



**ACT**  
Government

**Suburban Land**  
Agency

Draft Place Brief

# Whitlam Local Centre

June 2022





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as Canberra's first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians. We recognise the special relationship and connection that Ngunnawal people have with this Country.

Prior to the displacement of Ngunnawal people from their land, they were a thriving people whose life and culture was connected unequivocally to this land in a way that only they understand and know and is core to their physical and spiritual being.

The segregation of the Ngunnawal people from Culture and Country has had long-lasting, profound, and ongoing health and well-being effects on their life, cultural practices, families, and continuation of their law/lore. We acknowledge the historic interruption of the Ngunnawal people of Canberra and their surrounding regions.

We recognise the significant contribution the Ngunnawal people have played in caring for Country. For time immemorial they have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual, and economic connection to these lands and waters.

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# 01

## PURPOSE OF THE PLACE BRIEF

### Place Brief:

The Suburban Land Agency engaged Hatch RobertsDay to lead the community and stakeholder engagement and prepare the Place Brief for Whitlam Local Centre.

Canberra's local centres have long been the hearts of our city, with many of our best cafés, eateries and boutique retail being found in the suburbs. Canberrans know this, and on a Saturday morning many of these spaces jostle with cyclists chatting over a coffee, locals stopping by to grab a bunch of flowers or something from the butchers whilst children play on the grass.

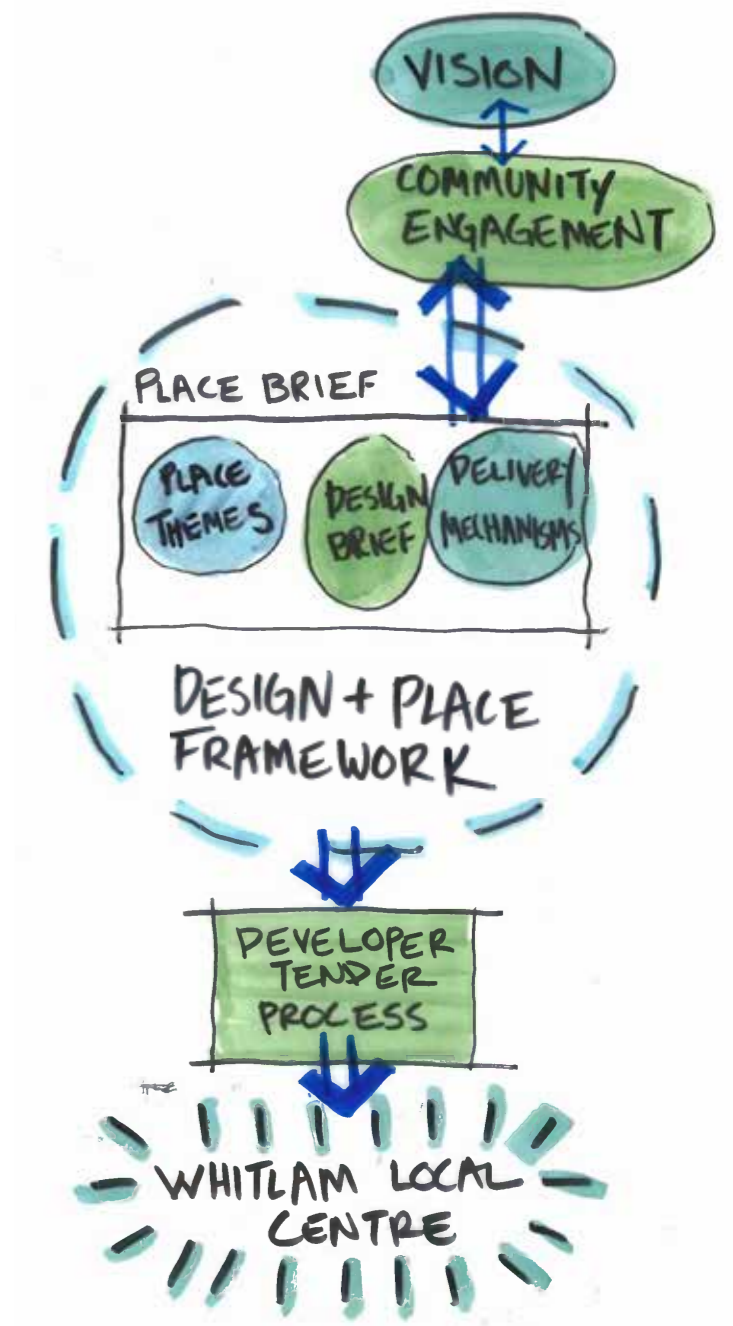
For Whitlam to truly feel like home, its residents need their own place to congregate, shop and play – and importantly a shared place to build a strong and united community.

This Place Brief has been designed to capture the place experiences and qualities desired for the Whitlam Local Centre. It has been informed by a range of community and stakeholder

engagement activities which helped the Suburban Land Agency to understand, capture and articulate the community's vision and needs for the centre.

It includes a range of opportunities that will enable place activation through street level pedestrianisation, active frontages, as well as recreational and landscaped areas. These have been designed to keep the centre 'alive', while boosting the local economy and making it an attractive place to spend time and to build a successful business.

The brief also explores a range of ways that the Whitlam Local Centre can connect the community – whether that be through the incorporation of visual and performing arts, or communal garden areas which also add to sustainability outcomes, or activities to keep people of all ages returning to and connecting with the centre.



# 02

## BUILDING ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

### Overview:

This Place Brief builds on strong foundations established by the ACT Government through the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) over the past decade.

Our work is building on valuable feedback and community input gathered from a number of activities. These include:

- SLA place direction and commitment to creating great places where communities thrive
- Previous community engagement in the Molonglo Valley region
- A vision for Whitlam and the role of the Whitlam Local Centre
- Engagement with traditional owners in the Molonglo Valley region.

We recognise this is Ngunnawal Country and through our work we look to support and celebrate a living thriving Ngunnawal culture.



Place Direction

The SLA has demonstrated a shift toward stronger place-led design and development. The shift to a place-led agency is well-supported by the Board and Executive.

A place-led approach is being used to design the Whitlam Local Centre to ensure it delivers on the ACT’s strategic planning intent – a more compact, efficient city with lower emissions city to enhance quality of life for all Canberrans.

The SLA has taken a ‘people and place first’ approach to develop this place brief, working with the community to strike a balance across design and amenity, while delivering optimal density and land use outcomes.

This brief aligns with the ACT Planning Strategy’s direction for local centres to ‘strengthen neighbourhoods and support their diverse character by creating strong local activity hubs’ (Direction 4.3).

Community Engagement:

Substantial community engagement in and around Whitlam and the Molonglo Valley has already taken place, or is underway, including:

- including cultural engagement with Ngunnawal Elders and knowledge holders
- work to help inform a place vision for Whitlam, and
- the consultation for the Coombs and Wright Village.

A place first approach has ensured the process represents a true collaboration between members of the public, key stakeholders, community councils and interest groups, while prioritising the project objectives to deliver a timely, high-quality outcome.

The place brief is the next stage in this process. It includes testing of the vision,

and a range of activities conducted with members of the public, new and future residents, stakeholder and advocacy groups. These activities were aimed at investigating the needs, desires and wishes of the community, and enables us to start defining what the Whitlam Local Centre might look like as a built environment.

The Vision:

Whitlam is Canberra’s newest and growing suburb. The Whitlam Local Centre’s 1.8 hectare site will provide commercial, community and potentially residential use with a generous public realm.

Our vision is to create a destination for the local community – a buzzing activity hub that invites everyone to stay and enjoy its services and high-quality place design.

This is a shared vision – developed and tested with the community through consultation.

It will be a distinctive, mixed use precinct that embodies the best of contemporary Canberra, builds on its memorable landscape setting and incorporates spaces and activities for people to meet and linger, ensuring its ongoing success.

Whitlam Local Centre will be a local activity hub, with supermarkets and retailers.

A design that allows people to meet and dine outdoors; provides inclusive, welcoming places for all and includes facilities for community groups.

One that prioritises pedestrians, and provides easy active travel by design - walking, cycling and taking public transport. The Whitlam Local Centre will be a central place for the community to come together.

Providing a complementary mix of uses, activities and events, an integrated, permeable network of well-designed public spaces, connected paths and streets that support vibrant public life along with buildings/structures of high architectural quality and environmental performance.



- A range of housing choices:**
- For people at different life stages
  - A minimum 15% affordable housing



- Walkable places with great access to transport options:**
- Open street networks and paths connecting places
  - Creating an enjoyable/streamlined travel experience
  - Connected to existing paths and cycleways
  - Prioritised pedestrian and active transport



- Spaces for businesses, workplaces and community facilities:**
- Jobs close to home
  - To support strong local economies
  - Create thriving local centres



- Sustainable places for current and future communities:**
- Open and diverse spaces for communities to enjoy
  - Environmentally sustainable principles such as water and energy efficient design
  - Well-designed public spaces and buildings that demonstrate design excellence

# 03

## THE WHITLAM LOCAL CENTRE POINT OF DIFFERENCE

### Overview:

The SLA has engaged with the community and commissioned this Place Brief as the Whitlam Local Centre has unique ingredients to create an exemplar local centre.

