



Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Early Childhood Development
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
Minister for Women
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Member for Ginninderra

Mr Lachlan Butler
Chair
Belconnen Community Council
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Dear Mr Butler

Lachlan

Thank you for meeting with me on 1 September 2023 regarding the Belconnen Community Council's interest in public education planning in the Belconnen Town Centre.

The ACT Infrastructure Plan (2019) indicative pipeline identified new or expanded primary school infrastructure may be required in Belconnen Town Centre midway through this decade to meet growing enrolment demand.

However, since 2019, the rate of residential growth, development progress and school enrolments around central Belconnen have not grown as quickly as projected at that time. In fact, the number of primary school age children from Belconnen Town Centre enrolled in ACT public schools has only increased by around 60 students since 2019, when the ACT Infrastructure Plan was released (source: *Education Census*).

Based on current enrolment and projected demand, existing public schools in central Belconnen have sufficient capacity to accommodate enrolments over the next five to ten years.



The ACT Government is continuing to monitor population growth and anticipated enrolment demand to plan for future public education needs. The Education Directorate develops enrolment projections in collaboration with the ANU School of Demography. School planning is informed by a range of data sources, including:

- Education Census
- Education enrolment projections
- ACT Chief Treasury Population Projections
- ABS Estimated Resident Population Data
- Analysis of affiliation from school aged residents to public and non-government schools, out of area enrolments and enrolment trends
- Monitoring residential development

The ACT Government also considers potential longer-term requirements for school capacity, which could include new or expanded schools (either on existing Education-owned land or at new locations), as well as enrolment policy demand management through changes to Priority Enrolment Areas (PEA).

When we met, I undertook to provide a summary of sites around central Belconnen that the Directorate have considered and determined to be unsuitable for potential future public education infrastructure. Feasibility analysis of potential suitability of land for new school infrastructure considers a range of factors, including land availability, accessibility and transport, projected demand, proximity to established schools, relationship to surrounding facilities, Territory Plan zoning and provisions, topography, flooding and bushfire risk, and site servicing works.

Potential Site	Location	Feasibility Analysis
<i>'Emu Ridge' oval</i>	<i>Part Section 150 Belconnen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing dryland oval and flood basin. • Significant challenges for access and stormwater management. • Site proposed for ACT Government Healthy Waterways project to improve water quality.
<i>'Lathlain Street Precinct'</i>	<i>Sections 21, 22 & 23 Belconnen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant development sites within the Belconnen Town Centre. • Identified as redevelopment sites for ACT Government land release. • Constrained size and arrangement of land, potential requirement for significant site preparation works.
<i>'Circus Site Precinct'</i>	<i>Section 151 Belconnen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant development site within the Belconnen Town Centre. • Identified as redevelopment site for ACT Government land release. • Constrained (insufficient) size and unsuitable arrangement of land for school infrastructure.
<i>Former Belconnen Health Centre</i>	<i>Block 45 Section 54 Belconnen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant development site within the Belconnen Town Centre. • Insufficient size to accommodate a school (0.2ha).
<i>Canberra Institute of Technology Bruce</i>	<i>Block 4 Section 9 Bruce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to utilise part of the existing campus. • Majority of land area is committed to other uses, and the site is not located in proximity to future enrolment growth areas.

Potential Site	Location	Feasibility Analysis
<i>Winchester Police Centre</i>	<i>Part Blocks 7&14 Section 31 Belconnen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing ACT Police site and carpark. Identified by Government for possible future urban renewal. Location less than one kilometre from Macquarie Primary School would not achieve value for money given capacity available at Macquarie PS. Site currently in use. Potential to be reconsidered as a possible longer-term option.
<i>University of Canberra</i>	<i>Bruce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of potential sites within UC, subject to ongoing UC MasterPlanning. 1 hectare site insufficient size, unsuitable for a primary school

The Education Directorate will continue feasibility, planning and site analysis in the Belconnen Town Centre to ensure every child or young person continues to be guaranteed a place at their PEA school.

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy on behalf of the Belconnen Community Council and in the interests of the local Belconnen community.

Yours sincerely

Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs