

Southern Gateway

Community Needs Assessment

February 2026

Acknowledgment to Country

Yuma

Dhawura Nguna Dhawura Ngunnawal

Yanggu ngalawiri dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari

Nginggada Dindi yindumaralidjinyin

Dhawura Ngunnawal yindumaralidjinyin

Hello,

This is Ngunnawal Country

Today we are meeting on Ngunnawal country

We always respect Elders, male and female

We always respect Ngunnawal Country

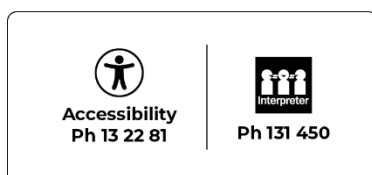
The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this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

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Community needs in the Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework

Canberra's population is growing quickly. By 2050 nearly 700,000 people will call Canberra home. To support this growing community, it's important that housing, employment and social infrastructure is delivered where it's needed. This includes along public transport corridors and close to essential services.

The Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework (the Framework) will guide future development and investment along the City to Woden corridor. It will help make sure growth is managed in a way that maintains Canberra's liveability and meets future demand for social infrastructure.

This Southern Gateway Community Needs Assessment supports conversations with the community about social infrastructure priorities in the corridor.

What is social infrastructure?

Social infrastructure means the places and services that help people live healthy, connected lives. It includes schools, hospitals, parks, libraries, community centres, meeting places and sporting facilities. Social infrastructure supports the wellbeing and quality of life of communities.

Why is social infrastructure important?

As the ACT grows and more people live in apartments or close together, access to the right social infrastructure becomes even more critical. Without this access, spaces can feel overcrowded or isolating. Good social infrastructure makes sure people can learn, stay healthy, meet others and feel part of a community.



Vision for liveable communities in the ACT

The ACT Government (the government) has strategies and policies with a strong focus on making sure Canberrans have access to the social infrastructure they need to live happy and healthy lives. Some of these key documents are:

- **ACT Planning Strategy 2018** – Sets a vision for a compact city, with 70% of new housing within the existing footprint and strong focus on social infrastructure
- **ACT Infrastructure Plan** – Long-term plan for transport, health, green spaces and modern amenities to support growth and attract investment
- **ACT Wellbeing Framework** – Measures quality of life across 12 domains to guide policy and investment decisions
- **Minister for Planning’s Statement of Planning Priorities 2025–28** – Outlines priorities for housing supply, infrastructure and services
- **ACT District Strategies 2023** – Nine district plans guiding sustainable growth to 2050, including Woden and Inner South districts
- **Territory Plan** – Statutory framework for land use and development, ensuring land-use zones support social infrastructure like schools, theatres and other community facilities.

Vision

The draft Framework sets a long-term vision for the Southern Gateway corridor to 2050 and beyond. This vision is for a connected corridor that:

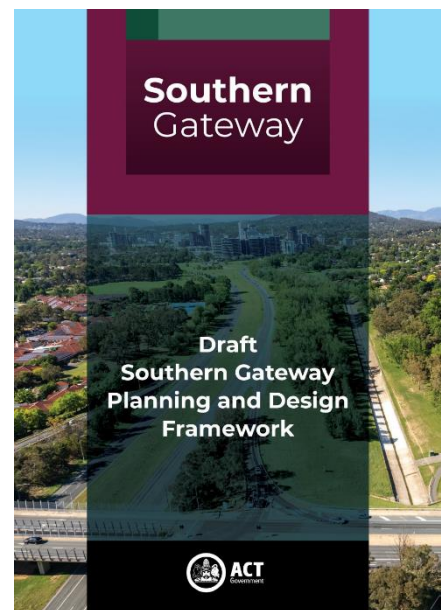
- meets the needs of the growing population through design-led, people-focused urban renewal
- supports safe, convenient and sustainable movement
- celebrates community by protecting heritage, enhancing the natural landscapes and ensuring equitable access to services and facilities, all while promoting social and environmental sustainability.

Social infrastructure is a big part of this vision. Making sure the right social infrastructure is available in the right locations will help keep the corridor liveable for existing and future residents. With new housing to be delivered along the corridor, providing facilities and services close to centres and easy for people to reach will help foster vibrant hubs for communities to live, learn, work, socialise and play.

With limited land available in established areas, it is becoming more important to explore innovative ways to make sure social infrastructure meets community needs.

Priorities in the corridor

- **Multi-use and co-located facilities** bringing compatible services and uses together.
- **Flexible and adaptable facilities** to meet the needs of changing populations.
- **Equity and inclusion** in all stages of planning for social infrastructure.



- **Community-informed planning** that reflects local values and needs.

Have your say

To shape how the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework plans for social infrastructure along the corridor, we want the community's help in shaping priorities and decisions about future investment.

The government is now consulting on the draft Framework. The needs assessment will support the Framework so your ideas and suggestions will help inform the final Framework. There are several ways you can provide your feedback.

- Information sessions (online and in-person)
- Pop-ups being held in each precinct
- An online survey that includes the questions posed in this needs assessment.

You can find more information on the ACT Government's YourSay website.

The Southern Gateway corridor

The Southern Gateway corridor spans almost 10 kilometres in length, following the proposed light rail network from Parliament House to Woden and the connected rapid bus corridor down Athllon Drive to Torrens and Farrer. The corridor captures 13 suburbs, each with unique characteristics and features. To make sure a place-based planning approach is used, the Framework considers the corridor in four precincts:

- Inner South precinct (Deakin, Yarralumla, Barton, Forrest)
- Yarra Glen precinct (west Deakin, Hughes, Curtin)
- Woden precinct (Phillip, Lyons, Chifley)
- Athllon precinct (Farrer, Mawson, Torrens, Pearce)

