



CALWELL GROUP CENTRE UPGRADES

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

The ACT Government is committed to upgrading local shopping centre precincts across Canberra, creating and protecting local jobs and supporting local businesses.

Feedback was sought on the preliminary designs for three shopping centre upgrades – Lanyon Marketplace, Calwell Group Centre and Evatt local shops – from 28 June to 21 August 2023.

The community was invited to provide feedback on the preliminary designs, including what proposed upgrades were most important to them and what they felt was missing from the proposed upgrades.

Upgrades are proposed for the Calwell Group Centre to improve access and the overall look and feel of the area.

The preliminary design includes the following key features:

- new seating and tables providing spaces to sit and gather
- improved playground with nature plays and accessible play elements which may include a slide, steppers and new shade structure
- art murals to brighten up the area
- new accessible parking bays
- additional trees and better landscaping including raised planting beds
- improved access for pedestrians including paths, safe crossings and stairways
- resurfacing of the carpark and service area with wider medians and more tree plantings
- lighting and accessibility upgrades to the laneway between Aquatic Achievers Calwell swimming school and the aged care facility to provide a space for public activations
- service gate to restrict parkland access.

THE CONVERSATION

Online Survey

An online survey was opened during the consultation period on the YourSay Conversations website for the community to provide feedback on the preliminary design. A total of 81 surveys were completed. Members of the community and stakeholders were also invited to provide feedback via email and social media.

Community pop-up session

Two community pop-up sessions were held at the Calwell Group Centre on Saturday 5 August and Thursday 10 August 2023 to promote the consultation and provide the community with an opportunity to ask questions of the project team and share their thoughts. We spoke to approximately 10 people across the two sessions.



WHO WE ENGAGED

The consultation targeted regular visitors to the Calwell Group Centre including local residents, business owners and tenants, community groups and visitors from surrounding suburbs.

We promoted the consultation via signage and pop-ups at the Calwell Group Centre, the ACT Government's Our Canberra newsletter, social media, the City Services website, and an email to key stakeholders including the Tuggeranong Community Council and the South East Tuggeranong Residents Association as well as community members who had previously asked to be kept informed on the project.

Only 38% of survey respondents identified themselves as living in Calwell however 80% of respondents did identify as local residents when asked about their connection with Calwell Group Centre. We did not hear from any shop owners or tenants.

More than 97% of respondents access Calwell Group Centre using their car, over 50% of people sometimes access the shops by walking or riding and a small percentage use public transport.



Key insights from the community

Playground improvements

- More than 50% of community members voiced their support for improvements to play elements being the most important part of upgrades at the Calwell Group Centre.
- The collective desire to create a more enjoyable recreational space for children and families was number one chosen within their top three elements for 61% of respondents.
- We heard a desire for a more diverse and extensive range of playground equipment. The current playground is described as basic, and many feel it doesn't offer enough options to keep children of all ages engaged and entertained. Suggestions made include adding swings, climbing structures, slides, and interactive play elements.
- Respondents called for a safe play environment, including impact-absorbing surfaces such as rubber matting to reduce the risk of ensuring the playground has shade for year-round use. We also heard concerns about the exposure of children to second-hand smoke from the nearby tavern.

Parking

- 54% of respondents rated parking and path improvements as most important in an upgrade.
- We heard there is frustration amongst visitors to the Calwell Group Centre with the current parking layout. It was described as poorly designed and creating congestion. Respondents advocate for increasing the number of parking spaces to alleviate overcrowding issues.
- Specific suggestions include reconfiguring parking spaces for better traffic flow, creating clearly marked lanes, and optimising the overall layout to prevent bottlenecks during peak times.
- Additionally, there are concerns about a potential reduction in parking spaces (including accessible parking spaces), which some community members worry could intensify the existing parking challenges.

Amenities

- There is support for the incorporation of additional seating near the playground area. Nearly 47% of respondents have indicated this is an important element in the preliminary design. This is also supported by 31% of respondents placing this element in their top three priorities.
- There is also a strong desire for more green spaces and grass areas within the shopping centre. This includes suggestions for creating inviting aesthetics of the centre with landscaping and artwork.
- We heard shade and shelter is important, particularly over seating areas. The community would also like to see more bins incorporated into an upgrade.

Safety

- We heard the community feel lighting is poor in the area. Safety including lighting improvements was ranked the highest in the most important upgrade to the public space. (64%).
- Several respondents request better lighting at pedestrian crossings to ensure drivers can see pedestrians and stop safely. Additionally, well-lit walkways enhance visibility and make it easier for shoppers to navigate the shopping centre, especially during evening hours.



- We heard pedestrian safety improvements are needed with suggestions for pedestrian crossings on Webber Crescent and Were Street. Respondents highlighted this was particularly important for families with prams and mobility devices. Comments were also made about the existing paths and lack of connections surrounding the Calwell Group Centre.

Feedback for private land

- These upgrades are focused on the public space (ACT Government owned) however we heard several suggestions for actions to be undertaken by those responsible for the private land including upgrading the existing shopfronts, undertaking maintenance and additional building space to accommodate more shops with suggestions including a variety of restaurants, cafes, and bars that cater to different tastes and preferences. This feedback will be passed on to the building owners.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Feedback from this engagement will be used to finalise the design ahead of construction procurement which is expected to get underway before the end of 2023.

If you have any questions about this project or would like to be kept updated on its progress, please email communityengagement@act.gov.au.

Key Timings

28 June 2023: Consultation begins on preliminary design

5 & 10 August 2023: Pop-up at Calwell Group Centre

21 August 2023: Community consultation closes

5 October 2023: What We Heard report released [We are here]

Late 2023: Design finalised and construction procurement starts

2024: Construction expected to commence

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK****80+**

we received 87 items of
feedback in total via YourSay,
Facebook and email

81

a total of 81 people
completed the YourSay
survey

10

we spoke to around 10
people at our pop-ups at
Calwell Group Centre

One

we received one
submissions via email

1,320+

we received 1,323
page views on YourSay

600+

a total of 609 people visited
the YourSay page

8,000+

we reached 8,965 people via
ACT Gov Facebook and
received five comments

88%

the majority of survey
respondents were satisfied
with the engagement