Some of the unique features include:

- An aspirational vision to deliver strategic and place objectives
- An SLA commitment towards the delivery of a place with a special and genuine identity and the sales mechanism to achieve it
- Opportunity to celebrate Ngunnawal culture and community
- Views of the Brindabellas and the Molonglo River Corridor
- Adjacent to nature reserves
- Unique topography
- Proximity to the City and Belconnen Town Centre



**SPECTACULAR  
VIEWS OF THE  
BRINDABELLAS**



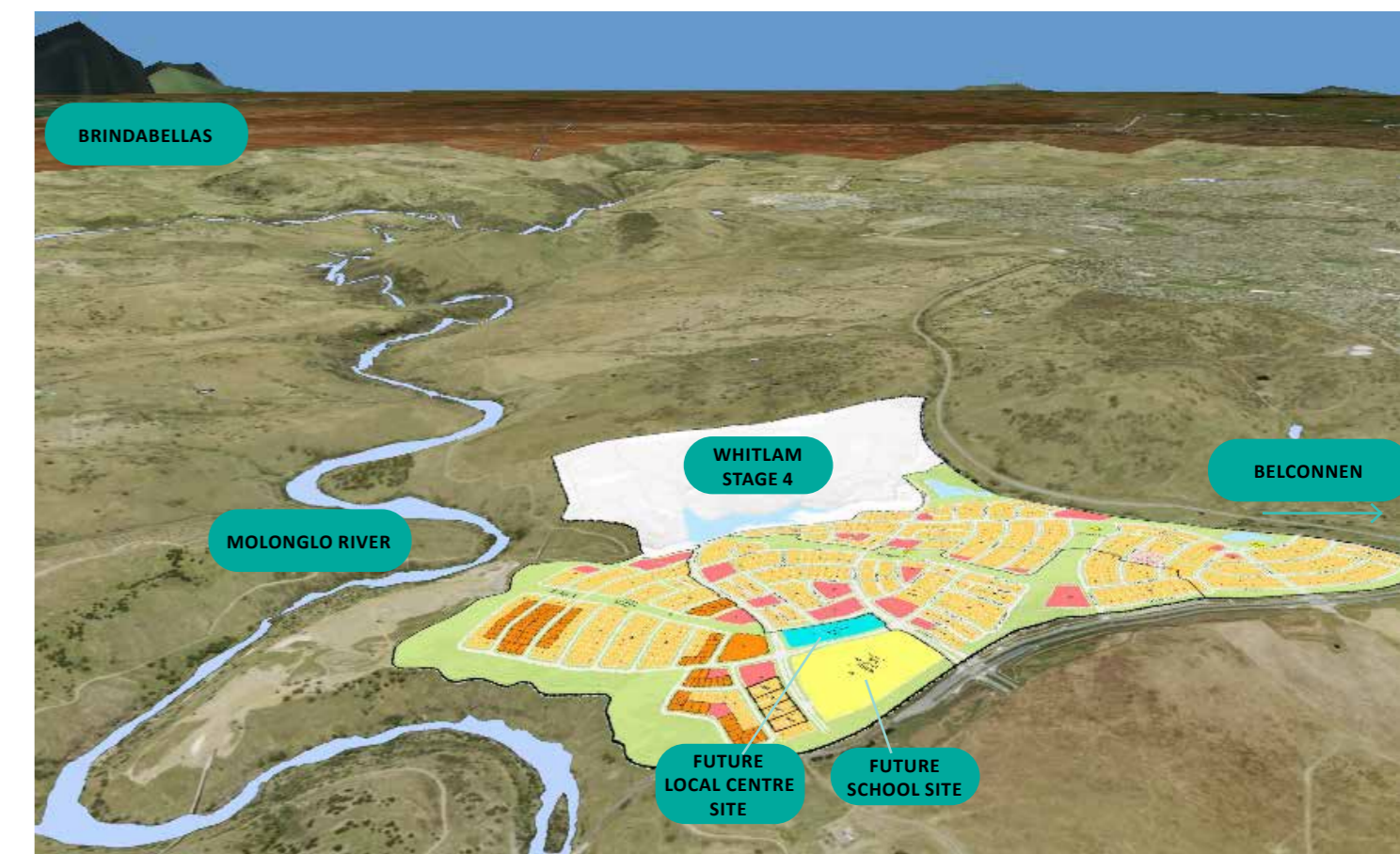
**BORDERED  
BY NATURE  
RESERVES**

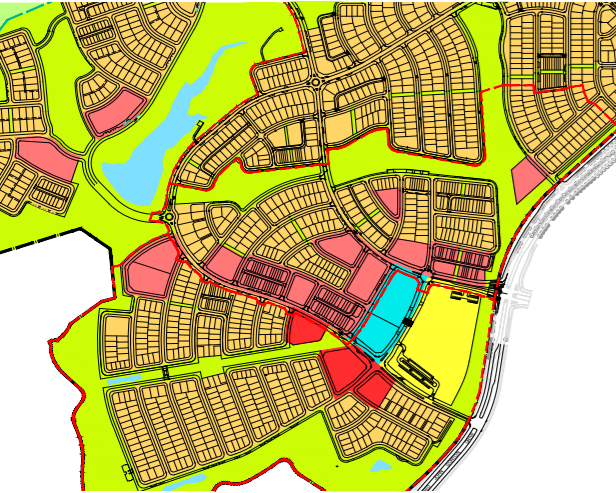


**9KM TO  
THE CITY**



**5KM TO  
BELCONNEN  
TOWN CENTRE**





Whitlam Land Use Plan (SLA)

Location:

The Whitlam Local Centre site is bounded by Sculthorpe Avenue, Bousloff Street, Hazel Hawke Avenue and Alice Moyle Way. The 1.8-hectare site has exceptional views, particularly to the south and west, with quite a steep fall.

The site is located adjacent to the site of the future Whitlam Primary School and surrounded by medium density residential blocks. The mixed use site may also include up to 250 diverse residential housing dwellings.

The ACT Government’s Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) lists 10,000m2 of the site will be released for sale in the 2021-22 financial year. The site is zoned CZ4 – Local Centre. This mixed-use site is envisaged to include a supermarket of up to 1,500m2, as well as other uses including a cafe, retail, commercial and community use.



Movie Night Inspiration (EllasList.com.au)

Aspirations:

Canberra’s local centres are transitioning to activity centres that provide lifestyle services, niche shopping and social connection, such as informal community meeting or working spaces.

Supporting centres through a greater mix of uses, housing diversity and appropriate service levels can help strengthen local centres as destinations and hubs of activity.

When centres have a variety of uses, are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, and are integrated with green space they have more longevity and can adapt over time.



Stairs as an Event Amphitheater (OMA)

Brand and Identity:

The Whitlam Local Centre will be the hub of the suburb, activated by regular programmed offerings, visually and aesthetically interesting areas to enjoy indoors and out, and a series of fine grain and connected spaces.

A series of elements will contribute to the unique identity of the Whitlam Local Centre:

- Layered – the site’s topography allows the opportunity to construct layered and connected spaces across different levels. Whitlam’s purpose will also be multi-layered with a range of potential activities and uses
- Views – to the Brindabellas, these will

form a key part of the identity of the centre and can be capitalised on through outdoor eating and activity spaces

- Destination – connected spaces allow for movement and no-cost activities. These will ensure people are present at the centre throughout the day and night
- Quality – design and finish will be high-quality with careful consideration paid to the ease of maintenance and longevity of the centre.

SLA Commitment:

The SLA is considering delivering the Whitlam Local Centre in the form of a Concept Delivery Deed. This means that there is accountability on the developer to demonstrate the designs are well aligned with the Place Brief and contribute to our vision. SLA and EPSDD must approve alignment with this Place Brief and Design and Place Framework before a developer can progress. The Place Themes identified will direct the future developer to embed this value across the entire development.

This will be supported by ongoing market sounding throughout 2022 to ensure that the ideas built into the design, based on community feedback, are attractive and practical for a developer to deliver.

# 04

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Engagement Overview:

SLA led a multi-faceted engagement process for Whitlam Local Centre, alongside Hatch RobertsDay, to provide transparency and neutrality for the community.

The purpose of this engagement was to share information about the future Whitlam Local Centre, ACT Government's vision and aspirations for the site, and involve the community in defining what experiences are important for this place and the decision-making process.

The community and stakeholder engagement specific to the Whitlam Local Centre commenced in February 2022 and ended 6 April 2022.

The engagement sought feedback on community values, aspirations and priorities for the future Whitlam Local Centre.

**4X**  
**WORKSHOPS**

**MORE THAN**  
**60** **WORKSHOP**  
**ATTENDEES**

**1**   
**PHONE**  
**CALL**

**180**  
**SURVEY**  
**RESPONSES**

**2x**  
**STAKEHOLDER**  
**SUBMISSIONS**

**13X**  
**YOUTH IDEAS**  
**SUBMISSIONS**

**5x**   
**SHOW US**  
**YOUR IDEA**  
**SUBMISSIONS**

The Workshops:

All aspects of the engagement are important and have influenced this Place Brief. The workshops, in particular, provided an opportunity for open discussion of ideas and knowledge sharing.

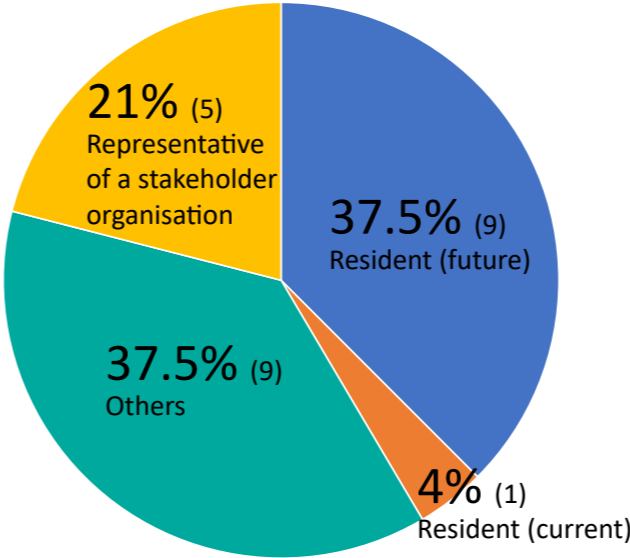
The workshops were structured as follows:

- Workshop 1- Scene Setting
- Workshop 2a & 2b - Listen and Learn
- Workshop 3- Report Back and Ideas Testing

The following pages provide a succinct summary of the engagement and workshops. A detailed account of the workshops is provided in the form of Listening Reports, which have been included as appendices to this report. The Place Themes section of this report provides detail on what we heard and how it is directly influencing the direction of the Place Brief and Whitlam Local Centre design.

‘SOME REALLY PROMISING IDEAS ESPECIALLY AROUND COMMUNITY FACILITIES RELATING TO THE SCHOOL, ACCESSIBILITY AND FREE SPACE AND SAFETY.’

- Geoff B, workshop participant



Workshop 1 Participation Summary (HatchRobertsDay)

**Workshop 1:** Workshop participants included current and future residents of Whitlam, Woden Community Services, canberra.bike, Wildlife Carers Group, anberra Skateboarding Association and the Molonglo Valley Community Forum.

