



West Belconnen Community Plan

Part 1 - Background Report

Client:
Riverview and the Land Development Agency

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Disclaimer:

The development parameters, (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

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1 Introduction

This is the first of a four part report that presents a Community Plan for the new suburb(s) of West Belconnen, to be developed within the north western part of the ACT and extending into the southern part of the Shire of Yass, in NSW. It has been prepared by social planning consultants Elton Consulting, on behalf of the project's proponents, the Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd (Riverview) and the ACT Land Development Agency (LDA). The Community Plan has been prepared to support and inform the master plan for West Belconnen, the rezoning of the site and subsequent development applications.

The scope of the Community Plan includes:

- » Population forecasts for West Belconnen
- » Analysis of housing needs and strategies for housing mix, affordable housing, adaptable housing
- » Assessment of needs for community, education and recreation facilities and services
- » The strategies required to address those needs, including funding, implementation and delivery, management and on-going planning processes
- » Commitments for community building and place making initiatives and arrangements for implementation
- » Other measures to create a socially sustainable community at West Belconnen.

It is important to note that both open space and demographics are being dealt with by other consultancies with the outcomes of the work detailed in separate reports. Preparation of the West Belconnen Community Plan has involved:

- » A review of background studies and planning policies
- » Analysis of housing and demographic data
- » An assessment of existing community facilities in the surrounding area and their capacity to meet the needs of the future West Belconnen population
- » Consultation with staff from relevant ACT agencies to consider needs and strategies for social infrastructure provision
- » Input from the Planning and Design Forum and other workshops to inform elements of the Master Plan
- » Discussions with LDA and Riverview regarding commitments and implementation strategy.

The Community Plan is presented in four parts with this Background Report being the first. The second part focuses on social sustainability, the third on housing and social infrastructure requirements and the fourth provides an overview of housing.

This Background Report provides:

- » An introduction to the project including vision, principles and objectives
- » An overview of the relevant policy context including mostly ACT but also relevant NSW policy
- » An analysis of existing conditions including current demographics and existing social infrastructure
- » An overview of future conditions.

2 West Belconnen – the project

2.1 The development site

The West Belconnen development site is located in the north west of the ACT and straddles the NSW border. The majority of the site falls within the ACT with the northern portion located in the Yass Local Government Area, in NSW. The site is near the new suburb of West Macgregor and the existing suburb of Holt, and is bordered by the Magpies Belconnen Golf Club to the east, Ginninderra Creek to the north and the Murrumbidgee River to the south-west.

The development site in NSW is a 'peninsula' bounded by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek and is only accessible from the ACT. The entire site has direct access to the existing ACT road network via the distributor roads of Parkwood Road/Southern Cross Drive and Stockdill Drive/Drake Brockman Drive. The site is approximately 20 minutes from the centre of Canberra and 12 minutes from Belconnen. The town of Yass is the closest major NSW settlement and is approximately 50 minutes travel by car to the north of the site, with the only access via the ACT road network.

The ACT site includes all of Blocks 1605 and 1606 Belconnen District. The ACT Blocks, Lots 1605 and 1606, are currently held by Corkhill entities as a rural lease. The Corkhill Group through entity Reid & Stevens P/L also owns NSW Blocks Lots 1, 2, 3 & 7 which are adjacent to the rural lease land. Immediately to the north of the site, across Parkwood Road, is an area of territory land which is occupied by Parkwood Eggs and the balance of the land is largely unleased and undeveloped. This land is currently used as horse agistment paddocks but has possible urban potential and has been identified as such in the ACT Planning Strategy. This land is bounded by Parkwood Road, West Macgregor, Ginninderra Creek and the NSW border. Four additional blocks in the NSW peninsula are also included in the master plan area. These blocks are freehold with different owners.

The West Belconnen site is close to a range of social facilities and commercial centres in Macgregor, Holt and Belconnen. It is 2-3 kms from the Holt local centre and the Kippax group centre which offer access to daily needs. It is approximately 7km from the Belconnen town centre which accommodates government departments, a community centre, a Westfield shopping centre and an arts centre.

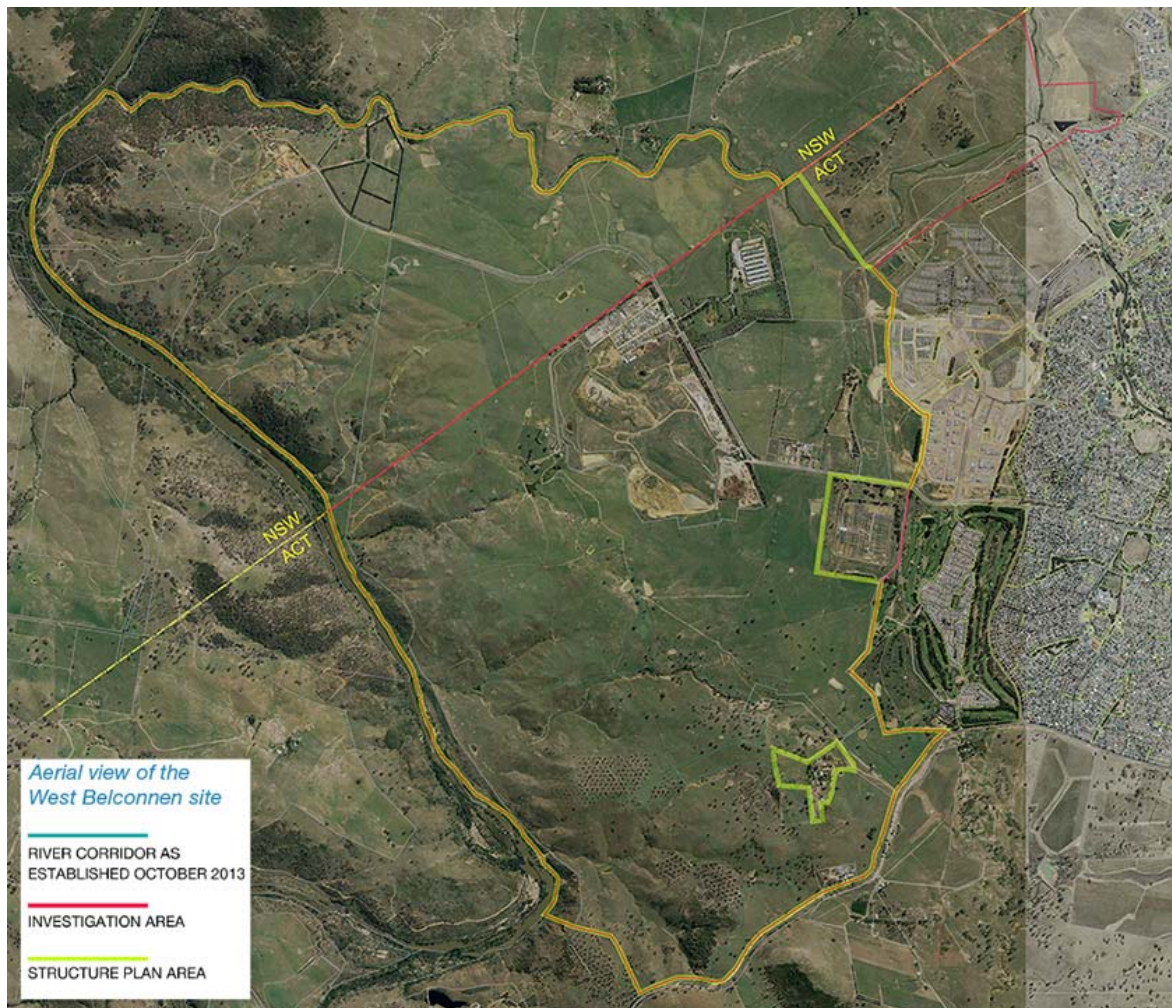
The site is close to education facilities in Holt, Macgregor, Latham and Charnwood including the Kingsford Smith School in Holt which offers preschool to Year 10. It is also able to be served by the library at Kippax and emergency services, including a fire and ambulance station at Charnwood, and police at Belconnen town centre, and Calvary Hospital at Bruce.

The rezoning in both the ACT and NSW will allow a high quality residential precinct that provides for around 11,500 dwellings (approximately 6,500 of which will be in the ACT and 5,000 in NSW) housing around 30,000 people¹ over a 30 year period. It will accommodate a mix of lots to provide for a range of housing types and densities. This will allow a greater variety of affordable housing in the overall development while minimising the impact on commercial outcomes.

¹ The development parameters, (dwelling numbers, stages etc.) referred to in this report may vary over time. The figures contained herein are estimates; they represent a good approximation of likely development outcomes to a sufficient level of accuracy for the purposes of this report.

The master plan will incorporate an efficient subdivision pattern which will minimise space utilised by roads in order to maximise the available land. The urban pattern will be designed to allow for connections and links to existing physical infrastructure, services and social infrastructure facilities located in the adjacent suburbs. This design will extend the lifespan of these facilities and contribute to an integrated community.

A site and context map for West Belconnen is below .Study area map



2.2 Project vision

A variety of initiatives are proposed to help build a diverse and cohesive community at West Belconnen. These include:

- » Incorporating a variety of housing types in the master plan to ensure diversity
- » Providing a variety of block sizes and density in house and land packages to improve housing affordability and exceed the ACT Governments 20% target for affordable housing
- » Establishing adaptable housing to allow residents to age in place as their lifestyles change
- » Incorporating an accessible and user friendly open space network into the development to enhance community interaction and liveability
- » Provision of public transport for new residents in the earliest stages of the development to embed use of public transport into residents travel behaviour
- » Providing community facilities and services, located close to public transport and in an area where people are likely to congregate to create a sense of place and enhance community wellbeing
- » Establishing a residents' welcome program highlighting the sustainability and environmental initiatives provided in the development and how to make best use of these
- » Providing public open space throughout the development and retaining natural open space
- » Ensuring the Murrumbidgee River Corridor zone is recognised and maintained as a major conservation and recreation area. It will be restored and managed with an emphasis on its conservation values, protecting important ecological and heritage features
- » Ensuring the Ginninderra Creek corridor is rehabilitated and conserved as a riparian corridor, building on the series of creek restoration projects that have been undertaken by Riverview in NSW and the ACT in recent years. This will contribute to completion of the restoration for the entire length of the creek from Gungahlin to its confluence with the Murrumbidgee River
- » Introducing conservation areas to protect important ecological features, particularly habitat for the threatened Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) and Yellow Box Red Gum grassy woodland
- » Establishing a network of path and cycle ways to allow for passive recreation and transit throughout the development. This will help to reduce vehicle trips and provide opportunities for health and fitness
- » Creating opportunities for both passive and active recreational pursuits and necessary infrastructure. Locations for these activities will not compromise ecological objectives for the open space network
- » Creating opportunities to include educational experiences associated with the Indigenous and European history and natural history of the site
- » Implementing an integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation program to document and validate all steps in the process. This means lessons learnt can be used to inform the development strategy, sales and marketing and future projects.

