

# GUNGAGHLIN SMOKE SIGNALS

Failed Mixed-Use



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### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

GCC public meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except for January) at 6:30 pm. Meetings are held regardless of any pandemic restrictions - when permitted, we meet at the Gungahlin Eastlake Club otherwise we meet online using Zoom. In either case, we stream and save video of our meetings on the GCC Facebook page ([facebook.com/gungahlin](https://facebook.com/gungahlin)) Further details, agendas, and how to register for online meetings can be found at [gcc.asn.au/meetings](https://gcc.asn.au/meetings)

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## Message from the Editor:

Gungahlin Town Centre could be a place in which we can all take pride. Unfortunately, recent land releases make this unlikely as the remaining blocks will end up as "mixed-use". Mixed-use in Gungahlin is apartment blocks with a few stores that struggle to survive. **Mixed-use** can work but it **is failing** in the Gungahlin Town Centre. This edition outlines the story of the Town Centre and the direction that policy drift is taking us. The good news is there is still time for the ACT government to turn the Town Centre into a vibrant destination for all of Canberra.

KEVIN COX



Gungahlin Community Council

**President:** Peter Elford - [president@gcc.asn.au](mailto:president@gcc.asn.au)

**Vice President:** Henley Samuel - [vicepresident@gcc.asn.au](mailto:vicepresident@gcc.asn.au)

**Secretary:** Sharee Schultz - [secretary@gcc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@gcc.asn.au)

**Treasurer:** Darron Marks - [treasurer@gcc.asn.au](mailto:treasurer@gcc.asn.au)

**Public Officer:** Kevin Cox - [publicofficer@gcc.asn.au](mailto:publicofficer@gcc.asn.au)

**GCC Committee:** Prasad Tipirneni, Ralitsa Dimitrova, Shah Jillani, Sunita Dhindsa, Krishna Nadimpalli, Pradeep Sonaraj

**Web:** [www.gcc.asn.au](http://www.gcc.asn.au)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/gungahlin](http://www.facebook.com/gungahlin)

**Email:** [info@gcc.asn.au](mailto:info@gcc.asn.au)

**Gungahlin Community Council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, at 6:30pm at EastLake Gungahlin, 51 Hinder Street. When possible, meetings are streamed live via Facebook.**

**We are grateful for the financial support provided by the ACT Government.**

# From the President

**PETER ELFORD**



I don't think many of us thought the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would be as significant as it is in September 2021. But here we are, in a Canberra-wide lockdown, kicked off with a flurry of exposure sites in Gungahlin. The lucky run we've had has well and truly come to end for all of us Ken Behrens!

The memory of the Celebrate Gungahlin festival, therefore, seems very distant, even though it was in March. The multi-event "popup" format created a much more varied series of experiences over the week, and the weather again challenged us. Planning has started for the 2022 festival – let us know what you would like to see.

Over the past six months, the GCC has focused on the lack of employment, retail, entertainment and community facilities and services in Gungahlin Town. In April, the GCC called on the ACT government to suspend land sales in the Gungahlin Town Centre to avoid wasting precious land on an increasing number of "mixed-use" developments that are large residential projects that add little back to the town centre. Over 750 residents signed a petition sponsored by Andrew Braddock (Greens MLA), who tabled it in the ACT Assembly in August. The ACT Assembly passed motions in February initiated by Suzanne Orr (Labor MLA for Yerrabi). In June, Andrew Braddock called for substantive planning and land sales changes in the Gungahlin Town Centre. The Suburban Land Agency has committed to engage the Gungahlin community on future land sales. Still, the Minister for Planning, Mick Gentleman, has not acknowledged any issues or chosen to respond directly to the GCC's calls for action.

A depressing example of this failure of planning was the approval of the development application (at the third attempt) of The Establishment on the corner of Gundaroo Drive and Swain Street after a long campaign from residents, the GCC and the YMCA (who operate an adjacent child care centre). Although the ACT Government are undertaking a reform of the ACT planning system, it may not be in time to save the Gungahlin Town Centre.

