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Stromlo District Play Fields

Consultation report

In the context of a 2025 Development Application

Report on community consultation

Canberrans were invited by the Territory Planning Authority (TPA) to provide feedback from 3 to 23 July 2025 on the Stromlo District Playing Fields project in the context of a Development Application (DA). The new district playing fields at Stromlo Forest Park will service the growing Molonglo region and will provide sporting groups and the local community more broadly, with sporting and community facilities to support a diverse range of health and recreational activities.

Construction of the facility will be delivered in stages.

Stage one is anticipated to include:

- full works to prepare the site including earthworks, services, stormwater treatments
- one synthetic grass sportsground consisting of two rectangular fields and one modified AFL oval (that uses the same space)
- a central sports pavilion
- match play LED sportsground lighting for the synthetic grass field to maximise usage opportunities (both training and competition) for a number of outdoor field sports
- a central internal road, carparking
- landscaping including pedestrian footpaths and the planting of trees.

Stage two, subject to funding approval, is anticipated to include:

- one natural grass oval (suitable for AFL) with a centre turf cricket square (with adjoining cricket practice nets)
- one natural grass rectangular field
- LED sportsground lighting for both fields
- additional landscaping requirements.

The conversation

Prior to the Development Application community consultation, several engagements were undertaken with the community over the years:

- The provision of district playing fields was identified in the Stromlo Forest Park 2016 Masterplan.
- In preparation for the Development Application, targeted consultation occurred in August and September 2024 with special interest groups including the ACT Brumbies, Cricket ACT, Canberra Region Rugby League, Ultimate Frisbee, Equestrian ACT, AFL NSW/ACT, and the Molonglo Valley Community Forum. A letterbox drop was also undertaken in September 2024 to approximately 8,400 residents.
- In 2020, special interest groups were invited to contribute to a survey that informed the Regional Sportsground Analysis Report, which helped identify potential future users of the facility.

Community feedback

The community provided the TPA with 79 representations as part of the Development Application process. Most representations came from nearby residents, Stromlo Forest Park users, and local sporting associations. The items raised in the representations were categorised into different topics.

Main themes of community feedback

The themes most frequently raised by the community were:

- Changes to the nearby mountain bike trails (54 submissions)
- Impacts to the environment and nearby trees/wildlife (42 submissions)
- Impacts on nearby traffic and parking (30 submissions)
- Lack of community consultation (27 submissions)
- Noise impacts (25 submissions)
- Lighting impacts (18 submissions)
- Impact to the nearby bushfire memorial (17 submissions)
- Use of synthetic turf (16 submissions)

Other topics identified were:

- General support for new playing fields in the Molonglo Valley
- Impacts to pedestrian safety
- Lack of public toilets

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- Lack of changing facilities
 - Impact on horse riding
 - Heritage naming
 - Insufficient number of cricket nets
 - Poor accessibility

Response to topics raised

In scope of the project

Traffic congestion and road network stress

Community submissions raised concerns about how the proposed development would impact traffic volumes, road safety, and residential amenity, particularly during peak sporting times.

Local community members highlighted that key intersections, such as Cotter Road and Eucumbene Drive, are already operating above acceptable thresholds. The projected increase of more than 190 cars per hour was seen as a key contributor to local congestion.

Concerns were also raised about increased traffic on surrounding local roads, including Swallowtail Road, Peter Cullen Way, and Steve Irwin Avenue. Representations noted existing safety issues on Swallowtail Road, particularly for children crossing, and suggested the development may worsen 'rat-running' and speeding.

The lack of public transport servicing the site was flagged as a key issue, with the reliance on private vehicles expected to put further strain on the road network and contribute to overflow parking in nearby residential streets.

Some community representations also questioned the accuracy of the Transport Impact Assessment (TIA), which concluded minimal impact on the road network. Locals argued this does not reflect on-the-ground realities.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members regarding potential increases in traffic volumes, road safety risks, and impacts on residential amenity, particularly during peak sporting times.

A Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) was undertaken for the proposed development in accordance with City and Environment Directorate's (CED) 'Guidelines for Transport Impact Assessment'.

The analysis incorporated:

- Strategic transport modelling data from the Canberra Strategic Transport Model (CSTM) for 2021, 2026, 2031, and 2041 peak hours provided by CED, which includes regional growth data

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- Actual traffic tube count data from Cotter Road, Swallowtail Road, Banjo Paterson Avenue, and Peter Cullen Way provided by City and Environment Directorate (CED)
 - Engineering best practice principles applied by the independent Traffic consultant, Burchills Engineering Solutions, to estimate future traffic generation and trip distribution, where required

Modelling using the SIDRA Intersection 9.1 software indicates that Cotter Road/Eucumbene Drive intersection would achieve satisfactory levels of service once the facility is in full operation. For the other intersections analysed, the levels of service are all well within acceptable ranges for future scenarios up to 2041. Additionally, the peak traffic generated by the sports facility is anticipated to occur outside the morning and evening peak hours of the external road network. These results support the TIA's conclusion that the proposed development is expected to have low impact on the surrounding traffic network.

