



Meegan Fitzharris MLA

Member for Yerrabi

Minister for Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Transport and City Services
Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan *Tom,*

I refer to your letter of 1 August 2017 regarding petition No 13-17 and 16-17, lodged by Mr Chris Steel MLA regarding Farrer – development and implementation of a strategic plan for integrated, appropriate and environmentally sensitive community facilities.

The interest of local communities and businesses is a key ingredient to the success and vitality of public places, such as the Farrer shopping centre. The Farrer Rejuvenation Community Concept has captured many ideas and demonstrates a strong sense of community interest.

There are many matters that arise when considering the suggested projects in the petitions. These include the various environmental impacts, the nature and condition of existing facilities located in the suburb, urban density, land use and alternate community requirements and developments across the greater Woden Valley region.

Suburban development, including the provision of urban open space and facilities is determined by the regional Plan of Management in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Urban Design Guidelines. The parkland adjoining the Farrer shopping precinct is categorised as a Neighbourhood Park in accordance with the regional Plan of Management for the Woden and Weston Creek's Urban Parks and Sportsgrounds. This Plan can be found at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2007-24/di.asp>. Neighbourhood parks are generally characterised by a small-scale landscape setting available for general community use and typical park infrastructure in such spaces may include play facilities and seating. The provision of major park infrastructure such as that suggested by the petitioners is generally provided at high use district parks.

The ACT Government has over the past decade invested substantial funds into the upgrade of local shopping centres to improve safety and amenity. The priorities for upgrade works are based on assessment and analysis of a range of data including the role, importance and viability of each centre, current and future demographics and asset condition and compliance to current standards. I am advised that the Farrer shopping centre was upgraded in 2013 with improvements to landscaping, access and lighting.

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Public toilets are generally only provided in high use town, district and group centres and town and district parks. Many of the toilets at older centres, such as Chifley shops/oval, are a legacy from the original development. In new developments or refurbishment of shopping centres, it is a requirement that toilet facilities are provided by the developer within the shopping complex.

The ACT Government has also been upgrading public playgrounds and establishing natural play spaces across the ACT. Natural play spaces have recently been installed in Telopea Park, Tuggeranong Town Park and O'Connor parkland. The ACT Government manages over 500 playgrounds, including four local playgrounds in Farrer. One of these is located very close to the local shopping centre. Playgrounds are prioritised for upgrade based on recommendations from annual safety audits along with current demographic, spatial and social information. This process ensures that safety standards are maintained and public investments are suitably targeted.

Should a playground in Farrer be upgraded in the future, the community will be consulted on the upgrade, including on the location of the playground and type of equipment to be provided. This may include skate items and a basketball half court for older children.

In regard to the proposed wetland for Farrer, under the ACT Healthy Waterways project up to 25 projects have been identified to improve long-term water quality in the ACT and downstream river system. It involves the construction of a range of infrastructure, including ponds, wetlands, rain gardens and swales as well as creek restoration and channel reconnection, which are designed to reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment and pollutants entering our waterways. The sites have been selected in order to maximise water quality outcomes and Farrer was not identified in the list of priority sites. Further information can be found on the Environment website www.environment.act.gov.au/water/ACT-Healthy-Waterways/healthy-waterways/act-healthy-waterways-project.

While I note the suggestion of a Farrer Community Strategic Plan, I can advise that strategic plans are developed for regional areas and town centres to ensure facilities and resources are allocated across a broader area rather than for each individual suburb level.

I understand the significant value in community-led proposals for suburban improvements. I have referred the petition to TCCS to review it in context of developing the Territory-wide program for playground upgrades and public realm improvements.

In the interim, if the Farrer community is interested in forming a community group of volunteers to empower them to improve their public park, they can contact City Presentation's Community Volunteer Group Coordinator on (02) 6205 2044 or email at: TCCS_CP_UrbanPrograms@act.gov.au.

Thank you for raising these matters. I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Meegan Fitzharris MLA
Minister for Transport and City Services

5/10/2017