomes – a place for all to live**

**Estate - Support for the encompassing of first nation principles into urban planning**

**Estate - Concern over impact on views from existing buildings within the City Centre**

**Estate - Support for sustainable development and use of public transport network**

**Need to widen the pedestrian bridge – current is too narrow for cyclists and pedestrians**

**Need more pedestrian crossings of Parkes Way – have multiple ways to cross**



Government should do a design competition for a number of sites

Insist on high design quality – New Acton sets a precedent – should be of similar high quality

Solar on roofs but also lots of green roofs

Concern about view lines from New Acton South and Capital Apartments

Be good to think about the Movement and Place (Transport NSW) framework as this area will attract lots of people

Concerned about sea planes

Temporary activations - e.g. pop-up bars

Interested in heights

Current carpark isn't utilised

Access from West Row is necessary

More inspired design of blocks and buildings - add to the aesthetic

Need affordable options and to consider affordable rent options

There's a more affordable rental option in Belconnen that's great for short-term stay

Bike hire building (existing) - keep the history. Ideal central hub. Hub for paddle activities and paddle boarding, lots of recreational enjoyment

Can't be gated - open and safe

The square is really nice

Misting across path and various areas for hot days

Beach area - why rock below water? Beach is not usable and is dangerous

Waterplay shade!

Boardwalk is very bright. Suggest a tree lined path - SHADE!

Development supermarket LARGE

Cycling path to be separated

Toilets needed at Henry Rolland

Apartment living - keep the greenery, softer

Apartment living - What about carparking? Problems with tradies / visitors carparking



Apartment living - Drawing more people to the area, where would they park?

Apartment living - Needs to be free parking

Apartment living - this area is over developed

Apartment living - 4-6 storey high is too congested

Apartment living - will there be more developments in the area that's being raised?

New Acton resident on the 8th floor: get the lake view, concern with the construction period (fences everywhere), it takes just too long to get things done. Concern with obstruction of the lake view (viewline)

Food, toilets, change

Street art

Accessibility

Community housing is important

Artistic expression

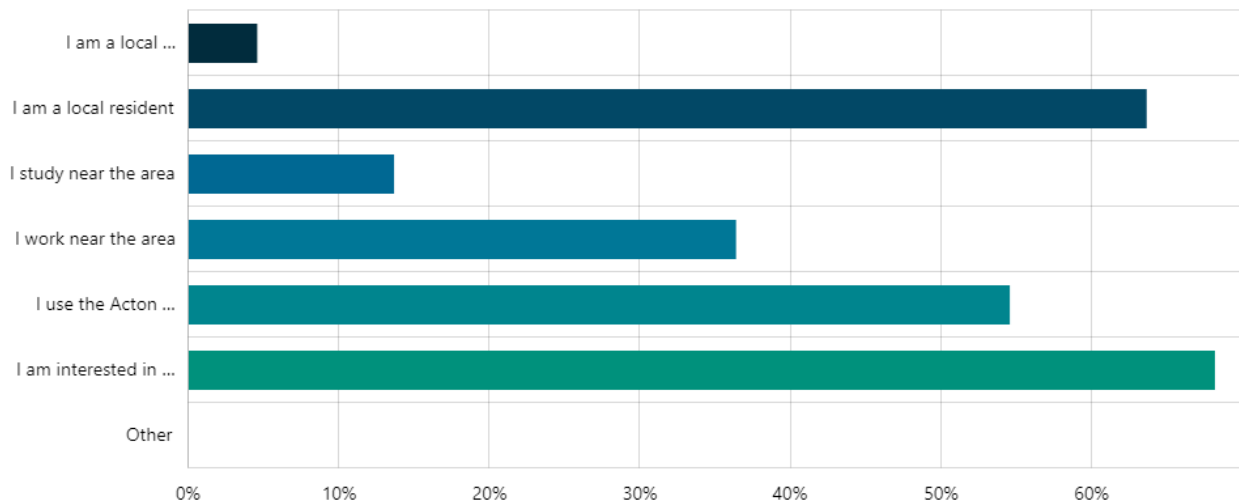
More people are able to ride bikes

Like the proposal of this development

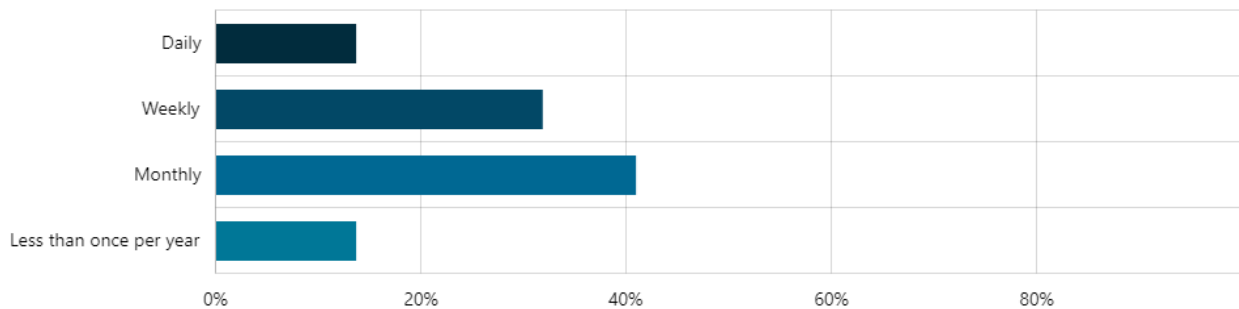
Make use of the area for everybody

## Appendix C – YourSay data

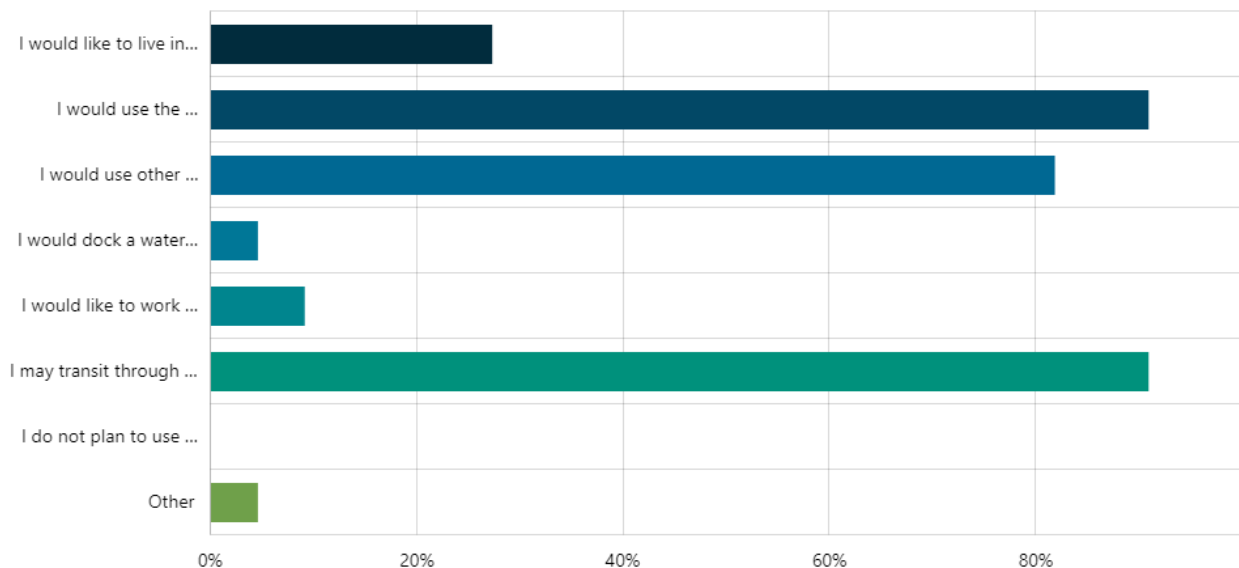
What is your connection to the Acton Waterfront project?



How often do you currently visit the Acton Waterfront?

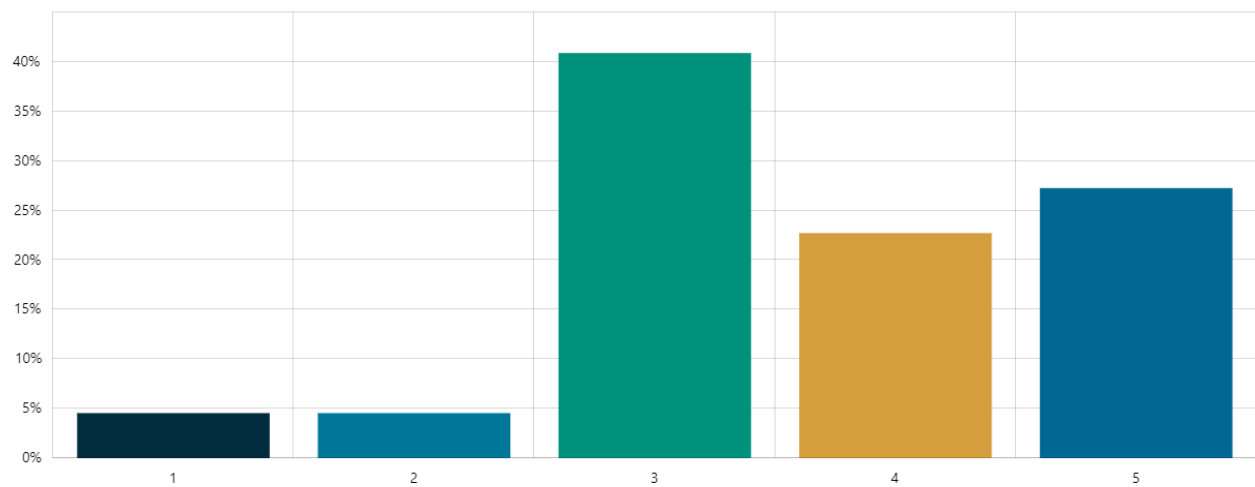


How do you intend to use the facilities at the future Acton Waterfront?