However, the ACT Government recognises that community members have expressed concerns about cumulative impacts, particularly in the context of ongoing residential growth in the area. These concerns will be shared with the relevant teams at CED for their consideration as part of broader transport planning processes.

While some aspects such as broader road network upgrades and public transport servicing fall outside the scope of this project, the following traffic impact mitigation strategies are included within the development proposal:

- Provision of onsite overflow parking to reduce pressure on surrounding streets
- Implementation of a low-speed environment within the sportsground site
- Installation of raised pedestrian thresholds within the site to improve safety
- Providing a 3-metre-wide shared path, with pedestrian priority, through the site into the broader Stromlo Park precinct.

Following discussions with the CED Road Safety and Active Travel teams the following additional traffic impact mitigation measures have now been proposed immediately surrounding the development proposal:

- Pedestrian markings on the active travel path within the site to improve pedestrian safety and provide pedestrian priority
- Reduction of the signposted speed on Swallowtail Road to 50 km/h along the frontage of the site with traffic calming measures
- Installation of a marked pedestrian crossing point beyond the southern leg of the roundabout at Swallowtail Road / Peter Cullen Way. This crossing will connect with the local active travel route that runs through Wright.

These measures aim to support safe access and movement within and around the site, while responding to key concerns raised by the community.

Insufficient parking provision and its impact on surrounding streets

Community representations raised concerns that the proposed parking capacity is inadequate for the scale and intensity of use expected at the facility. Many noted that the current design does not account for peak usage periods such as back-to-back games, carnivals, or major sporting events, which are likely to result in overflow parking in nearby residential streets.

Concerns were raised about the lack of integration with public transport or active travel, and only 200 parking bays are proposed for a precinct expected to serve 20,000 people. Modelling assumptions were also questioned, such as the omission of impacts from paid parking at Stromlo Forest Park.

Local community members expressed frustration that surrounding suburban streets are already under pressure during weekend events, with common issues including congestion, verge parking, and restricted access for emergency vehicles. These streets are often narrow or one-way, with limited turning space and existing parking demand from nearby apartments.

Community members also raised concerns that users of the new facility will park in nearby residential streets to avoid paid parking, causing a loss of amenity, access issues, and safety concerns for children and pedestrians. Community members also highlighted that inadequate parking may impact the experience of visitors and users, particularly families and individuals with mobility needs. It was also raised that the facility may also place strain on existing facilities within Stromlo Forest Park, including its role as a popular cycling hub.

Suggested improvements included increasing the number of car parks along the access road, exploring new parking locations near the Bushfire Memorial (with careful consultation to protect its integrity), and ensuring any additional parking is integrated with broader access and safety considerations, directing access via Cotter Road or the main access road to protect local streets and nearby bushland. Clarity was requested on how street parking will be managed to keep roads safe, two-way, and available to residents.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges community concerns regarding parking capacity, particularly during peak sporting events and high-traffic periods.

The proposed parking allowance for the Stromlo District Playing Fields has been developed based on a detailed analysis of expected usage during typical sport training and competition events for the various sports disciplines catered for. This was validated with parking demands experienced at other similar district playing fields in the ACT.

Based on this analysis, a maximum of 530 users is anticipated during standard operations, requiring approximately 212 parking spaces (based on 2.5 persons per vehicle). For rarer major events, an overflow parking area has been included in the design. This area is approximately 100m x 25m with an estimate capacity of 100 vehicles and will be managed during infrequent major events to reduce pressure on the surrounding streets.

As with other district playing fields across the ACT, there may be some occasions where onsite parking is at capacity. In such cases, participants may access additional parking within Stromlo Forest Park or available on-street parking in the surrounding area.

The ACT Government is working to ensure that parking provision supports safe and accessible access for all users, including families and individuals with mobility needs. Access to the Bushfire Memorial will continue to be available via the existing parking facilities.

Concerns surrounding paid parking

Representations noted that since the introduction of paid parking at Stromlo Forest Park, overflow into nearby streets has already increased, and this trend is expected to worsen. Community members expressed concern that if paid parking is implemented at the new facility it may lead to increased parking pressure on surrounding suburban streets, as users seek to avoid fees.

Response

There are no plans to introduce paid parking at the Stromlo District Playing Fields. As a community facility, the site is intended to encourage participation and access, consistent with other district playing fields across the ACT. To discourage inappropriate use and manage parking within the site, bollards and heavy-duty access gates are proposed along the internal roads to prevent parking outside designated bays.

