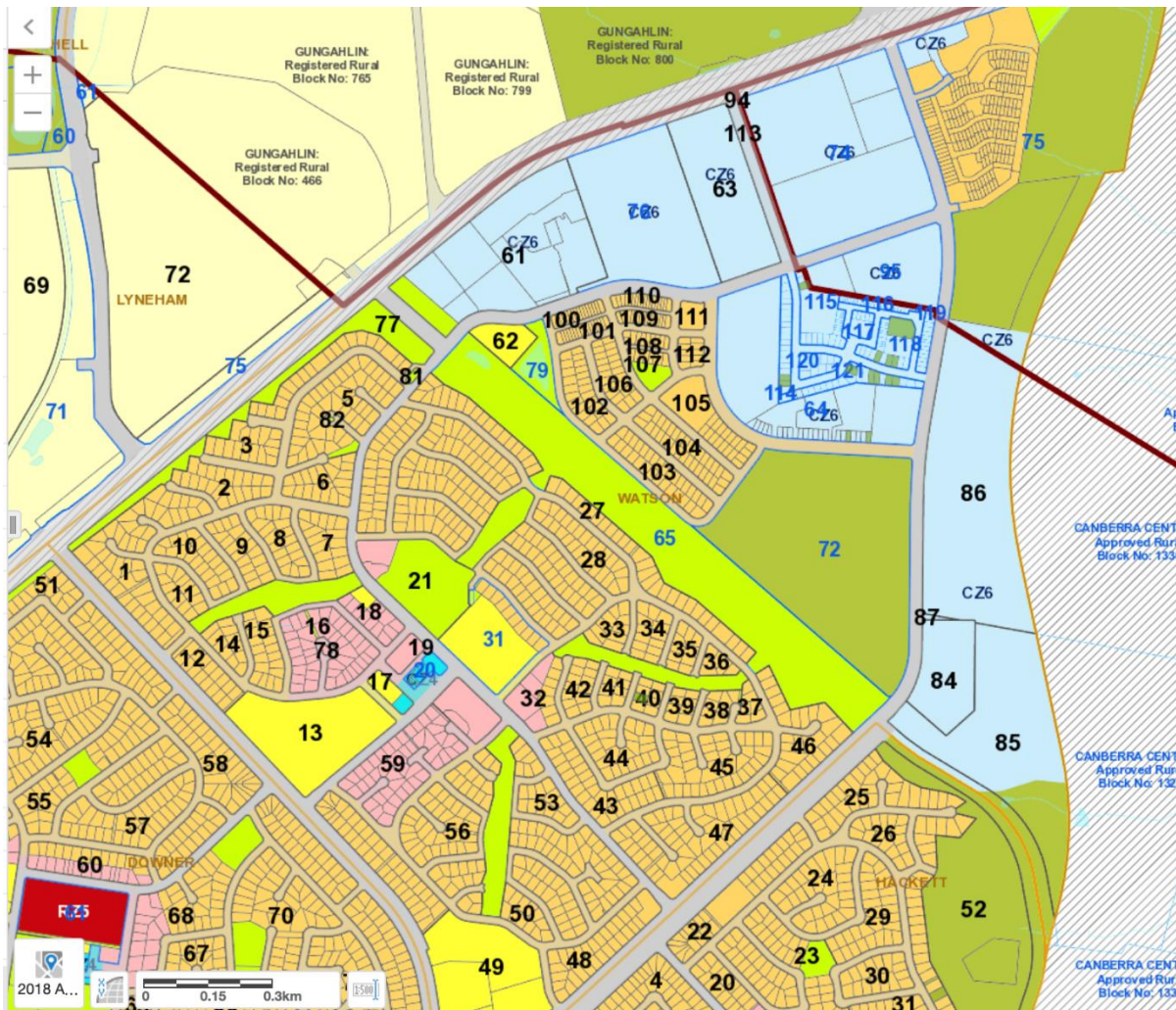


# WATSON, ACT

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



A Plan for the Sustainable Development of one of the  
ACT's first suburbs.

## Preface

### Purpose

This Plan has been developed by, and for, the community of Watson to set out the community's vision for the sustainable development of their suburb.

The Plan aims to fill the vacuum left by the lack of an ACT Government Master Plan for Watson. It can serve as a Sustainable Development Plan for Watson until the ACT Government either establishes a Master Plan in consultation with residents, or, accepts this document as a community-developed Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan<sup>1</sup> was prepared in 2004 for "A Sustainable Future for Watson" but it considered only south of Stirling Avenue, and no plan has guided urban development in North Watson, nor does one exist now. The void in wholistic planning for North Watson has been an important motivation for developing this plan to ensure integrated planning and development which builds rather than divides our community.

### Who This Plan is for

This Plan should be read by everyone who has a stake in the future development of Watson.

It is an injunction to urban developers, speculators, builders, business entrepreneurs and real estate agents that the people of Watson insist on high quality of planning, design, building and community infrastructure.

It is a challenge to urban planners, architects and consultants to offer exemplary standards of liveability.

It is a reminder to Government Ministers and their respective agencies to ensure the implementation of their espoused principles in their urban planning statements. This especially includes the decision makers in the portfolios responsible for housing, urban planning, education, environment, transport and traffic.

It is relevant for current or future residents of Watson, whether they be home owners, aspiring home buyers or renters.

It is also of interest to residents of nearby suburbs such as Hackett, Downer and Dickson who utilise the schools and shopping centre of Watson. The Watson Community Association has long worked in collaboration with the Hackett Residents Association and the Downer Community Association in pursuit of common goals for the wider 'Majura' community.

### Revisions

This document is intended to be a living document and will be updated as necessary to reflect changes in the suburb, and the aspirations of the residents of Watson.

This version was approved by the Watson Community Association at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Watson Neighbourhood Plan: A sustainable future for Watson, Prepared by the ACT Planning and Land Authority, September 2004, [www.planning.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/890576/watson-anp.pdf](http://www.planning.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/890576/watson-anp.pdf)

## Watson Community Association

The Watson Community Association was formed in the late 1980s and incorporated in 1995 with the object of promoting the social, economic and environmental amenity of Watson residents. The Constitution of the Association states that its aims are to:

- a) promote, protect and enhance the social, cultural and physical environment of the community of Watson;
- b) promote the welfare, community spirit and quality of life of residents of Watson;
- c) raise funds and expend them in the pursuit of the other objects of the Association;
- d) inform the community about issues concerning Watson; and
- e) engage in any other activity conducive to attaining these objects.

It is therefore within the ambit of that Association to undertake the development and promotion of this document.

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## Executive Summary

### Objective

This document has been developed for, and by, the community of Watson to set out their vision for the ongoing development of their suburb. It outlines a strategy for the managed growth and sustainable development of Watson, designed to achieve this vision for Watson.

The Watson Community Association (WCA) and the community it represents are determined to ensure that current and future developments meet the needs of residents and are informed by a sound planning approach that will deliver a healthy, connected, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing suburb in keeping with Watson's existing values.

In the absence of coordinated overall planning for the suburb, this document outlines an ongoing plan for sustainable development, which can act as a default Master Plan, or similar, until the ACT Government either initiates and establishes a formal Master Plan, or similar, in consultation with the Watson community, or adopts this Plan, with its requirements for ongoing and regular updating.

The development of a Plan for the future of Watson is consistent with the ACT Government's program which encourages community involvement in developing a *Better Suburbs Statement*<sup>2</sup> for their suburb.

### Future Vision for Watson

The Watson Community Association's principal concern is with the apparent lack of planning around new developments currently taking place in Watson, particularly how they integrate and address the needs of the suburb. A lack of overall vision presents a range of negative outcomes, some of which are already evident including:

- poor connectivity between new developments and existing amenities and public transport,
- lack of amenities, and overcrowding of existing amenities such as shops, playgrounds, parks and schools,
- encroachment on and degradation of green space and recreational areas,
- poor access to sustainable transport options, and increased reliance on cars, lack of planning for traffic and parking associated with redevelopment, and
- wasted opportunity and funds on poorly conceived developments and infrastructure.

In response to the ad hoc, uncoordinated development-by-development approach, this Plan outlines the community's vision for Watson as it grows and progresses over future years. It specifically identifies several objectives to achieve these aims:

1. SOUND PLANNING:  
to highlight the existing features of Watson, its design merits and mistakes, and to ensure these inform planning for current and future developments;

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<sup>2</sup> [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/4215/3722/6646/Better\\_Suburbs\\_Statement\\_accessible\\_SEPTMBER\\_2018.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/4215/3722/6646/Better_Suburbs_Statement_accessible_SEPTMBER_2018.pdf)

2. TRUE PARTICIPATION:  
to advocate for a participatory, holistic planning approach for the growth of the suburb;
3. ADEQUATE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE:  
to support convenient shopping, recreation and meeting spaces to meet the needs of the suburb, and to ensure infrastructure is developed with, not after, any planned population influx;
4. ACCESSIBLE WELL-PLANNED TRANSPORT OPTIONS:  
to ensure adequate road networks and access to public and sustainable transport options for planned population growth, and
5. VALUING GREEN SPACE:  
to protect and enhance existing green space and areas designated for recreational and urban open space, and to ensure suitable tree coverage across all developments with the multiple benefits this confers, including cooling, shading, and wildlife habitat.

Overall this Plan aims to promote the elements of a healthy, connected, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing suburb in keeping with Watson's existing values:

The design and planning criteria to meet these objectives are listed below, and more extensively described in the conclusion of this document. They encompass design which is aligned to:

- community and social orientation,
- retention of existing beneficial character,
- conservation values,
- positive visual impact,
- accessibility and safety, and
- energy efficiency, sustainability and changing.



## Watson - A Strategy for Development

### What We Value

In 2017 the Watson Community Association conducted a survey of Watson residents. 248 responses were received. Asked what specific aspects of Watson people liked, respondents prioritised:

1. open, green spaces;
2. local shopping centre; and
3. sense of community.

Other relevant survey results were:

- Respondents consistently commented on the ‘established trees and tree lined streets’, ‘leafiness’, ‘green corridors’ and ‘bird and wild life’;
- However, many respondents were disappointed that North Watson has missed out on open, green spaces—giving rise to the disconnect between the two halves of Watson;
- Several respondents commented on Watson’s green spaces supporting active lifestyles, specifically the pond at Majura Rise, the rejuvenated, irrigated oval (on Knox Street), off-leash dog area (adjacent Roma Mitchell Crescent); and Justice Robert Hope Park. Respondents also access Mount Majura’s trails for walking and running;
- Respondents consistently commented on the ‘convenience’ and ‘range’ of the shopping centre on the corner of Knox and Windeyer Streets. The co-location of the Watson Medical Practice and Pharmacy were noted;
- Many respondents remarked on the re-invigorating effect the Knox Café had on the local shopping centre;
- Many respondents noted the impact of population growth on the Watson shopping centre and the need for additional shopping facilities and a face lift for the building. The absence of public toilets and insufficient car parking were consistently raised by respondents;
- The sense of community was highly valued. Respondents consistently commented on the friendliness of neighbours and passers-by on foot paths. The contribution of the local shopping centre, local preschool and primary schools (fetes and carnivals) and efforts of the WCA (such as ‘Watson’ newsletter and ‘Parties at the Shops’) in building a sense of community were also noted;
- Other aspects of living in Watson most liked by respondents were (in order): location; public transport; local education and community facilities; streets and housing;

### ACT City and Gateway Proposal

Following the survey, the WCA made a submission to the ACT Government’s City and Gateway Proposal. The key issues from the submission are outlined on page 6 under Development Suitability. Also included in the submission was “the Case for a Master Plan for Watson” which set out issues of concern around recent developments in the suburb. The text of this document has informed the preparation of this Plan and is included in full at A Case for a Plan for Watson on page 32.



## Location

Watson is the first Canberra suburb in the approach to the city from the north along the Federal Highway. It is the 'gateway' to the ACT and close to the CBD. Phillip and Stirling Avenues, and Antill St provide exits for vehicles from the inner north travelling to Goulburn, the Southern Highlands, Sydney and beyond via the Federal Highway, or to Yass, Wagga, Albury and Melbourne via the Barton Highway. Watson also now has a second quick access to Canberra Airport, via the Majura Parkway. Most of the suburb is relatively level, with little hilly landscape.

Based on published sales data over the past three years, Watson has the lowest median price for residential properties<sup>3</sup> in the Inner North, and with its access to the Central Business District, airport, and easy entry and exits from Canberra, Watson is a popular suburb and residential properties sell relatively quickly. Local agents have advised that houses in Watson sell inside 30 days of coming onto the market,

This has caused a demand for more residences. In response the ACT Government proposes to meet this demand by higher density housing. The challenge to planners is to address this demand without negatively impacting the inherent nature of Watson that gives it such wide appeal. Housing density should be restricted so that new developments are consistent with past developments. This would imply different planning guidelines for Old Watson and North Watson. This also respects the substantial financial and intangible investments made by residents in their homes, gardens and in social capital.

Higher density housing changes the nature of any suburb. However higher density housing that is thoughtfully planned, and which is well connected to the rest of the suburb by transport routes with good services and greenspace, can ameliorate this change.

There has been no external consultation with existing Watson residents to develop a sustainable growth strategy for the suburb to provide for growth without major changes to the liveability and character of Watson.

People want to move into Watson. However, its real estate appeal is because of its relative affordability compared to other inner north suburbs. Watson's existing inherent characteristics are also an appeal - people want to move in here precisely because of its current characteristics.

## 'Old' Watson v 'New' Watson

### Physical Divide

Watson is geographically divided by Stirling Avenue and the Stirling Avenue Reserve Urban Open Space which runs from Antill Street in the east to Stirling Avenue in the western end of Watson. This contains an easement which provides for stormwater flows from Mount Majura and North Watson, contains high tension power lines, and contains survey markers used by surveyors for instrument calibration.

The area to the south of this easement was the first part of Watson to be developed and is sometimes referred to as 'Old Watson'. This area is characterised by single, standalone, traditional houses on larger blocks (generally about 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and extensive tree cover. However, its mix of housing is consistent with other suburbs of Canberra of a similar vintage. It contains high density residential development along Knox St particularly around the shops, and there are several medium

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<sup>3</sup> Source: [www.allhomes.com.au](http://www.allhomes.com.au)

density developments such as retirement units. Dual occupancy and similar construction have also occurred extensively in some areas in recent years, and the Mt Fluffy problem has increased this though without specific consideration of associated local traffic flows and parking issues.

The area to the north of this easement, referred to colloquially as 'New Watson' or 'North Watson', has been extensively redeveloped as an 'urban infill' development since about 2001. Previously it was planned mainly for broadacre commercial tourist and recreation developments. This area is now characterised by mostly medium density development that includes town houses, apartments (up to three levels) as well as an area of single, standalone houses on smaller blocks (about 500 m<sup>2</sup>). The area between Antill Street and Roma Mitchell Crescent is predominately standalone houses, while the area to the north of Antill Street is exclusively medium density with apartment complexes with a building height of up to three storeys.

This document uses the terms 'Old Watson' and 'North Watson' where differentiation is required. The suburb in whole is referred to as 'Watson'.

### Development Strategies

The different planning history and the physical divide means that different development and growth strategies should be applied to different areas within the suburb of Watson. The rationale for this is explained in more detail at Why Separate Strategies? on page 21.

## Environment

### Open Space

The Watson community strongly supports the recommendation of the *Better Suburbs Statement 2030*<sup>4</sup> in relation to street and park trees:

*That funding be increased and [...] the focus would be on tree planting and replacement to maintain and increase cover by 30% of our suburbs by 2030, leveraging community responsibility, engagement and education to do so.*

*This is important because:*

*Canberra has a legacy as the 'Bush Capital';*

- *managing safety and risk in the community;*
- *improving and contributing to community health and wellbeing;*
- *protecting infrastructure and the natural environment; and*
- *protecting against climate change.*

The Watson community proposes that the ACT Government should return unused spaces to urban forests.

The community has provided support by fostering engagement with new and existing groups, such as Friends of Mt Majura and Landcare groups such as the Watson Woodlands Working Group.

All future developments should include dedicated public open spaces with playground facilities for both younger and older children consistent with that provided in other new suburbs. This is

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<sup>4</sup> *Better Suburbs Statement 2030*, page 5, [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/4215/3722/6646/Better\\_Suburbs\\_Statement\\_accessible\\_SEPTEMBER\\_2018.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/4215/3722/6646/Better_Suburbs_Statement_accessible_SEPTEMBER_2018.pdf)

particularly essential for any developments in North Watson, due to the younger demographics of its residents and the failure to provide enough local open space, parks and playgrounds in developments to date. From the lack of facilities in North Watson, it appears that the then Government may have expected, or experimented with, piggy-backing North Watson residential needs for amenities to be accommodated by the existing amenities in Old Watson and allocated in other Canberra suburbs built prior to 2000.