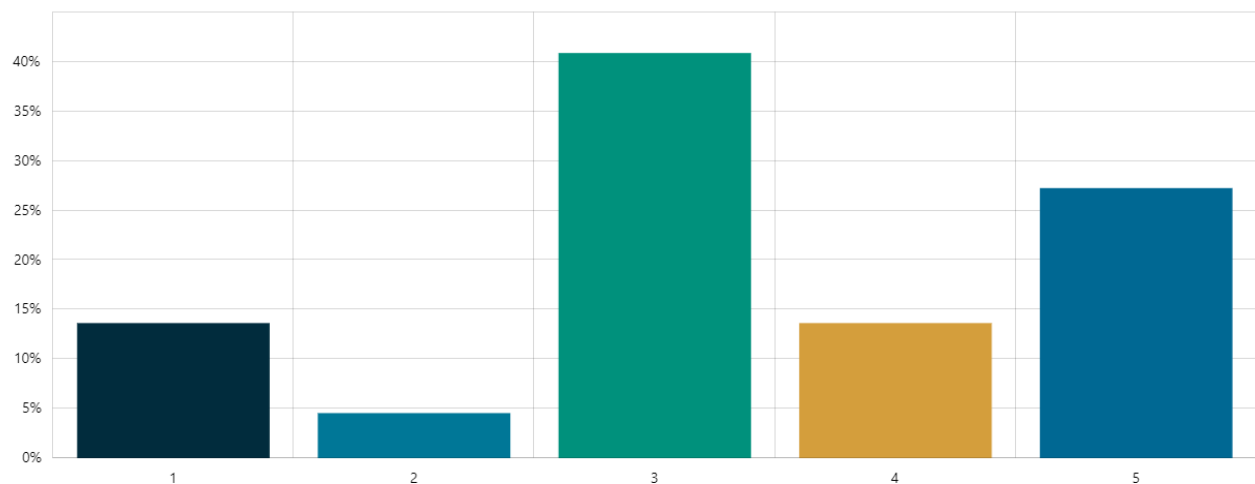




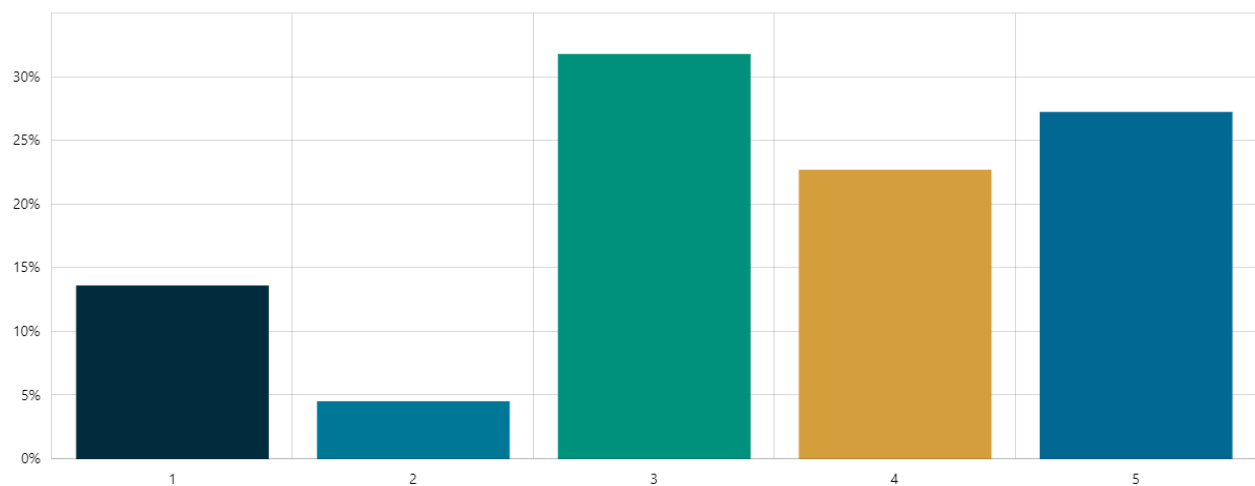
### Respecting the Griffin Legacy



### Contemporary garden city

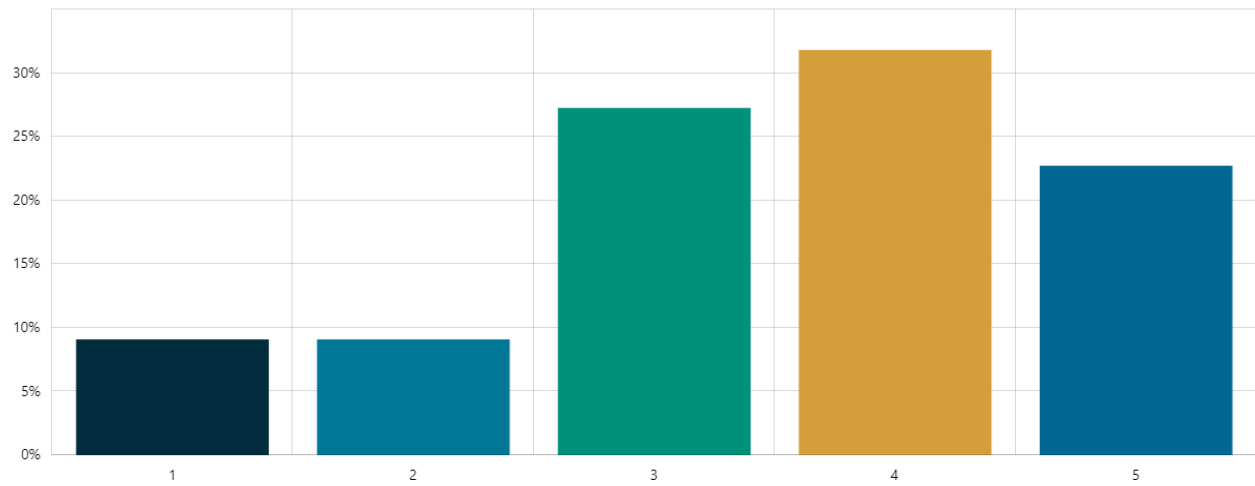


### Community place

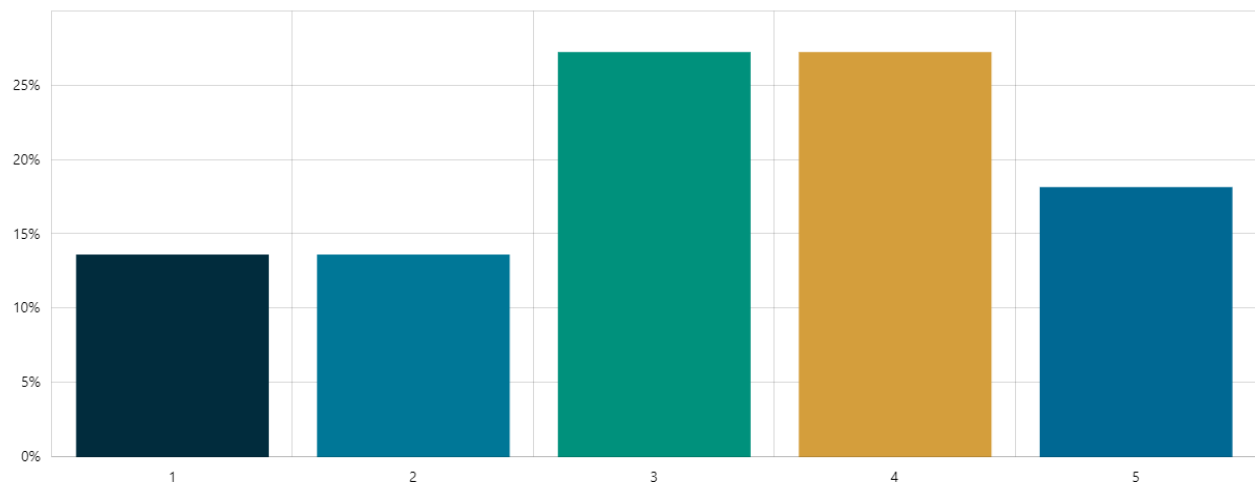




### Foreshore for the people



### Connections as journeys





**ACT**  
Government

**CITY  
RENEWAL  
AUTHORITY**

## Appendix D – Email submissions

See the following attachments for the stakeholder email submissions:

- Attachment 1 - Lake Burley Griffin Guardians
- Attachment 2 - Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group
- Attachment 3 - NewActon residents and broader community (15 submissions)

The table below captures the feedback emailed by community members:

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### Community email submissions

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Just wanted to give my feedback on Acton waterfront, by the way your advertised link in the CBR newsletter doesn't get you through.