This online workshop gave the community an opportunity to hear about the status of the Whitlam Local Centre, vision and aspirations for the Centre, and the foundations that exist to build a best-practice centre.

We asked the community to tell us how they use centres, what they like about existing centres they use - and what they *did not* like and *did not* want to see at Whitlam Local Centre, and how they would like to see a local centre function for them. The workshop utilised the digital Mentimeter



Workshop 2- Activity 2 Table Outcomes

tool to capture inputs as well as an open Q&A session run via the MicrosoftTeams platform.

The key takeaway from Workshop 1 was a commitment from all participants to explore ways to deliver on the aspiration of ‘more than just a shopping centre.’

**Workshop 2:** Two sessions were held, one online and one in person, with 24 people participating in total.

The workshops provided a recap of Workshop 1 presentations and findings and then focused on three interactive activities. The activities provided further opportunities for us to learn about what might make a memorable identity for Whitlam Local Centre, how we can best accommodate a holistic and diverse community and the

spatial vision and priorities of land uses that the community is seeking. They also allowed us to understand how people would like to use the spaces - for example fine grain play and skateboarding spaces, creative arts, and street furniture along the journey.

The workshop utilised the digital Mentimeter tool to capture inputs as well as an open Q&A session run via the MicrosoftTeams platform.

The key takeaway from Workshop 2 was a genuine emergence of common themes and community values which have been termed Emerging Place Themes in this brief.

For more detail on what was heard through workshop 1 and 2 please see the Listening Reports provided as appendices to this brief.

# What are your likes?



Workshop 2 Participant likes(HatchRobertsDay)

In the Wordle, larger font indicates more responses provided and smaller font indicates fewer responses

Density can be a positive – many local centres do not have enough volume, and shops end up tired and derelict. Denman is a good example to consider in terms of making sure shops are viable. This isn't a flat site and should be explored, but can be hard to compare to many Canberra local centres.

Places to ride bikes and scooters is important.

The Molonglo River Corridor is a really important feature at Whitlam.

Maintaining sight lines to views is important, particularly as suburbs develop – Whitlam presents a great opportunity for this because it is steep.

Child friendly and accessible places are really important.

Safe and slow streets, with areas that allow children to play.

Having easy access to local health facilities, GPs.

When meeting friends, I will stay a lot longer if it is a beautiful location or the shops allow me to look at a view. It is important not to be looking at a carpark, likewise nature views are important.

Places that accommodate fitness—particularly if there is a childcare

# What are your dislikes?



Workshop 2 Participant likes(HatchRobertsDay)

In the Wordle, larger font indicates more responses provided and smaller font indicates fewer responses

Feeling boxed particularly when you cannot look out.

I don't like when centres are inward facing.

Opening onto a carpark. It is important that these areas are not high traffic or busy with vehicles.

# YOURSAY – THE CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

### Survey Overview:

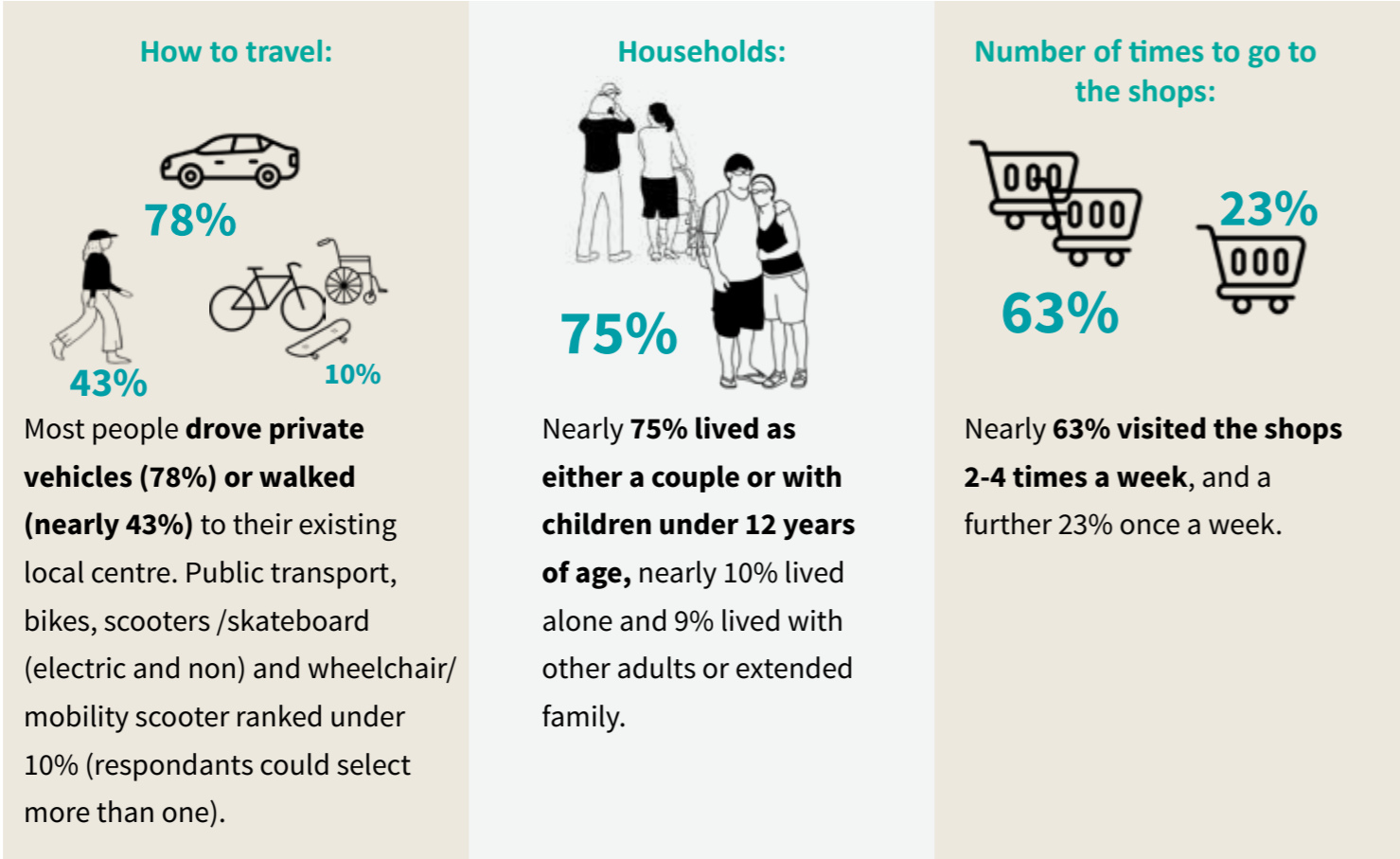
We received 180 survey responses via the Whitlam Local Centre YourSay website.

Participants were asked to provide information about themselves and the way they used their current local centre.

### Respondents:

- 43% residents, 25% regular visitors and 25% looking to buy/move into Whitlam
- 65% were aged between 25 and 39 years; 17% aged between 40-54; 12% over 60 years old and 5% between 20-24 years old
- 58% identified as women, 40% as men, 1% non-binary and 2% opted not to disclose their gender

A summary of some key relevant findings is provided opposite.



### Survey Overview (continued):

We asked a series of questions about how people currently use their local centres as well as how they desire their future Whitlam Local Centre to perform for them.

As captured in the opposite Wordle, when asked how people would prefer to recreate in their centre; the predominant response was in a linear manner. This included walking, hiking, cycling and swimming. Yoga, pilates, gym and tennis also featured highly.

In the Wordle, larger font indicates more responses provided and smaller font indicates fewer responses.

Recreation at local centres



Survey Overview (continued):

Similarly, the image opposite illustrates the most popular community facilities desired. Health services and safe spaces for youth of all ages to play is a constant and common themes across engagement platforms.

We have highlighted these two survey responses because physical health and community gathering and wellbeing within the centre is something that has not been focussed on in a conventional Canberra Local Centre model. Whitlam Local Centre can lead this change.

Additional important feedback is also provided here.

**Elements for people:**  
supermarkets, food & beverage and retail offerings, places for outdoor dining, green and comfortable outdoor spaces, fitness and wellbeing.

**Challenges:**  
car parking, traffic impacts, maintaining connection with the natural environment.

**Outdoor elements:**  
tree canopy and shade, outdoor eating areas, grassed areas and play spaces, then sitting areas.

Community facilities at local centres

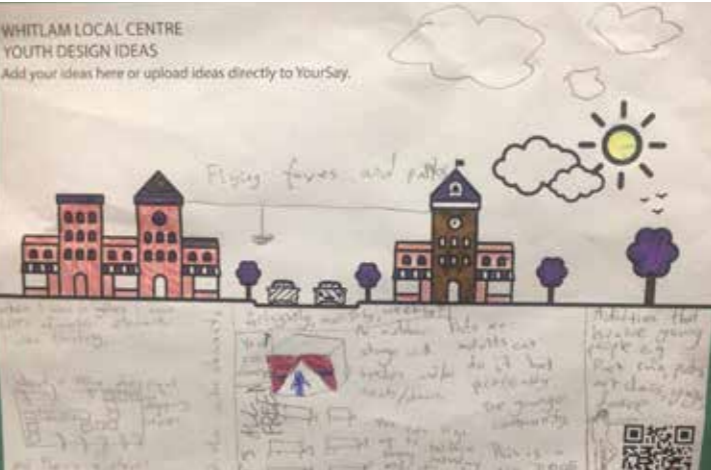


YOUTH DESIGN IDEAS

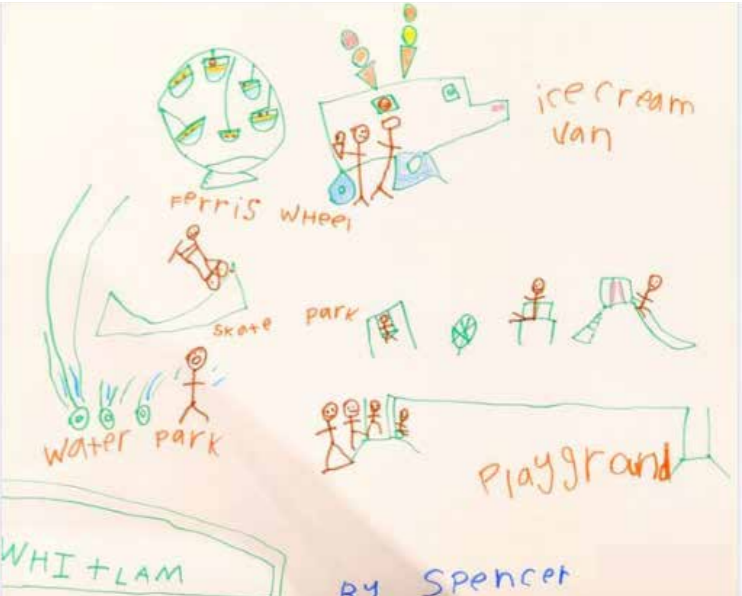
**Overview:**  
The Youth Design Ideas activity was invaluable.