Concerns surrounding verge parking

Representations highlighted that limited parking provision is likely to lead to congestion and ad hoc verge parking along Swallowtail Road and surrounding side streets. Community representations suggested measures such as bollards, kerbs, planting, and No Parking signage to inhibit unsafe verge parking, particularly on the eastern side of Swallowtail Road. Some proposed creating a new vehicle access and dedicated parking area for the Bushfire Memorial to help alleviate verge parking pressures.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges community concerns about potential congestion and unsafe verge parking along Swallowtail Road and nearby residential streets, particularly during peak usage periods.

To help manage parking behaviour and reduce pressure on surrounding streets, the following measures are proposed:

- No stopping signage along Swallowtail Road to discourage verge parking and maintain safe traffic flow
- Bollards and heavy-duty access gates throughout the site adjacent internal roads to prevent vehicles from parking outside designated bays or accessing the playing fields

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- Signage and wayfinding to encourage participants utilising other Stromlo Forest Park facilities (i.e. mountain bike trails and criterion track) to use the main car park.

Suggestions regarding a separate vehicle access and dedicated parking area for the Bushfire Memorial have been noted and will be shared with Stromlo Forest Park representatives for their consideration.

Pedestrian access and road safety

Community representations raised concern that the proposed development removes key informal pedestrian and active travel routes currently used by Wright residents to access Stromlo Forest Park. These include entry points along Swallowtail Road at the northern end of Brittle Gums, opposite Peter Cullen Way, and halfway between Peter Cullen Way and Cotter Road.

Representations also noted that the proposal does not appropriately consider pedestrian safety, especially for children and families walking to and from the site. More pedestrian crossings were requested along Swallowtail Road at key intersections, including Peter Cullen Way and Banjo Paterson Avenue, as well as throughout internal access roads. Concerns were raised about how safe pedestrian access will be managed during peak usage, given the anticipated increase in vehicle traffic.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members regarding the impact of the proposed development on informal pedestrian and active travel routes currently used by Wright residents to access Stromlo Forest Park.

The importance of maintaining safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling connections is noted, particularly for families, children, and local residents who regularly move through the area on foot or by bike. We have also discussed these concerns with City and Environment Directorate (CED) Road Safety and Active Travel teams and are proposing the following additional measures:

- Pedestrian markings on the active travel path within the site to improve pedestrian safety and provide pedestrian priority.
- Reduction of the signposted speed on Swallowtail Road to 50 km/h along the frontage of the site with traffic calming measures.
- Installation of a marked pedestrian crossing point at the southern roundabout on Swallowtail Road.
- Providing a 3-metre-wide shared path, with pedestrian priority, through the site into the broader Stromlo Forest Park precinct.

Lighting concerns

Community representations raised concerns about the potential impacts of lighting on residents, local character, and the environment. Community members questioned the clarity and scope of the AEC Obtrusive Lighting Risk Assessment and noted the Development Application does not outline clear mitigation strategies.

Concerns include light spill into nearby homes, particularly from floodlights during late-night games which may run beyond 9:30pm, and disruption to the peaceful character of the area and the Bushfire Memorial. Swallowtail Road is currently unlit and with increased traffic, this raises safety concerns in the evenings.

Environmentally, the site is located within a designated dark sky zone near Mount Stromlo Observatory.

Despite stated compliance, community raised concerns about skyglow, reflectivity from synthetic fields, potential impact of lighting on local wildlife, and the lack of independent verification against International Dark-Sky Association standards.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledge the concerns raised by community members regarding the potential impacts of lighting associated with the proposed development, particularly in relation to residential amenity, environmental sensitivity, and the character of the surrounding area.

The lighting design has been developed in consultation with representatives from Mt Stromlo Observatory to ensure the sportsground floodlighting and street lighting design aligns with the requirements of the designated dark sky zone. All lighting complies with all applicable Australian Standards and ACT Government design guidelines, with specific measures in place to minimise obtrusive vertical illuminance and beam intensities towards any residential blocks.

To minimise light spill and skyglow:

- All sportsground floodlighting and street lighting luminaires will be fitted with spill shields to eliminate upward light output and minimise skyglow.
- The colour temperature of sports lighting has been reduced from 5200K to a warmer 4000K, and street/pedestrian lighting will use 3000K, which is less disruptive to wildlife and residents.
- Lighting systems will be equipped with automated controls, including timers, remote dimming, and manual overrides, ensuring lights operate only when needed and allowing for extended dark periods each night.
- All sports, street and pedestrian lighting luminaires and systems have a 0.0% Upward Waste Light Ratio complying with Dark Sky requirements.
- Pavilion and security lighting will be controlled via daylight switches and proximity sensors to minimise unnecessary illumination when facilities are not in use.

We understand concerns about light spill into nearby homes, especially during evening games. The sportsground floodlighting is designed to minimise vertical light spill. Lights will normally be turned off by 9:30pm for all training and match play, maintaining the peaceful character of the area and respecting the significance of the Bushfire Memorial.