As Old Watson's demographic is changing with more and more young families moving in, and more expected with the densification along the light rail route, there's an even greater imperative to retain public green space in Old Watson for the use of all residents.

This Plan opposes any private sale of the remaining green space in Watson.

## **Recreation Amenities**

Whilst Watson has some parks with playground infrastructure, these have not been designed for teenagers, especially teenage girls. This aspect should be a consideration in the design of future public open space recreational amenities.

Only one very small public park has been provided within North Watson as it has been developed. Given the distance of many residents from the rest of the suburb, the need for parents of young children, and the elderly to be able to access very local facilities, and the growing size of this population, North Watson needs more local public parks and playground or recreation areas for children and young adolescents.

## **Environmentally Sensitive**

Both Justice Robert Hope Park (see page 14) and Mount Majura Nature Reserve (see page 14) are environmentally sensitive areas.

All major Development Applications for Watson, and critically the North Watson area, which have the potential to impact on Justice Robert Hope Park and Mount Majura Nature Reserve should include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressing any risks to the local flora and fauna.

## **Tree Protection and Nature Conservation**

The trees on Section 74 have significant cultural and natural values, being remnants from the ACT's grazing history, provide habitat and a wildlife corridor for many species of birds and connectivity to the trees of Solstice and adjacent Mount Majura Nature Reserve.

As Section 74 is not currently classified as built-up urban area, applications under the Tree Protection Act will need to wait until it has been rezoned. Applications for Tree Registration can then be made. Meanwhile, none should be removed as they provide crucial habitat and nesting sites.

## **Public Facilities**

### **Public Toilets**

There are no public toilet facilities in the vicinity of the suburb's hub – the shopping centre. Public toilets should be built in or near this existing shopping centre and should be a mandatory component of any additional retail space in Watson.

## Streetscape

### Pavements

Each street in Watson should have a pavement on at least one side.

### Bus Stops

Currently the bus stops on Aspinall Street are sited such that the bus must stop in the street, halting traffic whenever a bus stops for passengers. Bus stops should be reconstructed so that they are indented from the roadway enabling the bus to pull over without disrupting traffic flow.

## Employment

When the television stations have been removed there will be a reduction in the employment opportunities within Watson.

Alternate opportunities can be realised if Sections 74 and 76 retain their current zoning and are developed to provide recreational and amusement facilities, or aged care facilities.

## Non-Residential

Non-residential development should be limited to the provisions of the current Territory Plan.

## Development Suitability

### Section 13

Section 13 encompasses Canberra Technology Park (formerly Watson High School) and includes a large oval that is currently unimproved and under-utilized.

More appropriate is refurbishment and revitalisation, as the consultation material from the ACT Government flagged for the site during its 'consultation', a narrowly framed survey.

The process to sell Section 13 should be suspended until proper informed consultation is conducted, and a community response from residents provided as per the ACT Government's Better Suburbs statement, and this Plan.

### Sections 74 and 76 Paddocks

The open areas known as Sections 74 and 76 are zoned for, and are suitable for, development as public entertainment and/or recreation hubs because of their proximity to the Federal Highway.

Such development would restore to Watson the leisure hub it lost when the drive-in and Canberry Fair were closed. Previously these contained community gardens and recreation facilities for local families. In particular, the loss of community gardens has made it difficult for local residents at North Watson who may not have garden space and have difficulty accessing suitable alternative facilities due to distance.

## Canberra's Gateway

The City and Gateway Framework<sup>5</sup> released in December 2018 after public consultation, covers future development on the strip along Northbourne Avenue from the NSW border to the City. The main points in the Watson Community Association's submission are:

- Watson is very much a part of the Gateway;
- the corridor along the Gateway should provide a showcase for Canberra urban development for visitors to the Capital;
- a reduced 8.5 metre height limit for buildings fronting Northbourne Avenue in Watson;
- as more than half of Watson residents live over 2 kilometres from the Phillip Avenue light rail station, car parking and secure undercover bicycle parking are essential;
- in the approach route, more could be done with vegetation screening of existing built areas, as well as greenfield areas;
- extend the off-road cycle path along the Highway from Stirling to Antill Street within a treed environment to create a transition to the informal park boulevard;
- improve active transport links, especially to and from north Watson;
- improve walking and cycling connections for all ages and abilities to increase options for sustainable movement along the corridor;
- Watson is perfect for a Destination Park in Watson;
- enhance Canberra Technology Park as an educational institution to bring young people to the area near the shops, and have space for an outdoor park and gathering space;
- improve the link from Watson shops to north Watson to improve active travel—this route is heavily used but inadequate both in width and surface, non-contiguous, and unsigned;
- consider the whole of Watson as a unified precinct; and
- ensure community facilities do not fall behind population growth.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.yoursay.act.gov.au/city-and-gateway-draft-urban-design-framework](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/city-and-gateway-draft-urban-design-framework)



*Figure 1 Kangaroos in the mist; Justice Robert Hope Park*

## Watson - Now

### Location

Watson is a suburb in the Inner North of Canberra, the nation's capital, and is one of Canberra's older suburbs. Its name was formally gazetted in April 1960.

The residential component of the suburb is bound by the Federal Highway, Northbourne Avenue, Phillip Avenue and Antill Street. Ian Nicol Street creates an additional portion to the suburb jutting into the bushland north of Antill St.

As the first suburb encountered by people driving south along the Federal Highway into the ACT, Watson is the gateway to the nation's capital. It provides the first impression for travellers arriving into Canberra from the north.

### Character

Canberra is one of the nation's most liveable cities and within it, Watson is one of the most liveable suburbs. Residents consider themselves fortunate for many reasons—to name a few:

- Watson is located at the perimeter of inner-north Canberra, yet Watson remains a relatively affordable place to live for new home buyers;
- Watson is close to the centre of Canberra, and sits alongside the light rail tracks;
- It is a short distance to the mixed shopping centre and sports facilities at Dickson;
- The established part of Watson is criss-crossed by picturesque tree-lined nature corridors;
- Residents of Watson value:
  - their leafy outlook and wildlife, and especially the established street tree canopy of eucalyptus, oaks and Chinese elms;
  - the magnificent view and amenity of Mt Majura nature park to the east;
  - an environment of low crime, low traffic, low pollution and low noise;
  - their great schools and education facilities, local shops and businesses;
  - the friendly community, and access to nature trails and off leash dog walking area; and
  - a community-minded, egalitarian spirit.

The local community is determined not to erode the character of, or the quality of, life in Watson, and it is committed to maintaining the positive values already existing in the suburb.

Watson is a level suburb with an open and welcoming spirit. Residents embrace the community of the suburb as a whole—north, south, old, new. This does not happen by accident. It happens by good planning, community participation and thoughtful design.

As such the community preference is for planning and design that promotes communal spaces - parks, pathways facilities and green spaces that foster walking, active transport and engagement with community and neighbours.



The community will resist ad hoc piecemeal developments that erode the values set out in this Plan. Sub-standard housing design that compromises on sustainability criteria is not wanted, nor is the concept of fragmented sub-communities. The community will not favour slick visions of introspective faux-elite apartment blocks enclosing restricted green spaces and amenities.

## Heritage

### Demographics

Approximately two thirds of the suburb identify as families, making access to schools and amenities such as child-friendly parks, and recreational areas, as well as connected paths and cycleways highly favoured and most likely to be utilised by residents.

### 'Old' Watson v 'New' Watson

#### Physical Divide

Watson is geographically divided by Stirling Avenue and the Stirling Avenue Reserve Urban Open Space which runs from Antill Street in the east to Stirling Avenue in the western end of Watson. This contains an easement which provides for stormwater flows from Mount Majura and North Watson, contains high tension power lines, and contains survey markers used by surveyors for instrument calibration.

Designated as an off-leash dog walking area, a new pathway and seating has been completed in



*Figure 2 Upgraded walking trail*

2018, running from Stirling Avenue up to Antill Street. The area also includes a small wetland with minor public seating as well as some very swampy parts unsuitable for walking and other recreation. There is increasing traffic and conflicting use, with cyclists, walkers and dog walkers from throughout north Canberra using the area as well as occasional horse riders.

The area to the south of this easement was the first part of Watson to be developed. Sometimes referred to as 'Old Watson', this area is characterised by many single, standalone, traditional houses on larger blocks - generally 600 - 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>). It has extensive tree cover and includes some

public-use green-space. However, it also has a mix of medium and high-density residential development comparable to other Canberra suburbs of its vintage. For example, it has a high proportion of public housing along A'Beckett, Windeyer, Antill and Knox Streets, three-storeys in height; and private flats to three storeys along Knox, Irvine, and Antill Streets. The more southern part of the suburb includes townhouses; with semi-detached dwellings along A'Beckett St and Antill St. There has been considerable dual occupancy redevelopment and other redevelopment resulting in higher population density and adding to traffic and parking as well as other social infrastructure demands.

The area to the north of this easement, referred to colloquially as 'New Watson' or 'North Watson', has been built since about 2001. Previously it was low intensity broadacre development such as

caravan parks, a polocrosse park and a Drive In. This area is characterised by higher density development that includes town houses, apartments (up to three levels) and single, standalone houses on smaller blocks (about 500m<sup>2</sup>). The area between Antill Street and Roma Mitchell Crescent is predominately standalone houses, while the area to the north of Antill Street is exclusively medium density with apartment complexes with a building height of up to three storeys.

This document uses the terms 'Old Watson' and 'North Watson' where differentiation is required. The suburb in whole is referred to as 'Watson'.

## Planning and Development Strategies

The different planning history and the physical divide means that different development and growth strategies should be applied to different areas within the suburb of Watson. The rationale for this is explained in more detail at Why Separate Strategies? on page 21.

## Growth

### Historical

The 2016 census reported that there were 5,862 residents of Watson at the time of the census<sup>6</sup>. This number included 1,286 children (age under years) which represented 22% of the population.

The 2011 Census recorded 5,121 people in Watson. These figures show an annual population increase of 3% year-on-year over the period from 2011 to 2016.

Watson grew by 1,785 people, or nearly 44 percent, between 2001 and 2016.

## Land Use

### Residential

The residential components of the suburb of Watson are as described under 'Old' Watson v 'New' Watson on page 11.

### Non-Residential

Watson has a single retail commercial centre with a supermarket, post office outlet, pharmacy, hairdresser and restaurants and cafes (known as Watson Shops). A doctors' surgery is opposite. Parking is limited. This shopping centre services more than just Watson – it is the only shopping centre between the ACT and Sutton and is used by people who work in the ACT and commute to and from such places as Gundaroo and Sutton.

When North Watson was developed for residential, further retail space was planned, including in the north area of Watson.

The site of the old Watson High School is currently leased to the Canberra Band, and the owner of Canberra Technology Park, who leases space to various community organisations and businesses. It includes technology-oriented businesses.

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[http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/SSC80127?opendocument](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/SSC80127?opendocument)

The Watson Arts Centre, established in 1975, contains a gallery which focuses on ceramics and is home to the Canberra Potters' Society. The Watson Arts Centre also annually hosts the 'Bald Archies' painting exhibition.

Three motels and a service station are also located in Watson. Two television stations have premises in Watson, but one is proposed for demolition in 2019.

### Open Spaces

Old Watson, like other Inner North Canberra suburbs is characterised by public parks and open spaces associated with the schools. Some of the public parks have facilities for children to play; swings, climbing frames, etc. These are increasing dated and out of keeping with current standards for newer suburbs. The level of availability of such facilities, standard in all Canberra suburbs built prior to 2000, was not maintained in North Watson.

Given the number of families now living in North Watson this omission was inappropriate, as highlighted by respondents to the Watson Survey as something that should be addressed as part of future planning.

The Urban Open Space area between Antill Street and Stirling Avenue is designated as an 'off-leash' area for dogs and is popular with dog owners. However, increasing traffic is causing noise and disturbance to local residents as well as growing conflict in use and impinging on amenity of adjoining residents.

It is also used as a walking trail leading into the Mount Majura Nature Reserve and is sometimes used by riders on horseback.

Watson is also the home to Justice Robert Hope Park described on page 14.

### Social Amenities

Majura Scout Group is based in Watson, and their small meeting hall is adjacent to the Majura Primary School.

There is a small public hall, which provides standing room for no more than 100 people, in Tay Street, in the northern-most part of the suburb. A suitable public hall was promised over a decade ago, but the one in Tay Street is unsuitable, as it operates under a private body corporate management arrangement. The school hall used to be available as did the scout hall but insurance was a difficulty. There is no other accessible public meeting place in the suburb.

### Amusement/Entertainment

Watson was the home of the Starlight Drive-in theatre, Canberra Heritage Village and the Canberry Fair amusement park. These were in the northern most part of the suburb. These amenities have been removed and no similar amenity has been provided. The current zoning of Sections 74 and 76 would permit such an amenity, or a more modern equivalent, to be constructed.

### Facilities

#### Public Toilets

There are no public toilets in or near the shopping centre, or indeed anywhere in Watson. This is unacceptable and especially difficult for those with young children, or the elderly.

## Employment

The retail shopping centre, the three motels, service station and the television stations provide employment opportunities within Watson.

The Canberra Technology Park, Majura and Rosary primary schools and the Australian Catholic University provide specialised employment opportunities.

A number of small businesses operate from home in Watson.

## Building Design and Height

The part of Watson to the south of Aspinall Street is characterised by predominately single-storey, single-dwelling residences per block. There is a small number of two-storey dwellings in this area.

The area to the north of Aspinall Street has been developed with predominately two- to three-storey multi-residence buildings; either townhouse style or apartments.

## Vulnerable Ecosystems

### Mount Majura Nature Reserve

The Watson residential area abuts the Mount Majura Nature Reserve. This is a significant social and environmental reserve.

The ACT and region was, is, and always will be, part of the traditional home of the Ngunnawal Aboriginal people. Mount Majura is an important Aboriginal cultural place in the ACT with up to 12 known Aboriginal heritage sites of cultural and archaeological significance.

Mount Majura is home to many threatened species of plants and animals, especially regionally declining woodland birds. It is the only known ACT nesting area of the vulnerable Glossy Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*). Several threatened or declining nomadic or migratory woodland birds are regular visitors including Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) and Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*). The rare and vulnerable Rosenberg's Monitor (*Varanus rosenbergi*) is sometimes seen wandering through the diverse understorey. The reserve supports a high plant diversity including rare plants such as the Canberra Spider Orchid (*Arachnorchis actensis*) and Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans*). Historic 1920 Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) plantings are found near the summit.<sup>7</sup>

### Justice Robert Hope Park

Justice Robert Hope Park, part of Canberra Nature Park, is an 18 hectare low lying grassy woodland located in north-east Canberra, and adjacent to Mount Majura Nature Reserve. This too is a significant social and environmental reserve, and it is important that connectivity across Antill Street is maintained and enhanced.

The reserve includes critically endangered Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland dominated by large old, prolific trees which provide seasonal nectar and valuable foraging habitat for canopy-dwelling birds and arboreal fauna. Trees include hollows suitable for nesting birds.

This area is sometime referred to as 'Watson Woodlands'.

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.environment.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/parks-and-reserves/find-a-park/canberra-nature-park/mount-majura-nature-reserve>

## Transport and Movement

### Public Transport

#### Bus

Watson is currently served by Transport Canberra bus route 39 which connects Watson to Civic via Dickson. This bus is also used by Watson students attending Lyneham High School, which adds to the congestion on this bus, especially during morning peak periods.

The current route 39 will be replaced by new route 50 and Rapid route 9 in 2019 as described in Proposed New Bus Routes on page 24. It seems this reduces public transport access for some parts of Watson.

#### Light Rail

The light rail network is adjacent to the south-western corner of Watson (Northbourne Avenue between Phillip Avenue and Flemington Road). The relevant Watson stop is located at the corner of Phillip and Northbourne Avenues, at one extremity of Watson, and thus is not a practical option for most Watson residents.

Travel to Civic was formerly available on bus route 39 but will be replaced by bus route 50 to Dickson with transfer to light rail for the balance of the journey. Light rail could be more attractive if secure cycle storage was available at the Phillip Avenue stop. Commuters heading to Gungahlin may be more likely to use light rail, especially if the park-and-ride facility opposite EPIC is retained.