And it feels like a fait accompli when artist impressions of the Acton foreshore has been advertised in the Canberra Times, it feels like you're just ticking boxes, not really wanting feedback.

I find the waterfront areas of Canberra very concrete manicured and has no soul or any resemblance to nature, The Barangaroo Reserve in Sydney's foreshore is completely the opposite there is a very soul satisfying walk around the Waters edge and you feel encased in nature, there's a very grounding feeling walking through something beautiful. And I imagine that would have cost a pretty penny, with our government they seem to give so much to developers, It would be nice if there was something given back to nature.

As an example Kingston foreshore is such a joke, a concrete canyon with no real beauty or substantial landscaping of the public spaces, given over to unobstructed views for the benefit of the apartments. And when there is something of beauty given to the community they rally together to keep it that way creating real community for example Bragg- Brennan St Park in our community with its invigorating new swales giving life to what was a desert Park and the community coming together to do it's bit, organised by the community.

---

I have had a look at the design of the Acton Waterfront Park Community Engagement Concept Design and the general objectives look great. I am however concerned that it does not recognise the importance of this area for active travel and this could be improved to ensure the best outcomes can be achieved for active travel through the space.

As you would be aware the park is located on key active travel routes both for transportation (Main Community Route – City to Queanbeyan etc.) and a Principal Recreational Trail (Burley Griffin Circuit forming part of the Western Loop).

My concerns are:

The Key connections plan does not appear to recognise the key active travel connections that are on the ground. Reference could be made to <https://activeinfrastructure.net.au/> to include the alignments of the designated Main Community Routes and Principal Recreational Trails on the plan. For example the western side of Commonwealth bridge and the trunk path connection to the National Museum of Australia that services the Burley Griffin Circuit are omitted from the plan.

The simplification of including just Cycling and Pedestrian Connections may lead to poor design outcomes for people travelling through the space. Many other lake users will be transient and will not be choosing to come to the park as a destination. Different considerations in path design are required for through movements for the transportation routes compared to paths where people may linger. How can physical

---



infrastructure within the space be designed to recognise the needs of people moving through the space and that they don't devalue the experience of people visiting / lingering in the space and vice versa.

The importance of Personnel Mobility Devices (PMDs) including scooters for people getting around in Canberra today and how they may impact on the design of paths through the space does not appear to have been included.

Confused use of language regarding paths may lead to poor outcomes. There is no such facility as a separated cycle lane. A designated bicycle(-only) path will only allow use by cyclists and PMDs in Canberra. Where will joggers go – which paths should they be traversing – probably best not to put them into spaces where people are lingering or contemplating etc. How will the design allow for the designated bicycle(-only) path to connect in to existing facilities at each end to ensure legibility and intended use.

Henry Rolland Park has not been delivered to increase the amenity of active travel and although it is a nice place to visit the design is very difficult for people to intuitively find a way through, especially if travelling around the lake on a bike or scooter.

The importance of placing facilities such as seating and artworks / sculptures / garden beds so that through paths are not impeded or peoples legs for safety and amenity are not within the clear travel space should be a consideration in the concept design so that compromises are not required in the detailed phase.

---

As a participant in previous engagements, we talked not just about separation of cars from cyclists and pedestrians, but also separation of cyclists from pedestrians. This plan fails to do that. It talks of mimicking Queen Elizabeth Terrace (well, it didn't actually get the name right, but anyhoo...). I'm not sure if that should be taken as a good example of management of traffic flow. Vehicles, including all AFP vehicles (shouldn't they set an example?) are normally doing well over the posted speed limit, resulting in pedestrians and most cyclists sticking to the other paths. In the proposal, diagrams show separation between pedestrians and cyclists, but in reality, in the most recently opened section there is no separation. Probably 30-50% of traffic on the areas identified on the maps as pedestrian connections are cyclists, and vice versa for paths marked for as cycling connections. Why? The transition at John Holland Park gives cyclists a choice of joining a road where zero drivers drive at the posted speed limit or following the footpath. Great for them, but bad for pedestrians, who feel about as threatened by cyclists and scooter riders as they do of cars. Also, there is zero signage discouraging cyclists from using the pedestrians areas.

The canopy strategy is very disappointing. First off, what is the definition of canopy? Does it need to shade 80% of the ground beneath it or 10%? In reality I think that based on recent plantings you are talking about 30% of a small section of the whole development providing 20% reduction. Effectively being 6% canopy. And that is once they are fully grown in a few decades.

Also, stop putting completely unrealistic drawings and photographs in your publications. Don't paint tramlines as green, roads as almost completely shaded by trees or cars, cyclists and pedestrians mixing in some sort of utopia. It is deceptive.

---

The new footpath along the Acton Waterfront is a great walk but why were no rubbish bins and drinking fountains included in the initial design.

I walk along there most days. The rubbish started appearing on day 2 - sadly that's human nature! I carry a water bottle, but having nowhere to refill it during a walk, or for other people - no drinking fountain to have a drink from, was very short sighted for somewhere that is in full sun and no likelihood of shady trees for a few years.

---

**My opinion of your proposals:**

**You have spoilt the form of the Lake that was carefully planned and constructed by the NCDC with a balanced form of 3 central basins**

**You have used the Griffin's conceptual basin plan to legitimise this action. The Griffin's would not be proud of this mess,**

**You have stolen our lakebed in order to sell off public parklands to developers, that was part of the Griffin's plan.**

**You have destroyed the lakeside park with its naturalising lake edge and will destroy parking and access to the lakeside that Canberrans and visitors enjoyed.**

**What you are creating is a playground with enormous quantities concrete for the future residents of the apartment estate.**

**You have achieved an anti-community ugly development and destroyed significant heritage of the Lake.**

**The best you can now do is fill it with trees to disguise this example of hideous destructive planning.**

---

**We attended the on-line workshop on Thursday 1 December 2022.**

**The meeting was told that there are no current plans for what should happen to land to the west of the western end of the Waterfront Parks which end in the 'Terraces' and the beach.**

**There was expressed an intention to provide 'green space' generally in the area. That area to the west of the planned Waterfront Parks and beach is home to many silver birch trees, grass running to the water and is itself a magnificent 'green space'. For unexplained reasons, the Plan shows buildings on this area even though it was acknowledged that the future for this area is unknown.**

**Our concern is that a plan showing buildings, when viewed many years from now at the time of serious planning of the use of this land, can be interpreted as implying that such use was expected in the future and approved when the current plan was being finalised.**

**Our request is that no intended use be shown for land where there is no current use planned. Please remove any indication of future use of the land to the west of the Waterfront Parks so as to leave a blank canvas for future planners.**

**Thank you.**

---

**Thanks for today's session, there are some great aspects to what you are proposing at Acton Waterfront. Some questions we need to clarify on housing and land for other uses:**

**How many homes and area for other uses are possible and what proportion of the city and inner north's future growth needs can be accommodated? I note you mentioned 940 dwellings, is that correct and what is the approx. area for commercial/residential/community and other uses you are targeting?**

**What is the expected timing for initial land releases and what is your staging plan? I noted your presentation mentioned construction starting in 2025, can you please confirm? Note we are developing next year's ILRP and this information would be of interest to EPSDD and government around timing and suitability/feasibility of land release to provide homes for people and other community benefits.**

**A few further notes for your consideration – please consider these informal notes for your use, happy to discuss.**

**Sustainability**

**Precinct, block, and public domain level controls for low whole of life carbon; net zero operational carbon; reduced embodied carbon; and reduced whole of life carbon should all be considered.**

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Living infrastructure and urban heat mitigation will need to be considered in line with the draft Territory Plan Building orientation – the urban design layout could take better advantage of north-facing living areas for solar access

#### **Landscape**

Where is the pool? With some geothermal or solar heating an outdoor pool in this location could be an amazing drawcard and a magnet for local community and visitors to Canberra to enjoy for much of the year. The previous ambitions for creating a waterfront park referencing Southbank in Brisbane, or the Cairns promenade could be a fantastic way to use the space. See also attached from <https://www.images.act.gov.au/>, people want to use the lake more we just need the right landscapes and architecture that addresses the lake.