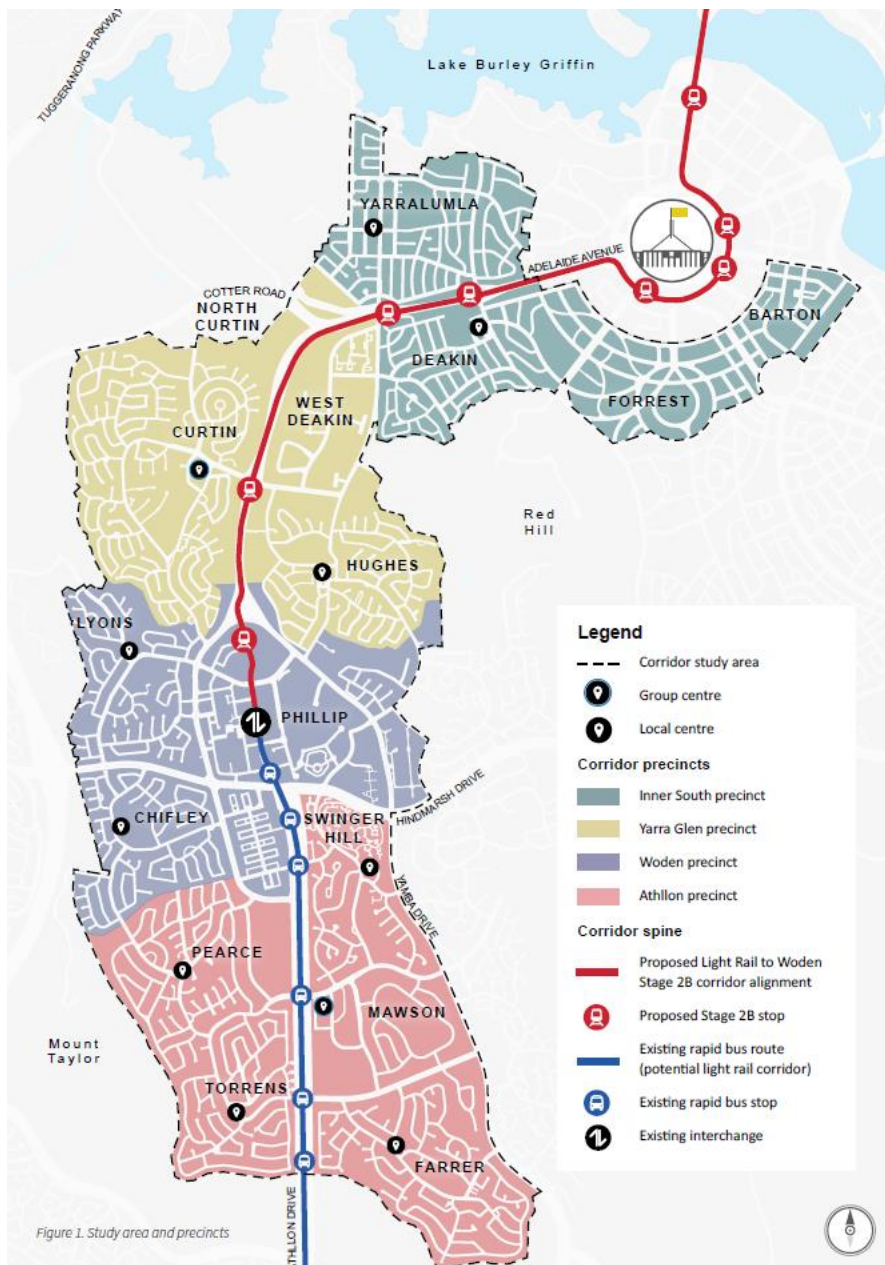


Figure 1- The Southern Gateway corridor

About the corridor

Social infrastructure

The corridor includes parts of the ACT's Woden and Inner South districts. To consider the corridor's social infrastructure needs, it is important to also consider social infrastructure in the wider Woden and Inner South districts and other nearby districts.

This is because social infrastructure in the ACT is available to everyone, regardless of where they live. In many cases, a facility outside a person's district may be more convenient, better suited to their needs or designed to serve a particular group, making it a better choice. New transport options in the corridor will make it easier to reach facilities across Canberra.



Woden

Woden is located in the geographic centre of Canberra. The corridor's Yarra Glen, Woden and Athllon precincts all sit within the broader Woden District. The district serves an important role for surrounding districts and for the whole Territory by providing a mix of health, education, retail and commercial and transport infrastructure.

Much of Woden's social infrastructure is found in and around the town centre, with key assets including the Woden Plaza, Woden Interchange, Woden Library, CIT, Eddison Park, Phillip District Playing Fields and Athletics Ground, and Phillip Oval and its sports facilities.

Garran is home to the Canberra Hospital, which services the whole ACT. This makes the hospital an important site in the corridor, where future co-location of health and wellbeing infrastructure could be prioritised.

New transport options in the corridor, including Light Rail Stage 2B, will reshape Woden's urban footprint, enabling more homes and apartments close to jobs, services and transport. This growth will increase demand for community and sports facilities.

Existing gaps in arts spaces and indoor sport and recreation facilities have been long-standing community concerns, making these facilities a priority for early planning in the corridor.

The ACT Infrastructure Plan identifies initiatives for Woden including a new community centre and expansions to Canberra Hospital and school campuses.

The Inner South

The Inner South is one of Canberra's most established districts. Introduction of light rail from the City Centre to Woden, through the corridor's Inner South precinct, will be an opportunity for positive transformation for the broader district.

Key assets in the Inner South District that lie just outside the corridor's Inner South precinct include major national cultural institutions like the National Gallery, National Library and Questacon. Also just outside the corridor are local facilities like Kingston Library and Canberra Glassworks, soon to be part of the Kingston Arts Precinct. The district also has a mix of playing fields and sports infrastructure.

With no dedicated town centre in the Inner South, residents rely on nearby districts like the Inner North and Woden for some higher-order services. The introduction of new transport options in the corridor is expected to make it easier for residents to reach these services.

In the broader district, limited land availability in established areas poses a challenge to providing facilities in future.

Planning for social infrastructure in the corridor should prioritise making new facilities easy for residents of all ages to reach and should complement future development in nearby East Lake.

Community snapshot

Population¹

- The population in both the Woden and Inner South districts will grow to 2051, including in response to future planning along the corridor.
 - Woden's population is expected to reach more than 65,000 by 2051, up from the current 40,000.
 - The Inner South's population is expected to reach more than 45,000 by 2051, up from the current 33,000.

Age

- The Woden and Inner South districts have a high proportion of residents aged 65 and over, with this demographic expected to grow significantly to 2051.
- The Woden precinct is the corridor's youngest precinct, with a median age of 34, while the Inner South Precinct has the highest median age of 40.

Households²

- The average household ranges from an average of 2.2 people in the Woden precinct to an average of 2.6 people in the Yarra Glen precinct.
- While the Woden precinct has more apartments (44%), the Athllon precinct has the highest proportion of stand-alone houses (67.5%).
- The Woden precinct has the highest proportion of single or lone-person households (41.1%) and the Inner South precinct has the lowest proportion (16.8%).

Income

- Along the corridor, the median weekly household income (\$2,690) is higher than the wider Territory's median weekly household income (\$2,373). However median weekly income varies significantly across the precincts.
 - The Inner South precinct has the highest weekly median household income (\$3,327),
 - The Woden precinct has the corridor's lowest weekly median household income (\$2,161), slightly below the median for the broader Territory (\$2,373).

Cultural diversity

- Cultural diversity across the corridor includes 33% of residents born overseas and 26.7% speaking a language other than English at home.
 - The Woden Precinct has the highest cultural diversity, with 42% of residents born overseas and 37.6% speaking a language other than English at home.