2.3 Guiding principles

Riverview has adopted a statement of guiding principles for sustainable results as the project objectives. The guiding principles are also recognised in the Heads of Agreement with the ACT Government where they have been adopted as the project objects and will guide decision making and for the planning and delivery stages and beyond. The guiding principles reflect national priorities and align with federal, state and territory government policies on housing affordability, climate change and environmental protection.

The West Belconnen Project will:

- » Be sustainable over time, socially, economically and ecologically (with a low and reducing ecological footprint)
- » Respond to the local and global environment
- » Provide for future beneficial change to occur in design, infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms
- » Be cost effective, replicable and measurable
- » Act as a new model that others can follow.

2.4 Social objectives

Social objectives for West Belconnen, detailed in the statement of guiding principles, include:

- » Respecting and honouring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural, historical and spiritual values, including integrating with the existing rich, social fabric of Belconnen
- » Designing for social equity, affordability, diversity and interdependence, honouring differences and catering for the needs of individuals through all stages of life
- » Maximising health, safety and comfort of the built environment to provide enduring quality of life
- » Instilling awareness and supporting education of sustainability values, technology and lifestyles
- » Using creative and robust design solutions to create a continuing sense of place and beauty that inspires, affirms and ennobles
- » Designing neighbourhoods that support and encourage community interactions through imaginative, functional and enjoyable public spaces

3 Policy Context

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this review is to ensure the West Belconnen project responds to the local strategic context and policy direction of both the ACT and NSW governments.

3.2 Territory Plan (2013)

Strategic directions

The Territory Plan is the key statutory planning document in the ACT, providing the policy framework for the administration of planning in the ACT. The purpose of the Territory Plan is to manage land use change and development in a manner consistent with strategic directions set by the ACT Government, Legislative Assembly and the community.

The object of the Territory Plan is to ensure, in a manner not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan, the planning and development of the ACT to provide the people of the ACT with an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and have their recreation.

Key **social sustainability principles** contained in the Territory Plans Statement of Strategic Direction (2010) of relevance for the West Belconnen project are:

- » 1.18 Provision will be made for a comprehensive range of readily accessible community, cultural, sporting and recreational facilities, distributed according to the varying needs of different localities and population groups. In major centres and developing areas, sites will be safeguarded where necessary for particular community needs.
- » 1.19 A variety of open space types will be provided in each district or local area to meet the diverse recreational needs of residents and visitors, and to contribute to community health.
- » 1.20 Planning policies for community facilities and open space will encourage multiple use and flexible design to allow for changing needs.
- » 1.21 Provision of affordable, adaptable and special needs housing will be promoted throughout the city, as well as modification or redevelopment of existing housing stock to meet emerging social needs.
- » 1.22 Urban development will be planned in a manner that promotes community vitality and safety, applying principles of crime prevention through environmental design. Provision will also be made for emergency services infrastructure necessary to ensure a high standard of safety for residents and visitors.
- » 1.23 The needs of people with disabilities will be recognised in all facets of urban planning, particularly including the design and operation of transport and access systems and the assessment of development proposals.
- » 1.24 New suburban areas will be planned with a legible and permeable hierarchy of roads; conveniently located commercial and community facilities; a network of open spaces; an off-road system for pedestrians and cyclists; and provision for accessible public transport.

- » 1.25 **Heritage and cultural values will be safeguarded**, including in particular those of the Territory's Aboriginal peoples and those derived from both its rural history and urban development as the National Capital. The distinctive qualities of residential areas and other places, as well as elements of community heritage, will also be recognised and their conservation promoted.
- » 1.26 **Identified places of heritage significance will be protected** in accordance with requirements for their conservation contained in the Heritage Register and any relevant heritage guidelines under the *Heritage Act 2004*. Special provisions are included in the Heritage Act for the recognition, registration and conservation of Aboriginal heritage.

Key **spatial planning and urban design principles** for West Belconnen include:

- » 2.7 **Development will be planned to encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling, including commuter cycling.** Routes will be preserved for an enhanced inter-town public transport system. Requirements for vehicle parking will be related to commercial needs and transport policy objectives.
- » 2.10 **Adequate provision of open space throughout the Territory will remain a high priority.** Open space will be planned and carefully maintained as an integrated, hierarchical system that provides for a diversity of sport and recreation activities, contributes to the legibility and character of urban development, is cost-effective to maintain, and assists in the effective management of stormwater.
- » 2.12 Planning for non-urban and natural areas will also **recognise the values of land for research, education, recreation and tourism purposes.**
- » 2.14 Policies and procedures to **promote high quality, creative design of development, urban spaces and landscape settings** will be applied throughout the Territory, and innovation encouraged, in keeping with the spirit of the National Capital as an exemplar of best practice. Particular care will be taken to ensure high-amenity, quality design outcomes within residential areas, heritage areas, major centres and activity nodes, and along principal approach routes. **The relationship between the public and private realms will also be emphasised in terms of the design quality of precincts and shared spaces**, including spaces around buildings, as well as that of individual developments.
- » 2.16 **Retention of Canberra's unique landscape setting, including the integration of natural and cultural elements that create its 'garden city' and 'bush capital' qualities, will be accorded the highest priority.** Special attention will be given to safeguarding visual amenity, protecting vegetation and other important features within the established urban landscape, and ensuring the high quality of environmental design in new developments or redevelopment.

Community facilities in Residential Zones

The Territory Plan contains a range of zones and precincts. The development of community facilities primarily occurs in the Community Facility Zone however the Residential Zones (RZ1-RZ5) also provide opportunities for "a limited range of small scale facilities to meet local needs consistent with residential amenity." Community facilities, for example medical services, are also commonly provided in commercial areas.

Community Facility Zone

The Territory Plan contains a Community Facility Zone (CFZ) with the following objectives:

- » a) To facilitate social sustainability and inclusion through providing **accessible sites for key government and non-government facilities and services for individuals, families, and communities.**

- » b) To provide accessible sites for civic life and allow community organisations to meet the needs of the Territory's various forms of community.
- » c) To protect these social and community uses from competition from other uses.
- » d) To enable the efficient use of land through facilitating the co-location, and multi-use of community facilities, generally near public transport routes and convenience services appropriate to the use.
- » e) To encourage adaptable and affordable housing for persons in need of residential support or care.

The Community Facility Zone Development Code applies to all development in the community facility zone. This code provides additional planning, design and environmental controls to support the objectives of the community facility zone. It is used by the Authority to assess development applications and offers guidance to intending applicants in designing development proposals and preparing development applications.

Community and Recreation Facilities Location Guidelines General Code

The general code covers facilities used for community purposes which need public access, namely:

- » Education
- » Health
- » Community services
- » Arts
- » Sport and recreation.

The general location guidelines cover:

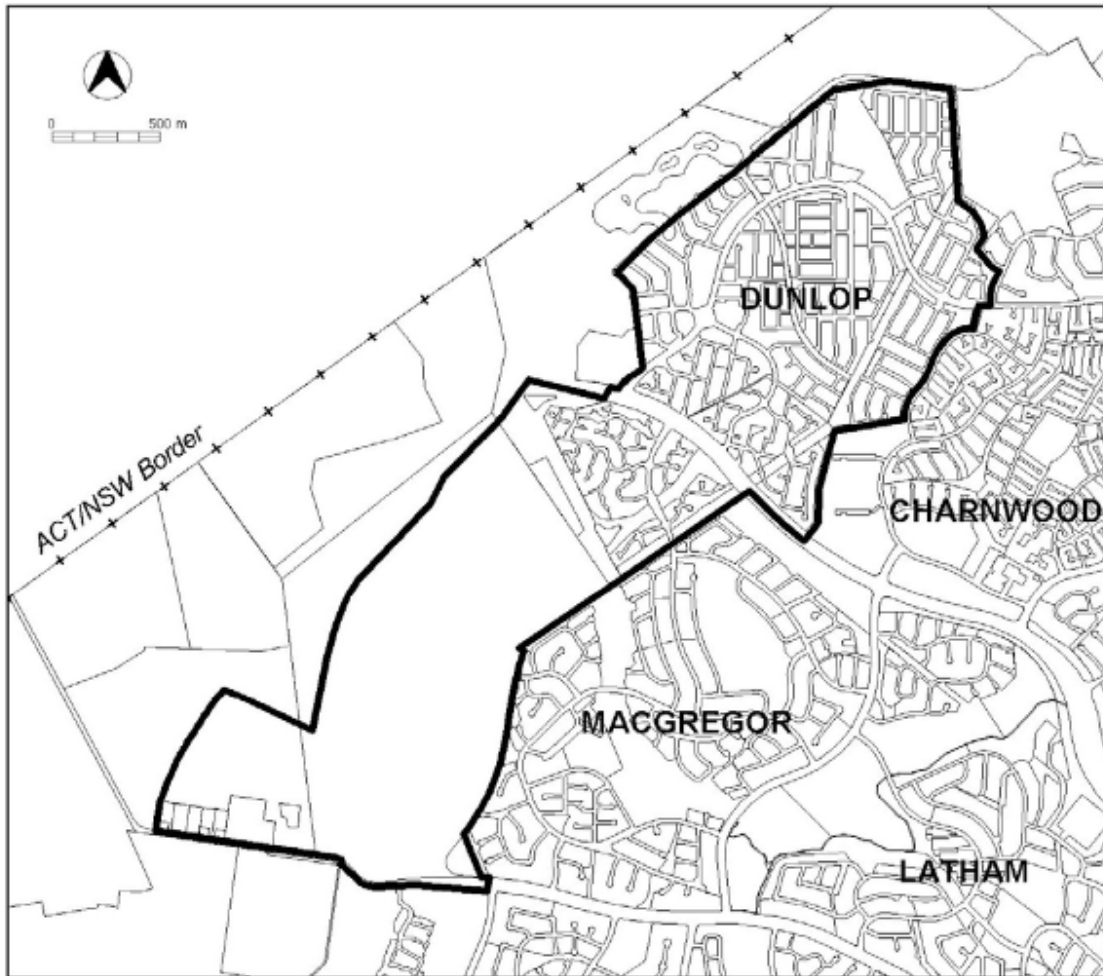
- » **Public transport** – aiming for locations within 500 metres of bus stops except where the facilities are likely to be used by small children, older people or people with a disability where the distance is reduced
- » **Parks** – aim for all residential areas to be within 400 metres of local parks with playground facilities
- » **Retail facilities** – community facilities generally should be located near retail centres in a position that is relatively central to their long term catchment
- » **Co-location/mixed use** – compatible facilities should be clustered at every opportunity and facilities shared wherever possible. Flexible design is encouraged
- » **Separation** – facilities likely to generate noise (clubs, outdoor recreation) should be located so that they do not reduce residential amenity, nor constrain later residential development
- » **Access and mobility** – reference should be made to Australian standards for access and mobility to ensure community and recreation facilities are accessible to older people and people with disabilities. Community and recreation sites should be as flat as possible
- » **Parking** – parking for older people and people with disabilities should be provided close to entrances of public buildings; parking should be safe and well lit after dark
- » **Pedestrian access** – safe access for pedestrians is key. Consideration should be given to the nature and traffic volume of nearby roads and distances, and safe access, to public transport
- » **Lighting/surveillance** – all facilities to be used at night should be well lit including parking areas and pedestrian routes. Landscaping should consider surveillance

- » **Design and siting** in residential areas – all community facilities located in residential areas should comply with the Residential Development Code where applicable.