Outdoor dining and public space need to be well-integrated linking the lake, waterfront edge and built form (including commercial and community uses) – see comments on road below

Integrated wind and weather protection are needed for public space and the design and arrangement of developments to minimise wind tunnel effects between buildings

Lighting – will need to be full cut-off and designed in line with NCA's Outdoor Lighting Policy

How long will the landscape take to establish? I note TCCS comments around preferring 1m stock to establish Eucalyptus trees – however this could take several decades to develop sufficient shading and landscape character. Suggest exploring a mix of other tree species that could suit advanced mature planting to provide improved amenity, cooling, shade and mitigate the visual impact of built form from the lake (this will also improve community support for the development)

Retention of mature trees where possible across the site should be explored and if not viable, explore relocation or replacement with equivalent canopy coverage

#### **Transport and access**

The road separating the waterfront edge public promenade and buildings needs to be reviewed – this will severely impact the quality, amenity and character of this area, reducing commercial/community use of this area (e.g. waterfront dining and entertainment), and cause safety issues. It would be far preferable to have this road located at the rear of the buildings, making the main frontage to the lake a space for people.

Cycling infrastructure and managing access/conflict – noting experience from Kingston Foreshore a separate cycle path will be needed to accommodate commuter cycling, ideally this also would be located at the rear of the buildings facing the lake in an accessible, efficient, prominent and safe location (to avoid conflict between people cycling at higher speeds and others).

#### **Built Form**

Building heights and densities – need to review in consultation with community and NCA, with integration of landscape/greening – this is vital to optimise the planning and housing opportunities and outcomes for making this a vibrant, contemporary neighbourhood and one of the last remaining significantly sized development opportunities in the city precinct.

#### **Destination, character and land uses**

To make this a drawcard for tourism, events and public activity – an economic planning assessment with community needs assessment and retail study would assist to identify land use requirements (including education/child care etc) and opportunities for commercial uses, events, and sharing of public space management (e.g. pools, beaches, lawns).

A development feasibility would also assist to inform decisions on financial feasibility of the overall development – likely something Treasury will be interested in for business cases etc.



## Heritage

On the edge of the West Basin area are a limestone outcrop and potential remnants of lime kilns used in early construction of Canberra – just checking how this is being considered?

## Levels and building heights

Likely need to check with NCA if raising levels by 6m if building heights will be changed?

## Site Investigations

Would be interested to know if CRA has done updated engineering/environmental/other technical due diligence site investigations for site servicing (electrical, communications, hydraulics (water, sewer, stormwater), potential contamination, ecological, transport, heritage, trees to confirm suitability. If EPSDD needs to assist we need to understand timing and scope so we can consider in our forward work program.

## Thanks

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Acton Waterfront and Estate proposals. If the Authority is truly concerned with community opinion then the whole project needs to be revised in line with the visions and feedback received. The waterfront should be retained as a genuine greenbelt, not a token 45 metre wide strip of concrete pathways with some grass and trees.

The Authority's stated vision is that the Waterfront would have two important roles, as a destination for everyday life, and a major foreshore recreational destination for the broader Canberra community and tourists. While this is appealing and desirable, the proposed estate can be reasonably expected to have the opposite effect.

If building a waterfront that all Canberrans and visitors can enjoy is truly the vision, then firstly we must question the apparent assumption that a residential development is an integral part of the waterfront. During this consultation process we've been given the opportunity to comment on the configuration of a significant residential component, gathering ideas and feedback to inform the refinement of that proposed estate plan, attempting to shoehorn that into the desired vision. Is the consultation just a means to get community approval for a building program that will actually reduce the accessibility and attraction of the Acton Waterfront area?. In most progressive cities of the world, the current trend is to preserve natural environments within the city footprint, not to turn public green space over to developers as is the trend in Canberra and the risk with the Acton Waterfront.

How does a residential estate build a connection between the city and the lake, and make the Acton foreshore more attractive as a destination?

The five themes raised during the consultation for the Place Plan were

- Respecting the Griffin Legacy
- Contemporary garden city
- Community place
- Foreshore for the people
- Connections as journeys

In the Acton Waterfront feedback document, we see this statement "The City Renewal Authority is working closely with the community and stakeholders to transform the Acton Waterfront into a place for all Canberrans to enjoy. This means more open spaces, improved connections with the City Centre, better access for water activities, and a celebration of the site's history and national significance. Importantly, all initiatives are grounded by care for the land, respect for the lake and the lakeshore landscape."

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It should be apparent from these consultations that a residential estate is contrary to most if not all of the feedback, particularly with regard to more open spaces, better access for water activities, care for the land, respect for the lake and landscape.

#### **Respecting the Griffin Legacy**

Why is a cramped, built environment being promoted as part of the Burley-Griffin's original vision for the city. The Burley-Griffins strongly valued the natural environment in the city and around the lake, a planned garden city with community access to greenbelts. Canberra incorporates large areas of natural vegetation that have earned it the title of the 'bush capital'. Many of these are now being built upon. Building apartments along the lake frontage is contrary to the Burley-Griffin legacy. A low density development that retains the natural connection with the lake is much more in keeping with their original vision.

#### **Contemporary garden city**

Once green space is turned into buildings it is gone forever. The 'estate' has some token green patches, and 'sight lines' to the lake. The reality is that the broader Canberra community and tourists will be looking at a row of buildings along Commonwealth Ave, with the occasional glimpse down concrete canyons to what is currently an unobstructed view of the lake and environment. The estate directly contravenes the design principle of 'enhancing views to recognisable and popular images of the National Capital'. The reality is you can't see through buildings, and preserving some narrow lines of sight is a degradation not an improvement, it's tokenism to facilitate the approval process.

#### **Community place / Foreshore for the people**

What other options could be considered that retain the foreshore as recreational destination for the broader Canberra community and tourists? The 45 metre setback is farcical - barely 2 cricket pitches away from the (now conveniently displaced) shoreline will be buildings that for the most part of the day block the sunlight along a concrete foreshore walk. A focus on outdoor venues for live events, eating, sports and other activities would go much further to meeting the desired vision for the area as a community place and foreshore for the people

#### **Connections as journeys**

We've heard several times that the current site is just an ugly carpark. The planning assumption seems to be that it can only be made more useful by an inevitable, dense construction program. If some hundreds of residences are added to the area, this will necessarily reduce access for the wider Canberran population who frequent the area for the many cultural and entertainment events in the Commonwealth Park area. The light rail may one day facilitate access to the eastern end of the waterfront, but only for those who live along its length. For the rest, this section of the waterfront will be less accessible.

The broader Canberra community would be best served by a total re-think of the value of well-maintained, low-density waterfront development in keeping with the original vision for Australia's capital city.

This is the beautiful view looking northeast from the museum to the Acton waterfront and Mt Ainslie. It's hard to conceive why anyone would believe this vista will be improved by rows of residences. My hope is that the real vision for this area will overcome a short-sighted profit-driven imperative to build more residential property.

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Submission to the City Renewal Authority re Acton Waterfront Westbasin Redevelopment, Community Consultation Process Input

The 'vision' images do not represent what is eventually built.

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Note the boardwalk in Image 1 appears to be a softer surface than the harsh concrete reality in Image 2. Too many hard, hot surfaces in the proposed redevelopment undermine the stated intention to preserve and re-establish the original green garden Griffin vision for Canberra and the lakeside. We need soft, green, natural garden surfaces lakeside that will not add to the heatbasin of the city. Plentiful planting > hard surfaces, acknowledging the intrinsic value of nature in this precinct, above overwrought designer concepts that intellectualise what is a very basic human need for the natural environment. Butterfly habitat exists around the lake in the adjoining area towards the museum where redevelopment has not yet taken place. Native bees abound. Birds forage. I walked that area this morning. Will the new development pass the 'butterfly habitat test'? Not likely in the current proposal. The lake is the lungs of the civic area. The community in recent times has sent clear messages via the ballot box that the environment cannot be ignored and is a top concern. Unfortunately the exceedingly long time lag (decades) in redeveloping the Westbasin area means that the stated priority objectives to "Invest in legacy capital works that improve the precinct, increase pride and leave a legacy for all" have a predominant economic, pro-development focus, and do not reflect newer current shifts in the priorities of people, responding to recent pressing climate emergencies, fire, flood and weather events. These are now a topmost in the community concern. If a greening agenda is buried in this redevelopment proposal as a minor, not major intention, it will not be appropriately addressed. Once this green area is built over it will be lost to future generations forever and they will judge you harshly for it. If you hypothetically began the consultation process now, could you be confident that what is being proposed would reflect current and future public needs and concerns? Responsive and timely community-based consultations should enable inclusion of CURRENT expressed needs instead of dismissing issues raised in deference to an existing outdated 'development plan' approved long before critical environmental factors were high on the public agenda.

**Example:**

The number of lighting posts installed far exceeds that in the Image1 projection, resulting in harsh light pollution at night. This adversely impacts nocturnal animals, insects and people trying to sleep nearby. What ongoing monitoring of environmental degradation is being done during the project? Assumptions are made that development of the area is a positive thing.

During a recent online forum public discussion event, a quick dismissal of one participant's concern about the local endangered moth population as 'there are none, we did a survey' when she has actually photographed the species in this area. The fact that you didn't find any during your limited survey is an argument for the critical need to preserve habitat of rare, endangered insects not a rationale for destroying it.