1 - Source: ACT Treasury Population Projections 2025–65

2 - Source: 2021 ABS Census

Precinct snapshots

Figure 2. Precinct populations (Source: 2021 ABS Census and ACT Treasury Population Projections 2025–65)³

Inner South Precinct (Deakin, Yarralumla, Barton, Forrest)

Population: 10,546

Median age: 41

- 39% aged 50 years or older, including 16% aged 70 years or older

Average household size: 2.1 people

- 72% family households, with 27% lone-person households.
- 47% detached houses.

Median household income: \$3,051 per week.

Cultural diversity: 32% born overseas, 22% speak a language other than English at home.

Social infrastructure considerations:

- High demand for aged care services, health facilities and mobility support.
- Opportunities to prioritise access to community hubs for older Canberrans and multi-generational programs and services.

Yarra Glen Precinct (Hughes, Curtin)

Population: 8,839

Median age: 39

- A balanced spread of ages, with 20% aged 35 to 49, 22% aged 50 to 69 and 14% aged 70 years or older.

Average household size: 2.6 people

- 75% family households, with 25% lone-person households.
- A housing mix with 57% houses and 26% apartments.

Median household income: \$2,842 per week

Cultural diversity: 27% born overseas, 18.7% speak a language other than English at home.

Social infrastructure considerations:

- Maintaining school and childcare provision for school-aged residents.
- Opportunities to prioritise health services to support an ageing population, and community hubs and family recreation opportunities.

Woden Precinct (Phillip, Lyons, Chifley)

Population: 12,395

Median age: 34

- A higher proportion of younger people with 23% people aged 25 to 34 and 8% aged 20 to 24 years.

Average household size: 2.2 people

- 41% lone-person households.
- High apartment living (44%).

Median household income: \$2,161 per week

Cultural diversity: 42% born overseas, 37.6% speak a language other than English at home.

Social infrastructure considerations:

- Facilities for younger residents, including gyms, co-working spaces and cultural facilities.
- Multi-purpose indoor sport court facility.
- Affordable housing and rental support.
- Public transport connectivity for students and professionals.

Athllon Precinct (Farrer, Mawson, Torrens, Pearce)

Population: 12,760

Median age: 39

- A balanced spread of ages, with 20% aged 35 to 49, 21% aged 50 to 69 and 14% aged 70 years or older.

Average household size: 2.5 people

- 65% family households and 36% lone-person households.
- 67.5% detached houses.

Median household income: \$2,430 per week

Cultural diversity: 31% born overseas, 21% speak a language other than English at home.

Social infrastructure considerations:

- Maintaining school and early childhood education and care provision for young children and school-aged residents.
- Opportunities to prioritise health services to support an ageing population and community hubs and family recreation opportunities.

Community needs assessment

The Southern Gateway Community Needs Assessment (needs assessment) provides a snapshot of current and future social infrastructure needs along the corridor. The needs assessment will help support:

- conversations with Canberrans about the social infrastructure they would like to see prioritised in the Southern Gateway corridor
- long-term strategic planning and coordinated delivery approaches across government.

How community needs are considered

A mix of recent analysis⁴, benchmarking and best practice trends were used to better understand what social infrastructure may be needed in the Southern Gateway corridor. This included:

- mapping the existing social infrastructure in the area
- using population trends, forecasts and benchmarks to identify opportunities for future infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing community
- looking at who lives in the community, considering how people use facilities and finding the best ways to provide them so everyone has what they need.

This analysis creates a strong starting point, but it is only a starting point. An important part of considering community needs is having conversations with the community. Community feedback on this needs assessment and the draft Framework will help the government decide what, where and when new facilities will be needed in the corridor.

³ - Population and Median Age Source: ACT Treasury Population Projections 2025–65- other data source: 2021 ABS Census

⁴ - FINAL- ACT Community, Recreation and Sports Facilities Needs Assessment and Social Infrastructure Audit, July 2025, City and Environment Directorate

Health in the corridor

Community health infrastructure planning

- The government is committed to continuing to fund the ACT's health system to deliver services for all Canberrans where and when they need it.
- The government is developing a Community Health Infrastructure Plan (CHIP), which will outline a forward plan for health and community infrastructure to meet service needs in the ACT.
- The CHIP project will provide a pathway for existing facilities to be upgraded or redeveloped as well as identifying where new facilities are needed, including in the corridor.
- The CHIP will support a more strategic approach for managing ageing community health facilities, including facilities in the Woden town centre like the Phillip Health Centre, to accommodate the changing demographics and increased demand for health services over time.

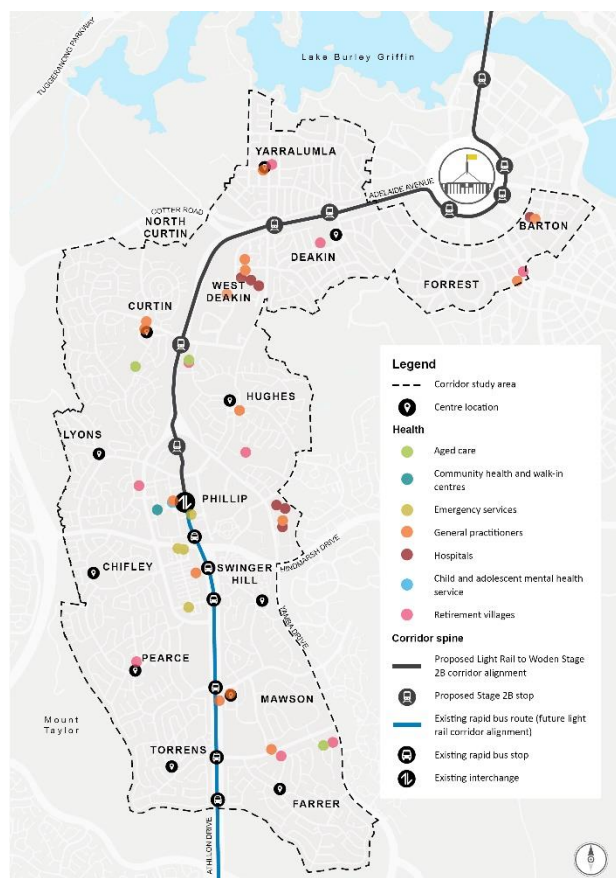


Figure 3. Existing community health infrastructure in the corridor

Emergency services, health and specialist social services

- Four police and emergency services facilities are located in Phillip: a police station, fire and rescue station, ambulance station and State Emergency Service (SES) unit. With the planned growth, a review of the future provision of police and emergency services and consideration of new ways to deliver these services will be needed.
- One community health centre (the Phillip Community Health Centre) and one child and adolescent centre (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services on Bowes Street in Woden) are in the corridor. There are 15 general practitioners (GPs).

Aged care

- The ACT is facing a growing challenge in aged care infrastructure. As a result, older Canberrans with non-acute needs may remain in hospital because there are no appropriate aged care beds available. The cost of non-acute persons staying in hospital has been estimated to be between \$150 and \$200 million annually.
- To help address these challenges in the corridor, planning and investment could prioritise:
 - enabling the development of new aged care facilities, including facilities to cater to dementia and high-care patients
 - more integrated service models that combine aged care, health and community services
 - better coordination of services across the broader Woden and Inner South districts.