The code also includes detailed guidelines for specific facilities.

West Belconnen Structure Plan (ACTPLA)

Figure 1 Area subject to the Structure Plan



An earlier West Belconnen Structure Plan was prepared to facilitate the development of Dunlop and West Macgregor. It covers only a small portion of the West Belconnen project area and will be superseded by a new structure plan. Reference to the earlier plan is included here for completeness.

The earlier structure plan outlines a series of planning objectives and principles for the development of West Belconnen to achieve high levels of amenity, safety and cost effectiveness. The most relevant planning objectives relating to social sustainability are identified in the following table.

Table 1 Relevant objectives and principles, West Belconnen Structure Plan

Area	Objectives
2.2 Urban structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set down a legible hierarchy of urban spaces which are responsive to community needs.
2.3 Transport networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide opportunities for effective and safely accessible public transport. To create a system of road and off-road networks that are legible, attractive and pleasant to use.
2.4 Residential development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage a diversity of housing forms and environments. To provide for a 'whole of life' approach for residential land use.
2.5 Open space and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop open space and planting theme for the main structure of the suburbs in keeping with concepts for West Belconnen as a whole and creating an individual identity for each area. To create a diversity of landscape experience which responds to community needs and offers distinct outdoor recreational and educational opportunities.
2.6 Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the future level of demand for school enrolment, from both the proposed development areas and from within adjacent suburbs, to build in sufficient flexibility at existing schools to accommodate potential future changes in enrolment levels and patterns. To provide for safe and convenient access for children to existing schools in neighbouring parts of Belconnen. To provide a strong focus for future communities of West Belconnen on existing primary schools in adjoining suburbs, as their local schools.
2.7 Other community and commercial uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide, where applicable, opportunities for the provision of local shopping and non-retail commercial facilities at a local centre located conveniently for all residents. To achieve flexibility of land use such that land not utilised for community facilities and/or commercial activities may be used for other purposes compatible with the location and scale of centre.

3.3 Canberra Social Plan (2011)

The Canberra Social Plan sits underneath the **Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century**.

Three themes support the vision of this Plan for Canberra:

- » Connection – creating a socially cohesive community now and for the future. Connected communities are welcoming, vibrant and adaptable. They refer to both the neighbourhood level and Canberra as a whole.
- » Belonging – making sure every individual has the opportunities and resources to reach their potential. Community participation is supported by responsive and welcoming services – particularly targeting people who are isolated, such as those experiencing mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and carers.
- » Collaboration – working together to improve the lives of all Canberrans. A shared commitment, strong partnerships and collaborative approaches across all sectors underpin this work.

Vision:

Canberra is a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community.

Profile of the ACT population

Relative to Australia's other States and Territories, the population of Canberra is characterised by:

- » High levels of education, workforce participation and average incomes
- » High levels of (self assessed) health
- » High levels of participation in sport, recreation and culture
- » An overall high standard of living, with pockets of concentrated disadvantage and social isolation.

Around 20% of people in the ACT (over 70,000 residents) were born overseas. And approximately 4,300 ACT residents (1.3%) identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Case studies

The Plan includes several case studies which have particular relevance for West Belconnen:

- » **People focused urban design in Belconnen Town Centre** – This important community hub for residents of north Canberra and the ACT incorporates retail, transport and improved cycling facilities for commuters. Nearby Belconnen Arts Centre and grounds provide an arts and cultural hub – with exhibitions, classes, community events, a café, festivals and concerts. Linked by walking and cycling paths, the centre is combined with the library, community services and educational facilities.

Belconnen Town Centre and Belconnen Arts Centre will act as important regional facilities for the new community of West Belconnen. Opportunities to link the new suburbs of West Belconnen to the Belconnen Town Centre via public transport and cycle ways are paramount.

- » **Libraries as community hubs** – The Kippax Library case study demonstrates the important role of libraries in the ACT, as a place for social interaction, self-discovery and learning. Libraries are shown to help address social isolation and to support positive health outcomes.

This service, which will support the new population at West Belconnen, is an important community asset now and into the future. The level of non-collection related services to the community may need to be enhanced in the future.

- » **Child and family centres** – The West Belconnen Child and Family Centre (opened in 2011) provides a one stop shop for prevention and early intervention services such as parent education sessions and programs for vulnerable families (including homework support). Primary health care services such as Maternal and Child Health Clinics and midwifery clinics also operate from the centre.

The Centre will provide an important district facility for the new community of West Belconnen. The Centre will provide services to the new community based on community demographics and need.

Schools for the future – Namadgi School in Canberra's south (opened in 2011) aims to function as a community hub and centre for excellence. The building and outdoor areas incorporate sustainable design features and planning for the school was supported by a process of community engagement.

Such a model should be considered for provision of the new primary school(s) for West Belconnen.

3.4 ACT Planning Strategy

West Belconnen is identified as a future urban investigation area in the ACT Planning Strategy adopted by the ACT Government on 26 June 2012. The Planning Strategy contains 9 strategies to achieve the plans outcomes and make Canberra more sustainable over time. A number of these strategies and their associated actions have particular relevance for community plan for West Belconnen. They are detailed below.

Strategy 4 Ensure everyone has convenient access to a range of facilities, services and opportunities for social interaction by reinforcing the role of group and local centres as community hubs.

Group and local centres will remain key meeting places and places of cultural and community expression. Despite changes to work and shopping patterns and community demographics, these centres can still be social and commercial hubs. Encouraging mixed use developments in these centres can provide affordable locations for new businesses and community services. More importantly, the centres can offer an alternative living environment to town centres and suburbs.

New residential areas must have sufficient space for, and high priority given to, the establishment of community facilities such as schools, meeting places, aged and child care centres, parks and play areas.

Short term action

- » Identify mixed use sites in town, group and local centres (through the master plan process) to support the viability and vibrancy of centres.
- » As part of this, give priority to identifying opportunities to partner with industry to provide community facilities in a more cost effective manner.

Strategy 5 Enhance Canberra's system of public spaces, providing vibrant, pleasant urban parks and places that everyone can enjoy by ensuring they are safe and accessible for the most vulnerable in our community

Creating new public spaces, improving the quality and maintenance of our existing spaces and improving access will encourage more people to enjoy Canberra's landscapes.

This strategy will guide planning and designing of streets and parks to be safe and enjoyable for the most vulnerable groups in our community, the elderly and children. By adopting this approach we ensure they are attractive for everyone.

The design and management of Canberra's network of open spaces – the street verges, parks and reserves – can encourage us to walk or cycle to work, shops or school. In tempting people to use these spaces we are fostering greater participation in the community and improving personal and public health

Short term actions

- » Further promote and develop opportunities for community gardens.
- » Develop new sports fields to support the new residential areas (in Gungahlin and Molonglo Valley and existing residential areas, such as Woden)

3.5 Study on Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability (ACTPLA, 2009)

This research was commissioned by the ACT Government to explore the relationship between community development and sustainability, and to investigate the perceptions, experience and expectations of residents in different areas of Canberra about community and sustainability. The study had several aims, with the most relevant for the West Belconnen project being: to explore new residents' expectations of social infrastructure and community development and their sense of identity with an area.

Participants from the communities of Harrison and Gungahlin Town Centre, two Greenfield sites in Canberra's north (with respectively lower and higher residential densities), were asked what 'community' meant to them. The most commonly identified infrastructure associated with new communities was: schools, shops, services and business, playgrounds and play groups. Social capital also featured strongly in participant responses. Knowing your neighbours, street parties and celebrations, as well as opportunities for social interaction were commonly identified as positive aspects of 'community'.

Expectations of community facilities were similar across both communities, with residents of both Harrison and Gungahlin identifying retail, recreation/entertainment, service facilities and other facilities/services as important. However, residents of Harrison expressed a strong desire for convenience shopping within walking distance.

Levels of local community involvement were mixed in Harrison and Gungahlin Town Centre. Overall there were limited social networks between neighbours, although community involvement was slightly higher in lower density Harrison. This was attributed to a small group of households in Harrison with similar circumstances, including some with school age children.

Provision of parks and recreational facilities in lower density Harrison provided respondents with a similar level of opportunity to meet neighbours as those in Gungahlin Town Centre. Community facilities were valued and were discussed in relation to opportunities for engaging with other local residents.

3.6 The Crace Study (Prof. Helen Berry University of Canberra, 2012, 2014)

The Crace Study tests assumptions about how "best practice" in urban development may, by influencing human behaviour, lead to better health. Best practice includes measures to make walking the easiest mode of transport and to provide places where people can interact to build safe connected communities. Run by the University of Canberra, The Crace Study assesses the benefits of such design measures primarily by surveying residents of the new Canberra suburb of

Crace over time while the suburb is still being developed and populated. This makes it possible to track changes in residents' thoughts, behaviours and health as the suburb is built around them. To establish points of comparison, the study also surveys Canberran residents who do not live in Crace. In addition, an international collaboration links *The Crace Study* with a similar study being conducted in Norway. This collaboration has not only increased the visibility of *The Crace Study*, it has broadened the kind of conclusions that can be drawn from it because results across the two studies can be examined for cross-cultural similarities and differences.