We received 13 contributions online and at the the Molonglo Valley Community Forum (MVCF) Multicultural Day.

**Theme**  
An underlying theme of this engagement is social connection - places where young people can connect with others and play and have fun.



A submission from Ella




A submission from Spencer



A photo submission from Paddy

# SHOW US YOUR IDEAS

The ‘Show us your ideas’ page on the YourSay website was also opened up to allow people to share comments and images with their ideas.



**An Architecturally Designed Childcare Centre**

Posted by DanielHall | 3 months ago

Childcare Centre

WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS

0 Likes 0 Comments



**Large outdoor BBQ areas**

Posted by monique\_brouwer | 3 months ago

Large outdoor BBQ covered spaces are limited in Canberra. Communities need places to gather. If not for Whitlam, maybe the next stage of the MV?

WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS



**A place to be...**

Posted by monique\_brouwer | 3 months ago

Ensure the shops are a community asset.

WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS

2 Likes 0 Comments

**Local shops - lessons to be learned**

Posted by Marcelo | 3 months ago

If the new local shops planning people just avoid the fiasco of the local Coombs shops it would be a good start. Please ACT Government, learn from the bad lessons from Coombs shops and do not repeat it. That's all I want to say. Thanks

GOOD TO AVOID THIS

0 Likes 1 Comments



**Leafy outdoor dining areas**

Posted by Ryan1992 | 3 months ago

The local centre at the Gungahlin suburb of Forde features accessible, comfortable spaces for outdoor dining.

WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS

3 Likes 2 Comments

## Workshop 3:

11 people attended the Report Back Workshop.

The workshop provided:

- a recap of the feedback received to date
- the emerging place themes gathered from the community input, for testing and confirmation
- an overview of the design thinking and progress as a direct response to the emerging place themes and community values

Illustrative and indicative imagery such as the one opposite was used to contextualize the design thinking and prompt further discussion around the specific design controls that may exist within this physical framework, aligned to the emerging place themes extracted from the engagement.



Illustrative and Indicative Concept for Whitlam Local Centre Plaza (SLA)

# A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

### Overview:

The active participation on the Whitlam Local Centre engagement has been high, over multiple platforms.

All engagement participation is valuable and important, and the process has helped us to sharpen our focus on what is important to the community. This allows us to incorporate the community’s interests and ideas, in the broader development context to see how these may be achieved at Whitlam Local Centre now or in future, or even at an adjacent location.

Many commonalities have emerged and been identified and captured in this brief as the key values of the Whitlam existing and future community.

Several ideas that came out of the engagement are described opposite, and interest and participation relating to these specific items is summarised. These ideas have not been explicitly identified in the Place Design Brief at this time due to:

- A proximate location being planned for/ identified as better suited
- Financial feasibility underway
- Unable to be controlled through the two-stage tender process.

### IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

#### Skate Park

- Significant youth and adult interest
- Wider community engagement topic and request
- Opportunity to better understand the requirements and apply for future planning
- Engagement from stakeholders offered practical feedback and solutions
- Innovative alternatives being explored by the SLA include multi-purpose street furniture and skateable surfaces
- Scope for smaller areas that include ramps & rails as an alternative to a large skate park

#### Community Centre Management

- Local centre integration desirable
- Flexibility, multi-purpose and for all ages
- Co-located with youth spaces
- Interest in management and delivery structure



Skaters at bowl (PXhere - creative commons)

### Skate park:

A skate park was a very popular response to the youth design ideas activity and workshop ideation. We agree that a place for skating, and safe, free youth activities in general, is an important part of realising the vision and place themes at Whitlam Local Centre.

Workshop representation from the ACT Skateboarding Association inspired us to plan for skateable areas versus a traditional skate park in this location.

Our skateboarding opportunities will be more multi-purpose as discussed within the Design Brief component of this report.



Denman Prospect Local Centre (AMC Architecture)

### Community Centre

The Denman Village Community Centre was discussed as an example of a high quality community facility located within the similarly sloping site of Denman Prospect Local Centre. The plans for the Coombs and Wright Community Centre were also discussed based on merit and management.

The following community feedback is to be incorporated into this Place Brief and the design for the Whitlam Local Centre:

- A community centre located within Whitlam Local Centre is highly desirable
- The community centre should have flexible, multi- purpose spaces that can be hired

- Combining a community, youth centre and adjoining outdoor space is preferred
- A community centre will contribute to the realization of Whitlam Local Centre as more than a shopping centre.

# EMERGING PLACE THEMES

**Overview:**

What we heard from the community went beyond the physical and focused on the experience and feeling that was desirable for the Whitlam Local Centre. There were a number of commonalities.

We have grouped the common ideas into Whitlam Local Centre Place Themes. These are identified here and further described within the next section of this brief.

The purpose of the Place Themes is to direct the future developer to embed this value across the entire development.

The following pages begin to translate the Place Themes into an SLA and Developer Design Brief including controls for public and private domain and activation. These controls are allocated to the Whitlam Local Centre Design and Place Framework to illustrate one way that the control could be delivered.



Illustrative and Indicative Concept for Whitlam Local Centre Plaza (SLA)

# 05

## PLACE THEMES

### Overview:

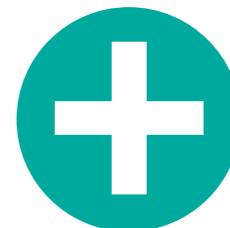
The Whitlam Local Centre Place Themes, as tested and confirmed by the community during Workshop 3, are summarised opposite.

These themes reflect community feedback, align with the Whitlam Local Centre Vision and are tailored to Whitlam and its residents.

- The following section is structured to provide:
- A recap of what we heard from the community that led to the place theme identification
- An explanation as to why this theme is important; to humanity, community and the realisation of the SLA objectives and Whitlam Local Centre Vision
- Photo inspiration relating to the theme and/or Design Brief elements
- A Design Brief demonstrating how each place theme is embedded across physical and non- physical aspects of Whitlam Local Centre, supported by an indicative and preliminary 3D massing of Whitlam Local Centre.



DISCOVERY



SAFETY



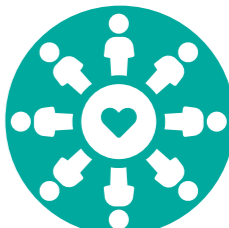
WELLBEING



CONNECTION  
TO NATURE



DIVERSITY



A FREE COMMUNITY  
DESTINATION



# DISCOVERY

To be inspired, stimulated, and entertained.

What we’ve heard:

Through the range of community and stakeholder engagement platforms, we heard that the future centre needed to be entertaining. When asked how to achieve this; we heard that interactive and sensory opportunities for art and play combined with a dynamic, not stagnant, environment would be key.

Sensory, nature and seasonal water play was desirable as well as play that encouraged sustainability and technology awareness. Art should be engaging and could be a combination of permanent sculpture play as well as a rotating art exhibit.

All play should encourage group gathering over autonomy to promote the vision for community.

Why is it important:

When people are interested, they walk further, stay longer and remain connected to place and experience. This is true for all ages and contributes to a happy and healthy community.

Entertainment and inspiration can be provided through interesting landscape and engaging built form but in particular through dynamic events and exhibitions achieved through local partnerships. The resultant place can spark joy and interest for all ages.

places that inspire



- 1. (clockwise from top) Gosford Leagues Park (Hatch Roberts Day)
- 2. Sculpture Play (SLA)
- 3. Darling Quarter Pedal- Powered Charging Station(DarlingHarbour.com)



RECREATION/PLAY

Provide interactive, sensory, water play elements for all seasons.



RESIDENTIAL

Design for vertical articulation and textured materials.



COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

Encourage an appropriate mix of fine grain, medium and large tenancies.



STREET NETWORK

Design the rear laneway for function and as a ‘small street’ destination with artwork and activation.



OPEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPE

Landscaping to include sculpture, play nodes and areas for seating and reflection.



EVENTS

Nominate a showcase space for local artists within the public realm.





# SAFETY

To feel safe and contribute to the safety of the broader community.

What we’ve heard:

Activation was one of the most dominant points of discussion. It was spoken about as a strategy for creating a buzzing hub, a destination and as key to achieving a place that feels welcoming and safe to all ages.

The idea of activation to most meant that the Whitlam Local Centre would never feel empty. This Place Brief must consider day and night-time activation that fosters a feeling of safety for people of all ages, cultures and abilities.

We discussed that the spatial, physical and program elements of the Whitlam Local Centre will all contribute to real and perceived safety.

Why is it important:

Safety is a basic human right which should be valued and preserved. It is important for communities to be educated on the intended, flexible use of spaces and the audience. Additionally, we must be aware of culturally diverse definitions of safety and do what we can to design spaces and places where all ages, genders and cultures feel safe and respected.

places that inspire



- 1. (top) Pedestrians crossing safely at Hibberson Street, Gungahlin
- 2. Plaza Lighting Tiles (Matt Coggan)



RECREATION/PLAY

Focus play in central locations and a design enabling community safety



RESIDENTIAL

Design windows and habitable rooms to contribute passive surveillance to the public realm.



COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

Design to have public frontages, evening lighting that contribute to passive surveillance and activation.



STREET NETWORK

Activate perimeter streets. Supplement streets with a permeable network of paths and lanes.