- The government has committed to releasing Block 14 Section 99 in Curtin (on Carruthers Street) to support a new residential care development with a focus on accommodating residents with a diagnosis of dementia. Integrating complementary community uses should be considered for the site to maximise its benefits as a shared community space.
- Over the long term, the National Construction Code's new Liveable Housing Design Standard is expected to make ageing in place an option for more Canberrans. New homes will be easier and cheaper to adapt to the changing needs of the population, from people with young children to those with mobility limitations to those ageing in place.

Retirement villages

- Retirement villages can play an important role in easing pressures on the health system and acute health services by supporting different care models and community-based ageing.
- There are nine retirement villages in the corridor. Farrer and Hughes each have two facilities and Forrest, Deakin, Yarralumla, Pearce and Lyons each have one facility, providing a total of more than 500 places.
- Opportunities for innovative retirement village models that should be explored in the corridor include:
 - look for co-location opportunities with transport, health and other community services to enhance access and liveability for residents
 - investigate new models of delivery that combine homes and support services (like that provided for young people through the Youth Foyer at CIT Woden) so older Canberrans can live independently with the help they need
 - consider further public sector involvement in the delivery of retirement living and aged care facilities.

Education in the corridor

Early childhood education centres

- As a more established area, the corridor has more early childhood education and care (ECEC) services compared to some other parts of the ACT (see Figure 4 for current service locations). However, expected population growth in the corridor will require planning for additional ECEC services.
- Planning for ECEC involves looking at future demographics, urban residential development, ECEC participation rates and service provider type and size. The ACT has the highest rate of ECEC attendance nationally at 60.4% of all 0 to 5 year olds (10% above the national average).
- Currently, only 29% of ECEC provided in the corridor is not-for-profit. The government partners with the not-for-profit ECEC sector on important social policy objectives. Growing not-for-profit provision in the corridor would be expected to support community outcomes.
- Three of the five not-for-profit ECECs in the corridor operate out of buildings owned by the government. As these buildings age, they can become more challenging to maintain and operate. However, this may present opportunities to make upgrades or modifications to meet community need for not-for-profit ECEC provision in the corridor.
- Future planning for ECEC should consider opportunities to integrate ECEC with child and family, allied health and other community services.

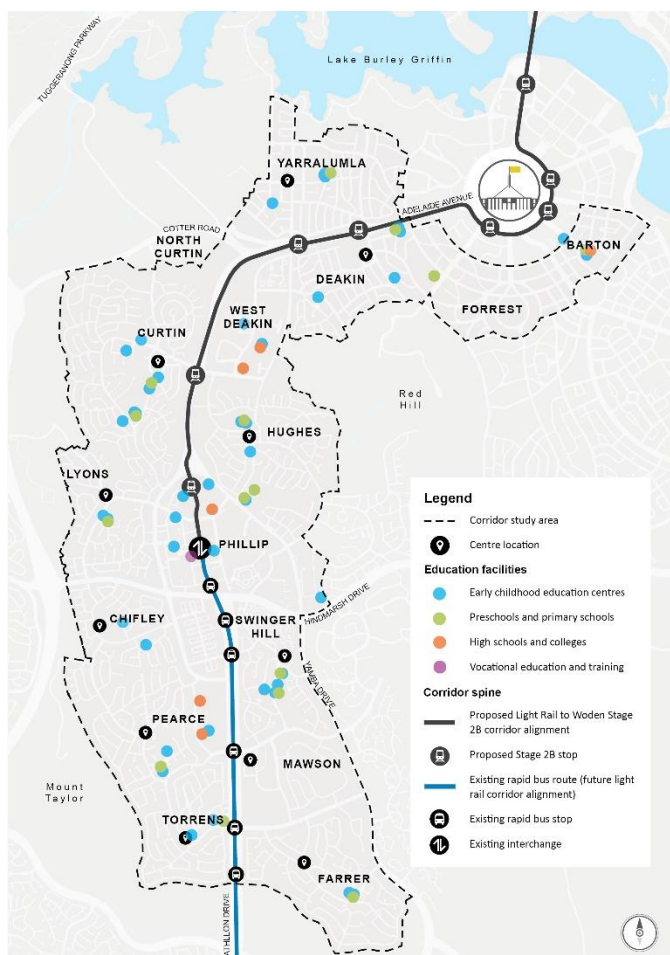


Figure 4. Existing education infrastructure in the corridor

Schools

- Multiple public schools exist within the corridor including preschools, primary schools, high schools, an early childhood school, a college and specialist schools. Non-government schooling options are also available (see Figure 4).
- Recent school infrastructure projects in the area include:
 - Garran Primary School expansion and modernisation, with Stage 1 finished in November 2025 and Stage 2 expected project completion in late 2026
 - Telopea Park School's senior campus modernisation and expansion, which is expected to be completed in late 2029.
- The government uses detailed and tailored approaches when planning future capacity for pre-schools, primary schools, high schools and colleges. Depending on patterns of enrolment demand, new capacity can be delivered as new schools or expansions of capacity (either temporary or permanent) at existing schools.

- Planning for future schools includes looking at where new homes are expected to be delivered in the future. This directly impacts the need for provision of school facilities and broader social infrastructure.
- At this early stage of planning for the corridor, more information is needed to determine the impact of new development on school provision. This includes information about the rate of development, dwelling numbers and locations and dwelling types and sizes.
- The ACT Education Directorate has been closely involved in early planning for the corridor, with a focus on public schooling provision. As conversations with the community help to shape the final Framework, the directorate will continue to monitor school provision needs in the corridor.
- Beyond education, government schools play an important role providing sport and recreational opportunities to the community. Outside of school hours, the community can use school ovals and indoor gymnasiums. New schools and upgrades to existing school facilities should be designed with community use in mind.

Vocational education and training

- The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Woden Campus will, in the long term, provide improved educational facilities for vocational education and training students in the Territory. It is expected up to 6,500 students will use CIT Woden each year, making the area a hub for activity and stimulating the local economy.
- CIT Woden is a technology skills delivery precinct with a strong focus on IT, cyber security, business and hospitality skills and training opportunities required to meet the growing demands of industry and the ACT community.
- Part of the CIT Woden Campus is a Youth Foyer, an integrated learning and accommodation facility providing housing for 20 students between the ages of 16 and 24.

Community, sport and recreation facilities in the corridor

The government has recently undertaken benchmarking for some types of community, sport and recreational facilities. Population-based benchmarks have been applied to these facilities to better understand future supply and demand in the corridor to 2051. A full supply and demand assessment for each facility type is available at [Appendix 1](#).