Current redevelopment plans that focus on 'Maintaining sightlines to the lake' are laughable, these computer made drawings of imagined places are just lines drawn on plan compared with the actual excellent vision of the lake currently available through existing trees and open spaces. Once tall buildings are constructed, they will limit views of the lake, not enable them. This fallacy needs to be called out for the designer-talk BS that it is. Once the buildings are constructed it is too late. In fact some of the design images take liberties presenting drawings of buildings on land that is privately owned and over which the development plan has no application. Presenting images of built structures over natural environments is part of the 'development creep' that assumes built = desirable and good, whilst nature = undesirable and expendable. This is an assumption I strongly challenge. Putting such images into the public consciousness is an insidious part of the development creep taking away our natural places of public land.

The removal of large existing trees and the replacement with small younger trees is lamentable and must be avoided. Rapidly planting large established trees to replace those already removed will ensure a comparable green value is maintained. We need to ensure continuing habitat for the birds that currently





live in the Westbasin surrounding area. Using a 'significance' rating to justify trees being removed is irrelevant because this means nothing to the birds currently living there whose habitat is being removed. Where will the birds live? On the buildings?

The development plan describes the adjoining carpark and parkland as underutilised, using this as a rationale for development. I challenge this assumption based on the maximised carpark use day and night during Floriade, and whenever concerts or events are held in Commonwealth Park. Safe night time access to parking is an incentive for Canberrans of all ages to frequent these events. The stated objective of opening the Westbasin Precinct up to people of wider Canberra is questionable if you are removing the parking capacity for large numbers of people in the outer areas of Canberra who are reliant on cars for transport, especially those with children and elderly people.

Additionally, establishing a beach yet not providing easy access for cars carrying kayaks to launch there is a design flaw. Carrying vessels or even children's playthings from the existing carpark is already quite a stretch, which will be made impossible if the carparks are removed. The reality of cars being essential to outer Canberra life is a blind spot in this development plan.

Another constituent group is local residents and workers who use the Westbasin as area as their back garden, recreation and exercise location. Unfortunately, the design plans pay scant attention to the existing walkway bridge over which people from the University precinct, NewActon and Civic access the lakeside area. It is quite difficult to even find the walkway bridge in some of the plans. Certainly, the existing walking/cycling bridge access has not been a key factor in design considerations so far. This, along with the linear design plan that assumes that users will arrive at the 'arrival area' bridge end via light rail rather than walking or cycling over the existing access point overlooks current users and their needs.

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## **Attachment 1 - Lake Burley Griffin Guardians**

## **Attachment 2 - Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group**

## **Attachment 3 – NewActon residents**



# Attachment 1 - Lake Burley Griffin Guardians



Address: [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au)

## ACTON WATERFRONT AND ESTATE COMMENTS

### Dear City Renewal Authority

The following comments are informed by both participation in the CRA Workshop of 26 November 2022 and available, online information.

#### Key concerns

The following long list of concerning issues, connected to both components of this West Basin endeavour, emphasise, yet again, the overall project's bad design and obvious lack of financial viability.

The following seriously undermines the venture and which a major recasting is unlikely to fix as they are all tied to the CRA's vision of 'success':

- as the Guardians have consistently indicated for years, this proposal represents an egregious and unjustified loss of public space in a densely populated area close to the City centre;
- the thin public domain at the Lake's edge, including a road, and its other crowded elements with a token Indigenous theme;
- coupled to an also very congested estate, clearly driven by a very strong, ACT Government financial imperative;
- with extremely expensive, but critically needed, Parkes Way crossings, requiring fill across the entire development site;
- vista-blocking buildings along the critical Parkes Way and Commonwealth Avenue edges;
- likely conflicts between the expected 10,000 visitor events, and the up-market residences;
- no explicit affordable or social housing requirement;
- extremely limited parking for visitors;
- an honest Business Case, currently unavailable, that includes the earlier stages of the West Basin project, is essential to determine the real financial viability of the project;
- the recent Auditor-General's report on the ACT Government's performance at West Basin, in terms of the early stages of the Waterfront project, emphasises our concerns with the capacities of the Government to deliver what it promises to provide, through a high standard process of professional management, integrity and quality - that which the community expects – or will it continue to mismanage and disappoint?
- multiple other issues (the detail and implications of some is not known); and
- overly long development delivery times.

#### Recommendation

However, the Guardians recommend a development moratorium to provide space to consider an independent, overall, deep, project review with a seriously critical exploration of any potentially ongoing issues identified by the Auditor-General (in the extended contract and its variations for the boardwalk) and similar, overall concerns, is otherwise essential to ensure confidence in the integrity, fidelity and value of the project to the community.

### **The Griffin Legacy**

The consistency to the 'Griffin Legacy' of the proposed West Basin developments were proudly asserted by the CRA representatives at this Workshop and consequently challenged by participants because of the dubious qualities of this document produced to present commercial opportunities rather than the preservation of LBG's heritage and other qualities. It is not an appropriate standard to use for the conformity with the Walter Burley Griffin vision or success of the project so far and future proposals for this area of West Basin.

Griffin stated that his vision for the then future Lake was that it be surrounded by parkland. This has been ignored whilst other more commercial interests, based on highly selected, stretched interpretations of Griffin have been promoted.

The Guardians have repeatedly, over a long period, suggested to both the CRA and the NCA, that, whilst there was a portion of the area now proposed for the Park and the Estate dedicated to useful parking, the much neglected Acton Park should be revived with a proper maintenance programme and allowed to continue as a positive, green contribution to City recreation and valuable 'lungs' for the City. This is, unfortunately, not being realised.

The CRA's (and before that, the LDA's) exceedingly inadequate performance in delivering the early stages of this development, as documented in the Auditor-General's Report, *Procurement and Contracting Activities for the Acton Waterfront Project No 5/2022*, do not create a positive feeling either in us or the community for the site and its development. The Auditor-General said, in part, that the procurement lacked transparency and the contract was poorly managed. The ACT Government has not reacted with great positivity and meaningful demonstration of changes in approach or bureaucracy to this damning report. The Guardians have little confidence in its future performance at West Basin but hope that improvements can be made in project design, management and outcomes.

### **The Park**

The Park would be mostly given over to Indigenous themes, including a Welcome to Country site at the southern end, Ngunnawal interpretive areas, endemic and resilient plantings, and a raised bush tucker area at the northern end (near the beach) all to be co-designed with the Ngunnawal Council.

The Guardians previous attendance at the Community and Key Stakeholder Workshops, 16-17/5/22, made obvious the apparent tokenism of the suggested Indigenous design elements (analogous to green wash) of the Park with little provided rationale for this theme or the lack of local Indigenous representation from the Ngambri. An Indigenous name for the Park is now also said to be under consideration.

The CRA defence of this lack of involvement, when asked, was a referral to the ACT Government policy on Indigenous consultation exclusively with the Ngunnawal, the use of the Sydney Indigenous consultancy, Yerrabingin, and advice sought from another Indigenous body which has some Ngambri involvement. This doesn't resolve this important, overriding, ethical question of the indefensible real lack of full and equitable Ngambri consultation.

The Park was described as 500m by 50m and including the road (Barrine Drive). This road inclusion was seen to be inappropriate by all community participants. The CRA representative at the

Workshop suggested that this might be an area for further discussion, but, unfortunately, no promises were made. Any expansion of the Park is desirable as it will allow the many suggested inclusions to have more space – it does seem overly-packed at present.

The first stage of the Park (and the only part funded) is to build a raised berm on top of some of the gravel fill. This mound would need 18 months to settle, so this park will be unusable until around 2025.

Future stages would see progressive development of the landscape and construction of low scale pavilions for public toilets, cafes, etc. Overall, the project seems overly attenuated - the whole Park is expected to take ten years to complete. This delay is extraordinary, given the promises made. The community can be expected to be dissatisfied with this extended construction delay in providing appropriate waterfront access along this West Basin foreshore.

We have learnt that Acton Waterfront would host public events of up to 10,000 people. This is astonishing and perhaps this would not be expected without the facilities promised, so more than ten years away (presumably, plus a return of the parking function, now removed), but we wonder how the intended Estate residents will react to such large events at the edge of the promised Estate? It does not seem an attractive element in this presumed high-end, exclusive, enclave for both quiet living and streets, even with water views.

### **The Estate**

The main feature of the Estate is the continuation of the road grid south of Parkes Way, a road bridge over Parkes Way (elsewhere called West Row) and two “green” foot bridges to link New Acton and the Estate. Some of these will come in at first floor level of the new buildings.

The Estate would be developed from the late 2020's. We were told the Estate would take 30 years to build (a similar time scale as Kingston Foreshore) and there is a debate within Government about the ‘delivery model’, whether it would be Government led or by ‘a future buyer’. Depending which model is chosen, additions may be required to the National Capital Plan.

The associated infrastructure costs to create a satisfactory Estate (roads, public spaces, bridges, and services) are huge and rising so it does seem likely that it may never be fully delivered.