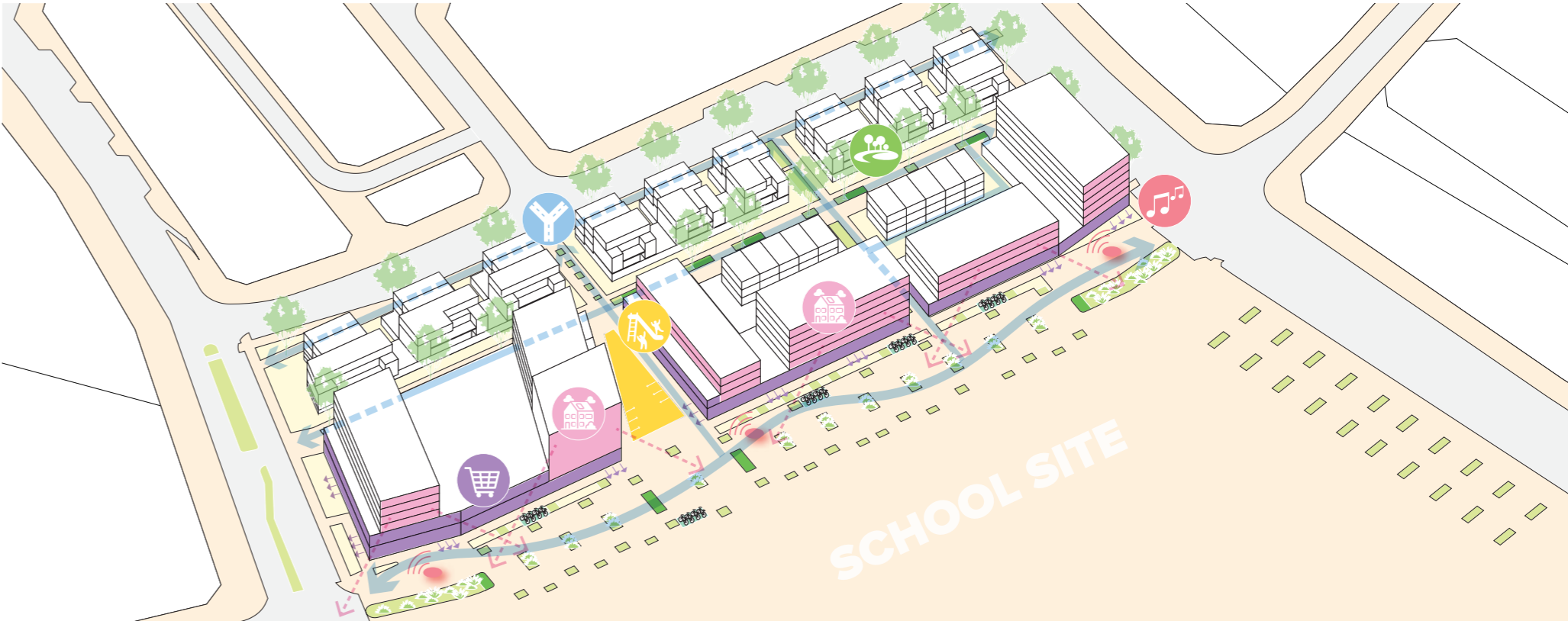
OPEN SPACE/LANDSCAPE

Educate visitors on multi- purpose intent of open spaces through signage and communication.



EVENTS

Program spaces for day and night activity. Prioritise lighting.





## WELLBEING

To have access to an environment that promotes physical, social and mental wellbeing.

### What we've heard:

When asked how the community chooses to recreate, the majority prefer to recreate in a linear manner; walking, hiking and cycling. A number of people walk to their existing centres as part of their routine. Cycling has benefits for wellbeing as well as active transport and end of trip facilities would encourage the use of bikes. Opportunities to incorporate swimming and tennis would be well-received by the community.

In addition to traditional exercise, we heard that sunny places for reflection, pilates or yoga and access to fresh produce in the form of a communal garden and greenery was needed.

The future Whitlam Local Centre residents want to have great cross ventilation and sun and access to social interaction contributing to their wellbeing.

### Why is it important:

Wellbeing refers to our physical and non physical health but also refers to our sense of belonging. Research indicates that people repeatedly visit destinations in which they attach meaning and feel that they belong. The design for the Whitlam Local Centre will be welcoming and attractive to all because it supports physical activity, social gathering, opportunities for reflection and access to fresh produce. This may be achieved through quality and diverse supermarkets and/or communal gardens.

places  
that  
inspire



1. (top) The green walls of the Caixa Forum in Madrid activate the adjoining plaza (Hatch Roberts Day)
2. Topography, greenery and play inspiration Museum of Ethnography and City Park (Metalocus.com.es)



### RECREATION/ PLAY

Co-locate a multipurpose centre, community activity centre and public



### RESIDENTIAL

Provide cross ventilation and access to sunlight, fresh produce and social interaction.



### COMMERCIAL/ RETAIL

Design to attract a high quality, established supermarket.



### STREET NETWORK

Design for naturally calmed streets that balance pedestrians, cyclists, buses and the private vehicle.



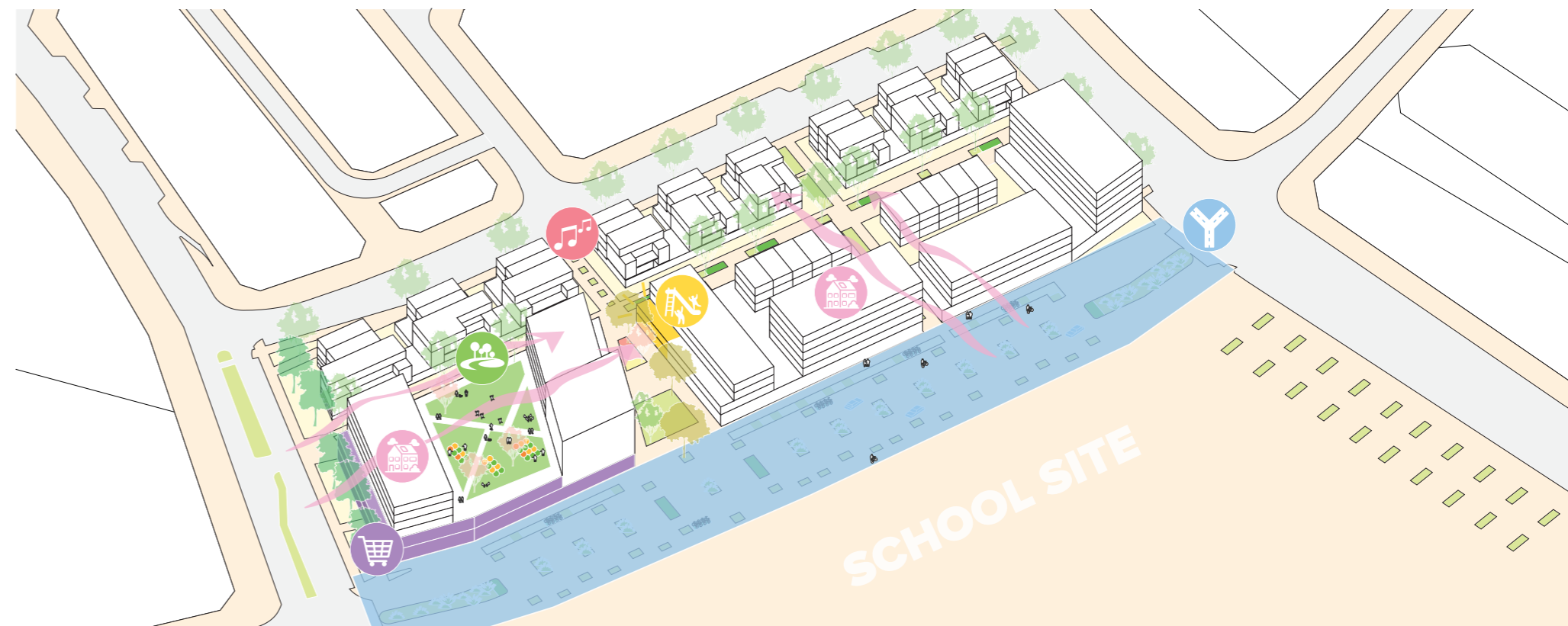
### OPEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPE

Allocate publicly accessible areas for productive landscape and communal garden plots.



### EVENTS

Consider noise mitigation in design and siting, encourage artists to perform and connect





# CONNECTION TO NATURE

To retain that natural and/or inherent character of Whitlam and the Molonglo Valley and enhance green pockets.

What we’ve heard:

Connection to Country is where it starts. We heard that the connection to nature was important but that the retention of that connection would be a challenge. It is acknowledged that Whitlam will be developed and it will no longer be native bushland, however through good design, connection to nature can be embedded throughout the centre.

We can ensure that views to the ranges and to nature are framed by built form and that these views are captured within public spaces, particularly elevated public spaces. We can also create smaller pockets of nature and demonstrate green character through finer grain landscape features throughout the Centre.

We can prioritise the celebration of the Molonglo Valley and the Brindabellas even after Whitlam is fully developed.

Why is it important:

Homebuyers have a range of living options within Canberra. A priority for Whitlam has been to establish a unique brand, identity and point of difference to attract and retain this future community.

The Brindabellas and Molonglo Valley form part of the ‘place DNA’ for Whitlam. The suburb encourages walking to and through the local centre and into the surrounding landscapes, and this theme of connecting to nature enables that.

We don’t just choose to live in a house. We choose to live in a house, on a street and within a community. We have a responsibility to ensure that the Whitlam offering provides the best of all of these aspects through the Place Brief.

places that inspire



- 1. (top) Views to the Brindabellas from Whitlam (SLA)
- 2. Supermarket Rooftop Inspiration, Burwood Brickworks (Fraser’s Property)



RECREATION/PLAY

Partner to develop opportunities to understand and learn about local and traditional nature, sensory gardens.



RESIDENTIAL

Deliver ‘density done well’ including slender elements, strategic views of the sky and optimum orientation for sunlight, green building edges.



COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

Locate cafes and seated areas to capture views of nature and avoid carpark views. Landscaping that incorporates garden beds and climbing plants



STREET NETWORK

Use street tree planting to bring nature into the centre and contribute to the Urban Forest.