The suburb of Crace was developed by the Crace joint venture, which comprises: CIC Pty. Ltd. (Development company, project manager), Land Development Agency (local government), Defence Housing Australia and CHC Affordable Housing. When completed in 2015, Crace will house around 4,000 residents in 1,500 homes. Crace was designed as a 'mini-city': high-density urban precinct around a shopping centre surrounded by suburban areas, with some relatively smaller block size options. The street layout has a 'walkable' grid design, including wide walking/bike paths. Once the suburb is completed, houses will be in walking distance of multiple parks as well as shops and amenities with 25% of total land allocated for common use. These and other design features were based on best practice to create an attractive and safe neighbourhood that promotes fun activities, social interactions and sustainable living. Current thinking is that these design features will also have long-term benefits for the health and wellbeing of Crace residents. However, there are almost no studies that test across time whether building a suburb like this will actually produce health benefits and whether different sorts of people (in terms of age, family structure etc.) draw particular benefits from different design features. *The Crace Study* helps fill this gap, creating insights about good urban design for the Canberra region and beyond.

What are the findings so far?

2012 survey: Crace residents (n=180) were more positive about their suburb than people living elsewhere (n=97) and most Crace residents stated that the style of the suburb was one of the reasons they chose to live in Crace. Crace street design was assessed more positively than other places, with the exception that there were not yet many destinations for people to walk to or meet at. Residents were asked what they wanted for Crace with three themes emphasised as important for Crace.

Sense of Community – fun, friendly, nice people, community, sense of belonging, social groups, chance to meet people, community activities, community centre, people know their neighbours, people talk to each other.

Services and Amenities – shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants, bakery, facilities, services, post office, medical centre, petrol station, newsagency, pharmacy, hairdresser, ATM.

Outdoor Facilities and Space – bike paths, playgrounds, outdoor recreational facilities, walkable, easy to get around, places to walk, walking tracks, parks, parkland, open space, easy to walk to shops

2013 survey: Crace residents (n=375) were more likely to walk to parks than people living elsewhere (n=173), reflecting the number and variety of parks now open in Crace.

3.7 ACT Arts Policy Framework (artsACT, 2012)

The ACT Arts Policy Framework reflects the ACT Government's continuing commitment to support and strengthen the ACT arts sector and through it the wider community. It identifies arts priorities and provides a structure within which future arts policy will be developed, while guiding the implementation and review of existing policy and programs. The Framework is based on the following foundations:

- » Art is intrinsic. Art and artists are an essential part of our community.
- » The ACT is a unique community with a distinctive and valuable arts landscape.
- » Access to and participation in the arts is vital to a productive, healthy and creative community and a vibrant local arts scene.
- » Artists lead us to creative insight. Continuing engagement with the arts, from early childhood, is a fundamental part of social development and life-long learning.

Vision:

Canberra and its region comprise an inclusive, unique and creative arts landscape where excellence is highly valued. The ACT is home to innovative artists and arts organisations and is an important part of the cultural richness of Australia.

It contains four principles to achieve the vision – and outlines key elements of each principle along with examples of supporting activities. The principles contained in the policy and a selection of the most relevant ‘elements’ of these are shown below.

Table 2 Relevant principles and related elements, ACT Arts Policy Framework

Principles	Elements
Principle One: Facilitate Community Participation in and Access to the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding local arts organisations and activities to continue to deliver arts outcomes for the ACT community.
Principle Two: Support Artistic Excellence and Artistic Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the intrinsic value of art and arts participation. • Encouraging artistic excellence through arts hubs that enable and support best practice.
Principle Three: Strengthen the Sustainability of Arts Organisations and the Capacity of the Arts to Contribute to Social and Economic Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new and enhancing existing arts hubs to build vibrancy in the local arts sector and provide increased opportunities for social development through the arts.
Principle Four: Foster Artistic Innovation and Creative Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating connections between local arts organisations and other areas across government and the community, in particular the health and education sectors.

3.8 Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan (ACT Health, 2013)

A new action plan to reduce the level of obesity in the ACT community was recently launched. Towards Zero Growth sets out a goal of zero growth in obesity within the ACT, focusing on strategies that make active and healthy lifestyle choices easier. Despite the ACT population being the healthiest in Australia, 25% of children and 64% of adults in the ACT are overweight or obese.

Key actions in the Towards Zero Growth plan include:

- » Improve the availability of healthy food and drink options in ACT Government workplaces and events
- » Implement a Chief Minister's award scheme to reward healthy workplaces and food outlets

- » Develop and implement an ACT Government school food and drink policy with supporting guidelines that will mandate the implementation of the National Healthy School Canteen guidelines in ACT schools
- » Create new incentives for ACT workers and/or workplaces to participate in physical activity or active travel
- » Introduce health risk assessments for ACT Government staff with a view to extend these to the private sector
- » Restrict the advertising of unhealthy foods within the government's regulatory control
- » Improve awareness, skills and capability across the ACT in buying and preparing healthy food.

The document also proposes increasing the availability of free drinking water in public places and food outlets, a mandatory code for supermarkets to require at least one checkout aisle to be free of energy dense, nutrient poor foods, and regulating the sale of sugary drinks.

Our health is shaped by the way we live our daily lives in our neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces. As a result, many of the factors that influence what we eat or how active we are – for example how accessible and attractive footpaths and cycle paths are, or the availability of healthy food in schools and the community – lie outside of the traditional reach of the health sector (Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan, ACT Government, 2013:9)

There is growing recognition that the built environment influences levels of physical activity, whether for transport or recreation. Good urban planning can shape our neighbourhoods to encourage active recreation and the active travel options of walking, cycling and public transport. As Canberra undergoes future development and urban renewal, the government will work to embed active living principles in its transport and urban planning processes (Towards Zero Growth – Healthy Weight Action Plan, ACT Government, 2013:14)

3.9 Active Living Impact Checklist (Heart Foundation, 2012)

The Heart Foundation's vision is for a built environment that promotes health, happiness and wellbeing. The Active Living impact checklist focuses on one major part of the problem – physical inactivity. The checklist aims to support active living as a fundamental design principle for new developments, as part of the planning phase. It builds on the Heart Foundation's healthy planning design objectives and previous work undertaken by the enHealth Council, Department of Health and Ageing, the Premier's Council for Active Living NSW, the Australian Local Government Association, the Planning Institute of Australia. ACT specific policy content has been developed through a local expert working group.

The checklist provides an initial measurement tool to promote better design outcomes for higher levels of physical activity on site to street level in the ACT. It contains 10 key design principles and a series of specific actions to achieve these.

1. Active transport: to achieve better health for people who walk, bicycle or take public transport.

Initiatives include minimising contact between pedestrians and cars, achieving easy wayfinding (eg signs, landmarks, path lighting, public art), traffic calming measures, design for bicycle access, etc.

2. Aesthetics: to achieve better health for people through friendly and safe places that will invite people and encourage exploration by foot or bicycle.

Initiatives include designing built form to contribute to a walking friendly urban environment, incorporating orientation features into public spaces (eg public art, lighting), and incorporating 'living green' canopies to support urban air and water quality.

3. Connectivity: to achieve better health for people through convenient and direct routes, whether by active travel for transport or recreation.

Initiatives include providing travel links that are attractive, safe, direct and convenient to support permeability and access; and incorporating shared paths that are sufficiently wide, with adequate sightlines, gradients, centreline markings, etc.

4. Environments for all people: to achieve better overall health for people by creating places where people can have a sense of belonging, comfort and be part of a community.

Initiatives include providing onsite opportunities for social interaction including transitional zones such as communal open spaces, meeting rooms, communal gardens, seating, children's active facilities, shade and weather protection; using climate conscious design solutions (eg green roofs, protection from wind and sun).

5. Mixed density: to achieve better overall health for people by creating a variety of buildings that support a broad selection of healthy and active lifestyles within a smaller footprint.

Ensure building height has an environmental performance-related outcome that complements/ supports the surrounding density mix with a focus on social return.

6. Mixed land use: to achieve better overall health for people by having destinations in close proximity to make active transport more viable and convenient.

Initiatives include location near centres including public transport, open space and other key destinations, and supporting wider linkages; compliance with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines.

7. Parks and open spaces: to achieve better overall health for people as parks and open spaces can have the highest direct benefits to active living.

Initiatives include stimulating and attractive routes to key destinations, provision of street trees, weather protection, integrated landscaping.

8. Safety and surveillance: to achieve better overall health for people through a reduction of places that are perceived as unsafe. This can enhance the physical, mental and social wellbeing of a community.

Initiatives include crime prevention through environmental design measures; use of multiple entrances that are highly visible and separated from traffic; and an integrated approach to accessibility and legibility for all users.

9. Social inclusion: to achieve better overall health for people through greater social cohesiveness, a reduction of social isolation and increased social interaction.

Initiatives include public realm design that maximises social inclusion; convenient access for people who are mobility impaired; opportunities for community input to decision making about facility management and place making; and promoting a street focus with human scale (avoiding blank walls, etc).

10. Supporting infrastructure: to achieve better overall health for people as quality infrastructure can support the level of recreation, social interaction and active transport choices.

Initiatives include provision of supporting infrastructure in desirable locations (eg rest areas, information boards, toilets, water bubblers); encouraging use of stairs; use of motivational and directional signage for cycling/walking; providing end of trip facilities (eg bike parking, change rooms) onsite; lighting for night time safety.

3.10 NSW 2021 and South East NSW Regional Action Plan

NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One sets the Government's agenda for change in NSW. This 10 year plan includes five strategies to make NSW number One. These are: *to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen our local environment and communities*. It replaces the State Plan as the NSW Government's strategic business plan.

Each of the strategies is underpinned by goals and targets and priority actions. The most relevant for the West Belconnen Community Plan are as follows:

Return quality services

- » Improve education and learning outcomes for all students
- » Prevent and reduce the level of crime

Renovate infrastructure

- » Build liveable centres

Strengthen our local environment and communities

- » Protect our natural environment
- » Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments
- » Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities
- » Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life
- » Fostering opportunity and partnership with aboriginal people
- » Enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities
- » Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters

The South East NSW Region Regional Action Plan

To complement NSW 2021 and existing long term initiatives, Regional Actions Plans identify immediate actions for the NSW Government to prioritise over the next few years. These plans are an initial response to key actions raised by communities across NSW during the consultation undertaken for NSW 2021.

The Yass Valley Council local government area, including the NSW portion of the West Belconnen Development is part of the South East region.



Area
41,348km²



Population
183,400 (2011) ➔ **243,400 (2031*)**



Housing
87,200 (2011) ➔ **126,600 (2031*)**



South East NSW has a total population of 183,400 people living in approximately 87,200 dwellings.

It is experiencing rapid population growth in the centres of Queanbeyan and Batemans Bay, which are developing as major subregional service hubs.

The **South East NSW Regional Action Plan** identifies the immediate actions the NSW Government will prioritise. These complement the long term strategies being developed for NSW and existing regional strategies.