In addition, the lighting design also ensures safety and amenity for users within the facility. Lighting levels have been designed to relevant Australian and local standards to support safe movement throughout the site, including car parks and pedestrian paths/crossings, so that users leaving the venue after evening games do not encounter unsafe poorly lit conditions.

Noise concerns

Community representations raised concerns about the potential for increased noise levels affecting the peaceful amenity of nearby residential areas, particularly on weekends. Community members highlighted likely disruptions from game-day cheering, whistles, amplified announcements, traffic noise, and after-hours use of the facilities. There is also concern about construction noise during the build phase, and cumulative impacts when combined with existing noise from the nearby Stromlo Running Track, which already generates complaints.

Community members noted that the proposed development is located within a residential zone, where strict noise limits apply under the Environment Protection Regulation 2005. The proposed sports pavilion and potential use of a PA system are expected to exceed these prescribed limits, particularly during evenings and weekends. Community members expressed concern that no Noise Impact Study or Noise Management Plan was provided to assess or mitigate these effects. The Development Outcomes Report stated that the ACT Environment Protection Authority (EPA) does not require a noise plan for this project, but many strongly disagreed based on the anticipated scale and nature of use.

Representations raised that uncertainty remains about whether a PA system will be installed, and what its operational limits or management approach would be. In the absence of formal assessments, locals felt this indicated a lack of due diligence and insufficient planning consideration for the surrounding community.

Community members requested a comprehensive noise management plan and incorporation of specific mitigation measures into the design. Suggestions included providing a treed buffer along Swallowtail Road to reduce noise transmission, and positioning fields further away from residential boundaries.

Response

We acknowledge the concerns raised by community members regarding potential noise impacts from the proposed development, including game-day activity, amplified sound, traffic, and construction noise.

While the site is located nearby a residential zone, the facility and its users will be required to comply with all applicable legislation, including the Environment Protection Regulation 2005. The ACT Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has also advised that a Noise Management Plan is not required for this project.

In addition, the following key noise management measures are proposed to address community concerns:

- The sports pavilion design does not include a PA system. If a hirer chooses to bring a portable PA system, they must comply with all relevant noise legislation.
- Construction and maintenance noise will be managed in accordance with ACT Government guidelines, including restricted hours and mitigation measures to minimise disruption.
- Traffic and operational noise will be monitored, and management strategies will be considered during peak usage periods.

We acknowledge the suggestion to provide a treed buffer along Swallowtail Road to help reduce noise transmission. While vegetation has limited effectiveness in reducing sound, proposed planting along the site boundary including Swallowtail Road will contribute to visual screening, landscape character, and a sense of separation between the facility and nearby residences.

We remain committed to ensuring the facility supports active community use while maintaining the amenity of surrounding residents.

Environmental and wildlife impacts

Community members noted concerns about the clearing of tree-covered bushland that supports kangaroos, wombats, echidnas, frogs, birds, and other native species. They raised that tree removal may disrupt nesting and breeding cycles, displace fauna, and impact Holden's Creek, a known habitat for native frogs, and that floodlighting and noise may degrade the bushland and disturb nocturnal wildlife. The replacement of native evergreen trees with non-native deciduous species was criticised for reducing ecological value and natural buffering.

Community members wrote that the Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) identifies six threatened species under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 but lacks detail on mitigation or alternative design options. They questioned the accuracy of the ESO, noting it appears to rely on outdated ecological data that does not reflect the now-mature vegetation and thriving wildlife. Many community members strongly recommended a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address risks to biodiversity and endangered ecological communities.

Representations suggested increasing native tree planting, particularly along the north-western edge of the site, relocating fields away from sensitive areas, and improving drainage to protect Holden's Creek and surrounding bushland from runoff.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development, particularly in relation to tree removal, habitat disruption, and the protection of native species and ecosystems.

The project has received an Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) from the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna. The ESO states that, provided the works are undertaken in accordance with the

specified conditions (relating to fauna and fire management, fencing and signage, trees and plantings), the works are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact. The ESO is available via the ACT Government's notifiable instruments register [here](#).

Key environmental considerations incorporated into the project include:

- Retention of all identified threatened ecological communities and significant habitat areas, as outlined in the ESO.
- Protection of the Box-Gum Woodland located north of the site, listed under the EPBC Act, through:
 - A buffer of locally native canopy and understorey planting between the development and the EPBC area.
 - Protective fencing and signage to delineate no-go zones prior to construction
 - Stormwater treatment devices to prevent untreated and/or uncontrolled runoff into Holden's Creek and adjacent bushland
- Preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will include:
 - Fauna management protocols, including burrow checks and licensed relocation if required
 - Noise and lighting controls to reduce disturbance to wildlife
 - Erosion and sediment control measures to protect waterways and vegetation

While the site currently supports a range of fauna, ecological investigations as stated in the approved ESO identified that the vegetation and habitat quality has been significantly altered since the 2003 bushfires. All trees except one (Tree 1255) are classified as non-remnant noting that this tree is not within the site boundary.