The 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census on Population and Housing reports that less than ten percent (10%) of residents travelled to work by bus (refer to Table 4 Method of travel to/from work on page 56).

This census also reports that Watson residences have three motor vehicles for every two residences (refer to Table 2 Statistics from ABS QuickStats Census Data on page 54).

From this data the light rail system may not be an attractive travel option for Watson residents.

### Road Access

Access to Watson from the south is primarily along Northbourne Avenue and Antill Street from Dickson, or Northbourne Avenue and Phillip Avenue. Knox Street, which becomes Aspinall Street after Stirling Avenue, branches from Antill Street in the south-western part of Watson. Antill Street loops around Watson to reconnect with Aspinall Street in the north of the suburb.

Antill Street is used as the primary feeder to the Federal Highway to minimise traffic congestion on Northbourne Avenue during special events such as SummerNats. Antill Street, Aspinall Street and Knox Street are single lane each way. There is limited scope for widening.

#### Cycling

Whilst some streets have indicative cycle lanes, there are few off-road cycle paths. Cyclists must use the main roadway.

The ACT Government espouses a policy of prioritising active travel in the order of: walking first, cycling next, and then public transport. It is important that light rail stations have adequate bike storage facilities to enable cyclists to use the light rail and ride to and from the stations.

## Parking

### Watson Shops

Limited parking is available at the Watson shops, but it is inadequate. The area has not increased since the shops were developed and is proving inadequate to meet the needs of the shopping centre.

Given that many users of this parking area are using it to shop, it would alleviate congestion if many of the parking spots had a shorter time limit.

### Watson Community Centre

The Community Centre in Tay Street has minimal parking. Adequate parking should be available at all community facilities, such as a community centre, scout hall, etc.

## Education

Watson has one public primary school and one private primary school. Watson High School was closed over 15 years ago. The ACT Government does not plan to restore it to a high school, or to replace it, at this stage. High school students travel to Campbell or Lyneham. Some students also travel to a private school at Hackett or in other suburbs.

The changing demographic in Old Watson has seen increasing calls for the High School to re-open to cater for the children currently at Majura and other primary schools in the locale.

This Plan strongly recommends that the ACT Government seriously consider renovating and re-opening the school and consult directly with the community prior to any repurposing of the site.

The site is currently being used as a Technology Park, with non-industrial businesses and former playing fields providing a large open space.

## Public

### Kindergarten/Preschool

#### Majura

The Majura Primary School includes a preschool and kindergarten component located separately along Knox Street. Previously a mother baby clinic operated but this is now located at Dickson.

### Primary

#### Majura

Enrolments at Majura Primary School have grown at just over 12 percent over the past three (3) years. At this rate it will be over capacity by 2020 (Refer to Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools 57 on page 57). ACT Government consultants Elton supported this assessment (Feb 2018), and commented that adjacent primary schools are 'full to bursting'.

### Safety Concerns

Both the schools front Knox Street. The primary school encourages students to either ride bikes to school (there is a secure lock-up for bikes) or to walk. There is a concern that increased enrolment and increased traffic resulting from additional development will increase safety concerns for students, especially students at the preschool and kindergarten.

Knox Street is a narrow street, with limited bike lanes. Increased traffic poses even greater safety issues for school children. It also reduces parents' willingness for children to walk to school.

#### Secondary<sup>8</sup>

There are only two public high schools for the whole of the Inner North, including Old and New Watson: Lyneham High and Campbell High. Anecdotally most Watson high school students attend Lyneham High.

Lyneham High School is currently over-capacity (refer to Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools on page 57). There are no known publicly available plans as to how this over-capacity will be addressed.

Campbell High School reserves spaces for children of service people and overseas diplomatic residents, which limits enrolment availability for Watson children. It too is approaching capacity, with a reported 83 percent of its 719 available places occupied in 2018. A significant residential development is commencing adjacent to the school grounds in 2019 and this will create additional enrolments at Campbell High.

#### College

Dickson College is the designated college for Watson. It has a nominal capacity of 1,114 students and reportedly has 833 students in 2018 (Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools on page 57 on page 57).

Dickson College also takes students from other suburbs; e.g. Ainslie, Dickson, Lyneham, O'Connor.

#### Private

##### Rosary Primary School

Enrolments at Rosary Primary School, which is in the Catholic Education System, have remained relatively static at around 300 students.

##### Australian Catholic University (ACU)

The Canberra Campus (Signadou) has more than 1,000 students, including over 30 international students.<sup>9</sup> Its expansion in recent years has led to some overflow parking and traffic issues affecting the Antill St green spaces in the vicinity.

##### Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE)

The Academy of Interactive Entertainment is an Australian video games and computer animation school. Founded in 1996, it was one of the world's first institutions to offer qualifications in these industries. The AIE provides courses covering CGI, animation, video game asset creation and games programming

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/act/the-canberra-schools-bursting-at-seams-and-those-less-than-half-full-20180521-p4zgjd.html>

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.acu.edu.au/about\\_acu/campuses/canberra](http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/campuses/canberra)



## Watson - Development Challenges

The ACT Government's push for inner city infill and high-density accommodation is placing the suburb under more and more pressure from developers, and the selling of existing but much needed green space.

As a suburb that has almost doubled in size in recent years and already has higher than average population relative to other inner North suburbs, Watson residents have been impacted by increased ad hoc development. These impacts include poor traffic flow and congestion, lack of well-planned and connected active transport options, public facilities and recreational space as well as pollution, heat, noise; and major changes to the character of the suburb, particularly with the erosion of public green space.

These impacts are coupled with the densification taking place along the light rail corridor and will bring major changes to the suburb. Any population increase via additional accommodation developments requires careful and informed planning.

The popularity of Watson and its desirability from the real-estate perspective largely comes from the existing amenity and sense of community, and the affordability of Watson for potential buyers.

## Residential

### Density

#### Old Watson

Old Watson has developed since the early 1960s to become a living symbol of the "bush capital" concept that characterised Canberra's early development. This character is clearly demonstrated in the figure below, which has been extracted from Google Earth™.

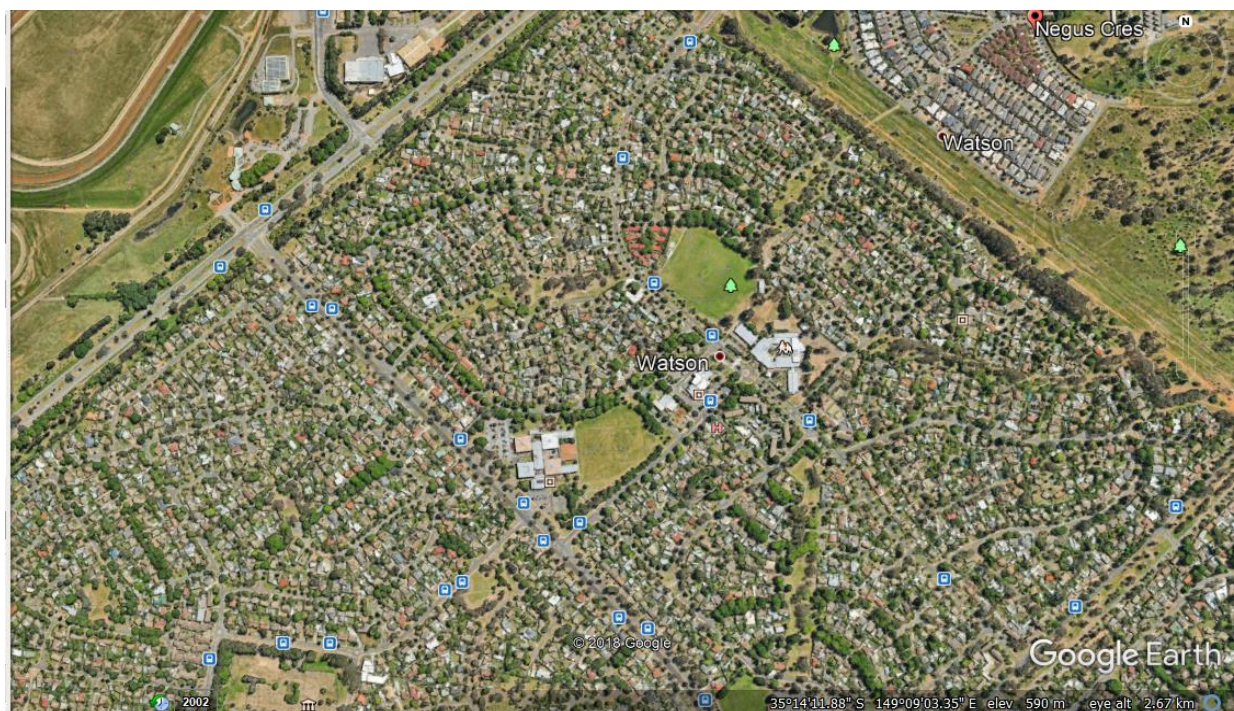
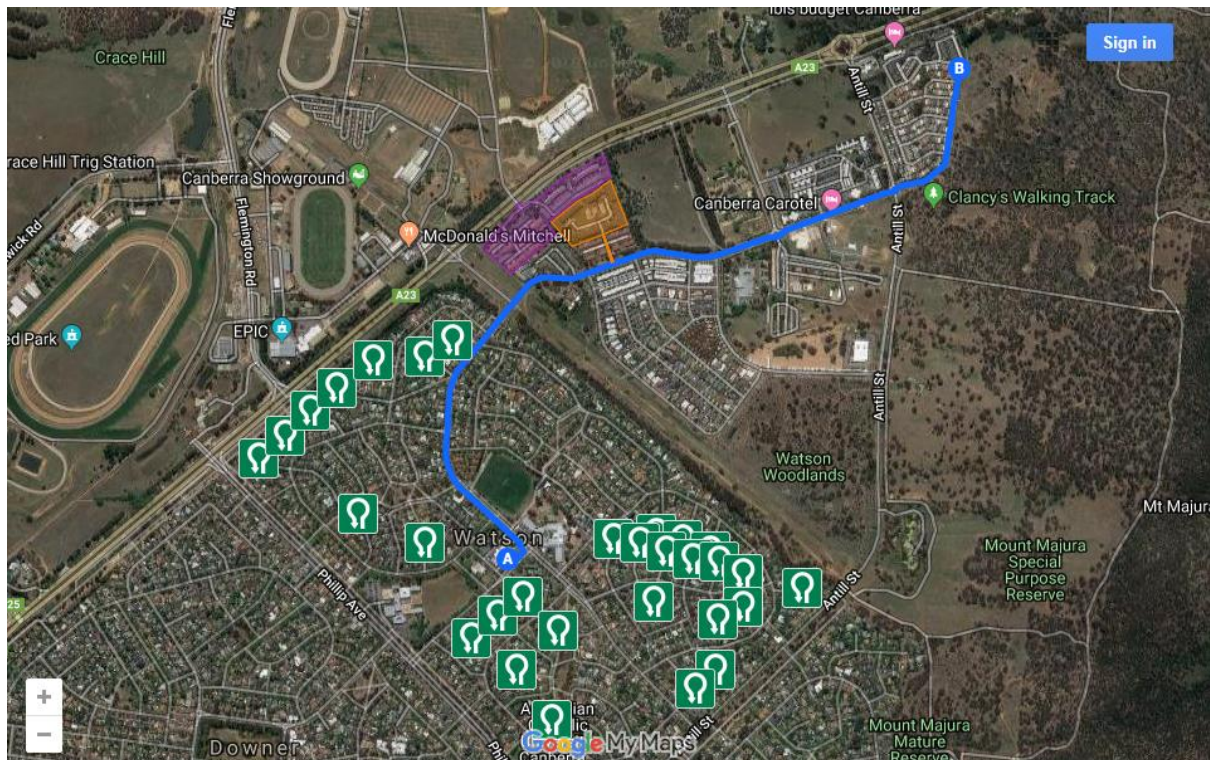


Figure 3 Old Watson from the air



Figure 4 Morphology of Old Watson below illustrates some outstanding features of the morphology of Old Watson:

- The central heart of the suburb is walking distance (less than 800 metres) from most of residents in Old Watson.
- Four finger parks interlace the area enabling walking and cycling access to the heart of the suburb.
- Established treelined corridors surround the perimeter of the suburb.
- Thirty-two short cul-de-sacs provide privacy within micro-neighbourhoods. See Figure 4 Morphology of Old Watson below.



*Figure 4 Morphology of Old Watson*

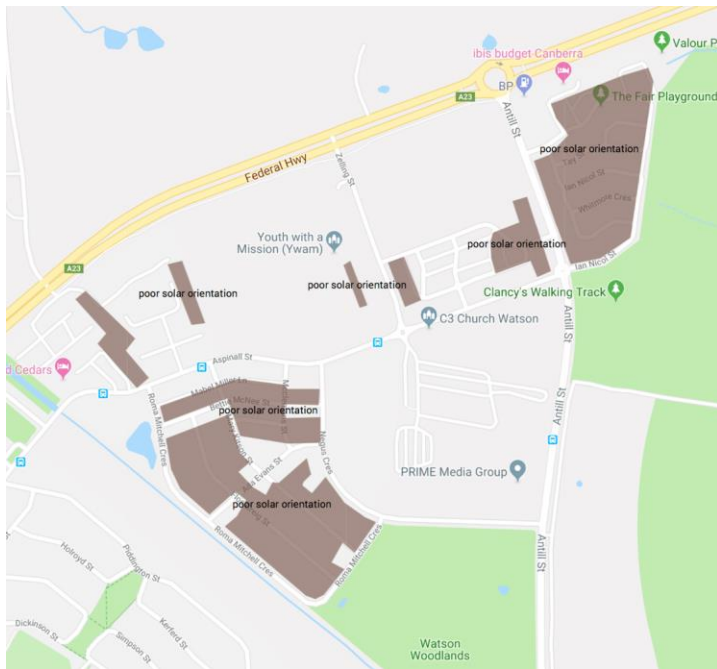
However, inappropriate and short-sighted 'infill' development has deprived North Watson of many of the brilliant design features of Old Watson. For example, the roof-to-roof housing in the new miniature blocks in the northeast have scant tree canopy and poor solar orientation. These houses will suffer heat island effects as climate change raises summer temperatures.

Due to myopic configuration of streets and housing, the shaded areas in Figure 5 Poor solar orientation on page 20 on page 20 highlight areas where dwellings have poor solar orientation, which will result in higher power bills for the long-term future.

It is an imperative that the current characteristics of Old Watson be maintained.

Further development would be at the expense of existing single dwellings, or by the rezoning of current open space. Any such new developments, or redevelopment, should align with the existing characteristics of Old Watson. This would require that any new developments within Old Watson

should be retained at low-density. Dual occupancy, whether as separate buildings or contained within the one building, should be strictly limited. An indicative limit would be 10% of blocks.



It is proposed that any changes to this existing ratio be determined by consultation with the ACT Government so that some additional capacity can be provided in Old Watson without changing the inherent character of that area.

Open public green spaces are to be retained to provide recreational public space, necessary for physical and mental health, particularly needed now to offset the densification coming to the suburb along the light rail route.

Reduction of block sizes, either directly or by consolidation, should not be permitted.

Figure 5 Poor solar orientation

## North Watson

North Watson has been developed along completely different lines to Old Watson, in line with successive ACT government's policy of cost saving on social infrastructure through 'urban infill' and catering to demand for higher density living. The density is thus deliberately greater, and the designated local public open space is minimal.

