



YWCA CANBERRA

Submission to Molonglo Town Centre Community Consultation

Leah.dwyer@ywca-canberra.org.au

Acknowledgement of Country

YWCA Canberra proudly recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their cultures and pays our respect to these rights. YWCA Canberra acknowledges the need to respect and encourage the diversity of Indigenous cultures and to respect Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles, and customary laws. We extend our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have preserved the culture and practices of their communities on country for thousands of years. This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be Aboriginal land.

About YWCA Canberra

YWCA Canberra is a feminist not-for profit organisation that has provided community services and represented women's issues in Canberra since 1929. Our mission is 'we strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy' and our vision is 'girls and women thriving'. We provide essential, quality services for women, girls and families in the ACT and surrounding regions. We work in children's services, community development, homelessness and affordable housing, youth services, personal and professional training, women's leadership and advocacy. We are externally accredited against the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Service Standards. Accreditation against the QIC standards supports us to improve client and community engagement, diversity and cultural appropriateness, management systems, governance and service delivery while committing to a cycle of continuous quality improvement. In addition to the QIC standards, we are accredited against the following external client-related service standards for our key areas of work:

- Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care

- National Regulatory System for Community Housing
- Registered Training Organisations Standards
- We also benchmark our work in homelessness and affordable housing against the Community Housing Standards.

Through our national Affiliate Association with YWCA Australia, we are part of the World YWCA network, which connects 120 countries across the globe.

Introduction

YWCA Canberra welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on planning for the proposed Molonglo Town Centre. As a trusted partner of the Canberra community for 95 years, YWCA Canberra has been supporting women and girls through various programs and services including frontline services that support vulnerable community members.

Our submission for the development of the Molonglo Town Centre emphasises the importance of place-based and integrated community and recreational services as well as a distinct social housing target. We also argue that the long-term sustainability of these community services is underpinned by the terms of leasing arrangements. In this regard, we recommend the future community centre in Molonglo be available under a peppercorn lease agreement to enhance viability and continuity of essential services.

Community centres like the Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre (MLYCC), which is on peppercorn lease, in Tuggeranong offer comprehensive support and facilities to the local community. The place-based model provides a welcoming community space that facilitates playgroups, music clubs and gardening activities as well as vital community support including food relief, financial advice and health services for young people.

In a 2023 survey of women in Canberra, conducted by YWCA Canberra, more than 100 responses were received from women who lived in the Molonglo, Woden and Weston Creek areas. The survey revealed trends indicating a degree of housing stress including that 22% of local survey respondents told us they did not have the savings to afford one cycle of housing payments if they lost income. In light of these as well as our reading of the Molonglo District Strategy, YWCA Canberra is using this submission to call on the ACT Government to:

- 1) Ensure peppercorn lease arrangements are available for any future community centre facility in the Molonglo town centre.**

- 2) Ensure the Molonglo community centre provides an integrated service delivery model featuring both recreational opportunities, essential support services and social opportunities.**
- 3) Implement a distinct social housing target in the Molonglo new town centre.**

Community service facilities on peppercorn lease arrangements

YWCA Canberra welcomes the ACT Government's commitment to establish community facilities in the Molonglo town centre, particularly given the increasing demand for existing community services in other districts which has emerged with the development of Molonglo.

YWCA Canberra supports the development of a place-based community service hub in the Molonglo centre, reflecting the successful model of the Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre (MLYCC) in Tuggeranong which serves as a vital resource for the community and hosting a range of activities that cater to diverse needs.

At MLYCC, clients can access food relief through the Lanyon Food Hub and the co-location model provides youth engagement programs and child and family support services, creating a nurturing environment for families and young people. Over the past year, the MLYCC has engaged more than 300 young people through onsite youth engagement programs and provided more than 2100 food hub services. This model also provides direct access to a community garden, as well as spaces for playgroups and recreational groups to meet and socialise. Bringing these diverse services together in one location, run by one entity, is a key factor in achieving success of the future centre.

To ensure the long-term viability of the Molonglo community centre, YWCA Canberra strongly advocates for the provision of a peppercorn lease arrangement for the Molonglo community centre. This approach would enable the community centre to focus resources on service provision rather than facility overheads. The community benefit of a peppercorn

cannot be overstated. With reduced rental costs, the community centre can allocate more resources to essential services and programs, directly benefiting residents.

Recommendation:

- 1) Ensure peppercorn lease arrangements are available for any future community centre facility in the Molonglo town centre.**
- 2) Ensure the Molonglo community centre provides an integrated service delivery model featuring both recreational opportunities, essential support services and social opportunities.**

A distinct social housing target.

The ACT faces significant challenges in housing affordability and accessibility. There's a critical need to address the imbalance between affordable housing and income-based social housing. The current conflation between these two distinct housing models has resulted in an ongoing undersupply of social housing throughout Canberra. Income-based rent provides housing a proportion of income, typically set to 25 per cent of income support or pension payments. The proportion of Canberra's social housing density, however, has not kept pace with population growth and need.

The undersupply of social housing is exacerbated by the conflation of affordable housing and income-based social housing models. While the Molonglo district strategy includes a 15% target for social and affordable housing, it's crucial to acknowledge this target does not distinguish between models, and that without a clearly defined social housing target, affordable housing will be prioritised as it is more commercially viable for developers. Separate and clearly defined targets for social housing in Molonglo must be implemented to ensure alignment of housing delivery with population growth and demand in the district.

Recommendation:

- 3) Implement a distinct social housing target in the new town centre.**