To offset the removal of trees, planting is planned both within the project site and offsite in an area designated for permanent protection, in accordance with the replacement ratios required by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, supporting long-term ecological resilience. These efforts reflect our commitment to delivering a project that supports community sport and recreation while protecting the ecological values of the surrounding environment.

Use of synthetic turf

Several representations oppose the use of synthetic turf at the proposed facility, questioning whether it reflects genuine community need or if it is primarily driven by maintenance cost savings. They cite reviews by the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, which highlight risks such as water contamination, soil degradation, heat stress, fire hazards, and end-of-life disposal issues.

Representations noted that synthetic turf contributes to the urban heat island effect, with surface temperatures reportedly reaching 60 to 88°C on hot days. Community members raised concerns that

this will create unsafe conditions for users and reduce comfort for nearby homes and park visitors. They also argue that replacing natural vegetation with artificial surfaces and hard infrastructure, such as car parks, worsens local heat stress and removes natural cooling effects.

Environmental pollution is also a key concern. Community members note the potential for microplastics and chemical leaching, such as PFAS and fertilisers, from synthetic turf into nearby waterways including Holden's Creek. These substances may harm aquatic ecosystems and degrade soil and water quality.

Artificial turf is seen as ecologically barren, offering no support for biodiversity, water filtration, or carbon capture. Community representations noted that the replacement of natural grass and trees with synthetic materials was an unacceptable environmental trade-off. There are also concerns about the lack of recyclability, with damaged turf requiring specialist repair and disposal posing environmental challenges.

Additionally, fire risk is considered especially problematic given the site's proximity to bushland. Community members fear the flammability and heat retention properties of synthetic turf could increase fire hazards in this high-risk zone.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members regarding the proposed use of synthetic turf, particularly in relation to environmental impacts, user safety, and alignment with community needs.

The use of synthetic grass sportsgrounds has been embraced by numerous jurisdictions and sports across Australia to support increased intensity of use, particularly in growing urban areas. This surface type enables year-round access and durability (i.e. not subject to biannual sportsground maintenance closures), which is critical for meeting the sporting needs of the expanding Molonglo community.

The NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's Synthetic Turf Review Final Report 2022 stated synthetic sports surfaces have a low and localised impact on the Urban Heat Island (UHI). Compared with other build forms in a city, their contribution is marginal.

While the impact is considered low, the design for the Stromlo District Playing Fields incorporates several mitigation strategies to reduce heat stress and environmental impact, including:

- A canopy of locally native trees around the synthetic field to provide shade and evaporative cooling
- Tree placement and spacing designed in accordance with ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Bushfire Management Standards, ensuring compliance with fire safety while supporting long-term cooling

Continuing advancements in synthetic grass technology has resulted in a reduced environmental footprint. To address concerns about pollution and ecological impact, the synthetic turf system will include:

- The use of organic infill (i.e. cork, woodchips or corn husk) as a replacement for the black rubber infill material

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- A closed drainage system which filters stormwater through sand and geotextile layers to improve water quality and prevent migration of microplastics

We also recognise concerns about end-of-life disposal. There are now recycling facilities in Australia which can repurpose synthetic grass and infill.

The broader landscape design includes native planting and habitat-sensitive features to maintain ecological value and natural cooling.

A raised kerb is also proposed surrounding the synthetic pitch to further mitigate any migration of synthetic or organic infill to the surrounding environment.

We remain committed to delivering a facility that balances sporting needs with environmental responsibility and community expectations.

Tree Assessment

A representation noted that the Development Application documentation presents conflicting information about Tree 1255. While the summary identifies it as a “High Value” remnant tree, the detailed assessment rates it as “Poor” quality. This inconsistency raises concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the entire tree assessment.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges concerns about conflicting information regarding Tree 1255. To clarify, the Tree Management Plan identifies Tree 1255 as a high-quality tree, and this classification is consistently reflected in the report and supporting drawings, noting that this tree is not within the site boundary.

The findings in the Tree Assessment have been reviewed and accepted by both City Services Urban Treescapes and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

Perceived lack of community consultation

Representations expressed concern over the lack of meaningful consultation prior to the Development Application. Community members reported little to no engagement with Stromlo Forest Park users, particularly regarding the removal of beginner mountain bike trails that earlier plans did not indicate would be affected. The 2024 Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan showed these trails retained alongside the playing fields, but the current proposal significantly expands the playing fields’ footprint with no clear consultation or replacement options.

Representations highlighted that much of the engagement occurred before Wright Stage Two was developed, despite this being the area most affected by the proposal. Local community members expressed concern about limited communication and consultation. One representation noted the only pre-Development Application consultation appeared to be a survey from when the suburb had a much smaller population, noting that “support for the oval proposal was mixed” even then. Several

representations have stated that, had the development been transparently disclosed, they may have reconsidered purchasing in the area.