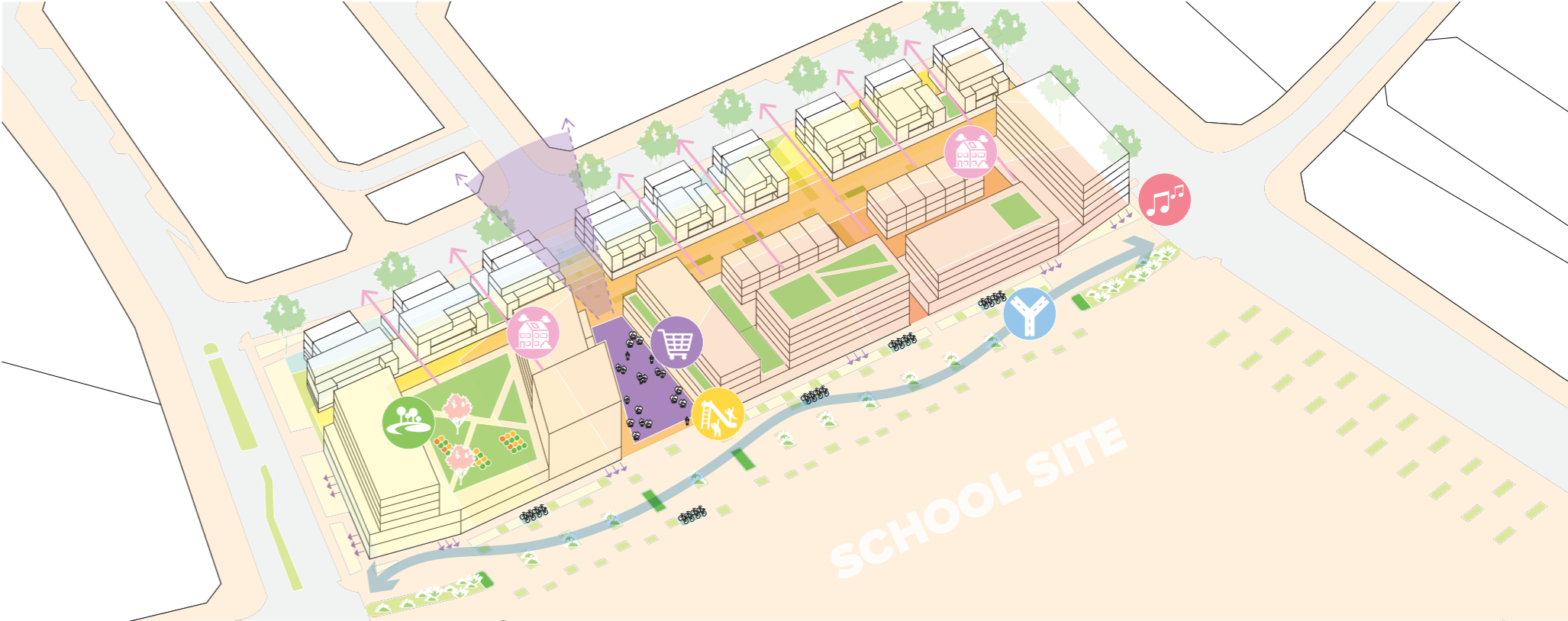
OPEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPE

Optimise elevated public open spaces, water sensitive treatments, green pockets and foster gardening including cultural plant use.



EVENTS

Partner to develop connection with and understanding of Country through the events calendar.





# DIVERSITY

To express our unique selves as our interests, ages, abilities and the seasons change.

What we’ve heard:

We heard that single use and mono-function are ‘out.’ The community is interested in multi-purpose and flexibility in everything from spaces to retail, facilities and infrastructure.

People want places their families can enjoy now, and as they grow older. Importantly they also want places that young people, teens, parents and grandparents can enjoy.

We also heard about the importance of different cultures feeling welcome and being able to come together and mingle everyday, as well as in events at the local centre. One way to incorporate this is through the activation program.

We have the opportunity to deliver a framework that supports, promotes and celebrates diversity in our centre and community.

Why is it important:

In order for Whitlam Local Centre to realise the Vision as a ‘place for community,’ we must ensure that all community members are represented in the planning.

Cultural diversity, age and ability affect the way that we feel safe, happy and contribute to our sense of belonging.

It is also important to plan for a centre that is robust and can be flexible as seasons, climate, work and lifestyle conditions change.



- 1. (top) Ramps as a Preferred Experience, Gallery of Victoria on the River (archdaily)
- 2. Working from Anywhere (FunSubstance.com)



RECREATION/  
PLAY

Source purpose-built street furniture to be compatible with play, skating, art and its primary function.



RESIDENTIAL

Provide decoupled home and office or ‘work from home’ opportunities.



COMMERCIAL/  
RETAIL

Integrate a community centre, curate a diverse range of tenancies.



STREET  
NETWORK

Provide accessibility as a joyful experience/journey. Design the school interface as a street, a gathering space and a linear green.



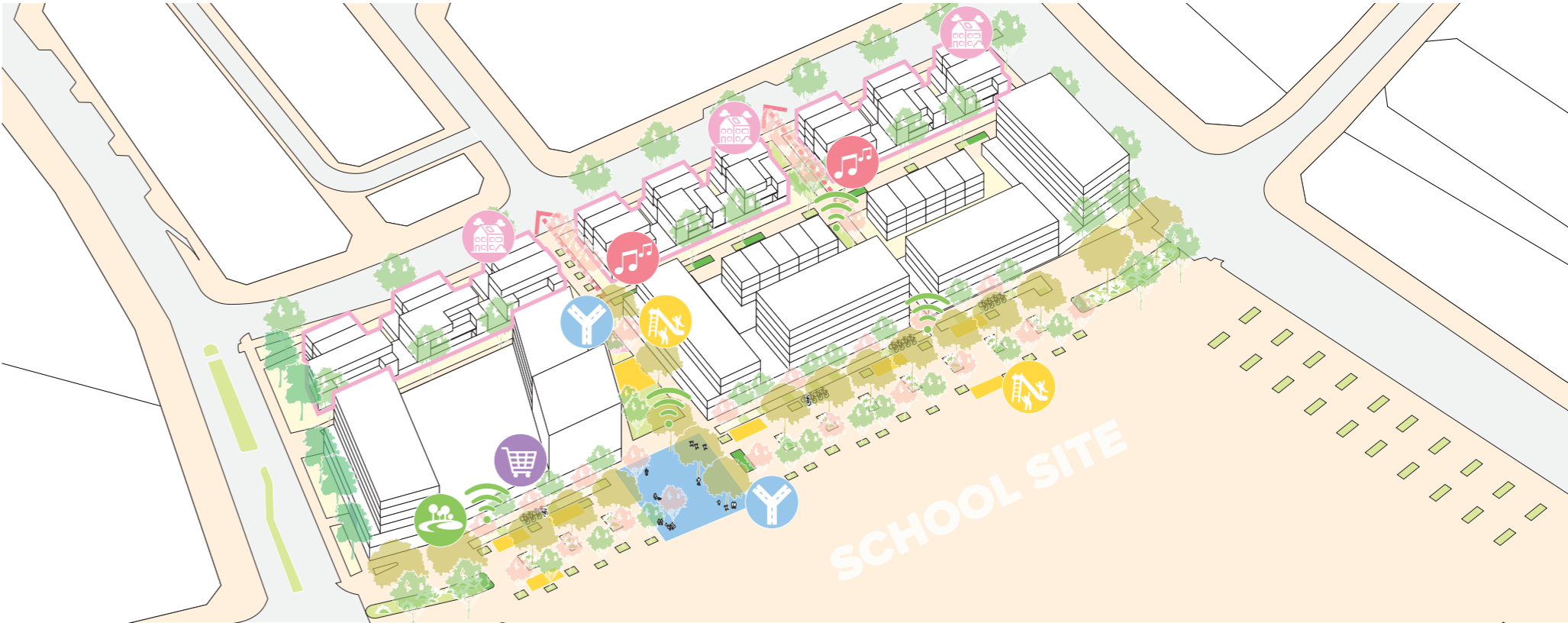
OPEN SPACE/  
LANDSCAPE

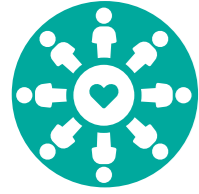
Provide wi-fi in all public spaces.



EVENTS

Use slope to create amphitheatre event spaces that are also daily gathering and reflection spaces.





# A FREE COMMUNITY DESTINATION

To feel welcomed and included in your community.

## What we've heard:

There was wide agreement that Whitlam Local Centre will be more than just a shopping centre. We heard that this is where you want to meet friends, spend your Friday nights and be able to work from...anywhere.

The Place Brief will focus on creating a place where all ages feel included, can connect and thrive.

Attention to the finer grain details will be important, including street furniture, community offerings such as a street library, and opportunities to play.

Whitlam Local Centre can be promoted as a free community destination; a place where everyone will feel welcomed in your community irrespective of ages or ability or intent to spend money.

## Why is it important:

A place becomes a destination when it is of a high quality, provides something unique and is welcoming to a broad range of visitors.

Whitlam Local Centre aims to be a local destination that prioritises its residents but welcomes visitors and families associated with the school in order to deliver diversity and day and night activation.

The Place Brief works off the principle of the 'power of free.' This means that the planning should encourage people to linger without the perceived obligation to spend money.

places  
that  
inspire



1. (clockwise from top) School and Local Centre Synergies ([www.cedarwoods.com.au/rivergums/community/nearbysuburbs/wellard](http://www.cedarwoods.com.au/rivergums/community/nearbysuburbs/wellard))
2. City Walk (SLA)
3. Yoga in the Plaza, New York ([metmag.com](http://metmag.com))



## RECREATION/ PLAY

Set aside adequate areas of unprogrammed space for yoga, exercise, work/study and reflection.



## RESIDENTIAL

Design all communal areas to be publicly accessible, rather than private areas for resident use only, e.g. shared car service.



## COMMERCIAL/ RETAIL

Encourage a tenants' agreement (quality control), open hours and streamlined alcohol license agreements. Spaces to eat without being a customer.