Community spaces and cultural facilities

Neighbourhood halls and centres

- These small halls are available for multi-purpose use.
- There are eight facilities in the corridor, including scout halls, community sheds and neighbourhood halls.
- Best practice recommends new facilities are no longer provided at a local level, with a move towards larger, more accessible, integrated and flexible community hubs.
- A review of existing facilities, in conversation with community and community organisations, could identify opportunities to enhance existing uses. For example, redevelopment of an existing facility into a larger, more flexible community centre.

Community centres

- These are larger facilities that include several multi-purpose spaces and may co-locate other uses like children, youth, adult or seniors' spaces.
- There are three community centres in the corridor, with all facilities likely providing a sub-district level of service.
- A new Woden Community Centre is planned for the town centre. A centre like this could bridge gaps for other facilities if co-location, flexibility and adaptability are prioritised in its design. For example, it could provide large and flexible meeting rooms, accommodate multi-generation services and programs or integrate library, arts or cultural services.
- Engagement with the community should be prioritised to make sure any new community centre is functional and reflective of the values, needs and aspirations of the people who will use it.

Youth and senior centres

- These flexible spaces are designed for young people or older people so they can access and participate in activities and age-specific programs. Youth and seniors' spaces should ideally be integrated with other community facilities like a multi-purpose community centre or multi-purpose sports facilities.

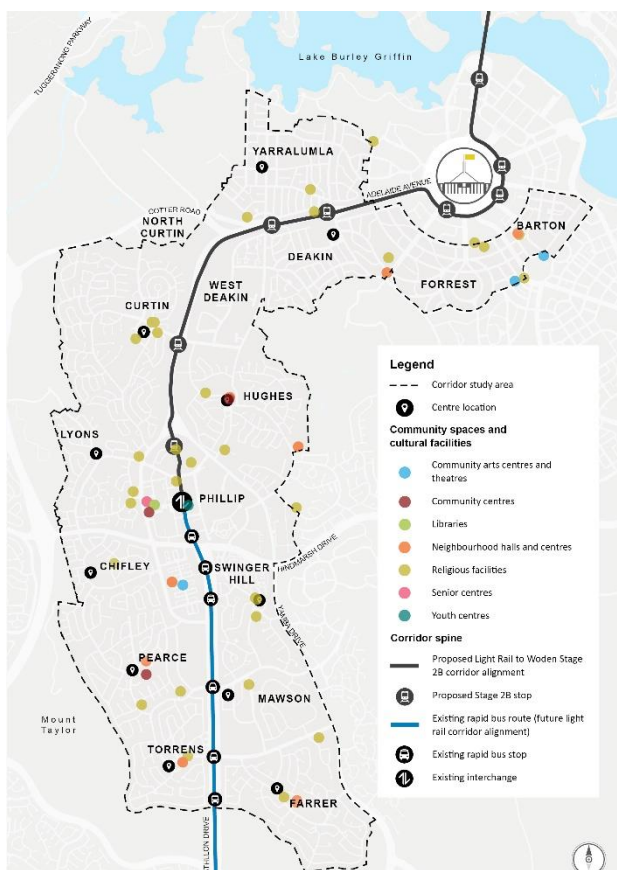


Figure 5. Existing community spaces and cultural facilities in the corridor

- Prioritising easy access to these services is important so young people and older people can reach them without relying on car travel.
- The Woden Youth Centre is the only dedicated youth facility in the corridor. Benchmarks suggest more space for youth services will be needed over the long term. Future youth centres or services could be explored close to public transport in, or close to, the Inner South precinct to bridge a gap for youth spaces in the broader Inner South District.
- The Woden Senior Citizens Club is the only dedicated facility for older people in the corridor. Benchmarks suggest more space for seniors' services will be needed over the long term, particularly as the Inner South has no facilities.
- Engagement with younger and older people will be key to creating inclusive, functional spaces that meet needs.

Community arts centres and theatres

- These spaces are designed to support creative arts and cultural activities, and they can be provided in different sizes depending on community needs.
- The Inner South precinct is well serviced by local and district-level arts facilities and is close to the Kingston arts precinct.
- Woden currently lacks any dedicated community arts facilities. Benchmarking indicates a need for accessible arts spaces in Woden over the long term. The specific need for these facilities depends on local demand. This existing gap has been acknowledged by the government and is identified for further investigation in the ACT Infrastructure Plan.
- The new CIT Woden campus includes state of the art facilities with specialist and large multi-purpose spaces to deliver courses in the creative industries across fashion, graphic design, interior design, media, music, photography and visual arts.
- The new community centre in Woden is intended to have large multi-functional space for a range of community activities including the arts.
- The ACT Government is conducting an Arts Assets Needs Analysis to review arts infrastructure across Canberra. The analysis will assess current and future demand for creative spaces and guide future planning. It also delivers on a commitment in the ACT Infrastructure Plan Update: Entertainment, Arts and Sports to complete a needs analysis for arts centres in Woden within the next five years.

Libraries

- A library offers services, programs, resources and spaces for learning, leisure and information sharing for people of all ages and abilities.
- Woden Library is the only district-level library serving the corridor. The Kingston Library provides services within the broader Inner South District.
- The existing floorspace of the Woden Library is generally in line with population benchmarks. Significant upgrades to the Woden Library were completed in 2021. Feedback and ideas from the community helped shape the designs for the upgrades.
- Over the long term, innovative ways to expand service offerings without creating a new library should be explored. For example, considering opportunities to co-locate new library services within a multi-purpose community space to better meet the needs of the growing population.

Religious facilities or places of worship

- These facilities are used primarily for religious worship and related activities by a congregation, religious group or the public. They may also host religious instruction, meetings, training and other community activities. Examples include chapels, churches, mosques, shrines, synagogues and temples.
- There are 33 religious facilities in the corridor.
- Although half of Canberra's population identifies as non-religious, these facilities can be multi-purpose community spaces that accommodate a range of uses like religious and cultural activities and activities for younger and older people.
- Community engagement is important to understand preferences around shared uses in religious facilities.

Sports facilities and active recreation

Playing fields

- Playing fields include enclosed ovals, district playing fields and neighbourhood ovals.
- Benchmarks indicate both the Woden and Inner South districts are well serviced by existing playing fields, both now and into the future.
- In recent years, significant improvements have been made to several sportsgrounds including Phillip Oval (in the Woden Town Centre), Phillip District Enclosed Oval (opposite the Canberra Hospital) and Woden Park. New sportsgrounds have also been provided at Melrose High School and Garran Neighbourhood Oval.
- Protecting and enhancing the amenity of existing playing fields, like the Deakin District Playing Fields should be considered to meet the needs of a growing population in the corridor.
- If new government schools are delivered in the area, they would likely include ovals, which would typically be accessible to the public. Any new school oval facilities should be designed with this in mind.