Representations claim the consultation appears to rely on outdated planning documents, such as the 2016 Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan, and does not appear to have provided recent, local, inclusive opportunities to raise concerns. Some representations claim it is unclear whether sporting organisations were prioritised over residents, with many noting the proposal seems designed to serve Canberra-wide sporting groups rather than the local community.

Some have questioned whether the consultation process meets the planning standards. Others highlighted that even the Stromlo Forest Park team may not have been adequately consulted, as a recent document from them showed a much smaller development footprint.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the consultation process prior to the Development Application (DA) for the Stromlo District Playing Fields. Community feedback is an important part of planning, and we appreciate the representations received. The community consultation undertaken as part of this DA and this consultation report are key parts of the broader community engagement undertaken for this project. The provision of district playing fields was identified in the Stromlo Forest Park 2016 Masterplan.

In preparation for the Development Application, targeted consultation occurred in August and September 2024 with special interest groups including the ACT Brumbies, Cricket ACT, Canberra Region Rugby League, Ultimate Frisbee, Equestrian ACT, AFL NSW/ACT, and the Molonglo Valley Community Forum. A letterbox drop was also undertaken in September 2024 to approximately 8,400 residents.

In 2020, special interest groups were invited to contribute to a survey that informed the Regional Sportsground Analysis Report, which helped identify potential future users of the facility.

The ACT Government understands that some community members feel that consultation did not adequately reach local residents or reflect the current population of Wright Stage Two. Feedback regarding the visibility and timing of engagement has been noted and will help inform future planning processes as part of this project and other similar projects. There will also be more opportunities for community engagement as part of the project, including ongoing consultation during construction.

Impact on the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) during construction

Community representations raised concerns about the safety and accessibility of the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) during the construction of the Stromlo District Playing Fields. The trail must remain open throughout construction, with no use of any part of it for vehicle or machinery access. Large, noisy machinery may pose safety risks, particularly for equestrians, and it is requested that contractors provide ongoing updates to the ACT Equestrian Association (ACTEA) and BNT Coordinator to keep the equestrian community safe and informed. Clear communication is sought regarding any construction impacts affecting trail users.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the safety and accessibility of the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) during construction of the Stromlo District Playing Fields. The BNT is a valued part of Stromlo Forest Park and an important route for equestrian users.

The trail will remain open throughout construction, and no part of it will be used for vehicle or machinery access. The project team recognises the potential risks posed by construction activity, particularly for equestrians, and will work to ensure safety is maintained at all times.

The design and delivery teams will liaise with the ACT Equestrian Association (ACTEA) and the BNT Coordinator throughout the project to provide timely updates and manage any potential impacts. Clear communication will be prioritised to ensure trail users are informed and safe during all phases of construction.

Community sport and recreation needs

Weston Molonglo Football Club (WMFC) is operating at capacity and urgently needs more playing fields to meet growing demand, especially from younger players in the Molonglo Valley. The club has a strong female membership and says it cannot continue supporting participation from young girls in the area without additional facilities. Given the population growth in Wright and the expected high use of the site, some representations suggested including more small-footprint sport and recreation options. Ideas include basketball hoops, tennis walls, and even an ice-skating rink to diversify the recreational offering.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the representations from Weston Molonglo Football Club (WMFC) and the broader community regarding the urgent need for additional playing fields to support growing participation, particularly among young and female players in the Molonglo Valley.

The Stromlo District Playing Fields are being delivered to help meet this demand for organised sport and community use. Sport and Recreation Facilities (CED) will be responsible for the overall maintenance and operations of the facility, including ground hire allocation, which will commence as construction nears completion.

The ACT Government also appreciates the community's suggestions to include small-footprint recreational features such as basketball hoops, tennis walls, and other inclusive amenities. While these elements are not currently part of the design, the feedback has been noted and will be shared with the relevant ACT Government teams for future consideration as part of broader recreational planning in the Molonglo Valley.

Naming of the playing fields

A suggestion has been received to adopt a dual name for the playing fields, incorporating both English and Ngunnawal language, to reflect and honour the cultural heritage of the area.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the suggestion to adopt a dual name incorporating both English and Ngunnawal language to reflect the cultural heritage of the area. Opportunities to respectfully implement this will be explored in consultation with Traditional Custodians.

Toilet facilities and amenities block

Representations noted concerns about the adequacy and placement of toilet and change facilities. Families using the rectangular and AFL ovals say the walk to the pavilion is too long, especially for young children and people with mobility needs. Without nearby toilets, some worry the surrounding bushland will be misused. The 20 toilets planned for the pavilion are seen as insufficient for the number of players, spectators, coaches, and families expected. Community members suggest including additional amenities block near the rectangular field. While a water refill station is planned at the pavilion and a tap proposed for a future storage shed near the grass ovals, broader concerns remain around heat and shade, especially during peak activity periods.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the community's feedback regarding the placement and adequacy of toilet and change facilities, particularly in relation to accessibility for families and people with mobility needs.