Examining one area - the viability of the development is questionable with the extra costs previously, officially estimated for bridging Parkes Way (now abandoned), ranging from c\$100m-\$900M depending on the number of crossings proposed. This high cost was acknowledged as an issue, particularly when compared to the usual (lower) infrastructure costs of establishing a suburb elsewhere in the ACT.

When asked if they would produce a Business Plan, CRA representatives agreed it would be done (next year), however, it was made clear that would only relate to this stage of the works not earlier phases such as Henry Rolland Park, the Lake-infill and the Boardwalk.

This approach, in our view, and probably of the reasonable person, will give a false impression of the public cost of the project as these preliminary items all underpin the actual Estate construction – it would be much less viable without these patently linked earlier and expensive stages. An honest Business Case needs to include these preparatory costs, not just the project stage/s to come.



To achieve an appropriate grade for these bridges, we were advised by the CRA representatives, the whole of the Estate area would need to be raised. This is important because it adds to the time and cost, means all the mature trees in the carparks are likely to be condemned, means there will be undesirable 'basement' development and potentially increases in the apparent or actual height of buildings.

The buildings on Commonwealth Avenue would be among the first constructed. Vague mention was made at the Workshop of 1000-1200 gross floor area and them being five storey commercial. What is the actual situation proposed? How can the community make an evaluation of this component? Also, what will be the impact on travellers heading south on Commonwealth Avenue and currently available vistas across the Lake to the Brindabellas following the construction of these 25m buildings? The proposed infill across the Estate will raise the RL of these (and other Estate structures), and further reduce the vistas.

Access to the site is limited by the few through-streets and the buildings on Commonwealth Avenue, and also those on Parkes Way, will understandably obscure the site and not just the vistas beyond.

Signalised intersections and changes to the southern off-ramp between Commonwealth Ave and Parkes Way will increase congestion on Commonwealth Avenue and destroy its long-appreciated intent and quality, including in the National Capital Plan, as a 'grand promenade' and appropriate entrance to the heart of the nation.

There will be a triangle-shaped public park or plaza within the Estate opposite the waterfront (which would be about the size of Green Square Kingston). It is not clear whether this small park is intended just for the residents. To the west of the Estate there is intended to be, primarily, low profile sites for educational and cultural use (linked to ANU and the NMA) with no plans available at this point for community consideration, but the desirability of the more fundamental issue here of extra structures was not considered. At this stage, there is only limited public space overall - waterfront park and a plaza - and no details of identified, public institution/s or community facilities for which people don't have to pay.

It was said that the NCA considered that there was no need for an aquatic facility here so none were now proposed. This is good news but, confusingly, we were told that the NCA was 'looking at' putting an aquatic centre 'somewhere in Commonwealth Park'. Although not being pursued further at West Basin, we will be following this up with the NCA.

The Estate is now promised to comprise 940 dwellings plus 20,000 sq m gross floor area of commercial. It appears that the buildings facing the waterfront and the plaza/park will be primarily residential with commercial on the ground floor (e.g. Kingston Foreshore) and active frontages facing the thoroughfares and water. The Estate is still too big, compacted and counter-productive – developers will develop to the edge of their allotted spaces to maximise profits, leading to an overcrowded and unfortunate development, despite the great effort and many millions expended.

We were told, repeatedly, that the CRA board had a very high desire to achieve quality and sustainability, with 70% solar orientation and 60% natural ventilation, and 'scope' for three storey townhouses and 'six star' green aspiration. Whilst there is no evidence of 'quality' so far, there was also another element missing which was intriguingly mentioned by the CRA - the desirability of including affordable and social housing. However, no commitment was made to the percentage of

this or manner of implementation. Why? Cynically this might suggest a limited commitment to social housing here because of tension with profitability. It seems unlikely that this social objective will ever be achieved.

The CRA Board has apparently 'directed' that the development is not to 'challenge' the NCP, for instance, in building heights. This was also taken to mean, by the CRA staff present at the Workshop, that the 50m width requirement for the Waterfront Park should not be exceeded. The reality suggested by participants was that this was a minimum requirement not a maximum. It did seem to those present that this CRA limit was likely to be so as not to limit the profitability of the Estate development. Related to this was the movement of the road to being outside of the Waterfront Park which was seen as highly preferable by the participants.

When the parking issue for events in, for instance, Commonwealth Park (eg Floriade and music festivals) or others within the Acton Park arose, it was suggested by the CRA that, at least temporarily, in the early stages of the Estate development, this parking pressure might be eased by the construction, temporarily, of a multi-storey carpark on one of the residential blocks. It is not clear why more permanent provision for event parking is not being made given that events are not only actually intended to occur within the Park but will be in the immediate vicinity of West Basin in the future as now. Parking is insufficient and at maturity, parking will be otherwise mostly private, high cost and inside buildings, so less desirable and available for public use.

The presenters of the Workshop were told they had missed an opportunity by not allowing bus parking for school children visits to the ACT to use the site for Ngunnawal cultural orientation. The CRA representatives said that this hadn't been considered but would be now. It is hoped that this idea will be carried through in the future planning.

It was said that the CRA was to make a presentation to the NCA Board in February 2023 on the Estate development. An issue for the CRA was explained as: would the planning be inserted into the NCP or just be an ACT Government delivery issue? There was no detail provided of the implications of either of these options to reveal to the community how significant they are, so as to initiate a preference at this useful early stage of planning.

Because of the need for infill under the Estate the ACT intends to build retaining walls on the south side of Parkes Way. This will turn Parkes Way into a canyon of cars and trucks, a consequence of the grade difference between the sides of the road and the need to bridge it to improve access to West Basin - it will not be a desirable outcome for this major roadway.



Richard Morrison  
Vice Convenor  
10/12/22

## Attachment 2 – Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group

To: City Renewal Authority – [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au)

From: John Widdup – Pedal Power ACT Advocacy Group

### Acton Waterfront Development Proposal & Acton Waterfront Place Plan – comments

The Proposal and Plan are treated as one thing from the point of view of the use of the area by people riding bikes.

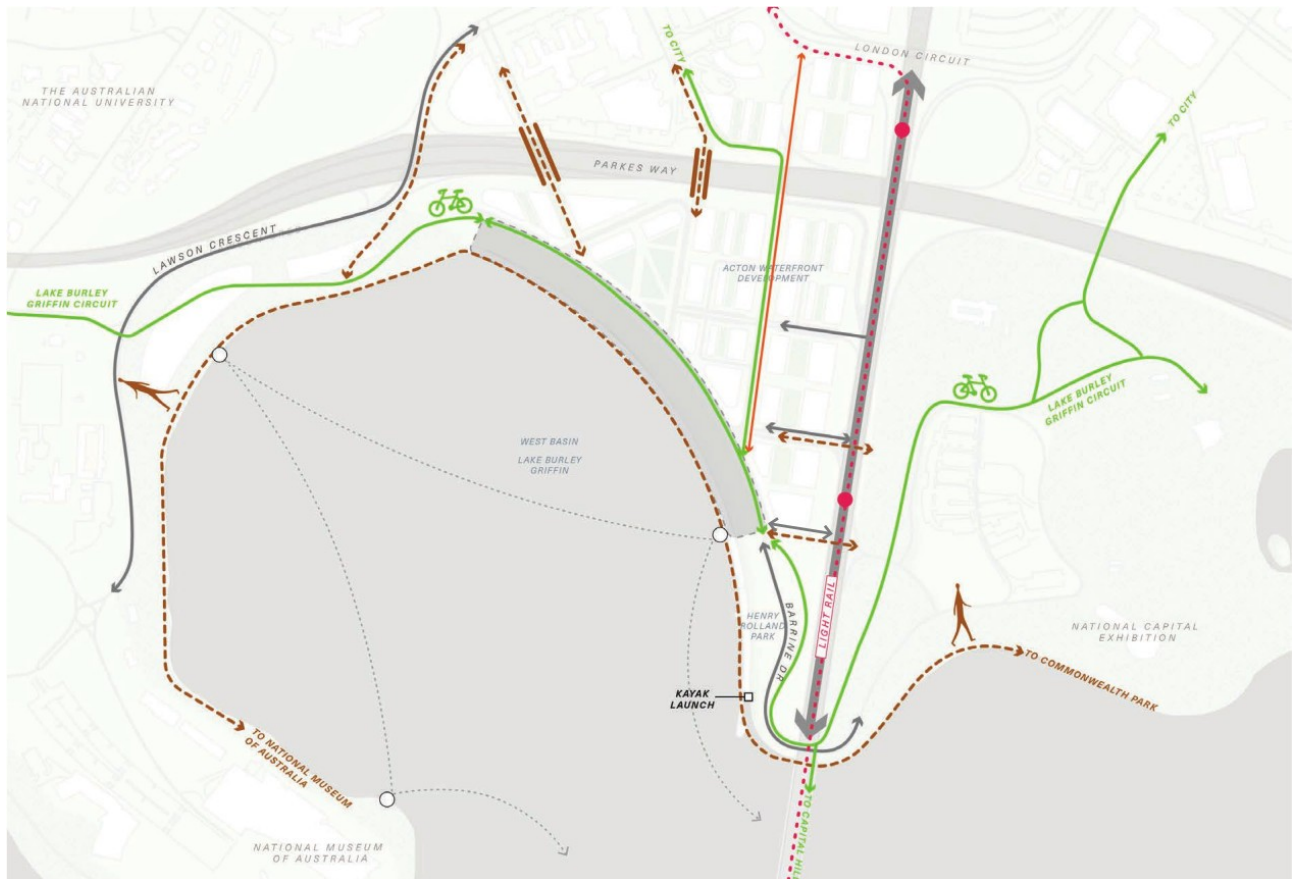
The proposals should be considered and presented in the wider context of their locations and the active travel routes through the area. They do not appear to have considered the large volume of cycle traffic through the area that is likely to come as the city grows. Consequently, we are quite concerned about the provisions for active travel, particularly for commuters and the connections into the city and beyond.