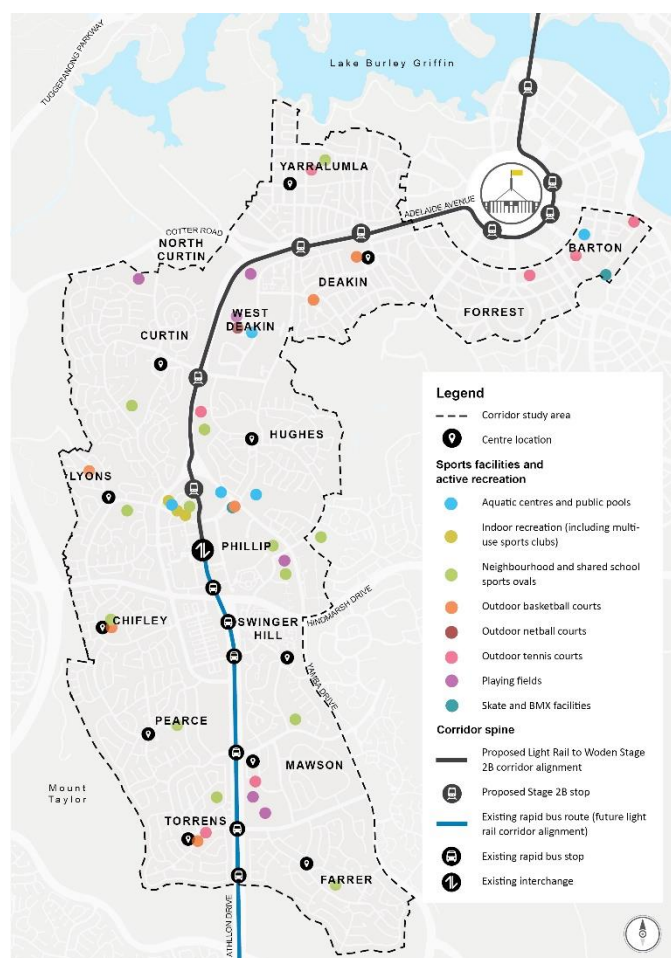


Figure 6. Existing sports facilities and active recreation in the corridor

Aquatic centres and public pools

- Public swimming venues are provided at different scales to meet community needs. Smaller pools (sub-district) may provide swim schools or seasonal pools and typically have 25-metre pools. Larger pool centres (district) have complementary uses like leisure areas and fitness spaces and serve as regional hubs, typically providing 50-metre pools.

- There are two sub-district pools in the Inner South precinct (Kingswim Deakin and Evo Health Club Pool) and a third sub-district pool just outside the corridor in the Inner South District (Manuka Pool). There is one sub-district pool in the Woden precinct (Stellar Swim).
- Redevelopment of the Phillip Swimming and Ice-Skating Centre, the only district pool in the corridor, has drawn a lot of local community interest.
- In December 2025, the Territory Planning Authority approved a development application for the Phillip Pool site with conditions. The proposal is for demolition works and the construction of a mixed-use development with a new pool facility on the ground floor. The approval is for the first of 3 stages. It is anticipated that stages 2 and 3 will be lodged in the future. This stage does not affect the operation of the existing 50-metre swimming pool, which has been indicated to be the subject of a future development application.
- The ACT Government is developing a new ACT Aquatic Strategy to set clear priorities for future aquatic infrastructure. Through the new ACT Aquatic Strategy, options to deliver a new public 50-metre outdoor pool in Woden will be progressed. Research has started on potential site options in Woden to meet community needs and requirements.
- New transport connections along the corridor will make accessing district pools in surrounding areas easier, including pools along the City to Woden light rail corridor.

Indoor recreation including multi-use sports facilities

- These facilities have multiple multi-purpose courts for activities like basketball, netball, volleyball, futsal and badminton, along with associated amenities.
- There are three indoor recreation centres in Phillip (Woden Squash Centre, Cricket ACT High Performance Centre and the Phillip Swimming and Ice Skating Centre) and several indoor school gymnasiums that the community can use outside school hours.
- The government will deliver upgrades to Garran Primary School, which will include a new 2-court gymnasium that will be available for community use outside of school hours. Planned upgrades to Telopea Park School in Barton include a new double gymnasium that will be available to the community.
- The government has recognised the need for more indoor sporting amenity in Woden and is doing early investigations to consider a multi-court indoor sport facility on the former Woden CIT site. A new facility would help to address long-term demand from multiple districts in the ACT's south. The need for this kind of facility is a priority in the ACT Infrastructure Plan.
- It is noted Scentre Group has recently started engaging with the community on a proposed master plan, titled 'New Life in Woden'. This proposal includes the potential provision of an indoor sport court facility as part of a community and recreation precinct in the town centre.
- The introduction of new transport options in the corridor would make a new facility in Woden easier to access for residents across Canberra.
- Opportunities to co-locate other social and recreation uses in an integrated multi-use sports facility is recommended and could help to bridge possible gaps across other facility types.

Outdoor courts⁵

- There is a good supply of outdoor tennis courts in the corridor, with court improvements recently delivered at the North Woden Tennis Club in Hughes. However, possible gaps are identified for outdoor basketball and netball courts across the corridor's precincts.
- Government improvements to South Canberra District Netball Courts in Deakin were completed in early 2025. Further upgrades to convert the existing grass courts near the netball courts into hardcourts are currently being explored.
- Outdoor hardcourts for basketball, netball and tennis are usually provided as part of schools rather than as standalone facilities. They are available for community use outside of school hours.
- A new multi-court facility that could accommodate both basketball and netball could be explored in the corridor to help minimise demand pressures in neighbouring districts like Weston Creek.
- Conversations with the community and local organisations will help the government to better understand how the community uses and prioritises these facilities. For example, a new indoor multi-court facility in the corridor may help bridge possible gaps for outdoor courts.

Skate and BMX facilities

- Purpose-built outdoor spaces designed for skating and BMX activities are provided at different sizes to meet community needs.
- The two facilities in the corridor are the Eddison Park skate park and the half pipe at Telopea Park. With projected population growth in the corridor, there may be a need for additional skate infrastructure.
- The government is developing a [draft ACT Skate Strategy](#) and will engage with key skate stakeholders. The draft strategy will include recommendations for improving skating infrastructure and opportunities in the ACT.
- Conversations with the community will help the government to better understand if new facilities may be required. If they are, facilities could be co-located with other outdoor recreational or integrated into open space networks to maximise accessibility and community use. This approach would support efficient land use and encourage multi-generational activity hubs.
- As these facilities are mostly used by young people, any new facilities needed in the corridor should be located within walking distance of public transport to make sure they are easy to reach without relying on car travel.

⁵ Note: Outdoor courts are often located at ACT Government schools and available for the community to use outside school hours. Our benchmarking does not currently count all outdoor courts provided at schools, which means overall supply may be underrepresented. More work is needed to understand how the community uses ACT Government school sport court facilities.