The Action Plan focuses on growing the economy, improving transport connectivity, delivering quality and integrated services and protecting the natural

environment. The NSW Government in partnership with the community aims to create a vision for South East NSW which is:

- » Economically diverse, by supporting the expansion of existing businesses, attracting growth sectors and maximising opportunities for cross border economic development
- » Connected with efficient and integrated transport, through improved community transport services and links to health services
- » Well serviced to meet health and community service needs, providing support for the ageing and vulnerable population
- » Well planned, with integrated service planning, to support environmental, social and economic growth impacts
- » Supportive of our young people through education and training pathways which encourage young people to stay within the region
- » Sustainable, with the natural environment protected for current and future generations.

Regional priorities and the most relevant actions for the West Belconnen project are outlined in the following table.

Table 3 Priorities and relevant actions, South East NSW Regional Action Plan

Priorities	Actions
<p>Priority 1: Diversify the economy and provide sustainable employment options</p> <p>To support sustainable economic growth, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing business and industry to expand and provide sustainable employment options • Diversify the economy by attracting and supporting key growth sectors including renewable energy, fresh food production and small business • Deliver regional infrastructure that supports economic growth • Maximise opportunities for cross border economic development. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 3 – Drive economic growth in regional NSW</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support business and industry to growth • Support small business • Deliver regional infrastructure that supports economic growth • Upgrade local water infrastructure • Partner with the ACT Government to develop the region
<p>Priority 2: Provide accessible, efficient and integrated transport services</p> <p>To provide accessible, efficient and integrated transport services the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long term transport strategies that improve access to employment, business opportunities and services • Deliver road infrastructure upgrades and manage local congestion issues • Improve road safety and freight logistics. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 8 – Grow patronage on public transport by making it a more attractive choice</i></p> <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 10 – Improve road safety</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan • Regional Transport Plan for Southern NSW • Deliver road infrastructure upgrades • Manage local traffic congestion
<p>Priority 3: Deliver quality health and community services</p> <p>The NSW Government will work in partnership with local government, non-government organisations and community members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in and maintain the regional infrastructure required to deliver improved health, aged care and family services • Support our ageing population and vulnerable families and individuals • Foster the development of the non-government organisation sector. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 12 – Provide world class clinical services with timely access and effective infrastructure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in and maintain health infrastructure • Provide more support for an ageing population • Enhance and further develop services for the ageing population • Support vulnerable families and individuals • Foster development of the non-government organisation sector

Priorities	Actions
<p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 13 – Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of poverty</i></p>	
<p>Priority 4: Improve strategic planning and service delivery</p> <p>The NSW Government will improve strategic planning and service delivery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the ACT Government to implement the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration to address cross-border issues in the area around the ACT Developing new Regional Growth Plans that reflect an integrated approach to infrastructure planning, land use planning and transport planning. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 32 – Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the coordination of strategic planning in the region <p>The NSW Government is improving the coordination and management of growth and development in South East NSW through strategic planning initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in collaboration with the ACT Government to develop an ACT-NSW Land Use and Infrastructure Plan to deliver collaborative strategic land use and growth related infrastructure planning across the broader South East NSW region Reviewing and updating the Sydney-Canberra Corridor and South Coast Regional Strategies to reflect the NSW Government's new integrated planning approach that incorporates land use planning, infrastructure planning and transport planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver customer focused services <p>A one-stop shop will be opened in Queanbeyan by mid 2013 to make it easier for people to access Government transaction services, improve customer convenience and reduce lost productivity for local businesses.</p> <p>The NSW Government will work with the ACT Government to progress the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Regional Collaboration. The NSW and ACT Government agreed that priority actions under this MoU include Integrated Service Planning initially focussing on the health and education sectors.</p>
<p>Priority 5: Improve access and options for education and employment</p> <p>To improve access and options for education, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on options for education to encourage students to stay at school Offer a range of strategies to support students' transition from school to higher education and the workforce Continue to provide targeted training to build on the region's skill base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to meet the skills needs of local business and industry

Priorities	Actions
<p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 6 – Strengthen NSW's skills base</i></p> <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 15 – Improve education and learning outcomes for all students</i></p>	
<p>Priority 6: Manage our natural resources and protect the environment</p> <p>Growth and development must be balanced to ensure valuable agricultural and food production areas are retained and the region's valuable biodiversity is protected.</p> <p>To better manage the region's natural resources and to protect the environment, the NSW Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably manage our natural resources and biodiversity • Identify and better understand the impacts of climate risk and variability on communities, the environment and water sources • Develop and implement strategies to reduce the impacts of pest and weeds • Develop strategies to manage waste and reduce the impacts of littering and illegal dumping. <p><i>NSW 2021 Goal 22 – Protect our natural environments</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully manage the region's natural resources to deliver long term sustainability • Responding to climate risk and variability • Protect built assets and public safety from flood hazards

South East NSW Regional Action Plan (2012)

3.11 Sydney Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy 2006-2031

The Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy applies to the local government areas of Wingecarribee, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley, Palerang and Queanbeyan, and is one of a number of regional strategies prepared by the Department of Planning. The Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy builds on previous planning work, including the 1995 Sydney–Canberra Corridor Strategy as well as the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Subregion Planning Strategy.

The aims of the Strategy are to:

- » Cater for a housing demand of up to 25 200 new dwellings by 2031 to accommodate the additional 46 350 people expected in the Region over the period 2031.
- » Increase the amount of housing in existing centres to ensure the needs of future households are better met, in particular the needs of smaller households and an ageing population.
- » Manage the environmental impact of settlement by focusing new urban development in existing identified growth areas such as Bowral, Goulburn and Queanbeyan.

- » Only consider additional development sites if it can be demonstrated that they satisfy the Sustainability Criteria
- » No new rural residential zones will be supported unless as part of an agreed structure plan or local settlement strategy.
- » Ensure an adequate supply of land to support economic growth and provide capacity to accommodate a projected 27 800 new jobs, particularly
 - » in the areas of manufacturing, transport and logistics, business services, health, aged care and tourism.
- » Limit development in places constrained by important primary industry resources and significant scenic and cultural landscapes.
- » Protect the cultural and Aboriginal heritage values and visual character of rural towns and villages and surrounding landscapes.

3.12 Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013

The 2013 LEP replaces the three LEP's previously covering the Yass Valley Local Government Area. Local Environmental Plans set out planning provisions for Local Government Areas. Through zoning and development controls they guide the ways in which land is used and managed.

The aims of the 2013 LEP are as follows:

- (a) to establish planning controls that promote sustainable development,
- (b) to protect high quality agricultural land and encourage emerging agricultural industries,
- (c) to encourage housing diversity,
- (d) to promote employment-generating tourism,
- (e) to provide for commercial and industrial development,
- (f) to encourage the establishment of retail and professional services in urban locations,
- (g) to protect and enhance the character of each of the villages in Yass Valley,
- (h) to enhance service provision in each of the villages in Yass Valley,
- (i) to protect and conserve the cultural heritage and history of Yass Valley,
- (j) to protect and enhance the environmental and biodiversity values of Yass Valley,
- (k) to minimise land use conflicts.

3.13 Yass Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan 2013-2030

The Yass Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2013-2030 outlines the long term aspirations of the Shire's community for at least the next 20 years. The CSP was developed in late 2010/early 2011 after extensive community consultation and was endorsed by Council in June 2011. Version 2 was adopted in June 2013 following the local government elections.

The CSP includes a number of themes under which sit a range of long term goals, strategies and targets. Relevant goals for the West Belconnen Community Strategic Plan are as follows:

Community and Culture

3.1 Social and cultural life in our townships is expanded

- 3.1.1 Encourage / provide incentives for the establishment of a variety of social and cultural venues
- 3.1.2 Create local community and business partnerships and incentives to establish social and cultural events such as live music, festivals and other public events for people of all ages
- 3.1.3 Develop appropriate community infrastructure to service the needs of the Yass Valley community
- 3.1.4 We have a range of opportunities for volunteer involvement in local programs and projects

3.2 Our communities are strong, resilient and inclusive

- 3.2.1 Activities are established that strengthen our communities
- 3.2.2 Empower the community through capacity building programs such as education and awareness
- 3.2.3 Promote community involvement through appropriate participation in decision making

Recreation and open space

4.2 We have extensive parklands throughout the local area that are well maintained and child friendly

- 4.2.1 Ensure that planning and provision of parklands and open space meets community needs
- 4.2.2 Develop specific plans of management for parklands and open space areas
- 4.2.3 Ensure that appropriate parkland is provided in new urban release areas
- 4.2.4 Ensure all playground infrastructure continues to meet Australian standards

4.3 Local outdoor recreation options are expanded

- 4.3.1 Establish a network of walking tracks and bicycle paths
- 4.3.2 Establish a network of horse trails
- 4.3.3 Provide improved and expanded skate park facilities

3.14 Implications of policy for West Belconnen

Planning for West Belconnen needs to incorporate a comprehensive range of accessible community facilities that are multipurpose and flexible

Housing in West Belconnen should be affordable and adaptable and include accommodation for special needs

Community vitality and safety are key policy objectives that are important to the planning and design of West Belconnen

The provision of community facilities is recognised as critical to achieving social sustainability and inclusion

The Social Plan themes of connection, belonging and collaboration are important policy influences for this Community Plan and planning for West Belconnen more generally

Social infrastructure, identified in research as including shops, businesses and playgrounds, as well as social capital, are identified as important aspects of community for residents of new development areas

4 Existing conditions

4.1 Existing community profile

The following profile of the Belconnen District population is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The district of Belconnen (Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3)) is compared with the wider Australian Capital Territory Area (Greater Capital City Statistical Area) to ensure an adequate benchmark for comparison.

The community profile is useful in understanding the population characteristics of the area into which residents of the West Belconnen community will be moving.

4.1.1 Population overview

Indicator	Belconnen District (no.)	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Population (2011)	92,444	-	356,585	-
Age groups (%)				
0-4	6,541	7.1%	23,813	6.7%
5-11	7,517	8.1%	29,735	8.3%
12-17	6,203	6.7%	26,019	7.3%
18-24	11,139	12.0%	41,317	11.6%
25-54	40,023	43.3%	158,846	44.5%
55-64	10,753	11.6%	38,720	10.9%
65 and over	10,268	11.1%	38,135	10.7%
Median age (yrs)	34	-	34	-

The age distribution across the Belconnen district is broadly comparable with that of the wider Australian Capital Territory. The median age across both areas is 34, further suggesting a comparable age range across both areas.

The percentage of people aged 65 years and over is higher than that of the wider ACT. This has implications for the delivery of services and also reinforces the need to provide facilities that will enable people to 'age in place'.