## STREET NETWORK

Provide an activation plan along pedestrian lanes. Design for road closure event opportunities.



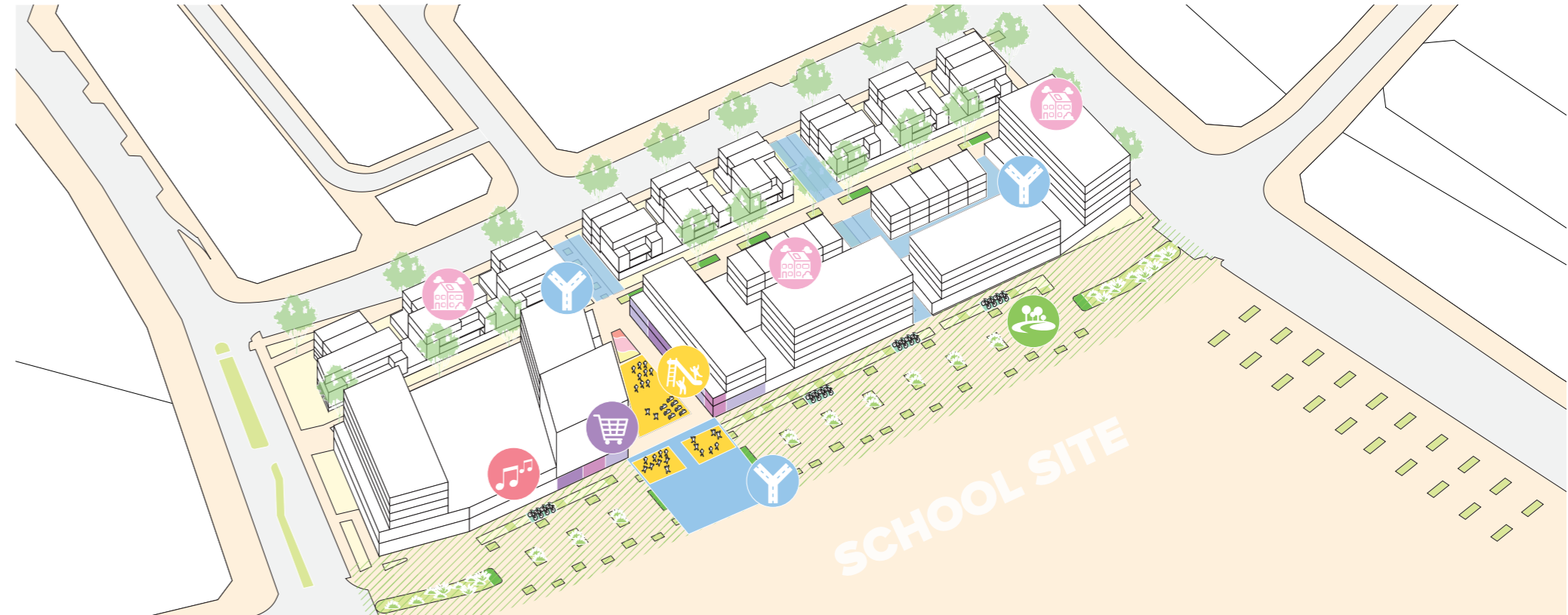
## OPEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPE

Use high-quality materials. Landscape and materials palette 'of the place.' Shared plants such as seedbank and community garden.



## EVENTS

Develop an annual events program. Hire or use SLA as a place manager. Whitlam Display Village as place curator.



# 06

## DELIVERY MECHANISMS

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### Overview:

Implementation of this Place Brief is reliant upon ACT Government leadership, private developers, local and national partnerships, grass roots community action and changes to policy.

The primary purpose of the Place Brief is to provide a framework and design brief for all collaborators. However, we also provide a high level overview of policy consideration and/or amendments that are recommended to facilitate the realisation.

This section outlines a number of site-specific mechanisms recommended to assist in achieving the optimum outcome at Whitlam Local Centre. These would be separate and additional scopes of work to be undertaken to further guide the developer, promote a certain degree of creative flexibility and to bring transparency to the commercial impact and/or uplift of the Place Brief recommendations.

Specifically, we recommend the following work to be undertaken:

- Active Frontage Controls Toolkit
- Greenery Performance Criteria
- Partnership Investigations
- Apartment Design Guide Application
- Tenants' Agreement
- Public Realm Character and Materials
- Art and Events Strategy and/or Program
- Streamlined Policy and Licensing

# ACTIVE FRONTAGE CONTROLS TOOLKIT

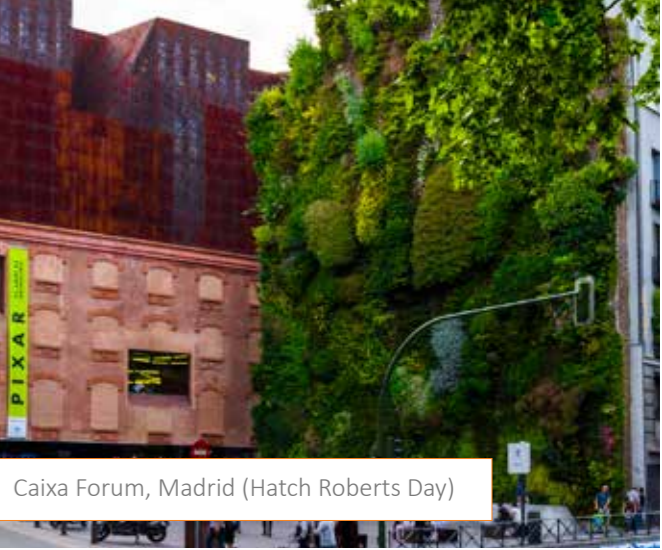
**Discussion:**

This Place Brief describes many benefits associated with activation, visual interest and diversity. The reference design and Active Frontage Controls Toolkit can provide a sliding scale of built form activation to the perimeter and internal thoroughfare (vehicle and pedestrian) frontages.

Active Frontage Controls apply to all land uses. As an example, commercial ground floor can and should have active frontages in key areas where aspirational vibrant retail shopfronts are not viable currently and/or into the future. The developer would need to consider ways to keep these frontages active where a tenancy was not in place - for example, with a free display from a local artist. Other non-traditional activations include non-profit, arts and creative sector as well as repair or share economy.

**Proposal:**

A CBD Active Frontage Plan should allocate Active, Friendly and Mixed Frontages with corresponding controls similar to the following items.



**Active**



- Small units with many doors (approximately 15-20 doors per 100m)
- Uses are highly varied and include shops, cafés, bars, markets and community centres focused around high amenity
- Visual richness in façade details to engage the pedestrian
- Primarily vertical façade articulation
- Ins and outs (horizontal and vertical articulation of façades)
- Vehicle access and servicing zones prohibited
- Integrate signage with unit design

**Friendly**



- Relatively small units (approximately 10-14 doors per 100m)
- Predominantly for the purpose of activation and surveillance
- A less varied and concentrated mix of uses than ‘active façades’ and including visually dynamic facades for residential lobbies, communal gyms, open spaces, laundromats and innovative uses such as boutique shared workspaces for artists, or small business hotdesk collaboratives spaces
- Few blind and passive units
- Limited vehicle access and servicing via tight, recessed openings
- Integrate signage with unit design

**Mixed**



- Large and small units (approximately 6-10 per 100m)
- Some blank walls and passive units embellished with façade art or greenery
- Modest facade relief
- Vehicle access and servicing permitted and mixed in with large footprint active uses such as workshops, design studios and exhibition space
- Integrate signage with unit design

# GREENERY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

## Discussion:

Whitlam Local Centre provides the opportunity to be an exemplar requiring public and private collaboration towards best practice greenery performance criteria.

This is consistent with ACT Government strategies and objectives towards greenery and urban cooling mitigation and specifically the Urban Forest Strategy and Canberra’s Living Infrastructure plan.



Green View Index Sample (MIT)

## Canopy Cover Proposal:

At national and territory levels of Government there is the priority to increase canopy cover in urban areas in order to mitigate the heat island effect arising from increased development. In addition, increasing shade has broader environmental benefits including improving pedestrian amenity and encouraging walking and healthy activities.

Best practice canopy cover generally ranges from 25-35 percent. An aspirational yet achievable position should be taken for Whitlam Local Centre. There are opportunities to experiment with climbers and a range of plants and to trial and evaluate performance of shade provision equivalents to trees (in an urban centre setting). EPSDD planning controls work may apply to the site.

Street tree planting should be coordinated with private development requirements in order to maximise tree canopies and shade. Canopy cover on a private block should be located on the ground plane and podium, and on roof surfaces where adequate deep soil can be achieved.

## Green View Index Proposal:

Greenery contributes to the pedestrian experience through visual amenity, interest and micro-climate whilst softening the visual impact of the built form in urban areas. A diverse range of greenery and landscaping can complement tree canopy to provide microclimate (and wellbeing) benefits.

The [Green View Index](#) is used to calculate the extent of greenery in our urban outlook. It answers the question, ‘How much of my view as a pedestrian is leafy and green?’

The top ten greenest cities, measured using this tool, have a Green View Index of 20-30%. It is considered reasonable that urban areas seeking to increase walkability and prioritize pedestrians and cyclists would aim for a target within this range.

The website [Treepedia](#) provides data from around the world, through MIT’s Senseable Lab.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## Discussion:

Community, Stakeholders, Suburban Land Agency and Hatch Roberts Day have identified a range of critical partnership and/or champions that should contribute to, or take the lead on, delivering the Place Brief.

The true success of this Place Brief will be demonstrated by the community, independent and/or developer led interventions that occur over time. This Place Brief initiates this transformation but it will require a great number of people to implement and maintain it into the future.

The [SLA Innovation Hub](#) - Whitlam Display Village will establish a Place Curator in 2022 and implement a place activation playbook. This process has established a range of local partnerships and continue to grow and strengthen over time. The Place Curator will play a critical role in fostering partnerships and connecting the insights from the village to inform the designs and development of the local centre.