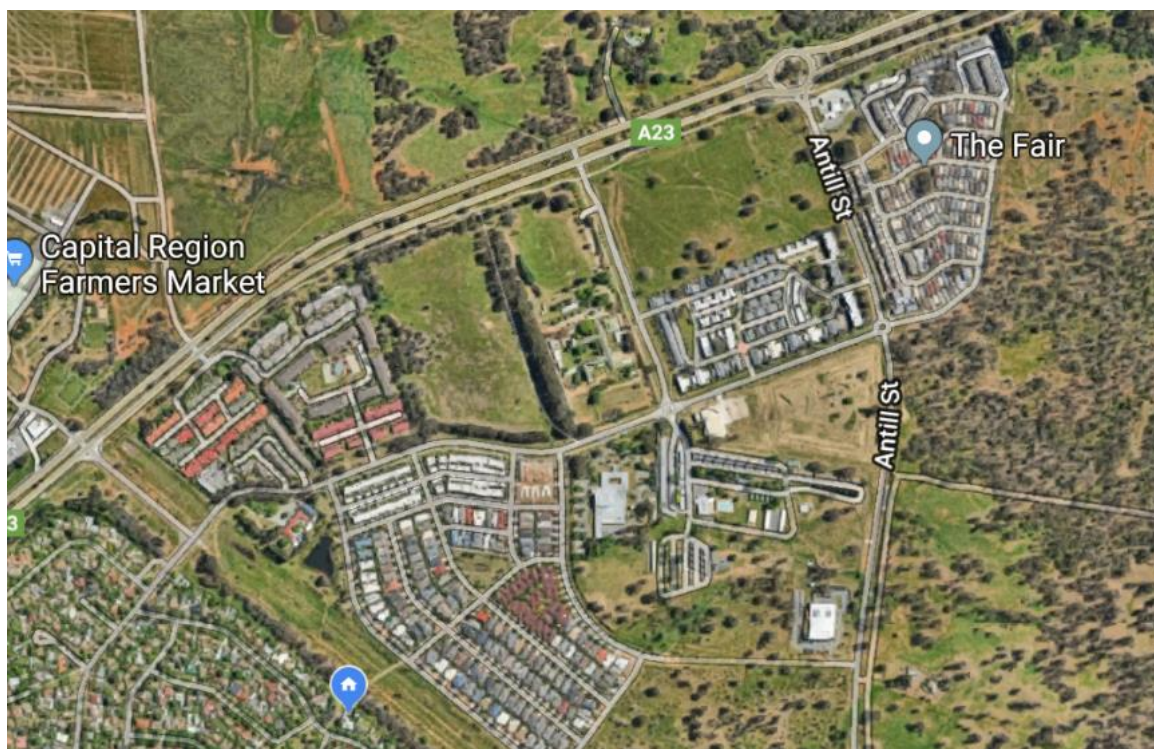


Figure 6 North Watson from the air



Figure 6 North Watson from the air on page 20 shows North Watson; the visual difference between Old Watson and North Watson is striking.

Block sizes for single dwellings in North Watson are considerably smaller than those in Old Watson, ranging from about 600m<sup>2</sup> down to about 400m<sup>2</sup> or even less in some instances. North Watson also has a larger proportion of multi-residence buildings.

It is estimated<sup>10</sup> that the number of standalone residences would be about the same as the number residences in multi-storey and multi-residence buildings.

As more open space is redeveloped for housing, this ratio should be maintained.

### **Why Separate Strategies?**

The above visuals clearly show that there are vastly different environmental characteristics between Old Watson and North Watson, based on specific planning objectives for North Watson urban infill of saving on social infrastructure costs, and responding to reported consumer demand for higher density living. The different characteristics can be summed up as:

#### **➤ Density**

- Old Watson is predominantly housing constructed with a mix of high and low density that is the norm for suburbs built in Canberra until the 1990s. Commonly this is one single-storey dwelling per block;
- North Watson is split between medium density apartments and town houses of two or three stories and low density with single-storey dwellings per block;
  - This split is approximately 60:40 medium density to low density by area.

#### **➤ Block Sizes**

- Old Watson blocks are generally between 600 - 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>;
- North Watson blocks for single dwellings are less than 600 m<sup>2</sup> with the majority being less than 500 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **➤ Street Scape**

- Old Watson is characterised by tree-lined streets with wide street frontages providing safe and comfortable pedestrian movement;
- North Watson is characterised by streets with access driveways for unit complexes and trees limited to those few streets with single-block residences.

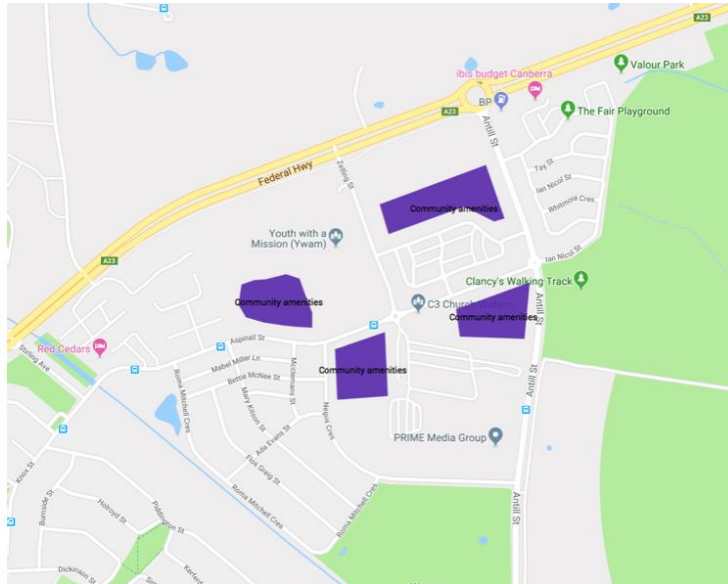
### **Diversity**

Watson currently has a favourable level of diversity within its boundaries. It has significant educational and cultural institutions and a local shopping centre, with a suitably-sized supermarket.

Housing is mixed, ranging from single-level houses on larger blocks through to two- and three-storey apartments.

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<sup>10</sup> No empirical data has been sighted.



*Figure 7 Existing amenity space in Watson*

To reduce traffic congestion, the rapidly growing population of North Watson will need nearby community amenities that they can access by foot, pram or bicycle. Figure 7 Existing amenity space in Watson above shows centrally positioned vacant areas where amenities could be built for the benefit of local community.

### Speculative Development

The Old Watson High Oval on Block 1 Section 13 has been the subject of an unsolicited development proposal, which drew the area to the ACT Government's attention to consider its future use and possible sale to a private developer. The ACT Government committed to residents during the 1990s that this would stay in its existing community use.

As it appears that the ACT Government considers North Watson's need for green space to be catered for outside the area, it is particularly important to retain existing open space in the wider Watson area. As well as considering the site for refurbishment and reopening as a High School, it could be revitalised, as promised in consultation material from the ACT Government, for public use, e.g. as community gardens with a children's playground nearby, so children can play while mum and dad garden.

Such might also be welcomed on sites such as next to Starlight at North Watson, as density in this area is high and access to private gardens such as for vegetable growing much less.

Any development should be limited to the footprint of the existing building to preserve the green space.

There has been no need shown for any student accommodation by AIE, and with campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, as well as an on-line campus, it is highly unlikely to expand a campus in Canberra.

Anecdotally, the Australian Catholic University will use some accommodation. The ACU, as detailed at Australian Catholic University (ACU) on page 17, has only 30 interstate students, which does not support a claim for accommodation for 400, as a prospective developer has proposed.

It does not have any specialised accommodation suitable for an aging population, and the general move to multi-storey residences is a restrictive factor for elderly citizens, who, because of their age, have less mobility.

Old Watson has a suitable availability of public open spaces, but this level of availability has not been carried through to North Watson.

The citizens of Watson believe that the egalitarian ethos of our community should not be undermined by new precincts with privileged restricted access to amenities. Facilities with restricted access, e.g. for specific building or complex residents only, should be ruled out. To be deemed “open space” an area must be accessible to all, without restriction.

Very little open space with recreational amenity is currently provided in North Watson. An area of around four thousand square metres (4,000m<sup>2</sup>) of land should be set aside from either Section 74 or Section 76 (or a parcel from each) for recreational open space. This open space must have unrestricted public access.

## Transport Consolidation

A consolidated traffic management plan considering all planned and proposed developments is an imperative. The main Watson arteries of Antill Street and Aspinall and Knox Streets are not wide streets. Widening (where this is possible) would reduce tree cover and amenity of the suburb. This is particularly because many from Downer, Hackett and other suburbs access Watson for childcare, schools and shops, due to the historical closure or reduced local access to such facilities in their own suburb.

Note that both these arteries will be impacted by developments in neighbouring suburbs of Hackett, Ainslie, Lyneham, O'Connor and Dickson.

Data in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (Table 4 Method of travel to/from work on page 56 on page 56) details how Watson residents travel to and from work. Overwhelmingly, the preferred method of travel for residents aged 15 years and over is car.

Although the suburb is served by bus routes, predominately No 39, in 2016 this option was used by less than one tenth of residents. This suggests that the development of higher density dwellings in North Watson is likely to be accompanied by an increase in the number of vehicles using the suburbs roads, and a concurrent increase in traffic congestion, pollution, and noise; and road safety challenges.

While the introduction of the light rail will have some impact on transport decisions, most of the population growth in the suburb will be in North Watson, which is farthest from the light rail stop making light rail use impractical for the majority of residents. The alternative being proposed by the ACT Government would require residents to utilise bike or bus for the first part of their journey to get to a suitable light rail stop (most likely Phillip Avenue or Dickson) to complete the remainder of their journey by rail. This would add extra travel time and complication and given lack of uptake of existing bus services seems unlikely. Many school children attending local schools are dropped to school by car – particularly in wet or colder weather – and this also needs to be taken into consideration as part of travel preferences.

The ACT Government's Bike and Ride Map<sup>11</sup> indicates that the light rail stops at Phillip Ave/Northbourne Ave and at Northbourne Ave/Antill St will have bike rails. Also, each light rail will have space to carry four bicycles.

However there appears to be no parking space at the Phillip Ave/Northbourne Ave light rail stop for people to leave their car and take the light rail. This will cause additional problems of public parking

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<sup>11</sup> [www.transport.act.gov.au/about-us/public-transport-options/bike-and-ride](http://www.transport.act.gov.au/about-us/public-transport-options/bike-and-ride)

adversely affecting amenity for Watson residents along federal highway who already experience problems of overflow parking from EPIC events.

Finally, the WCA has previously raised the issue of poor active and public transport links from North Watson to the rest of the suburb. A case in point is the lack of direct path for residents of say, Phillipa Weeks Street, who need to walk around the entire development to access the bus stop on Aspinall Street. The present trend of ad hoc housing developments that are developed in isolation and not integrated by planned travel routes for the suburb, mean current pathways are disjointed and inadequate, forcing greater reliance on the car.

While mixed modes of transport for the daily commute are more common in large cities, given the preference for the convenience of the car shown by Canberra residents, this may be a longer-term social shift, meaning that increased congestion and reduced safety is likely for Watson's main road arteries as the suburb grows.

### Proposed New Bus Routes



Figure 8 Proposed Bus Route R9

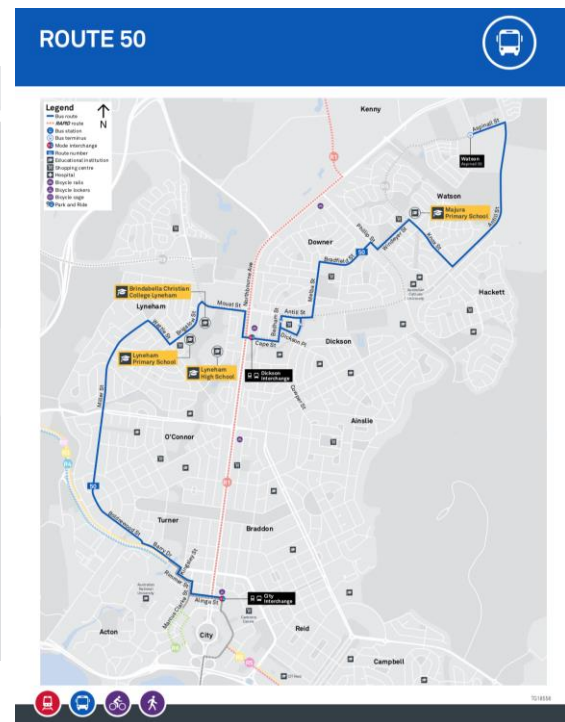


Figure 9 Proposed Bus Route 50

In early 2019, the number 39 bus will be replaced by the new route 50 which unfortunately will take a more circuitous route to the city, adding travel time for existing public transport users.

Also, a new Rapid route R9 bus will rush through the narrow suburban streets of Watson and continue to Belconnen.

Consequently, the Route 50 and rapid R9 bus routes converge at Windeyer Street. This is already a traffic choke point when parents are dropping off children to school / day care and during peak shopping times.

Parking at the Watson shops is currently saturated at these times. The addition of several thousand more residents presents serious problems for traffic flow, safety and convenience.



A solution to divert the burgeoning pressure on this zone, would be to build shops, educational and child care facilities in North Watson.

The impact of these changes on uptake of public transport options for the suburb and Canberra remains to be seen and may result in some commuters (who have the option) to travel by car.

The WCA believes greater consultation with the public regarding travel and public transport links is essential if the public transport network is to function as a genuine alternative to car use for all residents.

## Education

The schools servicing Watson are close to, or at, full capacity (Lyneham High School is already over-capacity). Future enrolment projections should take into consideration the potential population increase due to planned and proposed developments and a permanent solution be determined, as a priority.

These projections are at Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools on page 57 on page 57

## Infrastructure

### Water and Sewerage

This document assumes that ActewAGL and Icon Water can provide adequate services to any proposed increase in density in Watson; if not, the provision of any necessary additional capacity should be at the expense of the relevant developer, not existing customers.

### Telecommunications

From time to time Telstra has had difficulty in providing landline services and effective mobile services as North Watson has been developed. North Watson was developed with inground fibre rather than copper, and properties were directly connected to the NBN via Fibre to the Premises (FttP). At this point it is not known if newly constructed premises can be connected to the NBN via FttP, or if they will be connected using some other method, such as Fibre to the Node (FttN). FttN does not provide the same download speeds as FttP.

## Conclusion

### Intrinsic Values for Enhancing Liveability in Watson

#### Urban Infill

The Watson Community Association are not anti-development nor against urban infill per se. However, we firmly believe that urban infill must respect the existing community values and character of Watson, and the investments of residents in home and community. It needs to be people-friendly, respect local visual character and focussed on building community, through active travel, green spaces, community and recreational facilities and mixed housing responding to the demographics amongst residents. Infill directed at addressing demand for higher density housing should be motivated by planning for what people want, not what saves the government money.

The answer to urban infill is not lower present and future housing standards - cheap badly oriented shoe-boxes and incongruous high-rise buildings inconsistent with the existing design and environment, and which block solar access in the surrounding neighbourhood. Urban developments should create common spaces, have greenery and be visually interesting. Rather than an ad hoc collection of developments, they should also be an expression of the above stated broader vision and linked by common elements of design.

Planning and design should incorporate the latest in urban design to protect human physical and mental health as well as the environment. It must acknowledge and explore the latest research into climate change and use urban design features that reduce projected expected impacts of climate change.

#### Protection of Green Space

With planned increase in population of 2,500 or more, the residents of Watson insist on protecting our urban green spaces because it is vital to our health and quality of life. Research shows that children and adults need ready access to green space for play for their healthy development. A lack of accessible open green space also encourages a lack of physical activity and is linked to a range of negative physical and mental health problems.

Green spaces ensure our suburbs stay cool in the face of climate change. The CSIRO's [Mapping Surface Urban Heat in Canberra Report](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6415/1976/9241/CSIRO_Mapping_Surface_Urban_Heat_In_Canberra.pdf) (December 2017)<sup>12</sup> revealed the imminent problem of 'urban heat island effect' exemplified by the planning disaster of Bonner with high density housing, large expanses of roofing and little tree cover. A report in May 2018 linked 79 deaths in Montreal to a "unique environmental problem: a heat island effect from loss of green space combined with population densification" (CEO of the Quebec State Health Authority).

It is essential for optimal health of our suburb and city, providing natural filtration of air-pollutants, as well as essential re-oxygenation of the air.

#### Transport Options

The residents of Watson believe that any new developments provide particular opportunity and must give high priority to creating active transport options including strategically located footpaths and cycle paths. Our Plan needs to encourage people to walk and run, cycle and skate, throughout

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<sup>12</sup> [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6415/1976/9241/CSIRO\\_Mapping\\_Surface\\_Urban\\_Heat\\_In\\_Canberra.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6415/1976/9241/CSIRO_Mapping_Surface_Urban_Heat_In_Canberra.pdf)

our suburb. Active transport links not only facilitate and promote an active lifestyle but the interaction of residents and the opportunity for connection and contribution to the local environment and community. Equally traffic flow, volume and movements through the suburb need to be considered and planned for to meet needs of future development.

## Conservation

Through retaining old growth trees providing important nesting habitats, and via pleasant and appropriately planted green corridors and planned pathways, habitat can be created to attract local birds and wildlife, and providing places for residents to gather, exercise and play. A beautiful urban environment has been shown to reduce crime and inspire care and pride within the community. Conservation approaches also position Watson as part of the welcoming Gateway to Canberra and reflects our location on the edge of Watson Woodlands and the Mount Majura Nature Reserve which is the home to rare and threatened plants and animals and is under heavy pressure to provide recreational facilities to Watson as well as surrounding suburbs, and wider Canberra.