Open space, passive and informal recreation

Playgrounds and play spaces

- Outdoor areas designed for children's play and community recreation are provided at varying scales to meet local needs.
- There are two district, four sub-district and more than 30 local playgrounds in the corridor.
- In the long term, additional playgrounds could be considered for places that are easily accessible from across the corridor.
- Future planning for areas expected to experience significant population growth should focus on integrating play spaces from early in the planning process. Any new facilities should be designed to meet the needs of diverse age groups and abilities.

Community gardens

- Community gardens and allotments are shared outdoor spaces where individuals or groups can hire plots to grow plants, vegetables or flowers.
- Woden lacks a community garden. Exploring opportunities to provide a community garden in Woden is recommended in the long term, prioritising access to Woden's central and southern suburbs.
- The ACT has an existing policy and site selection criteria for community gardens to help identify suitable locations. Unlike other facilities, community gardens are typically not co-located with other uses or centres. Their success also depends heavily on local community support and engagement, which should be considered during the planning process.

Open space

- Open space refers to land available for passive and active recreation, including areas used for district and neighbourhood parks and play spaces. They make the area healthier, more enjoyable and better for everyone's wellbeing.
- Woden town centre has some great green areas like Eddison Park, Arabanoo Park and the Yarralumla Creek network. But there isn't much usable green space inside the main shopping and business area west of Callam Street. As more apartments and homes are built, these green spaces will become even more important, as will improved access to them.
- Planning for community needs in the corridor and in the town centre gives us a chance to improve access to green space and add new, practical green spaces right in the heart of the town centre. This will help make Woden a more attractive and liveable place as it grows.



Figure 7. Existing open space, passive and informal recreation in the corridor

- In general, the corridor is well serviced by existing open space. Changes should be monitored over time as new development happens.

Dog parks

- There is one dog park (Yarralumla), and one designated off-leash area for dogs (Mawson) in the corridor.
- As urbanisation continues in the corridor, the need for accessible, fenced dog parks is becoming more important. Currently, residents rely on unfenced ovals or parks like Mawson, Duffy and Yarralumla, which often require car travel. The government has acknowledged this and is investigating potential sites for new dog parks in Woden.

Opportunities in the corridor

Opportunity 1: Adopt a multi-use and co-location approach

Where possible, multi-use and co-location approaches should be used for compatible social infrastructure. This is when different types of facilities that work well together are located in the same building or space, such as a community centres co-located with a library. Co-location is important because it can make better use of land where there is limited new land available.

Local community hubs

- Move away from delivering new local neighbourhood halls and centres and instead focus on delivering flexible, larger community hubs.
- Review the condition and use of existing local neighbourhood halls and centres and explore options to repurpose or adapt these facilities into vibrant local community hubs that combine meeting rooms and spaces for young people, older people and arts and cultural programs.
- Where possible, co-locate community hubs with existing playing fields to allow shared use for schools and community activities.
- Explore opportunities to deliver integrated child and family services for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This could support the ACT's ongoing commitment to Closing the Gap and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.

Multi-purpose community centre

- Continue to explore a new multi-purpose community centre in the Woden town centre, with shared uses like arts spaces and flexible meeting rooms.
- Partner with Woden Community Service and local organisations to support shared services and integrated facilities.
- Explore opportunities for the proposed new community centre to offer a mix of services and spaces, including for young people, older people and local arts programs.

Libraries as community hubs

- Explore opportunities to transform Canberra's libraries into multi-purpose community hubs that go beyond book lending.
- Continue to explore how libraries can offer integrated services to support digital literacy, co-working spaces, cultural programs and activities for young people, older people and people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Schools as community anchors

- Where possible, explore opportunities for increased out-of-hours community use of existing schools, like Garran Primary, Hughes Primary and Farrer Primary in Woden and Forrest Primary in the Inner South.
- Meeting rooms, halls and sports courts can be adapted for activities for young people, older people and cultural events.

Sports and recreation co-location

- Explore opportunities to support indoor and outdoor sporting uses being co-located.

- To address possible gaps in the Southern Gateway corridor, explore opportunities to create a new combined multi-purpose indoor sports facility that could provide recreation spaces and meeting rooms to address a range of community needs, creating a shared precinct for sport and social activities ideally near the light rail corridor.

Arts and cultural integration

- Explore opportunities to co-locate a district-level arts and cultural space within the proposed multi-use community centre in Woden.
- Consider partnerships with schools and community organisations to support student art programs.

Diversity of open spaces

- Make sure open space is of a suitable quality and there are diverse open spaces available that can be used for different activities like parks, sports fields, playgrounds and dog parks.

Opportunity 2: Design for flexibility and adaptability

In a rapidly changing world, the delivery of stand-alone community infrastructure is now outdated. Instead, when planning facilities, it is important to build in flexibility and adaptability to cater to all ages and abilities and allow for a range of services.

New and upgraded facilities should include flexible spaces that can be adapted over time to meet changing community needs. Movable walls, modular furniture and multi-purpose rooms can support a wide range of uses from meetings and workshops to performances and exhibitions.

Meeting rooms

- Be flexible in design of meeting rooms; for example, a large meeting room (for 200+ people) should be able to be divided into smaller meeting rooms to accommodate a range of needs.
- Explore opportunities to upgrade meeting rooms and spaces with movable walls and modular furniture to accommodate workshops, performances and exhibitions.

Youth and senior centres

- Explore opportunities to design shared facilities with flexible layouts that can adapt to changing demographics and needs.
- Incorporate flexible spaces within local community hubs that can cater to the needs of people of all ages.

Arts spaces in Woden

- Explore opportunities to create multi-purpose rooms in new and existing facilities that can host exhibitions, rehearsals and community events.

Opportunity 3: Equity and inclusion

Equity and inclusion must be embedded in all aspects of infrastructure planning. Engaging with local residents, especially underrepresented groups, is critical to make sure infrastructure responds to real needs and raises a sense of ownership and belonging.

Accessible facilities

- Design facilities to be accessible to people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds and to reflect the diversity of the community.
- Ensure facilities can be accessed using a range of different transport modes like walking, cycling and public transport as well as a private motor vehicle.

Aged care facilities

- Locate new aged care facilities in areas with convenient access to general practitioners, public transport and essential services.
- Encourage these facilities to include high-care units and be supported by integrated service models that combine aged care, health and community programs within the same precinct.

Opportunity 4: Community informed planning

Community-informed planning is a critical principle in the planning and delivery of social infrastructure. It helps to make sure facilities are not only functional but reflect the values, needs and aspirations of the people who use them.

Conversations with community

- Engagement should occur early and continue throughout the planning process, creating opportunities for people to have a say through workshops, surveys and partnerships with local organisations.