The designs for bicycle route and paths should be in accordance with TCCS design standards MIS05 and the Active Travel Practitioner Tool maps to understand the context of this location in the network of active travel routes. There should be a proper overlay of active travel infrastructure as given in the Practitioner Tool with the cycling infrastructure proposed. That Tool shows (see image) the 'principle cycle routes' (blue) through the site and the connections into Civic.





The Acton Waterfront Park – Community Engagement Concept Design 28.10.2022 contains this concept design sketch (copy below) showing the ultimate scheme proposed ‘cycle connections’ (green lines), the proposed ‘pedestrian connections’ (brown lines) and indicates elsewhere that the cycle connections proposed would be ‘separated cycle lane’, fully separated from the roadways, and 3.5 m and 3.0 m wide. [https://www.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/2099185/20221031-Acton-Waterfront-Park-Concept-Design.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2099185/20221031-Acton-Waterfront-Park-Concept-Design.pdf)



The documentation says that the development will provide: segregated path for cyclists; footpaths, shared paths and cycleways with generous proportions; strong ties between the city and lake through an engaging journey; a coherent precinct and continuous journey; streets that support a richness of human activity and social connection; barrier-free movement for people of all ages and mobility levels; and footpath diversions in place for people to walk, run and cycle around the West Basin during the entire construction period. We look forward to see those features being fully implemented in the final design and construction.

It is good to see that the dedicated ‘through-the-site’ bicycle-only path through the site is well clear of the waterfront development. It must be designed as a high speed through route in accordance with the TCCS design standards MIS05 for ‘bicycle-only paths’ suitable for two-way traffic. As that trunk path will generate increased traffic in future years, have people riding in both directions, people commuting as well as recreating, people usually travelling at speeds greater than 20 km/h (often over 30 km/h), the optimum width is 5.0 m, and as a minimum they should be 4.0 m wide. Your proposal shows the path width as and 3.5 m and 3.0 m wide which is considered inadequate.

The ‘through-the-site’ bicycle-only path goes through Henry Rolland Park, that is a nice place, but a disaster from an active travel perspective. There is no intuitive path through the Park that links to

any of the cycling routes that arrive there from east or west, or off Commonwealth Avenue. It is important that the deficiencies in the Park area are not retained or repeated in the new developments. The proposed development should rectify the deficiencies in the Park and adjacent areas so that the 'through-the-site' bicycle-only path has a definite safe route through the Park and out of the area to the east and west.

Burrie Drive is shown as remaining and being extended into the waterfront development. The cross-section for that road shows separated bicycle-only paths adjacent thereto (only 3.0 m and 3.5 m wide rather than the optimum 5.0 m width). If those paths, at the greater width, are installed through Henry Rolland Park that should rectify the current major defect there. If not done, the current unsatisfactory layout in the Park will remain to the detriment of active travel by bicycle through the area.

The links from the 'through-the-site' bicycle-only path into Civic are less than desirable.

Currently the route from the foreshore area into Civic is across the narrow bridge into Marcus Clarke Street. Presumably, until the new bridge proposed across Parkes Way is constructed, that route will remain as the way into Civic and the new bicycle-only paths should connect to the existing bridge.

The new proposed cycle route into Civic shown through the Acton Waterfront Development parallel to Commonwealth Avenue would be satisfactory for people coming from the east. However, people coming from the west would likely not use that route and rather use one of the new roads shown to the west. Desirably the bicycle-only route into Civic should be attractive and suitable for people coming from either direction. Please relocate that route accordingly.

The 'pedestrian connections' are shown linking the waterfront area with Civic will be used by people riding bikes and should be designed as adequate shared paths. Signing them 'do not ride' or 'dismount' is will not work.

An important missing 'cycle connection' link in the proposal is that shown in the Active Travel Practitioner Tool map going from the west starting where the around-the-lake path crosses Lawson Drive, then goes across the top of the Parks Way tunnel and adjacent to Edinburgh Avenue (along the north side) and connecting to the Civic Cycle Route. TCCS has plans for that path and its construction would improve the commute into Civic from the west and reduce the cycle traffic through the development site. Its construction should be included as part of the proposed development.

Currently there is an informal path from the City Beach area along the Lake shore to the National Museum of Australia. That path should be formalised as a shared path as part of the development to connect the waterfront development and the Museum. It would likely get a lot of use.

Within the Acton Waterfront area, the streets and lanes should to be designed as shared places in which everyday life happens, including people riding bicycles. The documentation does not address the street layout or designs in that area.

It is important that there are adequate access points from the bicycle-only paths into the waterfront development area, but these not shown in the documentation. People will ride bicycle throughout the waterfront area and it should be designed accordingly

Bike parking facilities within the waterfront development are important but not detailed. There is one mention in the documentation of a 'pit stop for bike parking'. Failure to provide adequate bike



parking will result in bikes being chained to trees, lampposts and the like. The next stage of the design should include details of the bike parking proposed to allow it to be scrutinised.

The existing bollards in Henry Rolland Park and at each end of the recently opened broad walk are less than satisfactory and considered hazardous. They do not conform with the TCCS design standard, are brown in colour, difficult to see (particularly where they are in shadow and at night), close together and set at an angle to the direction of travel of people riding bikes. Bollard use should be minimised and only installed after consideration of their necessity as outlined in the TCCS documentation for bollards. The existing and any proposed bollards should conform to the TCCS design standards.

The documentation mixes nomenclature of paths and lanes and that can make it unclear as to what is intended. The nomenclature should be as in TCCS standards for routes (eg, Main Community Route) and for the facilities that those routes are comprised of (eg, paths, lanes, etc.)

# Attachment 3 - NewActon resident

## Acton Waterfront - Park Design and Estate Planning

### SUBMISSION from [REDACTED] of New Acton

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the workshop on November 26 and to make further comments on both the waterfront park design and the early estate planning concepts.

#### Introduction

I make these comments as a concerned resident of New Acton, who overlooks the site, and as a member of the Lake Burley Griffin Guardians, who wishes to preserve the heritage and other values of the lake foreshore. I have been interested in the planning for this area since at least 2007 when the first public consultations were undertaken by Ian Wood-Bradley and Tanya Parkes for the Land Development Agency under the umbrella of the City to the Lake (CtTL) project.<sup>i</sup>

Although I have participated in all stages of public consultations for CtTL, West Basin, Henry Rolland Park, the Acton Peninsula Draft Structure Plan, City Plan, the Place Plan etc etc, unfortunately little has changed since the original CtTL concept, except that much of the public benefit infrastructure has dissipated (e.g. the aquatic facility, the lowering of Parkes Way, the City Stadium, the ferry terminal and the Australia Forum). What remains is the same lake infill, promenade and narrow strip park, much the same city block design, and the same building heights, density and basic configuration.

#### Specific suggestions

Despite the massive shortcomings identified further below, I wish to make the following genuine suggestions for improvement to the current concepts for both the park and the estate:

#### Waterfront Park

1. Include a **co-designed women's art walk** in the park, as per the ACT Greens platform published in the ACT Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, appendix 4.<sup>ii</sup>
2. Provide access and parking (or at least drop offs) for **school children** to visit the Nggunawal interpretive elements of the park and include the waterfront in the National Capital Education Tourism Program. Over 165,000 school children visit Canberra each year and it is a major oversight not to provide for and encourage access to the site for this purpose.
3. **Make the park bigger.** The 55m setback from the lake edge in the NCP is the minimum not a maximum and it still includes the road, footpath and promenade. The park should be at least 80m wide and should include all the area of lake infill. The ACT should also guarantee wider public access across the whole West Basin (not 10m at Acton Peninsula as is in the Draft Structure Plan)
4. **Ensure quality and thematic integrity** of at least the standard of the Chinese Garden of Friendship in Sydney.
5. **Take some things out.** In my view, the CRA is trying to get too many things into the 3ha that is actual park and, given the cost over-runs to date, will inevitably have to cut back on the scale or quality of fixtures. This reduction in scope can be achieved by increasing the amount of informal landscaping for picnics, school visits and events and reducing the amount of hard and built landscape.
6. Put **trees close to the promenade and make greater use of running water.** The off-white cement promenade adjacent to the waters edge gives off too much glare and this needs to be

softened by shade trees and vertical water features which will also aid cooling. Likewise, there needs to be more shelter from the winter winds which whip across West Basin.

