

1 July 2015



██████████
Territory Plan Section
GPO Box 158
Canberra, ACT 2601

National Heart Foundation
of Australia (ACT Division)
ABN 32 008 507 328

PO Box 373
Mawson ACT 2607

Telephone (02) 6282 5744
Facsimile (02) 6282 5877

For heart health information
1300 36 27 87
www.heartfoundation.org.au

West Belconnen Urban Development Draft Variation 351

Dear ██████████

The Heart Foundation ACT Division appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on Draft Variation 351 – West Belconnen Urban Development.

As you would be aware Active Living is a fundamental part of improving the health and general wellbeing of the community and evidence suggests that the environment has a significant impact on supporting or discouraging people to continue to be physically active. Physical inactivity remains a significant independent risk factor for being obese, overweight and for some chronic diseases. We have significant concerns that development that occurs as a result of this variation, being on the very edge of Canberra's urban boundary, will do little to support to support active living.

Within Canberra the issue of healthy weight, of people being either overweight or obese, has reached pandemic proportions. In just 20 years our rates of being overweight have risen from 26% in 1996 to 63% in 2014. Left untreated, this issue will be the major contributor to the burden of disease and death within this city. Cardiovascular disease continues to be the number one killer of Canberrans accounting for nearly 30% of mortality, with a further one in five people being affected by the disease.

The Heart Foundation supports the inclusion of Active Living Principles within planning, design and development, as we believe the mounting evidence around Active Living is compelling. Ensuring easy access to walking, cycling and integrated public transport options will make a big difference to how people choose to move around and within Canberra. We strongly support the integration of Active Living Principles in all new development and in the consideration of new areas of urban development and believe these should be used as guiding principles for the development (see Attachment A for Active Living Principles based on recent work by the Heart Foundation ACT).

In this respect it is difficult to provide support for the variation, however we would like to provide the following specific comments on Draft Variation 351 for West Belconnen.

- The release of new areas for urban development should be considered in the context of the metropolitan structure of Canberra. A recent study by the Heart Foundation on the relationship between obesity and physical inactivity found that on average metropolitan areas more than 15km from the Central Business District, had a higher

incidence of obesity, physical inactivity and chronic disease. The location of West Belconnen around 18km from the Canberra CBD and 9 km from Belconnen Town Centre, does not support some of the precepts of integrated transport and land use planning.

- The draft for consultation states that the proposal is consistent with the Territory Plan's statement of strategic directions, however it does not refer to some of the principles which would be relevant to this proposal such as:

1.10 Integrated land use and transport planning will seek to maximise accessibility and transport efficiency, reduce energy consumption, support the preferred pattern of development, promote safety, safeguard environmental quality, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

Principle 1.10 is important as this development, being on the urban edge does not support integrated transport, will encourage car usage and lead to the compromising of existing environmental off sets.

- The principles contained in the draft Structure Plan are generally supported, in particular those relating to mixed use centres and supporting active transport (non-car based trips), however the location of the development on the urban edge of the ACT is such that a successful implementation of the principles, to achieve these outcomes, in reality may be difficult to achieve.

Should you have any questions or require further information please don't hesitate to contact Anthony Burton on 6282 2631 or Anthony.Burton@heartfoundation.org.au

Yours sincerely,



Tony Stubbs
Chief Executive Officer
Heart Foundation ACT

ACT Active Living Principles

1. **Connected Places** - all transport networks should provide interconnected and continuous safe routes, particularly to major destinations and community uses such as shopping centres, schools and health facilities.
2. **Open Space** - good quality, accessible, connected open space provides the opportunity for people to undertake physical activity. Exposure to natural spaces (everything from parks and open countryside to gardens and other greenspaces) has generally been found to have positive benefits for mental and physical health.
3. **Mixed Land Use and Density** - a mixture of land uses and densities creates variety, interest and multiple destinations for users. Clustering of related land uses can improve accessibility and reduce travel distances. Good design can ameliorate conflicts between different land uses such as noise.
4. **Safe and Attractive Places** - all public places should be safe and attractive, this includes people's perception of safety and natural surveillance, through the provision of adequate lighting, active frontages and limiting blank walls at ground floor level. In the context of urban environments, aesthetics relates to the attractiveness of an area and in particular the combined effects of various elements such as the quality of the architectural and landscape design, the quality of views and vistas, and the arrangement of elements such as furniture in the public realm. Attractiveness is also associated with the overall experience and use of the area, including how pleasant it is to sit, walk, cycle, view and talk.
5. **Supportive Infrastructure** - facilities that support physical activity can enhance people's experience and encourage regular activity. This includes infrastructure such as street furniture, shading, water bubblers, signs, bike lockers and bus shelters.
6. **Environments for All** - all spaces should be designed to allow easy access and use by all people, regardless of age, ability or transport mode.