## Consolidating a Living Infrastructure Plan

Rather than separate needs, transport, green space, wildlife habitat, residential and community facilities should be developed and addressed in tandem so that the values are reflected and reinforced across the suburb, not just in a few lucky streets, or token up-market enclaves. For this to take place we need a holistic living infrastructure plan!

To quote the ACT Government's [\*Canberra's Living Infrastructure Information Paper\*](#), February 2018<sup>13</sup>:

*Natural systems and processes can be harnessed to protect communities against excessive heat or flooding. They can improve air, soil and water quality, as well as increase public amenity. When natural elements and features such as wetlands, the urban forest and green refuges are incorporated into the design and operation of cities, this is called 'living infrastructure' [...] This approach compels a strategic and holistic approach to the planning, design, construction, maintenance and renewal of our communities.*

*Canberra's original "garden city principles" incorporated living infrastructure in its planning and design. As Canberra grows and evolves to become a compact city with more intensively developed urban areas, the importance of incorporating living infrastructure into the city's form and function increases. Importantly, living infrastructure will play a key role as the city adapts to the impacts of climate change.*

Developing and implementing a living infrastructure plan will enable and support the Government's strategic priorities. The anticipated beneficial outcomes include enhancing liveability and social inclusion; enabling appropriate redevelopment and active living; protecting property values; improving natural resource management and preserving some urban biodiversity.

What we seek is not just to preserve but to **enhance the quality of life** in our suburb. We believe the ACT Government—through authentic co-design with residents—should deliver this including through implementing the principles of a *Living Infrastructure Plan* as set out in its own planning process. This approach could well be described as 'liveability'. An approach which would include provision for genuine ecological sustainability rather than a developer's 'green wash' facade. While

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<sup>13</sup> [Canberra's Living Infrastructure Information Paper, February 2018](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf)  
[www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf)

developers need to draw a return on their investment this needs to be balanced with a range of values and needs that serve the community into the future. Bad planning and poor design has an impact for many years to come, and notably investors rarely live in the poorly designed developments they create.

## Diversity

Watson's future urban development will cater for a diverse community of all ages and walks of life. Watson is not a homogenous dormitory suburb, a retirement precinct, or peripheral light rail catchment hub. We want neither gated communities nor ghettos. We are an open vibrant community who actively seek to contribute to the life of our neighbours, the suburb and Canberra at large.

Our bush capital is greatly loved by existing residents and is what has drawn many new people to living in the ACT, and Watson in particular. Watson's character reflects the investments of many people, past and present, who have built its valued sense of community.

We believe that Canberra's evolution into a modern, world-class compact and sustainable city and the vision of a bush capital should not be mutually exclusive. Our leafy tree-lined streets, bird life and bush, alongside vibrant neighbourhoods, cool cafes, and well-planned city and suburbs, make us a unique place for visitors from across Australia and around the world.

## Desired Elements for Sustainable Growth

Against this background, we propose that all strategic planning for the future of Watson ensures the following design elements as identified through our recent local consultations and conversations:

- Planning and Design for Community Orientation:
  - spacious community facilities;
  - a variety of community owned recreational facilities;
  - intergenerational places;
  - adequate and accessible child care and schools;
  - availability of public toilets near recreational areas;
  - community gardens;
  - permeable thoroughfare through housing blocks, rather than private enclaves.
- Design for Social Orientation:
  - design to facilitate interaction among neighbours;
  - mixed housing reflecting long term local needs;
  - integrated social and cooperative housing;
  - affordable, quality housing;
  - equitable access and proximity to shops, cafes, doctors, chemists, and social infrastructure;

- innovative uses and activities, such as pop-ups, micro-businesses and festivals for social wellbeing and community cohesion.
- Design to Retain Existing Character:
  - profile of Watson as it is now should be maintained into the future;
  - ratio of medium density to low density be maintained;
  - Watson's heritage as a recreational suburb be reinstated.
- Design for Conservation:
  - conservation corridors;
  - all major Development Applications to include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressing any potential impact of development on Justice Robert Hope Park and Mount Majura Nature Reserve, and Old Watson High School Oval section 13;
  - full protection for existing nature reserves.
- Design for Visual Impact:
  - Federal Highway frontage be tree-lined to provide a visual welcome to Canberra. It should be lined with a visually pleasing solid structure suitable to reduce noise (trees do not block noise);
  - streetscaping (e.g. as planned for Ginninderry)<sup>14</sup>;
  - connected patchworks of well-maintained green spaces;
  - mandatory ratios of locally accessible green space in all residential plots;
  - appropriate native species of trees, shrubs and plants.
- Design for Accessibility and Safety:
  - networked pathways for active travel and safe access;
  - intelligently planned traffic routes for safety and noise minimisation;
  - regular public transport.
- Design for Energy Efficiency:
  - mandatory solar orientation;
  - energy efficient housing design;
  - carbon neutral buildings;
  - no over-shadowing of solar collectors;
  - low rise buildings in keeping with scale of existing housing;
  - clarity about where the new height limits apply.

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<sup>14</sup> Ginninderry, Creating the fabric of streets through patterns, <https://ginninderry.com/creating-fabric-streets-patterns/>

## Genuine Participatory Strategic Planning

We call for the ACT Government to undertake strategic holistic planning for the suburb of Watson ensuring that all future development is based on meaningful and informed co-design with the Watson community.

In the light of flaws that became obvious in the ACT Government's consultation processes regarding extending the AIE on Section 13 (linking two opposing answers to a Y/N question; apparently misleading information, etc), this Plan calls for the ACT Government to stop any request for tender to develop Section 13, and to undertake meaningful, informed consultation processes about the revitalisation and refurbishment of the section with affected residents, under the Better Suburbs Statement.

Consultation should be in letters to residents identified on the front as consultation about sale of the section to a developer - postcards look like junk mail - and they should go to all Watson residents.

Watson residents' views on the development of Watson should be prioritised over the views of the wider Canberra population.

Appropriately timed and located meetings specifically to inform residents about any ACT Government intentions should be held before tender processes are started. ACT Government representatives should be fully informed and be able to provide informed answers to residents' questions.

Appropriate time should be given for residents to be able to respond to any consultation material.

## True Participation

### Existing Process

The current process of “community consultation” is flawed and is biased against the community. This process apparently consists of giving residents a period (usually four weeks) to comment on a proposal. Usually any presentations or meetings are conducted by consultants, appointed by the Government, who have historically shown little local knowledge. Residents are then able to respond using an online process, and at some later time the consultants prepare a report. This is not ‘consultation’, it is, at best, ‘communication’.

### A Better Method?

A meeting of stakeholders should be convened for each significant development proposals in Watson, possibly chaired by an independent consultant. This would consist of a meeting with the WCA (as the representative of the residents), EPSDD, and, if the Government is not the proponent, the proponent. The objective of this meeting would be to identify where the proposal varies from the ACT Planning Strategy and this Watson Plan, and to try to achieve a compromise on those matters. Where a compromise is not possible, the differences should be clearly explained, along with the reason for the inclusion of such variances. The meeting should not be commercial-in-confidence, and the outcomes should be publicly disclosed (published) within 21 days of the meeting.

## **A Plan for the Growth Watson**

In the absence of a formal Master Plan, or similar, for the suburb of Watson, we ask the ACT Government to use this community-generated Plan for Sustainable Development as their baseline for developers and their formal reference for development approvals.



## Appendix

### 1. A Case for a Plan for Watson<sup>15</sup>

While the ACT Government presently provides opportunities for the community to provide input about individual developments across Canberra and within Watson, the Watson Community Association's principal concern is with the apparent lack of planning around new developments currently taking place in Watson, particularly how they integrate and address the needs of the suburb.

The planned green space, cycleways, playgrounds, educational facilities and shopping areas provided for in the original development of Watson, now fifty years old, are not being replicated in the new developments taking place north of Stirling Avenue. This situation, clearly illustrated in the attached Map A and 'Watson Community Survey (2017): origins and results' (Attachment B), is not only placing pressure on existing resources but means Watson residents as well as those from surrounding areas, are faced with poorer outcomes and services.

**A lack of overall vision presents a range of potentially negative outcomes, some of which are already becoming evident.**

#### Specifically:

##### 1. Wasted money

(i) The paved pedestrian pathway built alongside Majura Primary School (alongside the oval) is a key thoroughfare for access to the preschool and primary schools and local shops for residents east of the shops, and should have been made for concurrent use by pedestrians, often with prams or walking frames, and for people cycling. While at the time it was seen as a solution for school children falling over on the previous dirt track, it is inadequate and needs to be upgraded to handle present (and future) use (Map A).

(ii) Watson has long needed a public toilet in the vicinity of the local shopping precinct - a key issue identified in the Watson Community Survey. With the redevelopment of the Watson oval a toilet block was put in at the far end of the oval away from public areas and is only accessible to groups hiring the sporting facilities. An additional toilet needs to be constructed to meet community demand (Map A).

(iii) The pathway built along the southern side of Aspinall Street between Antill Street and the entrance to Carotel should have been built wide enough to accommodate people on foot, using prams, walking frames and cycles, as the key link to the existing amenities in Watson and to encourage multiple users (Map A)

##### 2. Poor connectivity or passageway between developments

Canberra is known for good accessibility that enhances the livability of the city and encourages active travel—as was the case in old Watson when the suburb was originally designed (Map A shows the radiating greenspace pathways, and some but not of all the small connecting paths found in many places).

However, this is not being replicated in the developments in new Watson which are happening in an ad hoc manner (Map A shows where one shared pathway exists across the Stirling Avenue

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<sup>15</sup> Copy of the WCA submission to the City and Gateway proposal

easement, but also illustrates no greenspace pathways in north Watson – and an absence of short interconnecting paths).

Map A also shows development boundaries in these two areas:-

(i) The blocks of flats and units built along the Federal highway north of Stirling Avenue have no connecting pathway to Aspinall Street. A person living at the northern end of Starlight has therefore to walk around the development (a long walk) to catch a bus on Aspinall Street, compared to using a path through or between developments—had there been one (Map A).

(ii) The developments taking place at the Channel 9, Negus Street and Carotel sites are being done in isolation from each other with no path easement between them, nor a planned capacity to walk through from one to the other. We spoke to developers who stated there was no requirement for them to do this, and found no appetite for joint arrangements with other developers (Map A).

The Watson Community Association recommends these pathways or easements be set out before developments are approved, in order to facilitate access by pedestrians, wheelchairs, prams and bikes.

### **3. Poor connectivity within the suburb and no planned pathways to existing amenities and public transport**

(i) The 'route' for people using active means to travel from the most northern end of Watson at The Fair, to the existing Watson shops is neither a continuous path nor a marked route. It is only adequate at the point where it handles present traffic between Roma Mitchell Crescent and Piddington Street, across the grassed Stirling Avenue. At the Piddington Street end it stops at banana rails (not supported by government now) with no proceeding pathway. It also necessitates travel through a gravel parking lot at the Scout Hall (Map A illustrates some of this).

(ii) There is no pedestrian crossing for people (including primary school aged children) coming from the developments east of Antill Street, nor a shared pathway to safely access the preschool, primary schools or shops, nor the closest bus stop (Map A)

### **4. Lack of amenities**

Ad hoc developments may, or may not, factor in playgrounds, picnic areas, or some commercial space. Where there are not designated areas earmarked for community or commercial use, prior to DAs being approved, these may be lacking, inadequate or poorly located. For example, the Fair development has only a single swing for younger residents. The Channel 9/10 site has been designed to provide amenities, but the other two developments in progress bordering it are only allowing for housing.

JRHP provides a marvelous open space for residential areas bordering it, but this does not serve the total needs for outdoor recreation in this area. For the increasing population of the suburb the amount of green corridors, shops, playgrounds, community space are extremely limited and largely non-existent. The responses from the Community Survey had numerous references to this.

### **5. Overcrowding of existing amenities and facilities**

The increased population of the suburb has resulted in parking and other pressures at the Watson Shops, which is also heavily frequented by residents from the surrounding suburbs of Hackett and Downer. All amenities will be stretched by the increasing population in new developments (Map A - blue shading).

Frequently noted in comments in the Community Survey responses concerned:

1. Parking. This will be exacerbated particularly if the active travel infrastructure (adequate paths, bike parking, and signage) is inadequate to facilitate or encourage people to NOT use cars within their neighbourhood.
2. Schools and childcare. Responses indicated that these are already at capacity.

#### **6. Poor health and increased car usage**

The points 1, 2 and 3 above all lead to people making choices to drive rather than use active means to move around their locality. Since the government supports active travel, and good health initiatives in respect to improved personal activity levels, the infrastructure needs to encourage and support this.

#### **7. Wasted opportunity, and poor reflection of the Burley Griffin legacy**

Once spaces are not set aside for pathways (not just roads), and open recreation spaces (not just buildings), nor are they set aside for commercial use or community use such as meeting rooms and gardens etc., the chance is lost.

Watson is the first suburb at the entrance to Canberra from the north by road. We have an opportunity to make Watson a gateway for the city, with some special visitor facilities to welcome and orientate them to the capital of the nation.

#### **In conclusion**

If the Canberra Technology Park site is considered a significant site under the Governments new requirements for community consultation then the whole area of Watson north of Stirling Avenue should be considered similarly significant. The ACT Planning and Land Authority 2004 document "Watson Neighbourhood Plan: A sustainable future for Watson" detailed vision for Watson, but DID NOT INCLUDE this area.

The primary concern of the Watson Community Association, is the way development appears to be happening without any oversight to good planning for the suburb as a whole, resulting in ad hoc housing projects that are poorly connected, and lacking provision for green space, playgrounds and community facilities.

A wider concern is that these oversights may be occurring in other parts of the city with infill developments. In our view and based on a range of best practice planning evidence from Australia and around the world, there are a host of economic, social, environmental and health co-benefits that can be realised which far outweigh any additional costs involved in providing a clear vision and overall plan for Watson, and other areas under construction.

## 2. Planned or Proposed Developments

The following developments are either planned or proposed for Watson.

### Old Watson

#### Block 1 Section 13, Watson

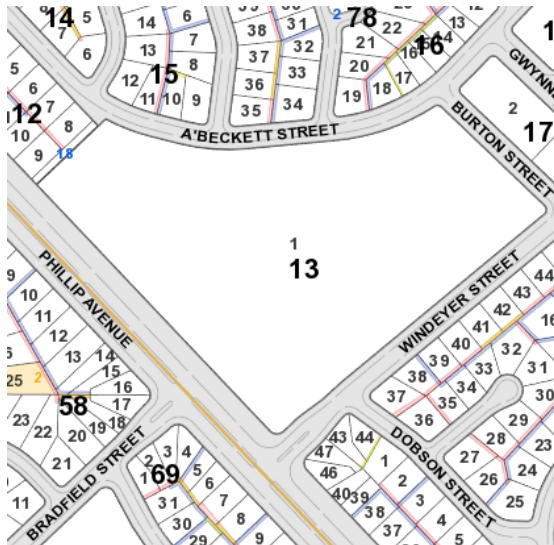


Figure 10 Block 1, Section 13

Aside from the Canberra Technology Park (Old Watson High School) building, this Block encompasses an underutilized, unimproved green space and tennis court in disrepair.

The operators of the Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) which is in this Block proposed to acquire all or part of the whole Block from the ACT Government in an unsolicited development proposal. Their stated intention is to extend the AIE to include 'student accommodation' consisting of 400 bedsit and one-bedroom flats on the site. The ACT Government has advised it will not accept the unsolicited development proposal, and it is understood that the ACT government is now considering a request for tender for at least part of the Block, probably much of the vacant oval area (see aerial picture above). Should this happen, the most likely outcome in the current climate would be a 'change of purpose' lease variation to allow medium to high density residential accommodation.

The balance of the site may go to AIE, the original proponent, in a tender process for the development of student accommodation.

This is an area of green space that will be lost forever; if it is not protected in this Plan. The points above show the pressing need to protect all the remaining green space in Watson, particularly for the following reasons:

- the need for retaining green space for physical, mental and environmental health of Watson as a whole
- that the ACT Government relied on public green space in Old Watson to service New Watson, thus this space is important for New Watson residents as well as Old Watson residents immediately affected by a sale of the green

- that densification from the light rail route and likely infill of Sections 74 and 76 would weigh heavily on the amenities in Watson, including compounding the need for retaining the existing green space
- that public green space is a quality part of Watson's traditional heritage, and a visual amenity as well as important for health, well-being; and for environmental health particularly to combat 'heat islands' and remove air-pollutants and re-oxygenate air, which affects all of Canberra.