The pavilion has been designed to service all proposed sportsgrounds and includes 20 toilets, change rooms, and a water refill station. These facilities have been planned in accordance with local design standards and are intended to support expected levels of use across the site, as experienced at other similar district playing fields in the ACT.

While additional amenities blocks are not currently planned, feedback regarding accessibility and comfort has been noted and will help inform future planning considerations.

Inclusive and accessible facilities

Concerns have been raised about the accessibility of the playing fields for people with mobility needs. Community members highlight that the facility should be inclusive for all users, including parents using wheelchairs, older spectators, and individuals with limited mobility. The current design shows fields connected by grassed areas but lacks clearly defined accessible paths around each field. Representations are requesting accessible paths and dedicated viewing areas to ensure everyone can safely and comfortably participate in and enjoy events at the playing fields.

Response

Disability access has been designed to Australian Standards (AS 1428) and has been provided from the carparks adjacent to the synthetic pitch through to the Pavilion and up to and including the synthetic pitch (to satisfy Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements). This includes eight

dedicated disabled carparking spaces. Access to other fields has been made through pedestrian crossings and flat areas to desired destinations such as the cricket practice nets.

Sporting club consultation and access

Weston Molonglo Football Club has expressed interest in future access to the District Playing Fields, reflecting local demand for sporting infrastructure. However, questions remain about which sporting teams were consulted during the planning phase and whether community clubs like WMFC were given meaningful opportunities to contribute to the design or access discussions.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the interest expressed by Weston Molonglo Football Club (WMFC) in future access to the Stromlo District Playing Fields and recognise the growing demand for sporting infrastructure in the Molonglo Valley.

Consultation during the planning phase included engagement with a range of sporting organisations such as ACT Brumbies, AFL NSW/ACT, Canberra Region Rugby League, Canberra Ultimate, Capital Football, Cricket ACT, and Equestrian ACT.

The design team also met with the Molonglo Valley Community Forum on several occasions to discuss the facility.

Sport and Recreation Facilities (CED) will be responsible for the overall maintenance and operations of the facility, including ground hire allocation. The ground hire allocation process will commence as construction of the facility nears completion.

Cricket infrastructure

One community member requested to consider double the number of cricket nets for the expanding population in Molonglo.

Response

The current design includes net numbers in line with what is provided at other ACT Government sportsgrounds and will be suitable for formal training and community use. While there are no plans to increase the number of nets at this stage, feedback has been noted and will help inform future planning and operational considerations.

Cricket ACT and Weston Creek Molonglo Cricket representations

A representation was received from Cricket ACT to include sufficient infrastructure to support regular use for the turf oval (Stage 2). A detailed representation from a former Board member was also received containing a range of comments regarding the design of the Stromlo District Playing Fields.

Response

Ongoing consultation with Cricket ACT will be undertaken to address the queries raised and ensure the facility supports the needs of cricket users.

Site selection

Representations questioned whether the proposed site is appropriate for a high-traffic recreational facility, given its ecological sensitivity, proximity to homes, and role as a well-used community trail area. Concerns have been raised about long-term impacts on amenity, access, and the natural environment.

Many believe alternative sites have not been adequately explored. Suggestions include already-cleared land in Rivett, Coombs, and Waramanga, the site near Stromlo Anglican College, and land south of Cotter Road near Eucumbene Drive. These locations are seen as offering better road access, reduced impact on residents, improved safety for users of Stromlo Forest Trails, and greater preservation of the natural setting.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the ecological sensitivity of the site, its proximity to residential areas, and its role as a well-used community trail network.

The provision of district playing fields within Stromlo Forest Park was identified in the Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan, which was approved by Cabinet in 2016 following community consultation. The site was selected to support the long-term vision for Stromlo as a multi-use recreational precinct serving Molonglo and the broader ACT community.

Stromlo Forest Park is already a key destination for sport and recreation in the ACT. The addition of district playing fields will further enhance this venue by providing much-needed formal green space for Molonglo residents and sporting groups, while supporting equitable access to community sport.

The ACT Government appreciates the community's suggestions regarding alternative locations. However, site selection for the Stromlo District Playing Fields has already been determined through established planning processes and is not subject to further review as part of this project.

Outside the project's scope

Road design improvement suggestions

Community representations raised concerns that current road designs do not adequately address the increased traffic expected as a result of the development. Many community members felt that further upgrades and traffic management measures are needed to ensure road safety for all users, including motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Suggestions included the installation of new roundabouts at key intersections such as Swallowtail Road and Cotter Road, and redesigning existing intersections like Cotter Road and Eucumbene Drive. These were seen as necessary to improve vehicle flow and reduce the risk of accidents.