4.1.3 Family and household overview

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Household type (%)				
Family household	24079	72.2%	91979	71.1%
Lone person	7405	22.2%	30248	23.4%
Group household	1872	5.6%	7198	5.6%
Average household size (no. people)	-	2.6		2.6
Family household structure (%)				
Couples with children	11027	45.0%	43191	46.2%
Couples without children	9445	38.6%	35150	37.6%
Single parent families	3601	14.7%	13601	14.6%
Other family	409	1.7%	1452	1.6%

The proportion of family, lone person and group households in the Belconnen area is broadly comparable with the wider ACT area. The Belconnen area however exhibits a slightly lower proportion of family households comprised of couples with children and a slightly higher proportion of couples without children than the wider ACT area.

4.1.4 Cultural diversity

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Cultural diversity (%)				
Aboriginal or TSI heritage	1155	1.2%	5154	1.4%
Overseas born	22,014	23.8%	86,165	24.2%
Speaks language other than English at home	17,011	18.4%	64,572	18.1%

Cultural diversity in the Belconnen area is broadly comparable with the wider ACT area.

4.1.6 Employment characteristics

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Median household income (\$)	-	1802	-	1920
Labour Force Status - persons people in the labour force aged 15+ (%)				
Employed full-time	32629	63.4%	131871	65.0%
Employed part-time	13479	26.2%	50947	25.1%
Unemployed	1940	3.8%	7257	3.6%
Population aged 15+ and not in the labour force (%)				

There are a slightly smaller proportion of people in the Belconnen area who are employed full time, and a slightly large proportion who are employed part time than the wider ACT area.

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Employment Industry (%)				
Professionals	14047	28.4%	57997	29.6%
Clerical and administrative workers	9666	19.5%	37478	19.2%
Managers	6801	13.7%	31001	15.8%
Technician and trade workers	5566	11.2%	19882	10.2%
Community and personal service workers	4884	9.9%	18183	9.3%
Sales workers	3583	7.2%	13341	6.8%
Labourers, machinery operators and drivers	4023	8.1%	13917	7.1%

There are some subtle trends evident when considering employment industry across the Belconnen area and the wider Australian Capital area. The Belconnen area exhibits slightly lower levels of professionals and managers, and slightly higher levels of technicians and trade workers and labourers, machinery operators and drivers than the wider Australian Capital Territory area.

4.1.7 Educational characteristics

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Qualification Level (total persons aged 15 + and with a qualification)				
University Qualification	30598	63.6%	124702	66.6%
Certificate (Tafe etc.)	10870	22.6%	39034	20.9%

The Belconnen area has a slightly lower proportion of people with a university qualification, and a slightly higher proportion of people with a certificate than the wider ACT area. This trend correlates with the slightly higher proportions of technicians and trade workers and labourers, machinery operators and drivers than the wider ACT area.

4.1.8 Housing characteristics

Indicator	Belconnen District	%	Australian Capital Territory (no.)	%
Housing types (%)				
House	25694	77.0%	94266	72.8%
Semi-detached house	4929	14.8%	18811	14.5%
Apartment	2717	8.1%	16071	12.4%
Other	0	0.0%	228	0.2%
Housing tenure (%)				
Fully owned	10056	30.1%	36739	28.4%
Being purchased	13339	40.0%	50392	38.9%
Rented	9206	27.6%	39592	30.6%
Other / not stated	261	0.8%	816	0.6%
Dwelling status (%)				
Occupied private dwellings	33357	93.7%	129423	92.7%
Unoccupied private dwellings	2251	6.3%	10197	7.3%

The Belconnen area has a higher proportion of separate houses and a lower proportion of apartments than the wider ACT area. Belconnen also exhibits a higher proportion of households that are fully owner or being purchased, and a lower proportion of houses being rented than the wider ACT area.

4.2 Existing social infrastructure

4.2.1 Overview

Existing social infrastructure in the areas surrounding the West Belconnen site have been identified and mapped for the purpose of understanding existing supply, spatial location and any existing capacity to absorb future population growth. Given the nature of the immediate locality surrounding the site, existing facilities and services in close proximity are limited, and consequentially, many facilities do not have the capacity to serve the needs of a large incoming population or future workforce.

4.2.2 Childcare facilities

There are few existing child care facilities located west of Kingsford Smith Drive. Centres to the West of Kingsford Smith Drive are as follows

Table 4 Child Care centres west of Kingsford Smith Drive

Centre	Age Range	Hours	Current vacancies
Cooinda Cottage Long Day Care Centre Charnwood	Birth to school age	7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday	Every day and age group
Brindabella Christian College Early Learning Centre	Birth to school age	8am-6pm Monday – Friday	Every day and age group
St Thomas Aquinas West Belconnen Early Learning Centre	Birth to school age	7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday	Every day and age group
Flynn Early Child hood Centre Long Day care	Birth to school age	7.45am-5.45pm Monday – Friday	Most ages groups most days except 3 years to school age on Tuesday and Thursday

Source: www.mychild.gov.au (date reviewed 1/5/14)

In addition to the existing facilities a new early learning centre is being constructed next to the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre on Stark Street at Kippax (Holt). This centre is anticipated to open in May 2015 with 90 places available. It will be offering spaces from birth to school age.

The availability of child care facilities increases markedly with distance from the study area centre with numerous facilities in Belconnen and Bruce. An analysis of vacancy data on www.mychild.gov.au highlights that seven of the 24 facilities in the wider Belconnen area do not have any vacancies currently available. A number of these facilities also have very long waiting lists, some of which are up to two years.

15 of the 24 facilities identified have a mixture of vacancies available across the week, with most vacancies available on Mondays and Fridays. Amongst these 15, five facilities have vacancies on all days of the week. Two of the facilities did not provide vacancy information.

This data suggests that there is a reasonable level of vacancies within existing child care facilities within proximity of the study area.

4.2.3 Education facilities

Schools

There are a number of primary (government and non-government) and secondary schools located in proximity to the West Belconnen study area. The closest public schools to the site are Kingsford Smith School in Holt, which provides for years P – 10, MacGregor Primary (P - 6) and Cranleigh School in Holt. Cranleigh School provides specialist educational programs for children with developmental delays, autism, moderate to severe intellectual or multiple disabilities in the age range of 3-12 years. A variety of other schools are located within 15 – 20 kilometres from the site. The closest public College (10-12) is Hawker College in Murrarji Street Hawker.

A number of non-government schools are also located in Charnwood including Brindabella Christian College - Charnwood campus (P – 4) and St Thomas Aquinas Primary (K-6). St Francis Xavier College (7-12) is located in Florey.

Meetings held with the ACT Department of Education and Training in October and December 2013 indicate that the closest schools to the site (Macgregor Primary and Kingsford Smith) are already above critical enrolment. Details obtained during the meeting indicate that Latham Primary is the only existing school likely to have any capacity to absorb an increase in student numbers, however, growth being experienced in West Macgregor may utilise much of this existing capacity.

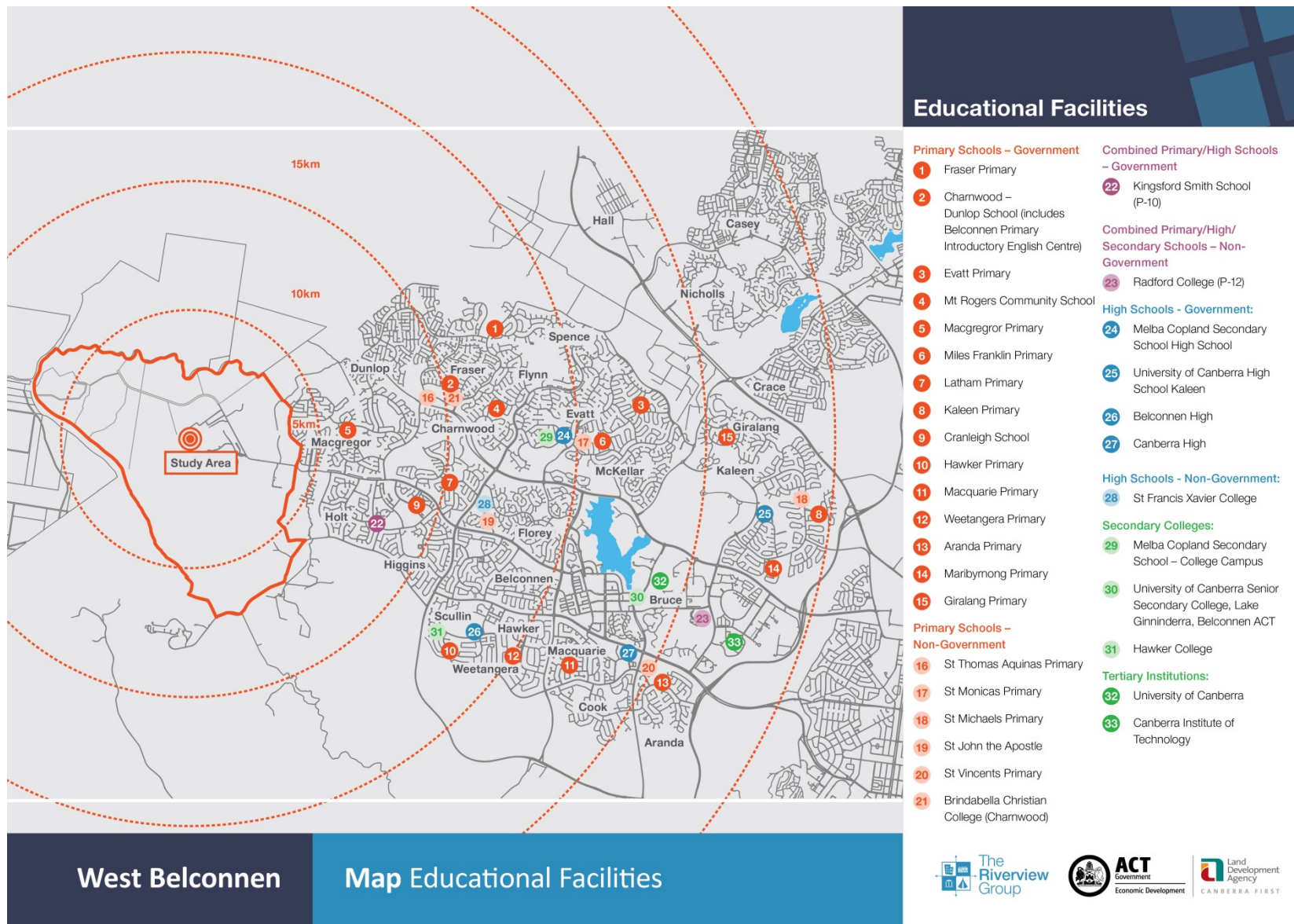
Outcomes from the meetings indicate that there is likely to be capacity available at high schools and college and therefore, largest demand will be experienced in P-6. The Department has a preference that students attend local schools closest to their homes rather than travelling to surrounding suburbs. Based on the development supporting 11,500 dwellings and approximately 30,000 people, it is considered that there will be a requirement for a number of new schools to support the incoming population, with early provision of a primary school to accommodate the first stage of West Belconnen development a key consideration.