7. Make the park **pandemic friendly**. COVID lockdowns demonstrated the need for quality open space for leisure and work. Make it so by increasing separation distances to encourage picnicking and outside working spaces and provide very fast public wifi access across the public realm.
8. Build a **proper ferry wharf**. It was in the original CttL plan. The currently planned landing places are too small and most are in shallow water.
9. Put **depth markers** on the waters edge. The Lake depth varies between about 5m and less than 2m adjacent to the site and this is dangerous.
10. **Prohibit high-speed cycling and scooters on the promenade**. This is already a problem and will cause conflict between pedestrians/strollers and the Tour de France wannabe's using the promenade as a short cut.
11. **Increase linkages to the National Museum and ANU** (one of the original concepts for the waterfront) by building wider pedestrian paths to NMA and ANU and encouraging the NMA to make better use of West Basin for installations and displays.
12. **Think 'beyond food trucks'**. Perhaps a specialised night market, but not noisy concerts. The Westside 'experiment' was a disaster and should not be repeated. Waterfront bars, fast food restaurants or a party district are not needed.
13. Likewise, make the park **family friendly**, not a party precinct, through high quality children's playgrounds (plural), expanding active play areas, including a fenced dog park, and limiting alcohol sales and consumption in the public realm.

#### **The estate (including the plaza)**

14. Include a **significant public facility in the estate** (not just at the water axis to the north end as is required by the NCP). This could house CMAG and/or the Nolan collection, for example.
15. Think very carefully about the 'delivery model' and **prefer Government-led development** over private or private-public partnerships and certainly don't repeat the experience of Kingston Foreshore where developer-provided public facilities were not delivered.
16. **Prevent developers "gaming the system"** (by proposing increased density and height in the buildings in the estate). In my view, the estate development is still too dense and not 'legible' enough. It needs more diversity of scale, more open space, more night-safety and more mixed private-public realm easily accessible to the public. I live in New Acton and I would like to see even more open space than here in any future Acton Waterfront development. To achieve this, the CRA needs to be more prescriptive than the NCP Design Guidelines and also not rely on the ACT Design Review Panel to set standards.
17. **Reduce the scale and impact of the buildings along Commonwealth Avenue**, because the current heights and block structure will create a wall of uninteresting buildings which will obviate the ability to 'look into' an interesting waterfront from the main avenue of Canberra.
18. Do not allow **zero frontage, overhanging and basement style development** in the commercial/residential area. The new Law Courts, the Morris Building on London Circuit and some of the basement frontages on Northbourne Avenue and in the back streets of Kingston Foreshore are disgraceful examples of this poor planning. Do not allow developers to convert approved new residential into commercial as has happened with The Barracks/ 1 City Hill.
19. Make the entire precinct a **smoke free, pedestrian priority, NABERS 6 Star rated building, and an electric vehicle-supported precinct**. Especially ensure there is sufficient electricity and ICT infrastructure for the future.
20. Insist on **greater than 30% tree canopy** (not just green space).

21. Emulate **Singapore's Green Building Masterplan** scheme for green gross floor area as well as overall green space.<sup>iii</sup>
22. The triangle park/plaza (the size of Green Square Kingston) should be a **totally permeable surface and be designed as a village common**, for a variety of public uses and not given over to pavement or private concessions except on the building frontages. Think a grassed version of Plaza San Marco in Venice, or a place for car 'show and shine' events, a starting point for triathlons etc.
23. **Don't build a retaining wall** on the south side of Parkes Way, because this will turn it into a canyon for high speed traffic and will increase noise and pollution for nearby residents.
24. **Don't have the land bridges enter the estate at first floor level**, because this will create dingy basements and reduce public safety in the nearby 'dead spaces'.
25. Ensure a **mix of retail experiences** (not malls) such as providores, local bakeries/patisseries. Think Greenwich Village shop frontages and residential, not Kingston boardwalk or City West.
26. Ensure **continuous active frontages and overlooking of streets** for night time safety (i.e. no 'creepy empty' streets like City West).

### A lost opportunity

Acton waterfront is a world-class site. It pains me greatly to see the ACT Government miss this single opportunity to build a landscape befitting the site, instead of an over-egged waterfront strip park faced by a melange of short term apartments, more bars and restaurants, and commercial dead space.

As currently designed, the water fronting public realm (promenade, park and road) has the same hard edge to the lake as the original concept. The mixed use medium density estate is still designed to generate the maximum gross floor area allowable under the National Capital Plan and surely will be indistinguishable from Northbourne Avenue, Campbell 5 and Kingston Foreshore.

The driving force for the ACT Government vision for Acton Waterfront is still "value uplift" from land development. The ceiling is still whatever developers will seek and whatever the National Capital Authority will approve under the faulty Griffin legacy NCP.

The ACT Government appears not to have planned for one **public** school, health or childcare facility, arts centre, museum or organised recreation facility in what will be a new suburb. City Hill south to the lake is still programmed to house 25,000 people eventually, even if only 900 apartments are supposedly to be built in the Acton Waterfront estate.

In 2055, the finished Acton Waterfront will consist of a bland exposed promenade fronting a medium density mixed use commercial-cum-short-term-accommodation 'enclave' indistinguishable from the Northbourne Avenue corridor or Kingston Foreshore. We might as well rename it "Kingston Foreshore 2.0".

Astonishingly, Commonwealth Avenue will be lined on one side by 25m commercial buildings, with no usable frontage to the grand ceremonial boulevard that it should be, and traffic will be stop-go through a succession of signalised intersections between the bridge and City Hill. The ceremonial boulevard will be unbalanced, with the Archbishop's residence and Commonwealth Park on one side and a medium density suburb on the other.

Almost all the pre-existing mature trees will have been cut down and replaced by individual plantings on street frontages. The vistas to the Brindabellas will be lost, because the first glimpse across the lake when southbound from the City will be at the Albert St southern end of the development. Despite all the talk, the estate will be a heat sink equal to or exceeding the flat carparks and rock infill which currently dominate the site.

The original intent to lower Parkes Way and build a network of elevated 'smart boulevards' and land bridges has been abandoned because of the insurmountable cost. The concept of extending the city road grid to the lake is now a shadow, because West Road will be the only new City grid street into the development and the new Parkes Way crossings will be mere footbridges.

There will be insufficient ease of access into the waterfront and parking for the planned for events of up to 10,000 people. Light Rail won't carry the numbers; the streets will be too narrow and insufficient, and underground parking will not meet the need, because it is too slow to empty and will be expensive; so families won't come from Tuggeranong and Belconnen to attend future Floriades or Skyfire type events.

Although Acton Foreshore is being pitched as a place for all Canberrans, it is still impossible to work out who is the target demographic, because it is part indigenous interpretation site, part public realm, part café district, part commercial office space, part residential and part social housing.

Lastly, the full physical expression of the development as put to the public to date won't be achieved, simply because of the ACT Government's appalling project and contract management (as demonstrated in the Auditor-General's recent report). Thus far, Stage 1 has cost \$45m, despite some of the infrastructure costs being shifted into the light rail project or not even delivered (e.g. stormwater drains and new intersections). Yet more landfill will be required across the entire estate to reduce the grade separation between the area north of Parkes Way and the commercial/residential blocks. Cement, steel and diesel are dearer by the day and financing will be by debt even if recovered over time through land sales.

Almost none of the future concept is funded, or even costed. I have been unable to find a publicly available cost benefit analysis, gross return estimates or return on investment, no financing model, no development pipeline relativity to other projects, etc, etc. In the current and prospective economic climate, it will never all be delivered.

## **Conclusion**

While I have dwelt on the negative, because unfortunately there are so many, I hope you will take on board the constructive suggestions I have made above.

I would like to be invited to take part in any further public engagement with regard to West Basin, Acton Waterfront, City Hill and Acton Peninsula.

Please acknowledge receipt of this submission.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

New Acton

[REDACTED]

10 Dec 2022

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Footnotes:

<sup>i</sup> ACT Government, City to the Lake Strategic Urban Design Framework, 2015  
[https://suburbanland.act.gov.au/uploads/ckfinder/files/pdf/3\\_Business/city\\_to\\_the\\_lake/Strategic%20Urban%20Design%20Framework.pdf](https://suburbanland.act.gov.au/uploads/ckfinder/files/pdf/3_Business/city_to_the_lake/Strategic%20Urban%20Design%20Framework.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> ACT Government, Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, Apx 4.  
[https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/1654077/Parliamentary-Agreement-for-the-10th-Legislative-Assembly.pdf](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1654077/Parliamentary-Agreement-for-the-10th-Legislative-Assembly.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Singapore Government, Building and Construction Authority, Green Building Masterplans, especially 4<sup>th</sup> edition updated July 2022. <https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/sustainability/green-building-masterplans#:~:text=The%20earlier%20editions%20of%20the,Singapore%27s%20buildings%20have%20been%20greened.>