Representations also called for traffic calming measures along Swallowtail Road, including reduced speed limits, additional speed humps, and devices to slow vehicles between roundabouts. There were concerns that the current design does not sufficiently mitigate risks associated with increased vehicle movements, particularly on roads that will be shared by Stromlo Forest Park users and visitors to the new fields.

Additional proposals included opening Uriarra Road to two-way flow to help disperse traffic more evenly and exploring a new signalised intersection at Cotter Road and Eucumbene Drive to provide an alternative point of access to the site

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the detailed feedback from community members regarding the adequacy of current road designs in managing increased traffic volumes associated with the proposed development.

While the proposed changes fall outside the scope of this project, they will be referred to the relevant teams within CED for consideration as part of broader transport and infrastructure planning to ensure that traffic and safety impacts are addressed holistically.

Changes to the nearby mountain bike trails

Community representations showed concern about the removal of beginner mountain bike trails, particularly in the Brittle Gums area. These trails provide safe, local access into Stromlo and are important for families, new riders, and children. Their removal would limit outdoor recreation, active transport, and undermine Stromlo's status as a world-class cycling destination.

Community members question whether trail usage has been properly monitored, noting that there are no other beginner-level trails or suitable land available. The current design overlooks existing trails and access points. It is recommended that removed beginner trails be replaced and that new connections be incorporated into the design.

Community members have expressed concerns regarding the proposal to relocate beginner trails to the far side of Stromlo due to safety concerns and reduced suburban access.

Suggested improvements include linking the Banjo Paterson roundabout to the fire trail, connecting the northern bike path across Swallowtail Road to the shared path along Phillip Hodgins Street, and relocating the shared path to the opposite side of the internal road to avoid car park crossings.

Project response

The ACT Government acknowledges the community's concern regarding the removal of beginner mountain bike trails, particularly in the Brittle Gums area. These trails play an important role in

providing safe, accessible entry points into Stromlo Forest Park for families, children, and new riders.

While existing trails will be impacted by the delivery of the Stromlo District Playing Fields, the broader trail network will be maintained to support the riders.

The relocation and implementation of new mountain bike trails falls outside the scope of this project. However, the project has provided the community's comments on this matter to Stromlo Forest Park. We will continue to work with Stromlo Forest Park representatives throughout delivery to share community feedback and suggestions. We appreciate the community's suggestions regarding improved trail connections, including links to Banjo Paterson roundabout, Swallowtail Road, and Phillip Hodgins Street.

The Stromlo Forest Park Tracks and Trails Masterplan recognises the importance of catering to riders of all skill levels, including beginners. Stage 1 of the Tracks and Trails Masterplan is currently being progressed by arranging the required environmental and cultural assessments and approvals. This will be followed by the construction of new trails including new green-level trails, designed for beginner riders.

Impacts to the nearby Bushfire Memorial

Community representations believe the scale and nature of the proposed sports facility are incompatible with the quiet, reflective purpose of the Bushfire Memorial. Cheering crowds, heavy traffic, and overflow parking risk undermining the memorial's significance as a place of remembrance for lives lost and communities impacted by bushfires. Many view the location decision as disrespectful, particularly if it involves removing native trees planted by community members after the fires.

There is wide support for working with Stromlo Forest Park to ensure the memorial retains a distinct identity and respectful access. Community representations oppose 'hiding' the memorial site near active playing fields and instead propose a separate entrance and dedicated carpark from Cotter Road near Eucumbene Drive. With limited parking already at Stromlo, concerns remain about future access being further restricted.

Response

The ACT Government acknowledges the strong community sentiment regarding the importance of preserving the quiet, reflective character of the Bushfire Memorial and ensuring it remains a place of remembrance and respect.

The delivery of the Stromlo District Playing Fields will not impact access to the Bushfire Memorial, and the Memorial will remain separate from the operation of the playing fields, allowing for quiet reflection. The trees planted by the community members around the Memorial will be protected as part of the proposed development.

The existing car park for the Bushfire Memorial will be retained as part of the broader parking provision ensuring continued and respectful access for visitors.

Suggestions regarding a separate vehicle access and dedicated parking area for the Bushfire Memorial have been noted and will be shared with Stromlo Forest Park representatives for their consideration.

The ACT Government remains committed to working with Stromlo Forest Park and the community to ensure the Bushfire Memorial continues to be respected, protected, and accessible.

What's next?

Feedback received as part of the consultation has helped the Territory understand the views of the community and was used to inform their assessment of the project.

The conversation on the project's impacts on the community will continue during the next phases of development. This includes collaboration between the project and other stakeholders such as the City and Environment Directorate and with UC Stromlo Forest Park.

There will be further opportunities for the community to engage with the project during the next phases of development, construction, and operations.