Appendix 1: Community, sport and recreation facilities supply and demand assessment

Understanding the community, sport and recreational facilities supply and demand assessment

Existing facilities

Existing facilities have been assessed across the entire Woden and Inner South districts, not just the corridor, to make sure all available nearby facilities are considered. From this starting point, specific opportunities to explore throughout the needs assessment were identified in the Southern Gateway corridor.

Benchmarks

This assessment applies adopted population-based benchmarks, drawn from standards used in other cities and recognised best practice guidance for specific facility types to identify where there may be gaps or future opportunities for community facilities and social infrastructure.

Benchmarks are a useful starting point, but assessing actual community needs means looking at a much wider range of evidence. This includes feedback from the community, participation trends, considering the use of existing facilities (including options to upgrade existing facilities, such as providing more lighting at sportsgrounds) and broader policy trends.

Benchmarks are still being considered by government and have not yet been formally adopted.

Facility hierarchy

Facility hierarchy describes the level of service a community facility provides. Some facilities are local and serve a small community, while others are larger and serve an entire district or, in some cases, the whole ACT. This means not every district will have every type of facility, but across the Territory there should be a good spread of infrastructure that is well located and easy to access.

The hierarchy used in the supply and demand assessment is outlined below.

- **District:** These facilities serve an entire district, like the Woden District. However, it is important to remember that while Woden is a district, it is not viewed in isolation for social infrastructure needs. People often use facilities in nearby districts, so location and connectivity matter. District facilities should be placed so they can be easily reached by residents within the district and surrounding areas.
- **Sub-district:** These facilities serve an area of four to five suburbs, meaning there are multiple sub-districts within a district. They provide a middle level of service and are positioned to reduce travel time and complement district facilities.
- **Local:** These facilities serve one to two suburbs and are located close to where people live. They support everyday community needs and help people to avoid long trips.

Why proximity matters

Communities do not use facilities in isolation. People travel across districts and sub-districts based on convenience, transport links and the clustering of services. Planning for the corridor will consider these patterns so access to facilities is practical and infrastructure works together rather than being duplicated.

Where possible, gaps have been identified for different facility types in this needs assessment. The location of existing facilities has been considered in order to shape our recommendations for where new facilities could be located to improve community access.

Population projections

All population projections come with a degree of uncertainty due to the difficulty of forecasting how the population will change in the future. For this assessment, ACT Treasury Population Projections 2025–2065 have been used.

Table 1.1 Community, sport and recreation facilities supply and demand assessment

Facility type	Facility hierarchy	Benchmark ⁶	District	Existing facilities	Supply opportunities ⁷			
					2026	2031	2041	2051
Neighbourhood hall or centre	Local	1 centre per 9,000 residents	Woden	7	+3.3	+3	+2.3	+1.1
			Inner South	8	+4.9	+4.7	+4.3	+3.9
Community centre	District	1 centre per 45,000 residents	Woden	3	+2.1	+2	+1.8	+1.5
			Inner South	0	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-1
Youth centre	District	1 facility per 45,000 residents	Woden	1	+0.1	0	-0.2	-0.5
			Inner South	0	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-1
Senior citizens centre	District	1 multi-purpose space per 50,000 residents	Woden	1	+0.2	+0.1	-0.1	-0.4
			Inner South	0	-0.7	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9
Community arts centre or theatre	Local	1 facility per 9,000 residents	Woden	0	-4.4	-4.9	-5.9	-7.6
			Inner South	6	+2.2	+1.9	+1.4	+0.9
	District	1 facility per 50,000 residents	Woden	0	-0.8	-0.9	-1.1	-1.4
			Inner South	2	+1.3	+1.3	+1.2	+1.1
Library	Based on NSW Libraries floorspace calculator.		Woden	2,234 (1 library)	+249	+140	-108	-524
			Inner South	190 (1 library)	-1,546	-1,633	-1,787	-1,925
Playing fields	District	0.62ha of playing field area per 1,000 residents	Woden	56.5	+30.5	+28.4	+23.6	+15.2
			Inner South	46.4	+25	+23.4	+20.5	+17.9
Aquatic centres and public pools	Sub-district	1 facility per 30,000 residents	Woden	2	+1.2	+1.1	+0.9	+0.7
			Inner South	3	+2.3	+2.3	+2.2	+2.1
	District	1 facility per 75,000 residents	Woden	1	+0.4	+0.4	+0.3	+0.1
			Inner South	0	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.6

⁶ FINAL- ACT Community, Recreation and Sports Facilities Needs Assessment and Social Infrastructure Audit, July 2025, City and Environment Directorate

⁷ A positive gap means benchmarking indicates facility provision is meeting or exceeding expected demand. A negative gap means benchmarking indicates there may be a possible gap for this facility type.

Facility type	Facility hierarchy	Benchmark ⁶	District	Existing facilities	Supply opportunities ⁷			
					2026	2031	2041	2051
Indoor recreation centres including multi-use sports facilities	District / local	1 court facility (2 to 4 courts) per 40,000 residents	Woden	3	+2	+1.9	+1.7	+1.3
			Inner South	1	+0.1	+0.1	0	-0.2
Outdoor tennis courts	Sub-district	1 court per 5,000 residents	Woden	16	+7.6	+6.9	+5.4	+2.7
			Inner South	28	+21.1	+20.6	+19.7	+18.9
Outdoor basketball courts	Sub-district	1 court per 3,000 residents	Woden	1.75	-12.2	-13.4	-15.9	-20.5
			Inner South	3	-8.5	-9.4	-10.9	-12.3
Outdoor netball courts	Sub-district	1 court per 5,000 residents	Woden	0	-8.4	-9.1	-10.6	-13.3
			Inner South	8	+1.1	+0.6	-0.4	-1.2
Skatepark and BMX facilities	Sub-district	1 facility per 7,500 residents	Woden	0	-3.2	-3.5	-4.1	-5.1
			Inner South	1	-1.6	-1.8	-2.2	-2.5
	District	1 facility per 17,500 residents	Woden	1	-1.4	-1.6	-2	-2.8
			Inner South	0	-2	-2.1	-2.4	-2.6
	Local	1 playground per 2,000 residents	Woden	36	+15	+13.4	+9.5	+2.7
			Inner South	16	-1.3	-2.5	-4.9	-7
Playgrounds and play spaces	Sub-district	1 playground per 9,000 residents	Woden	5	+0.3	0	-0.9	-2.4
			Inner South	4	+0.2	-0.1	-0.6	-1.1
	District	1 playground per 50,000 residents	Woden	1	+0.2	+0.1	-0.1	-0.3
			Inner South	2	+1.3	+1.3	+1.2	+1.1
Community gardens and allotments	District	1 per 60,000 residents	Woden	0	-0.7	-0.8	-0.9	-1.1
			Inner South	2	+1.4	+1.4	+1.3	+1.2
Open space (for informal and active and passive recreation)	All	30 square metres per resident	Woden	343	+217.1	+207.1	+183.8	+143.1
			Inner South	178	+74.4	+66.8	+52.8	+40.2