It is important to note that the incoming West Belconnen population will grow over a long period of time (up to 40 years). During that time, the utilisation of school facilities will rise and fall considerably. Work is continuing with ACT Education to determine the impacts of this changing utilisation pattern and understand its impacts on school provision in West Belconnen.

Tertiary facilities

The closest tertiary facility to the site is the University of Canberra. The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses covering six main learning areas. These include applied science, health, art and design, business, government and law, education and information and sciences and engineering.

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the ACT's principal vocational education and training provider offering skill development to individuals, employers and industry in Canberra. It is a statutory authority of the ACT Government. The closest campus is CIT Bruce which offers a range of courses including building and construction and horticulture.



4.2.4 Community and cultural facilities

There are a number of community facilities located within reasonable proximity (within 10 kilometres) of the centre of the study area. These include:

- » Strathnairn Homestead Gallery – Located within the West Belconnen study area, this facility consists of converted 1920s homesteads beyond the western fringe of Holt. In addition it includes studios for artists, a foundry, paper making facilities and a number of venues for community events and classes. The facility provides regular exhibitions of painting, woodwork, photography, sculpture, glass, textiles, ceramics and mixed media. A meeting with Arts ACT in October 2013 outlined the potential for Strathnairn to become more of a mixed-use facility.
- » Holt Community Hub - The Holt Community Hub and Neighbourhood Hall provides co-location opportunities for complementary organisations, with a focus on mixed community and health based services. The Holt Community Hub includes tenancy space for 6 community organisations including Carers ACT, Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn and Sharing Places who have relocated to the hub, with National Brain Injury Foundation and Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT to relocate at a future date. The Hub also includes a large hall (capacity approximately 100) with an attached small meeting room available for community hire. The site has the capacity to allow other facilities to be added via an extension or construction of new buildings.
- » Kippax Library – Kippax Library is a small library with a range of material for a diversity of ages. These include magazines, DVDs, CDs, Audio books on CD. The Library is open Monday to Saturday. A meeting with Libraries ACT in November 2013 indicated that the Library has some capacity for expansion to cater for some of the growth expected from the West Belconnen development.
- » West Belconnen Child and Family Centre - The Centre offers a range of programs, including:
 - > Drop-in parenting information and support;
 - > Parenting programs,
 - > Children's behaviour support clinic;
 - > Family case-coordination and home visiting;
 - > A range of targeted and universal playgroups at the centre and in the community;
 - > Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community;
 - > A range of external agencies operate from the centre offering a range of health services, counselling, and other assistance.

In addition to community facilities located within 10 kilometres of the centre of the study area, a number of other facilities are located between 10 and 20 kilometres. The most sizeable of these facilities are the Belconnen Library and Community Centre and the Belconnen Arts Centre, both of which are located in the Belconnen Town Centre.

At the meeting with Arts ACT in October 2013, it was identified that stage 2 of Belconnen Arts Centre is now being planned, which involves the expansion of the existing facility to include formal exhibition space, a dance studio and performance space. Conclusions from the meeting were that arts space is well provided for in the area.

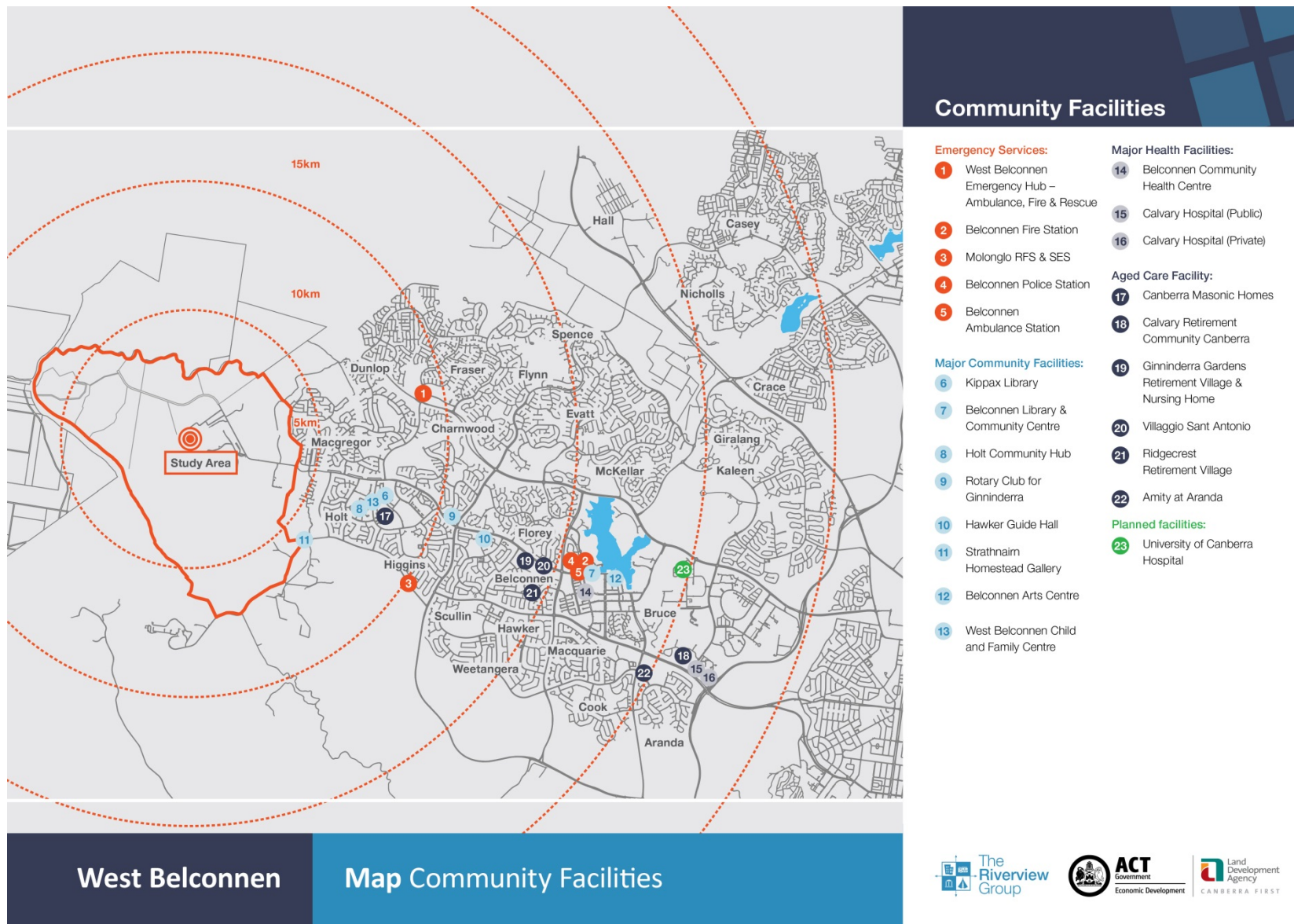
4.2.5 Health and support services

The closest major health facilities are located within 20 – 25 kilometres of the centre of the study area. These facilities include:

- » Calvary Hospital (Public) – This facility provides cancer treatment services, coronary care, elective surgery, emergency department services, geriatric assessment, hospice care facilities, obstetrics, outpatient services, psychiatric unit facilities and rehabilitation services.
- » Calvary Hospital (Private) – This facility provides elective surgery, outpatient services and psychiatric unit facilities.
- » University of Canberra Hospital (Public) (Proposed for completion in 2017) – This facility is in the planning and design stages. It will be dedicated to rehabilitation and related activities. The Hospital will include physiotherapy and other allied health services, including a rehabilitation gym and hydrotherapy pool, among other features and services. It will also provide sub-acute mental health services.
- » Belconnen Community Health Centre – the new Belconnen Community Health Centre on the corner of Lathlain and Cohen Streets, opposite Westfield Belconnen delivers a comprehensive range of services to the Belconnen community. Services include audiometry, alcohol and drug counselling, cancer counselling, community nursing, community paediatric and child health, community rehabilitation, dental, diabetes, maternal and child health, mental health, social work, nutrition, physiotherapy and women's health.
- » West Belconnen Health Cooperative is a health care cooperative that operates six medical centres at Charnwood, Belconnen, Page, Holt, Evatt and Chisholm. In 2013 the cooperative had 16,000 members and employed 13 doctors.
- » Belconnen Community Service (BCS) is a regional community service providing services, programs and activities for people in the Belconnen Region. BCS offers integrated and inclusive services to the community, including those who have diverse backgrounds and abilities and from socially and financially disadvantaged areas. These services include:
 - > Housing and Homelessness
 - > Mental Health
 - > Youth Services
 - > Family Support
 - > Children's Behaviour Support
 - > Child Care
 - > Aged Care
 - > Disability
 - > Transport
 - > Supported Playgroups
 - > Financial Support
 - > Sport and Recreation

Aged Care

A number of aged care facilities are located within relatively proximity to the site. The closest facility is Canberra Masonic Homes in Holt (10 kilometres from the centre of the study area). Between 15 – 25 kilometres of the centre of the study area there are a number of other aged care facilities located within Belconnen Centre, Florey and Aranda. These facilities provide a mix of high care and low care (hostel) beds.



An analysis of www.myagedcare.gov.au and direct consultation with some of these facilities indicates that there are currently low vacancy levels in existing facilities. Two facilities were able to be contacted directly for information regarding vacancy levels. Canberra Masonic Homes had no vacancies within the nursing home or independent living facility. Ridgecrest Retirement Village had three vacancies in their independent living facility and no vacancies within their hostel or dementia facility. Villaggio Sant Antonio also had no vacancies within their independent living accommodation or their hostel and dementia facility at the time of consultation (late February 2014).

4.2.6 Emergency and justice services

The key emergency service facility that is closest to West Belconnen is the newly constructed West Belconnen Emergency Hub – Ambulance, Fire and Rescue located in Charnwood. Completion of Ginninderra Drive will improve response times from this facility to West Belconnen. In Higgins, and approximately 10 kilometres from the centre of the study area, is the Molonglo Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES). Other facilities, including Belconnen Ambulance, Police and Fire Stations are located in the existing Belconnen Town Centre.

Meetings held with the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in November 2013 indicated that early growth associated with the West Belconnen site could be catered for with the provision of additional staff, however significant future growth may require the development of additional facilities, or an expansion of existing facilities.

4.2.7 Recreation

Kings Swim Centre is the closest aquatic recreational facility to the site and is located in the suburb of Macgregor. The Centre is privately owned and provides a diversity of aquatic facilities for both children and adults. However access to the centre is restricted as this is a private facility that operates primarily as a swim school.