## Proposal:

This table documents the early ideas for partnerships and should be considered a dynamic tool:

| DESIGN BRIEF                       | POTENTIAL PARTNER / S                  | SLA CHAMPION                |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Shared Facilities                  | Education Directorate                  | Whitlam Development Manager |
| Multi Purpose Street               | artsACT                                | Whitlam Place Curator       |
| Furniture                          | Canberra Skateboarding Association     |                             |
|                                    | TCCS                                   |                             |
| School Interface Shared Zone       | TCCS                                   | Whitlam Development Manager |
|                                    | Education Directorate                  |                             |
|                                    | Pedal Power                            |                             |
|                                    | canberra.bike                          |                             |
|                                    | EPSDD                                  |                             |
| Events Program                     | Molonglo Valley Community Forum        | Whitlam Place Curator       |
|                                    | SLA (Mingle)                           |                             |
| Rotating Art Exhibitions           | artsACT                                | Whitlam Place Curator       |
|                                    | Education Directorate                  |                             |
|                                    | Woden Arts                             |                             |
| Communal Garden                    | Local community garden operator/s      | Whitlam Place Curator       |
| Nature and Cultural Interpretation | Molonglo Conservation Group            | Whitlam Place Curator       |
|                                    | Ngunnawal Elders and Knowledge Holders |                             |
|                                    | Landcare                               |                             |

# DRAFT APARTMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES

**Discussion:**

The Whitlam Local Centre will provide much needed housing diversity in the form of apartments and/or shop-top housing (where a residence is available upstairs and a retail/office space below).

Housing diversity and affordable housing options do not equate to low quality or compromised residential amenity.

**Proposal:**

The Whitlam Local Centre should be subject to compliance with the draft Apartment Design Guidelines (ACT) with a particular focus on:

- Sufficient building separation
- Deep soil minimums
- Cross ventilation
- Solar access.

# TENANTS’ AGREEMENT

**Discussion:**

Whitlam Local Centre would benefit from friendly competition that would force retail, food and beverage and office owners to maintain a high standard from commencement and into the future.

**Proposal:**

It is recommended that a Tenants’ Agreement is put in place controlling the standard for items such as signage, lighting and outdoor dining. For example, an Outdoor Dining Agreement may include items such as:

- Minimum number of outdoor tables and chairs
- Plastic-free places
- Evening lighting strategy
- Umbrella shade structure guidance
- Planting guidance
- Whitlam Local Centre Exemption/Relaxation relating to approvals for events, road closures and the like.



Outdoor Dining (TimeOut)

# PUBLIC REALM CHARACTER + MATERIALS

**Discussion:**

The public realm interventions and character identified within this document are key to the delivery of the place intent and function of aspects of the Whitlam Local Centre Place Brief including:

- The low-key and/or shared nature of the street interface with the school
- Robust paving material for all abilities access
- Multi-purpose street furniture design that safely allows skate boarding, seating, safety barriers, art and sculpture to co-exist

**Proposal:**

Prepare a:

- Whitlam Local Centre materials palette
- Shared Street Reference Design in collaboration with TCCS including:
  - Working group with TCCS to realise the place intent with a light-touch set of engineering solutions including alternatives to line markings, bollards and excessive signage
  - Multi Purpose Street Furniture Design Specifications



Artist’s impression of the shared space at Beecroft Street in the Coombs and Wright Village (SLA)

# ART AND EVENTS STRATEGY AND/OR PROGRAM

**Discussion:**

Regular activation through arts and events is important in establishing a thriving Whitlam Local Centre, and will also support tenancies.

A Place Curator will be based in the SLA Innovation Hub - Whitlam Display Village from 2022 and will oversee delivery of a seasonal activation and events program. The artistic activities and creative outputs will reflect the Whitlam neighbourhood and celebrate living, thriving Ngunnawal culture.

SLA’s [Mingle program](#) will also utilise the Display Village spaces and work to ensure community led creative opportunities are provided and strengthened.

Through this community development program and the Place Curator; a combination of curated and organic art programs, workshops and installations will evolve over the next few years in Whitlam.

The creative outputs, community input and lessons will provide valuable place insights to inform the Whitlam Local Centre art and events strategy.

**Proposal:**

- Insights and learnings from the implementation of the Whitlam Display Village Activation and Management Playbook (led by the Place Curator) will feed into future arts and event strategy for Whitlam Local Centre
- Develop an arts and events strategy and program
- Support local residents to lead creative endeavours in their neighbourhood.



Totem Poles in a sensory garden, Queanbeyan (HRD)

# STREAMLINED POLICY AND LICENSING

**Discussion:**

To encourage desired tenancy take-up, day and night activation and to achieve a destination quality, planning and operational controls should be simplified and/or streamlined within Whitlam Local Centre to facilitate and encourage tenant participation and events.

These can be established and applied to the Whitlam Local Centre in addition to the Territory Plan.

**Proposal:**

Where a Whitlam Local Centre Place Brief or design element has been specified, the proponent would receive exemption, expedition and/or relaxation of requirements such as temporary traffic management plans (TTMP), licenses and the like.

Some examples may include:

- Outdoor dining and/or liquor license
- Event-based road closure, particularly where it support opportunities to walk, cycle or scoot to events
- Busking
- Markets
- Amateur performances



Orange Wine Street Festival (Pinterest)

# 07

## NEXT STEPS

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### Overview:

The Whitlam Local Centre Place Brief is crafted with purpose to ensure that it does not become a ‘shelf document.’ The community feedback that contributed to the place and design direction is invaluable.

It is intended that the Design Brief component of this Place Brief is to be embedded into future designs and approval process via the Whitlam Local Centre Development Application, Reference Design and Developer Deed.

The ACT Government’s Indicative Land Release Program indicates that the SLA is due to release Whitlam Local Centre for sale in the 2022/23 financial year. It is likely to be a two-stage tender process to encourage best-practice

outcomes from a competitive process, which could take 6 to 12 months to go through that process. The land will be ready to start developing mid to late 2023.

The developer of the site will be required to enter into a Concept Delivery Deed with the SLA. This will ensure that the Whitlam Local Centre reflects the Design Brief component of this report. SLA must approve the developer’s design before a Development Application can be progressed.

# APPENDICES

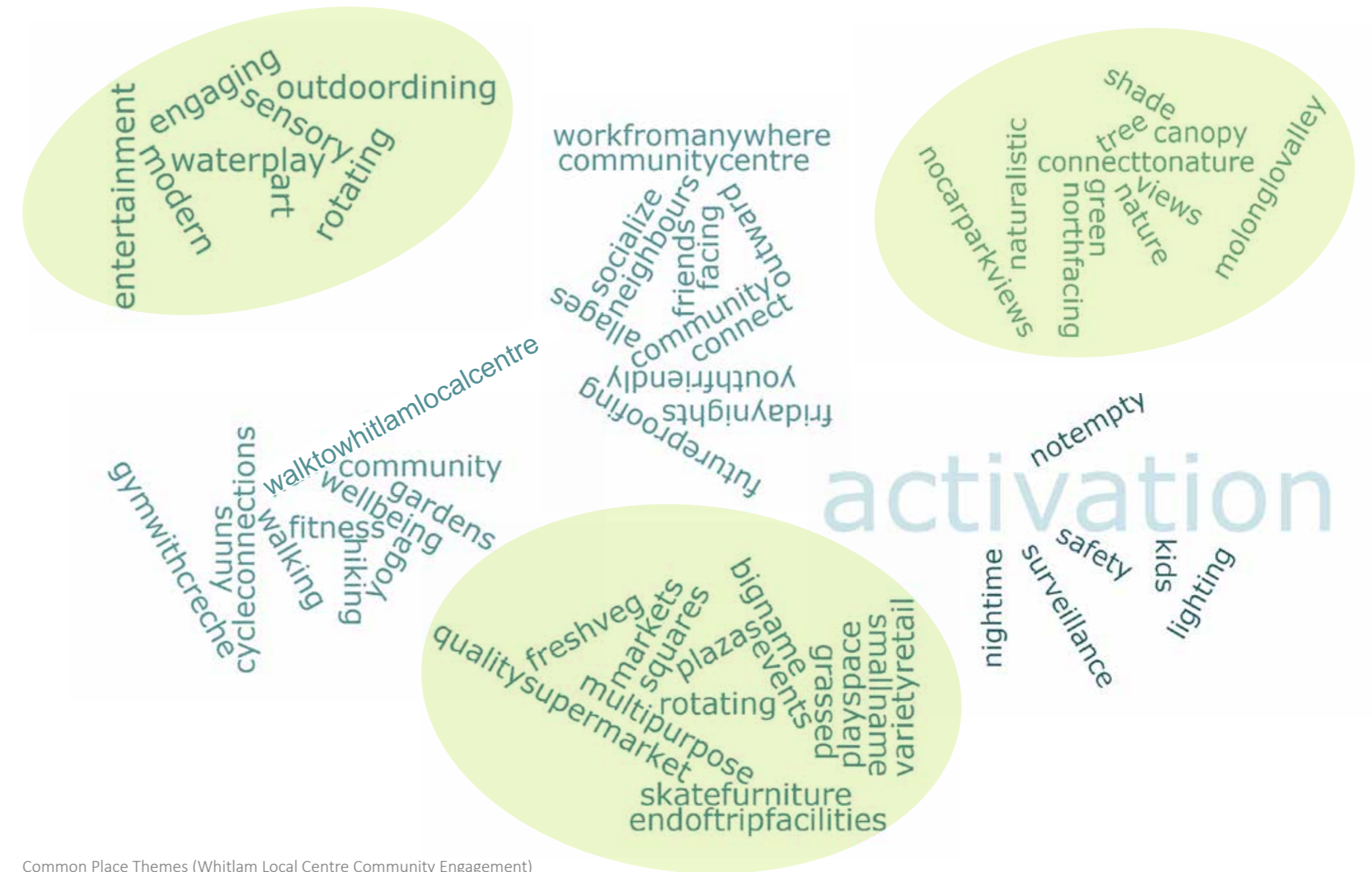
Appendix A - Listening Report - Workshop 1

Appendix B - Listening Report - Workshop 2

Appendix C - Listening Report - YourSay Survey and Digital Inputs

Appendix D - Listening Report - Workshop 3

Appendix E - Common Place Themes (Wordles)



Common Place Themes (Whitlam Local Centre Community Engagement)