### Impact

This site is close to the Watson shops and school, and fits within the current ACT Government's target area for higher density in-fill. Should there be a 'change of purpose' lease variation to allow residential accommodation on the oval open space, the most likely outcome would be around 300 residences in buildings of between three to six stories. This number of residences realistic based on the AIE operators view that the area could contain 'student accommodation' consisting of 400 bedsits and one-bedroom flats on the site.

This has the potential to raise the population of Watson by about 720 people (refer to Table 2 Statistics from ABS QuickStats Census Data on page 54 for the average number of people per residence).

Based on the number of vehicles per residence in Table 2 Statistics from ABS QuickStats Census Data, this would add 450 more vehicles to the immediate area with all the attendant problems of: traffic congestion, noise, traffic road safety around an already congested area at the shops, and especially for children, as it is alongside Nipperville nursery school; air pollution, negative visual impact, (as well as negative physical and mental health and negative environmental issues).

Rates may rise as they do with increase in population, and Watson residents as a whole will be charged 'value capture' fees to provide infrastructure such as sewerage, water, electricity, drainage, telecommunications, etc associated with population increase.

### North Watson

#### Sections 74 & 76

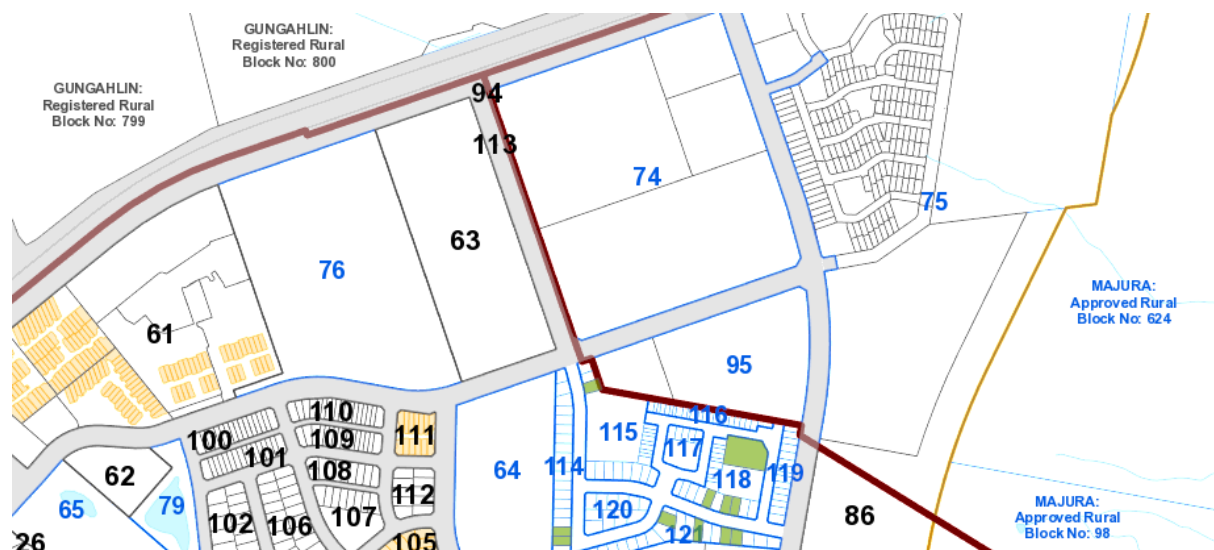


Figure 11 Sections 74 and 76

Scheduled for rezoning and release in 2020-21 and allowing for over 200 residences in each block.<sup>16</sup>

#### Impact

Based on the current statistics for Watson, the population will increase by around 500 people and around 350 vehicles with this development.

#### Block 2, Section 64 'Norrebro'

This site is currently occupied by Channel Nine. According to media reports:

*"Upon completion, Norrebro will house 186 two and three-bedroom apartments and 134 two, three and four-bedroom "terrace-style" townhouses.*

*"The DA listed a restaurant, small shop, gym and health facility as potential commercial tenancies."*<sup>17</sup>



Figure 12 Block 2, Section 64

#### Impact

Based on the current statistics for Watson, the population will increase by around 770 people and around 480 vehicles with this development

#### Negus Crescent

*"A maximum of 21, 33 and 35 dwellings have been approved for the three sections of land, located opposite the Prime Media Group building and Justice Robert Hope Park near Antill Street.*

*"The three parcels of land, Block 9 Section 64 Watson, are being sold separately through Colliers International Canberra but could be bought by a single developer."*<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup><https://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/budget/budget-2018-2019/files/indicative-land-release/Indicative-Land-Release-Program-2018-19.pdf>

<sup>17</sup>[www.allhomes.com.au/news/a-320home-sustainable-village-slated-for-watson-20170113-gtq5nk](http://www.allhomes.com.au/news/a-320home-sustainable-village-slated-for-watson-20170113-gtq5nk)

<sup>18</sup>[www.allhomes.com.au/news/watson-continues-to-grow-with-townhouse-development-land-on-the-market-20161112-gsny6o](http://www.allhomes.com.au/news/watson-continues-to-grow-with-townhouse-development-land-on-the-market-20161112-gsny6o)

### Impact

Based on the current statistics for Watson, the population will increase by around 220 people and around 130 vehicles with this development.

### Mt Majura Estate

“The Canberra Carotel is moving to an adjoining block of land to make way for Mt Majura Estate, a new development consisting of terrace townhouses and more than 100 single residential blocks.

“Colliers International will auction the three two-storey townhouse sites and 129 single blocks at an event in March.”<sup>19</sup>

### Impact

Based on the current statistics for Watson, the population will increase by around 325 people and around 200 vehicles with this development.

### ‘Life Watson’

Advertised as ‘Life Watson’ and now selling a total of 47 apartments, of two- and three-bedroom terrace-style residences. This development is within an area surrounded by Mt Majura Estate.

### Impact

Based on the current statistics for Watson, the population will increase by around 98 people and around 71 vehicles with this development.

### Overall Impact

Site	Additional Residences	Additional Residents	Additional Children <sup>20</sup>	Additional Vehicles
Norrebro	(approx) 320	768	192	480
67 Negus Crescent	88	212	53	133
Mt Majura Estate	(approx) 135	324	81	203
Sections 74 & 76	(approx) 400	960	240	600
Life Watson	47	98	28	71
Section 13	(approx) 300	720	180	450
Other	(approx.) 250	600	150	375
<b>Combined Increases</b>	(approx) 1,540	3,682	924	2,312

*Table 1 Impact of Proposed Large-Scale Developments*

### Notes

1. The above numbers have been extrapolated using the estimated number of dwellings for each development and applying the current statistical ratios as determined in the 2016 Census.

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<sup>19</sup>[www.allhomes.com.au/news/watson-motel-to-make-way-for-houses-as-part-of-mt-majura-estate-development-20170208-gu79bq](http://www.allhomes.com.au/news/watson-motel-to-make-way-for-houses-as-part-of-mt-majura-estate-development-20170208-gu79bq)

<sup>20</sup> Included in the count of additional residents but important for future school capacities

2. These additional developments will increase the population of Watson by 60% over the 2016 census figure.
3. The estimated increase in the number of children would make the construction of an additional primary school and an additional high school an imperative.

### Impact on Educational Facilities

For the assessed impact on educational facilities serving Watson, refer to Enrolment Projections for Watson-Area Public Schools on page 57.



## 4. Areas of Responsibility

This section sets out the areas of responsibility of the various Government agencies and instruments.

### Territory Plan<sup>21</sup>

The authorised Territory Plan is available on the [ACT Legislation Register](#).

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. It must not be inconsistent with the [National Capital Plan](#).

The Territory Plan includes a statement of strategic directions, a map (the Territory Plan Map) which sets out zones and precincts in the ACT, objectives and development tables applying to each zone, and a series of general, development and precinct codes. It also includes structure plans and concept plans for the development of future urban areas.

The statutory requirements for the Territory Plan are set out in the [Planning and Development Act 2007](#) primarily in Part 5.

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.

The Territory, the Executive, a Minister or a territory authority must not do any act, or approve the doing of an act, that is inconsistent with the Territory Plan.

### Varying the Territory Plan

The [Territory Plan](#) can be varied, subject to it being consistent with the [National Capital Plan](#). Variations are usually necessary to update the policies to manage change brought about through economic, social, environmental, built environment and other factors. The following describes the process for varying the Territory Plan other than for [technical variations](#).

### Preparing a draft plan variation (other than technical variations)

Draft plan variations must be prepared by the ACT Planning and Land Authority. They are usually prepared either because of sufficient evidence by a lessee or their representative, or through the Planning and Land Authority's own initiative or because the Minister has directed the Planning and Land Authority to revise the Plan or a provision of the Plan. Current [draft plan variations](#) for public comment.

### Considerations

If preparing a draft plan variation, the Planning and Land Authority must consider any relevant planning report or strategic environmental assessment and consider whether the variation would promote the planning strategy if a variation, once made, would vary the statement of strategic directions of the Territory Plan.

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.planning.act.gov.au/tools\\_resources/plans-registers/plans/territory\\_plan/territory\\_plan\\_master\\_page](https://www.planning.act.gov.au/tools_resources/plans-registers/plans/territory_plan/territory_plan_master_page)

### Public consultation

The Planning and Land Authority must make copies of draft plan variations and the associated background papers available for public inspection and comment.

### Interim effect

Draft variations may have interim effect for a defined period meaning that during the defined period, in addition to not doing anything inconsistent with the Territory Plan, the Territory, the Executive, a Minister or a territory authority must not do any act, or approve the doing of an act, that is inconsistent with the Territory Plan if it were varied in accordance with the draft plan variation.

There are potentially two defined periods during which a draft plan variation may have interim effect:

- one period applying from the initial consultation to public notification of the final draft variation as submitted to the Minister (if the initial consultation notice stated that the draft variation was to have interim effect) or 12 months, whichever is shorter
- one period applying from public notification of the final draft variation as submitted to the Minister to passage through the Legislative Assembly and commencement.

### Revisions or withdrawal

The Planning and Land Authority may revise or withdraw a draft plan variation after the end of the public consultation period. Unless a variation is withdrawn, the Planning and Land Authority must give a variation to the Minister for approval and give notice that the variation and other documents are available for public inspection.

### Minister's role

After the end of the consultation period and if it does not withdraw a draft plan variation, the Planning and Land Authority must give it together with the associated background papers and a written report on consultation to the Minister for approval. On receipt of the documents, the Minister must approve the draft plan variation, return it to the Planning and Land Authority with written directions or refer it to an appropriate committee of the Legislative Assembly. If the draft plan variation is referred to a Legislative Assembly committee the Minister must wait for the committee's report before subsequently approving it or referring it back to the Planning and Land Authority.

### Approval and tabling in Legislative Assembly

If the Minister approves a plan variation, it must be presented to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly has the power to reject the plan variation. If the Legislative Assembly does not reject the approved plan variation within five sitting days after it is presented, a date for commencement is fixed. Public notification of the commencement of the variation is required.

### Technical variations

A technical variation is a technical amendment to the Territory Plan made under part 5.4 of the [Planning and Development Act 2007](#). Proposed [technical variations](#) for public comment.

A technical variation can be in the form of:

- an error variation (which corrects a formal error in the plan and does not adversely affect anyone's rights if approved)
- a code variation (only changes a code and is consistent with the policy purpose and policy framework of the code)
- a variation in relation to a future urban area to change a zone or change a boundary (only if it is consistent with the structure plan) or where it ceases to be a future urban area (when an estate development plan is approved) – refer to sections 95 and 96 of the Planning and Development Act
- a variation to ensure the Territory Plan is consistent with the National Capital Plan
- a change to a boundary of a zone or overlay under section 96A of the Planning and Development Act.

#### Making a technical variation

If the Planning and Land Authority is satisfied that the proposed change to the Territory Plan can be considered to be a technical amendment and any required consultation has taken place, it puts the plan variation in writing.

#### Limited consultation

Limited consultation is required for code variations and variations in relation to the rezoning of future urban areas. The requirements for limited consultation are set out in section 90 of the [Planning and Development Act 2007](#).

#### Considerations

If the technical amendment had limited consultation, the Planning and Land Authority must consider any representations that were made during the consultation period as well as any views of the National Capital Authority.

#### Commencement

A technical variation comes into effect on the date specified in the commencement notice. Once a plan variation is notified, the Planning and Land Authority will publish in the newspaper a description of the variation as well as the date it comes into effect.

#### National Capital Authority (NCA)<sup>22</sup>

Under the [Australian Capital Territory \(Planning and Land Management\) Act 1988](#), the functions of the National Capital Authority are:

- prepare and administer the National Capital Plan
- to keep the Plan under constant review and propose amendments to it when necessary
- on behalf of the Australian Government, to commission works to be carried out in designated areas in accordance with the Plan, where neither a department of State of the Commonwealth nor any Commonwealth authority has the responsibility to commission those works;
- recommend to the Minister the carrying out of works it considers desirable to maintain or enhance the character of the National Capital

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.nca.gov.au/about-the-NCA/what-we-do>

- to foster an awareness of Canberra as the National Capital
- with the approval of the Minister, to perform planning services for any person or body, whether within Australia or overseas, and
- with the approval of the Minister, on behalf of the Commonwealth to manage National Land designated in writing by the Minister as land required for the special purposes of Canberra as the National Capital.

#### Plan the Capital

Australia's National Capital has a unique purpose, setting, character and symbolism, and it's important we make sure it continues to do so. Through the National Capital Plan, we ensure that 'Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance'. We do this by assessing and approving applications to undertake works in designated areas, and by preparing development control plans, urban design guidelines, master plans and draft amendments to the National Capital Plan.

#### Promote the Capital

We are responsible for developing an understanding and appreciation of the role of Canberra as the National Capital. We take a strategic approach to fostering an awareness of the Capital through research; by encouraging participation, appreciation and celebration in the National Capital; by providing information and education about the Capital; and by promoting the attributes of Canberra that are of national significance.

#### Maintain and enhance the Capital

##### Advocacy, enhancement and management of the National Capital estate

The Australian Government has a direct interest in developing and maintaining the National Capital as an asset in which all Australians have a major investment.

We manage and maintain assets on behalf of the Australian Government. Most assets are maintained under competitively tendered contracts and represent some of the Capital's most nationally and culturally significant landscapes and attractions.

The diversity of these assets reflects the breadth of the Australian Government's interests in the National Capital and provides the setting for ceremonies, activities and events that Australians expect to occur in their capital. In managing these assets, we make sure they are created, maintained and, if necessary, replaced to enhance and protect the unique qualities of the Capital, and to support activities and events that spread an awareness of Canberra as the National Capital.

##### Asset and land management and Capital enhancement services

The NCA's statutory functions help us to ensure national assets continue to be created and maintained, are of an appropriate standard, meet the expectations of users, and support an appreciation and understanding of the role of the National Capital.

On National Land the NCA manages development and renewal projects for the special purposes of the National Capital. These works include regular maintenance, works to enhance or protect prior Commonwealth Government investment in national assets (eg refurbishment of monuments and fountains), construction of public infrastructure (eg roads, parking, pathways and lighting) and development of the landscape settings for new building sites, public parks and places, commemoration and celebration.

## The NCA and Watson

The following was extracted from an email from Rebecca Sorensen, Director Strategic Planning, National Capital Authority on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

“Thank you for your email, I’m happy to offer you the following advice in response to each of the dot points:

- The National Capital Plan is the overarching planning document for the ACT, and the ACT Government’s Territory Plan must not be inconsistent with the National Capital Plan. The NCA has a high level of interest in the Federal Highway Approach Route and has a varying level of planning responsibility. Within the road reservation, the NCA approves all works (for example, if the ACT Government as land manager wished to plant more trees, they would need the NCA’s approval). For land flanking the road, the National Capital Plan currently sets out what are known as ‘Special Requirements’. The Special Requirements require the preparation of a **Development Control Plan** (DCP) to guide development, however the DCP is then administered by the Territory planning authority. Examples of these DCPs can be found on the [NCA’s website](#) (there is one for Section 75 Watson). Draft Amendment 91 proposes to retain Special Requirements, but include the planning and design controls within the National Capital Plan itself (rather than DCPs). The ACT Government will still be responsible for approving new development.
- The Special Requirements I have referred to above apply to land flanking Northbourne Avenue where it both directly fronts AND is within 200 metres of the centreline of the road. ‘Directly fronting’ could mean sharing a common boundary with the road reservation, but could also apply to land that does not have a common boundary but is still **open to and visible from the highway**.
- DA91 proposes a maximum building height of 8.5 metres for sites flanking the highway between Flemington Road/Phillip Avenue and the border. This is the same building height limit as for most suburban areas (for example, the RZ1 zones in Watson). The Territory Plan contains further detail about what can be contained within this building height; my understanding is that two storeys is permitted within the RZ1 zone, however there is potential for dwellings to include basement car parking or an attic where particular provisions are met.