The main aquatic and multi-purpose indoor sports facility available to the public is Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre at Belconnen. This is open year round. Big Splash at Jamison (Macquarie) is a seasonally open water park. Nearby in Bruce is the Australian Institute of Sport which provides facilities that develop and produce world, Olympic and Paralympic champions. These facilities are open to the public but often with restricted opening hours.

The key playing field provision in the area is the Kippax District Playing Field. While some existing capacity exists at the moment, it is anticipated that this capacity will be taken up by growth in adjacent areas. It is anticipated that residents of both the new suburbs of West Belconnen and Molonglo 3 will utilise these facilities. A strategic planning review of the Kippax Centre, including the sports fields, is being undertaken to determine future planning for the centre in light of the proposed West Belconnen development.

ACT Sport and Recreation favours a centralised model of playing field provision which is more efficient for maintenance and also supports viability of local sports clubs. As a result more local and neighbourhood fields, such as Holt Neighbourhood Oval have been 'turned off'.

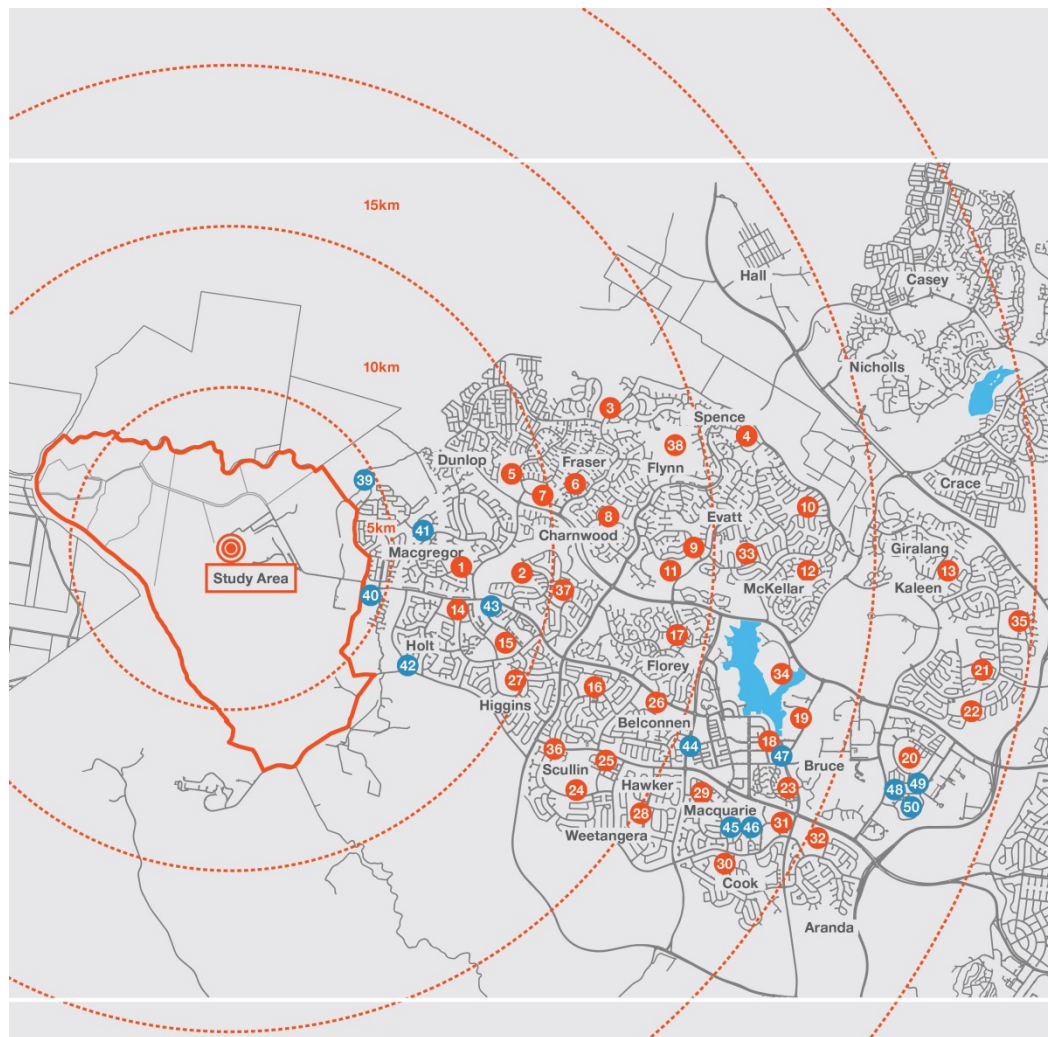
Tennis courts available to the public are located at Holt (Belconnen Wests Tennis Club- 8 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts and Kippax Tennis Club 4 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts) and Melba Tennis Club (8 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts). There are no squash courts in Belconnen available to the public.

Immediately adjacent to the project site on Spofforth Street Holt is the Magpies Belconnen Golf Club one of the most challenging 18 hole public courses in the ACT region. This also includes a

licensed club house. Members of the public are welcome to play. Other Golf Clubs are located in the inner north of Canberra and in Gungahlin.

Belconnen Pony Club is located on Parkwood Road in Macgregor. The Parkwood Horse Holding Paddocks are located on Parkwood Rd Belconnen (behind West Macgregor). This is an ACT Government Horse Paddock and provides affordable and accessible horse agistment to the Canberra community. Parkwood is approximately 110 hectares divided into 9 paddocks and includes has holding yards, washbay and a riding area with sand arena. There are two herds at Parkwood as it is such a large land area. Parkwood offers excellent grazing. Parkwood Horse Holding paddocks are located on the Bicentennial National Trail. The Bicentennial National Trail, Australia's premier long distance trekking route for the self-reliant trekker, stretches across the project site on its 5330 kilometres route from Cooktown to Healesville.

It is likely that West Belconnen will need to include a significant land allocation for district playing fields within the study area. Other areas of sport identified as being in deficit in existing provision are indoor recreation (which could be provided through shared use of school facilities), tennis and squash.



Sporting and Recreation Facilities

Playing Fields/Ovals

- 1 Macgregor Neighbourhood Oval
- 2 Umbabong District Park
- 3 Fraser Neighbourhood Oval
- 4 Spence Neighbourhood Oval
- 5 Charnwood District Playing Fields
- 6 Charnwood Neighbourhood Oval
- 7 The Boslem and Harte Park
- 8 George Simpson Park
- 9 Melba Neighbourhood Oval
- 10 Evatt Neighbourhood Oval
- 11 Melba District Playing Fields
- 12 McKellar Neighbourhood Oval
- 13 Giralang District Playing Fields
- 14 Holt Neighbourhood Oval
- 15 Kippax District Playing Fields
- 16 Scullin Neighbourhood Oval
- 17 Florey Neighbourhood Oval
- 18 Margaret Timpson Park
- 19 John Knight Memorial Park
- 20 Fern Hill Park
- 21 Kaleen District Playing Fields
- 22 Kaleen South Oval
- 23 Eastern Valley Oval
- 24 Hawker District Playing Fields
- 25 Hillview Park
- 26 Page Neighbourhood Oval
- 27 Higgins Neighbourhood Oval
- 28 Weetangera Neighbourhood Oval
- 29 Macquarie Neighbourhood Oval
- 30 Cook Neighbourhood Oval
- 31 Jamison Enclosed Oval
- 32 Aranda Districts Playing Fields
- 33 South West Evatt Oval
- 34 Diddams Close Park
- 35 Kaleen North Oval
- 36 Hawker Enclosed Oval
- 37 Latham Neighbourhood Oval
- 38 Mount Rogers Reserve

Other Facilities:

- 39 Parkwood Horse Holding Paddocks
- 40 Belconnen Pony Club
- 41 Kings Swim Centre
- 42 Magpies Belconnen Golf Course
- 43 Kippax Tennis Club
- 44 Canberra Basketball
- 45 Belconnen Wests Tennis Club
- 46 Big Splash Waterpark
- 47 Canberra International Sports & Aquatic centre
- 48 Canberra Stadium
- 49 Australian Institute of Sport
- 50 Bruce Indoor Stadium

West Belconnen

Map Sporting and Recreation Facilities



4.2.8 Existing conditions summary

The comparative community profiles suggest few differences between the Belconnen district population and the ACT. A more mixed housing profile in West Belconnen may provide greater diversity in future population characteristics

Government primary school provision is a key issue for West Belconnen. Existing P-6 schools are identified as being at, or close to, capacity

While there is some general community activity space in the nearby area, it is unlikely to be able to meet the community demands for community centre space generated by West Belconnen

Expansion of existing, or creation of new, emergency services facilities is also a likely future need based on existing provision and capacity

5 Population growth

This section of the Community Plan provides information on the projected population of West Belconnen and the timing of population increase. These figures are based on a series of assumptions (explained below) and will form the basis for assessments of future infrastructure requirements identified in part 3 of this Community Plan.

5.1 Population forecasts for West Belconnen

The table below shows the population of the main service age groups over time for West Belconnen. It is based on the following assumptions:

- » Production of 300 dwellings a year for 38 years (giving a total projected dwellings of 11,500)
- » An estimate of an average of 2.6 people per dwelling
- » Age profile benchmarked against Gungahlin for the first ten years and Belconnen (at year 20)
- » Age profile benchmarked against ACT Government ACT Population Projections at year 25
- » A constant age structure is assumed for year 25 onwards.

Year	Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	Young workforce (25 to 34)	Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	Seniors (70 to 84)	Elderly aged (85 and over)	Total
Year 5	423	427	266	406	932	909	323	128	52	10	3874
Year 10	675	748	501	1086	1793	1848	579	321	105	22	7679
Year 15	924	1005	775	1526	2329	2583	1127	816	421	89	11594
Year 20	1104	1268	1047	1880	2624	3191	1845	1536	912	192	15600
Year 25	1326	1615	1336	2088	3101	3978	2262	2009	1482	273	19469
Year 30	1591	1933	1610	2506	3721	4774	2714	2410	1778	328	23365
Year 38	2016	2400	2000	3306	4713	6047	3438	3053	2253	415	29640

5.2 Timing and staging

The stage 1 subdivision is located adjacent to Stockdill Drive on the eastern boundary of the site. Development will extend westwards in stages. It is anticipated that the construction of the first stage will commence in late 2015, with the first residents moving in during 2016. The commencement date for the development of the NSW land is not yet determined. For efficiency purposes, and to ensure that the development is cohesive, sustainable and demonstrates best practice, it has been proposed that the structure planning process for both NSW and ACT is undertaken simultaneously.



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