I’m aware that Watson has significant areas fronting the highway zoned as CZ6. The height limit of 8.5 metres would still apply, and coupled with the requirements for floor-to-ceiling heights in DA91, two storeys is likely to be the maximum achieved.

- The proposed setback of 70 metres (from the centreline of the road, which had taken to effectively be the middle of the whole road reservation) was for sites between the Barton Highway/Panton Street and Flemington Road/Phillip Avenue. The following are the proposed conditions for sites on the Federal Highway further towards the border:
- On the southern side of the Federal Highway between Phillip Avenue and Stirling Avenue – 6 metres from the Federal Highway road reservation.
- On the southern side of the Federal Highway between Stirling Avenue and the eastern boundary of Block 18 Section 75 Watson – 15 metres from the Federal Highway road reservation.

- On the southern side of the Federal Highway between the eastern boundary of Block 18 Section 75 Watson and the ACT/NSW border – 30 metres from the Federal Highway road reservation.

Please note that the NCA is currently reviewing setbacks based on the community feedback to DA91.

- The provisions of DA91 are intended to enhance the landscape character, including through the use of mandatory soft landscaping and deep root planting on development sites.

Mary Napier forwarded me the draft plan your refer to. Mary advised me that has been a number of open meetings with the community about the future of Watson, including one on 4 February where the plan was presented to Rachel Stephens-Smith. I had sought to understand whether the plan should be considered a submission to Draft Amendment 91 as it appeared in draft form and addressed issues within the suburb more broadly (and unrelated to Draft Amendment 91). It seemed to me that the plan needed to be formally endorsed by the community association (and had concerns that it would be made public through our own processes before this occurred) and also that it was probably better presented to the Territory planning authority. I'd be happy to keep the plan on file, and the final could also be provided to the NCA. Please let me know if this approach would be suitable for you.

#### Development Control Plan No. 171/99/0003

This Development Control Plan has been issued by the NCA and applies to land along the Federal Highway and Northbourne Avenue from the NSW border to Phillip Avenue and this is specifically relevant to Sections 74 and 76.



**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN  
NO. 171/99/0003**

**FOR LAND ADJACENT TO THE EASTERN SIDE OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY  
BETWEEN STIRLING AVENUE AND THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF BLOCK 10  
SECTION 75 WATSON**

**INTRODUCTION**

This Development Control Plan has been prepared as part of the Special Requirements of the National Capital Plan for Approach Routes. Section 2.4 of the National Capital Plan states that:

*Development is to conform to Development Control Plans agreed to by the Authority, which seek to enhance the surrounding predominantly rural character and landscape outside the urban areas. As the Approach Routes enter the built up areas, the emphasis shall shift to a more formal character.*

The land subject to this DCP is the point of transition from a non-urban to an urban character. The land to the north along the Federal Highway between the affected area and the ACT boundary is classified 'mountains and bushland' and 'broadacre areas' under the General Policy Plan of the National Capital Plan. To the south, land is developed in a more formal manner, increasing in intensity as it enters the city.

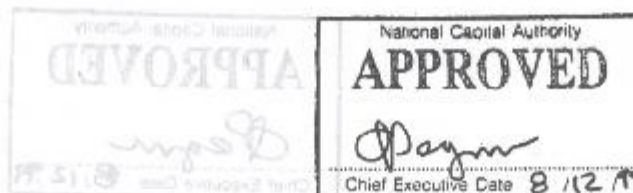
This DCP seeks to ensure that the transition between the urban and rural areas is clearly defined by appropriate landscaping and building, and that a high level of visual amenity is maintained. The area subject to this DCP is shown in the DCP Drawing No. 171/99/0003

In the absence of a provision in this DCP to the contrary, all development should generally accord with the Design and Siting Conditions set down in the Territory Plan. This Development Control Plan supersedes any DCPs previously approved for individual sites within the area covered by this plan.

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

**National Significance**

The national significance of the land covered by this DCP is that the development of this area determines the visual experience of the Federal Highway as a significant Approach Route to the National Capital. In this respect, development of the area must contribute positively to the



general urban design objectives for Approach Routes. These are:

- To establish a clear and identifiable route from the border to the symbolic centre of the Capital by providing visual cues and strong structural links such as verge and avenue planting;
- To identify and enhance distinct realms and elements that will introduce visitors to the inherent characteristics of Canberra;
- To recognise and reinforce the importance of the setting of the Capital by directing views to the rural landscape and surrounding hills and by ensuring adjacent development respects the natural features, character and scale of the landscape.

Development on these sites should provide a smooth transition from the rural and bushland areas to the north to the urban areas to the south. Development should recognise and reinforce the parkland character of the landscape with filtered views through trees to the buildings and on into the sites.

A strong landscape theme of canopy trees in a grassland setting will need to be established. Landscaping in the verge and in the setback area along the Federal Highway will reinforce this character.

#### **Possible Monash Drive Corridor**

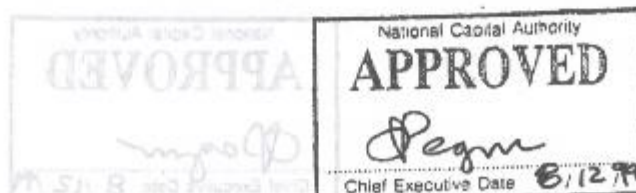
Development on Blocks 10 and 11 Section 74 Watson, immediately south of Antill Street, must take into account the possible extension of Monash Drive. A wider road and greater building setbacks from the new alignment should be considered. The existing road alignment on the northern side should be retained as Blocks 9 and 10 Section 75 Watson, to the north of Antill Street, are already developed.

The re-subdivision of Blocks 10, 11 and 12 to create two sites of approximately equal size should be considered if and when the Monash Drive extension is proposed for construction.

#### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS**

##### **Building Design**

- Buildings should exhibit a high standard of design and finish.
- Buildings sited along the Federal Highway frontage should appear as long low masses within a landscape setting. Building facades facing the Highway should be carefully articulated through modulation and fenestration treatment. Roofs are to be low pitched. Flat roofs or facades with wide fascias giving the impression of a flat roof will not be permitted.





#### **Building Height**

- Building and other structures are to be limited to a maximum height of ten (10) metres measured vertically from natural ground level to the top of fascia. Buildings along the Federal highway frontage must present a predominantly two-storey elevation to the Highway. Some three-storey elements will be permitted provided that they occupy less than 30 percent of the total building frontage to the highway.

#### **Building Setback**

- Buildings and other structures, car parking, service areas and the like are to be located a minimum of 15 metres from the Federal Highway frontage. The corner setbacks for individual sites are as shown in the DCP Drawing No. 171/99/0003.
- Side boundary setbacks must be in accordance with those indicated in the DCP Drawing No. 171/99/0003.
- Setback areas should be devoted to planting and be free of structures, driveways and car parking, except where driveway access from the Federal Highway is permitted. Some encroachment of driveways and car parking may be permitted in the side setback areas where the overall landscape remains consistent with the development objectives. Signs may be located in the setback area, provided they meet the requirements set out under 'Signs' below.

#### **Building Materials and Colours**

- External building materials and finishes should be of a high standard, durable and low maintenance. Highly reflective external materials should be avoided. Large spans of continuous uninterrupted glazing will not be permitted.
- Colours of external finishes should be predominantly light in tone. Earth tone bricks and masonry will also be permitted. Strong contrasting colours of individual architectural elements should generally be avoided.

#### **Landscape Design**

- A comprehensive landscape plan must be prepared in association with any development proposal.
- The landscape design should be well integrated with building design and signage for each site, and should create filtered views of buildings from the Federal Highway.
- Planting along the Federal Highway frontage should comprise an informally grouped composition of Australian indigenous trees, predominantly eucalypts, in a grass setting.



- Significant trees on site should be retained where possible and integrated into the landscape design.

#### **Vehicular Access and Car Parking**

- Vehicular access and egress from the Federal Highway will only be permitted at two points as shown in the DCP Drawing No. 171/99/0003. The location and design of the two access points must meet the requirements of the relevant ACT Government authorities. No other direct vehicular access to sites will be permitted from the Federal Highway.
- Vehicular access (and egress) from Federal Highway to Block 8 Section 61 Watson should only serve the northern commercial accommodation portion of the site. Access and egress for residential development on the balance of the site (to the south) should be from Aspinall Street. The two access points are not to be linked.
- Vehicular circulation within sites should ensure efficient access for visitors to the main address point and visitor car parking areas. Provisions must be made for access and parking for people with disability in accordance with standards set out in "Building Code of Australia (Access for People with Disability)".
- All car parking generated by development should be contained on site in accordance with the parking standards and guidelines of the ACT Government.
- The visual impact of car parking areas, particularly when viewed from the Federal Highway, should be minimised through appropriate screening and landscape treatment.

#### **Signs**

- All signs are to be contained within the site. They must be of a high standard and must not detract from the overall character of the built environment and its landscape setting. Signs on buildings should be below the roofline and generally integrated into the parapets and fascias.
- Details of all signs should be in accordance with Section C3 – Signs Policies of the Territory Plan and Appendix H (Part 3: Signs) of the National Capital Plan with special attention being given to the integration of signs with building design and landscaping consistent with the standards appropriate for an Approach Route. Should an inconsistency arise between the policies referred to, the policies of the National Capital Plan shall prevail.
- All signage shall be contained within the property. Only one sign shall be permitted on the elevations of buildings facing the Federal Highway. No more than one freestanding sign will be permitted on each block within the setback area along the Federal Highway.



• Entrance signs and features should be carefully sited to ensure that they do not have an adverse visual impact or reduce traffic safety and flow within sites and on the Federal Highway.

**Mechanical Plant and Equipment**

• All mechanical plant and equipment should be contained within the building they service or located within service yards which are screened from public view. Visually exposed air conditioning plant and equipment will not be permitted. Condenser units and cooling towers must be screened from public view.

**Site Services, Storage and Service Areas**

• Careful consideration should be given to the siting of any electricity substation, storage and service areas so that their visual impact is minimised and they do not detract from the presentation of the Federal Highway corridor. Such areas should be carefully designed and screened from public view.

• All site services (sewer, water, stormwater, electricity, telephone, and gas) should meet the requirements of the relevant ACT Government authorities.

**External Lighting**

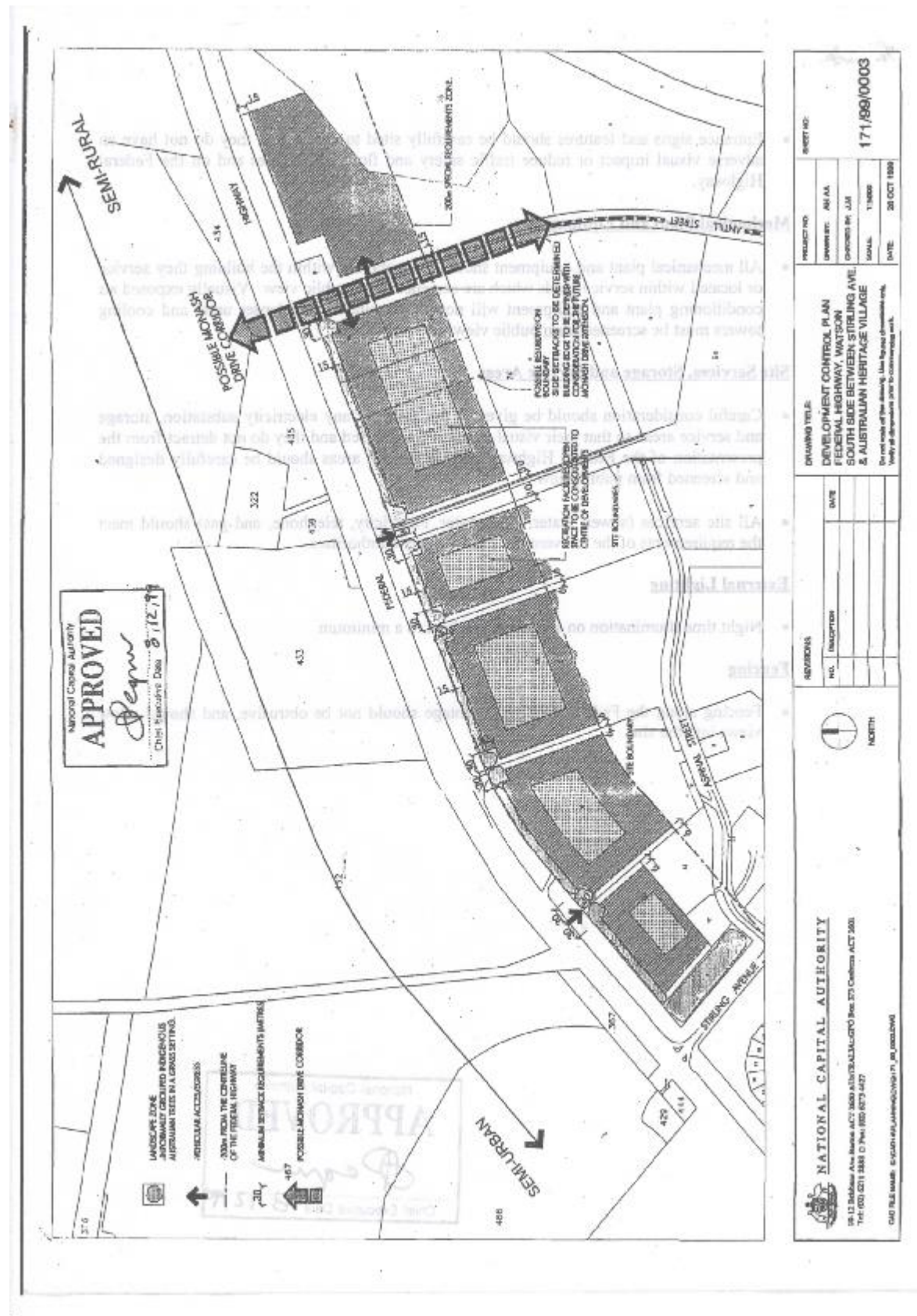
• Night time illumination on site should be kept to a minimum.

**Fencing**

• Fencing along the Federal Highway frontage should not be obtrusive, and should allow views into the site.

National Capital Authority  
**APPROVED**  
*Peggy*  
Chief Executive Date 8/12/99





## Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)<sup>23</sup>

### About EPSDD

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate aims to lead the nation in achieving sustainable outcomes; to be a 'liveable and sustainable city'.

The Directorate is responsible for developing and implementing a wide range of policies and programs across city planning and development, climate change and the environment. There are two divisions within the Directorate dedicated to the delivery of positive environment outcomes for the Territory. These are:

- the Environment Division is responsible for heritage, conservation research, nature conservation policy, catchment management and water policy and environment protection policy, and includes the ACT Parks and Conservation Service
- the Climate Change and Sustainability Division is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including actions delivering 100% renewable electricity by 2020, net zero emissions by 2045 at the latest, and increasing climate change resilience. The Actsmart program, Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme and Carbon Neutral Government programs deliver on-the-ground energy savings.

The Directorate's planning responsibilities include the planning and land authority's management of development assessment under the [Planning and Development Act 2007](#). The Authority also administers the [Territory Plan](#) which provides the policy framework for the administration of planning in the ACT. The Directorate's other planning related functions include building regulation, leasing, land information, planning based research, street and suburb name information, land development projects and planning policy including the Asbestos Response Taskforce and Public Housing Renewal Taskforce.

For more information on the planning arm of our directorate please visit [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au).

To find out more about the work of our Directorate to date, view our [Annual Report](#).

### Our Vision

The ACT Government's vision is for Canberra to be recognised throughout the world as:

- a truly sustainable and creative city;
- a community that is socially inclusive – acknowledging and supporting those who are vulnerable and in need and enabling all to reach their full potential
- a centre of economic growth and innovation
- the proud capital of the nation and home of its pre-eminent cultural institutions
- a place of great natural beauty.

### Our Ministers

Our directorate reports to these ACT Ministers:

- Andrew Barr MLA - Chief Minister
- Yvette Berry MLA - Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
- Mick Gentleman MLA - Minister for the Environment and Heritage; Minister for Planning and Land Management

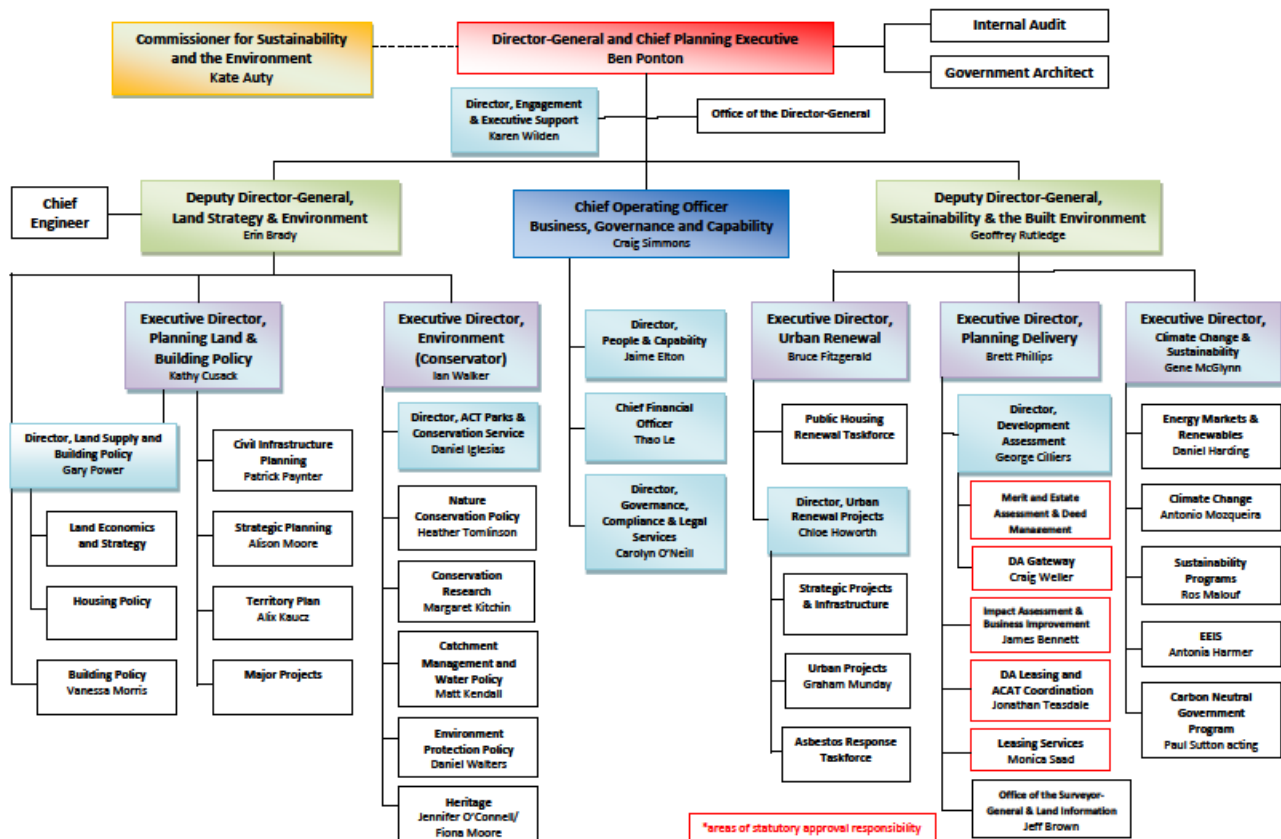
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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/about>

- Gordon Ramsay MLA - Minister for Building Quality Improvement
- Shane Rattenbury MLA - Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability
- Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA - Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety; Minister for Urban Renewal
- Chris Steel MLA - Minister for Community Services and Facilities

## Organisation Chart

### Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (as at 11 January 2019)





## 5. Census Reports

The following tables have been populated with data extracted directly from ABS census reporting.

### Demographical Overview

Measurement	2016 <sup>24</sup>	2011 <sup>25</sup>	2006 <sup>26</sup>	2001 <sup>27</sup>
Total Population	5,862	5,123	4,188	4,077
Male	48.2% (2,825)	2,537	1,989	1,940
Female	51.8% (3,037)	2,586	2,199	2,137
Median age	34	33	34	
Total Families	1,480	1,292	1,087	931
Average children per family				
for families with children	1.7	1.7		
for all families	0.6			
Total Private Dwellings	2,607	2,290	2,057	1,767
Average people per household	2.4	2.3	2.3	
Median weekly household income	\$1,962	\$1,908	\$1,268	
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$2,044	\$2,237	\$1,517	
Median weekly rent	\$370	\$398	\$265	
Average motor vehicles per dwelling	1.5	1.5		

Table 2 Statistics from ABS QuickStats Census Data

### Notes

1. The number of motor vehicles per dwelling has remained at 1.5 for the last two censuses.
  - 1.1. This is critical for traffic planning purposes.
2. The 2016 census reported 0.6 children per family; with 1,480 families reported this means approximately 890 children in Watson.
  - 2.1. This is critical for school planning purposes.

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<sup>24</sup> [http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC80127](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC80127)

<sup>25</sup> [http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/SSC80100?open=document](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/SSC80100?open=document)

<sup>26</sup> [http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2006/quickstat/SSC81496?open=document](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2006/quickstat/SSC81496?open=document)

<sup>27</sup> [http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2001/quickstat/805058559?open=document](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2001/quickstat/805058559?open=document)

## Children – Demographics<sup>28</sup>

Age Range	Females	Males	Total	% of Children	Assumed School Level
0 – 2 years	128	137	266	20%	No schooling
3 – 4 years	103	87	190	14%	Pre-school/kindergarten
5 – 10 years	212	214	426	33%	Primary
11 – 15 years	135	157	292	22%	High
16 – 17 years	63	49	112	11%	College
Total children, 0-17			1,286	100%	
Percentage of Population			22%		
Please note that there are small random adjustments made to all cell values to protect the confidentiality of data. These adjustments may cause the sum of rows or columns to differ by small amounts from table totals.					

Table 3 Children by School Age Groups

### Notes

1. The proposed and planned developments (refer to Planned or Proposed Developments on page 35) would increase the local school enrolments by the following, based on applying the census the data in Table 3 Children by School Age Groups above:
  - 1.1. An estimated 616 primary school students;
    - 1.1.1. Majura Primary caters for kindergarten/pre-school students;
  - 1.2. An estimated 292 high school students; and
  - 1.3. An estimated 112 college students.

<sup>28</sup>[http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/SSC80127?opendocument](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/SSC80127?opendocument)

## Method of Travel to Work

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2016 Census of Population and Housing			
Watson (SSC80127) 3.7 square kilometres			
Method of Travel to Work <sup>29</sup>			
G59 METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK BY SEX <sup>30</sup>			
Count of employed persons aged 15 years and over			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
One method:			
Train	3	0	5
Bus	118	114	238
Ferry	3	0	3
Tram (includes light rail)	0	0	0
Taxi	0	0	3
Car, as driver	969	989	1,957
Car, as passenger	67	109	176
Truck	8	0	8
Motorbike/scooter	43	6	52
Bicycle	141	62	208
Other	15	9	19
Walked only	20	21	47
<i>Total one method</i>	<i>1,392</i>	<i>1,319</i>	<i>2,709</i>
Worked at home	32	66	105
Did not go to work	130	176	310
Method of travel to work not stated	7	16	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,599</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>3,213</b>
This table is based on place of usual residence.			
Please note that there are small random adjustments made to all cell values to protect the confidentiality of data. These adjustments may cause the sum of rows or columns to differ by small amounts from table totals.			

Table 4 Method of travel to/from work

<sup>29</sup>[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter7002016](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter7002016)

<sup>30</sup>[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter9102016](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter9102016)

## 6. Enrolment Projections for Watson-Area Public Schools

### ACT Education Directorate Reports

The following data has been extracted from ACT Education Directorate reports.

School	2018 Capacity	2016 Feb Census	%	2017 Feb Census	%	2018 Feb Census	%
Campbell High School	868	721	83%	728	84%	719	83%
Dickson College	1,114	812	73%	815	73%	833	75%
Lyneham High School	1,088	1,065	98%	1,084	100%	1,119	103%
Majura Primary School	756	600	78%	630	83%	674	89%
Rosary Primary School	na	334	na	313	na	290	na

Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools

#### Notes

1. The above school census data has been gained from ACT School Census Reports available at [www.education.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z/census](http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z/census).
2. The ACT Education Directorate establishes notional school capacity, as above, by a calculation based on floor space. Generally, capacity as determined by the relevant school principal will be a lesser figure.
3. The 2016 published enrolment projections for 2017 and 2018<sup>31</sup> showed an increase of 1 student in 2017 and nil increase in 2018 for Majura Primary; a decrease of 5 students in 2017 and nil increase in 2018 for Lyneham High, and an increase of 24 in 2017 and a further increase of 26 students in 2018 for Campbell High School.
4. The changing demographic in Old Watson has seen a call from young families to refurbish and reopen Old Watson High School on section 13 to provide an additional High School in the Inner North. This Plan shows there is a need for another High School, and that population projections will only make this need more pressing.

### Projections Based on Proposed/Planned Developments

The following data has been developed using data in Table 1 Impact of Proposed Large-Scale Developments on page 38 and Table 3 Children by School Age Groups on page 55.

Note that these projections reflect only the increase in school populations due to growth in Watson; they do not reflect any impact based on growth in adjacent suburbs.

Refer to Table 5 ACT Education Directorate Enrolment Projections for Watson Area Schools above for the baseline figures used in the following Table.

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<sup>31</sup>[www.education.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/872083/Enrolment-Projections-for-Canberra-Public-Schools-Glossary.pdf](http://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/872083/Enrolment-Projections-for-Canberra-Public-Schools-Glossary.pdf)

	<b>Rosary Primary School</b>	<b>Majura Primary School</b>	<b>Lyneham High School</b>	<b>Campbell High School</b>	<b>Dickson College</b>
2018 Capacity	na	756	1,088	868	1,114
2018 Feb Census	290	674	1,119	719	833
Allow 3%pa Growth	9	20	34	22	25
2019 Estimate	299	694	1,153	741	858
Allow 3%pa Growth	9	21	35	22	26
2020 Estimate	307	715	1,188	763	884
Allow 3%pa Growth	9	21	36	23	27
2021 Estimate	316	736	1,224	786	911
Allow Growth from new developments	61	494	234	29	101
New 2021 Estimates	377	1,230	1,458	815	1,012
Comparison to 2018 Capacity	na	163%	134%	94%	91%

Table 6 Projected growth in school enrolments to 2021

#### Notes

1. The population of Watson as recorded by the 2011 Census was 5,121; the population as recorded by the 2016 Census was 5,862. This represents a year on year growth of approximately 3%. This growth rate has been applied to assess annual pupil increases.
2. Primary school students:
  - a. Assume that 10% of high students choose Rosary Primary;
  - b. Assume that 10% of high students choose out-of-area private schools;
  - c. Assume that the remainder go to Majura Primary.
3. High school students:
  - a. Assume that 10% of high students choose Campbell High;
  - b. Assume that 10% of high students choose out-of-area private schools;
  - c. Assume that the remainder go to Lyneham High.
4. College students:
  - a. Assume that 10% of high students choose out-of-area private schools;
  - b. Assume that the remainder go to Dickson College.

## 7. Protecting the bush 'front and centre' in new planning strategy

The following is an extract from The Canberra Times, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

### Protecting the bush 'front and centre' in new planning strategy

Canberra must contain its urban sprawl or risk losing its status as the bush capital, ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has warned.

Mr Barr used a mid-term speech on Monday to foreshadow the release of his government's long-awaited planning strategy refresh later this week.

He said the strategy would "step through the choices we face as a community about our city's future growth".

"There is a simple reality that if keep growing outwards the way we have in the past, this urban sprawl will significantly - and I mean significantly - eat into the unique bush and grassland environments that surround our city. This will happen in the next couple of decades," Mr Barr told the crowd at Ainslie Art House.

"If we want to protect what is unique about Canberra, if we want to maintain the great natural setting that our community values, then we need to focus instead on our CBD, our town centres and dedicated major transport corridors to accommodate more of our city's future growth."

However for this to work, Mr Barr said buildings needed to be of a high quality in both their construction and design.

He also said there had to be equitable access to public and green spaces.

"This is essential to the good life we want to maintain in this city," Mr Barr said.

"Good building design - design that is sustainable, inclusive, liveable and dare I say even a little bit stylish - has to be a focus for government but importantly has to be a focus for industry as we continue to grow."

Asked afterwards, Mr Barr said this was not a new direction for the territory and that increasing density in town centres had been a government policy since 2004.

"The point I've made is you can't sprawl outwards forever, we'll run out of land and ... the need to protect bushland is front and centre of the planning strategy," Mr Barr said.

"When you think about the future, we're not going to go west of the Murrumbidgee in the Tuggeranong Valley, we're not going to build in Kowen Forest out on the extreme north-east of the territory.

"Our future greenfield development is the Molonglo Valley and those areas between Weston Creek in the south and Belconnen in the north, the balance of Gungahlin and the Ginninderry development. That's about it. You don't have any more land so it's got to be in the CBD in the town centres and on the transport corridors. "

His comments come days after an ACT Climate Council report was tabled in the Assembly expressing similar sentiments.



The council said there was an "urgent need to address possible unsustainable building and urban development going on across the city which may lead to high emissions and low resilience" in its latest annual report.

Council chair, Professor Barbara Norman said with the current pace of development and urban renewal going on in Canberra "it's incredibly important to get the policy settings right".

"It's not that we're getting it wrong right now but we want to focus on getting it right in the future," Professor Norman said.

That includes re-examining building construction processes, looking at the kinds of training available and retrofitting the city with green energy.

Professor Norman said after transport emissions, emissions from the built environment would be the next hurdle for the ACT to overcome on the road to zero net emissions by 2045.

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By Katie Burgess *Canberra Times* 4 December 2018

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/politics/act/protecting-the-bush-front-and-centre-in-new-planning-strategy-20181130-p50jdh.html>

## 8. Useful Resources

The following links have relevance to this document.

### **ACT Planning Strategy 2018**

Two links for the new Territory Strategy:

1. <https://www.planning.act.gov.au/act-planning-strategy> This is the overview page; and
2. [https://www.planning.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1285972/ACT-Planning-Strategy-2018.pdf](https://www.planning.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1285972/ACT-Planning-Strategy-2018.pdf) which is the actual document itself.

### **SGS Survey**

Results from the July survey were recently made public. [https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/9115/4024/2265/SGS\\_Pre-Consultation\\_Report\\_North\\_Watson\\_-\\_Final\\_Report\\_23\\_Aug\\_18\\_002.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/9115/4024/2265/SGS_Pre-Consultation_Report_North_Watson_-_Final_Report_23_Aug_18_002.pdf)

### **ACTmapi – Development**

<http://app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi/index.html?viewer=dev>

### **Statement of Planning Intent, 2015**

[www.yoursay.act.gov.au/statement-planning-intent](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/statement-planning-intent)

### **ACT Planning Strategy Refresh, July 2018**

[www.yoursay.act.gov.au/act-planning-strategy-refresh](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/act-planning-strategy-refresh)

### **City Services and a Better Suburbs Statement for Canberra, September 2018**

[www.yoursay.act.gov.au/BetterSuburbs](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/BetterSuburbs)

### **ACT Planning Strategy Refresh - Conversation Tracker Speaker Session 3 Bush Capital and global city: getting the balance right - 10 July 2018**

[https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/5315/3230/9374/Convo\\_Tracker\\_-\\_Speaker\\_series\\_3a\\_002.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/5315/3230/9374/Convo_Tracker_-_Speaker_series_3a_002.pdf)

### **Canberra's Living Infrastructure Information Paper, February 2018**

[www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1170965/Canberra-Living-Infrastructure-Information-paper-2018.pdf)

### **City and Gateway Urban Design Framework, December 2018**

[https://www.planning.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1296986/CITY-AND-GATEWAY-Urban-Design-Framework.pdf](https://www.planning.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1296986/CITY-AND-GATEWAY-Urban-Design-Framework.pdf)

### **CSIRO's Mapping Surface Urban Heat in Canberra Report, December 2017**

[https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6415/1976/9241/CSIRO\\_Mapping\\_Surface\\_Urban\\_Heat\\_In\\_Canberra.pdf](https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/6415/1976/9241/CSIRO_Mapping_Surface_Urban_Heat_In_Canberra.pdf)

### **Watson Neighbourhood Plan: A sustainable future for Watson, Prepared by the ACT Planning and Land Authority, September 2004**

[www.planning.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/890576/watson-anp.pdf](http://www.planning.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/890576/watson-anp.pdf)

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