**[The Minister will be attending the GCC meeting on 13 October – mark it in your calendar!](#)**

Gungahlin is still under-served for community and sporting facilities relative to other Canberra districts. This situation is made worse when major facilities like the Gungahlin Leisure Centre's 50m pool are closed for repairs, which has been the case since mid-2020 when tiles began falling off. Although a contract was signed to repair the pool, the COVID pandemic has prevented the contractor from doing the work, and it's now unlikely it will be fixed in time for the coming summer.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has assessed Gungahlin community facilities in recent months, which sounds valuable and promising. However, the online survey suggests it has a simplistic focus on two blocks in Casey, understood to be for community use, which will now support "100 residences and 24,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space". Efforts to clarify the intent of the survey and the process behind the Casey sites continue.

More positively, Lendlease has been awarded a contract to develop the Gold Creek Homestead site and will continue to engage the community as part of their precinct development. It includes an extension to The Grove retirement village, a residential aged-care facility, and the original Stone Hut Kitchen and Slab Hut restoration, including the surrounding gardens focusing on broader community use. This is a terrific outcome from an excellent community engagement process by the SLA and proof that it is possible to do the right thing for the community, industry and government.

There has been a wonderful explosion in community-led activities, including establishing the Friends of Yerrabi Pond on the back of a petition sponsored by Michael Petersson (Yerrabi MLA), several Floriade in the Community plantings around Gungahlin, and the launch of a Micro Forest in Casey campaign.

The GCC continues to work with other Community Councils in Canberra and other groups that support the community's goals and objectives. It includes the ACT Northern Region Sports and Recreation Reference Group, the Coalition of Mass Participation Sport (COMPS) ACT, the recently convened Governance Meeting for Gungahlin Community Groups, and local residents' associations. We look forward to the ACT Budget in August (COVID permitting) and the possibility that some of this joint work on community services, in particular, is actioned.

# Failed Town Centre Refresh

The appearance of several high-rise residential developments in the Gungahlin Town Centre from 2015 onwards led to widespread confusion and frustration within the Gungahlin community. In response, the Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) approached the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) in November 2016, pointing out the intent of the Gungahlin Precinct Code was not working as expected, so it either needed to be changed or enforced rigorously.

EPSDD agreed to undertake “a place-making review of the Gungahlin precinct plan”, which subsequently became the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh (the Refresh) with a focus on:

- Building height and character
- Upgrading and enhancing public spaces
- Walking, cycling and road transport

The consultation undertaken throughout 2017 as part of the Refresh included many different forms of engagement, including a substantive evening workshop. The resultant Community Engagement Report published in May 2018 reflected much of this feedback but also included the following single sentence:

- Support for increases in building height noted the changing character of the town centre, the need for marker buildings and the strong demand for residential development



All other references in the Community Engagement Report indicated strong opposition for increased residential development in the town centre consistent with the views expressed by most participants in the workshop. The presence of this statement, underlined above, seemed out of place and appeared to be a minority position expressed by a property developer (or developers).

In November 2018, EPSDD released the “Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh – Snapshot”. The GCC and the Gungahlin community were shocked to discover that the Snapshot included significant changes to the Gungahlin Precinct Code (Territory Plan) that had not been tabled and discussed during the Refresh. It included substantive reductions in the amount of commercial space, increases in residential space, new mechanisms for incorporating community space, etc. These proposals were formally included as Draft Variation to the Territory Plan 364 (DV364) published in September 2019.

The entire Refresh experience further undermined the already low level of trust Gungahlin residents have with the planning system and processes. The Refresh took too long, the feedback from the community was selectively picked at, feedback was ignored, and the conclusions and proposed actions were at odds with what the community had expressed.

The GCC submission in response to both DV364 and the Inquiry into DV364 launched in 2021 rejects the proposed changes as they demonstrate the ACT government is committed to nothing but further residential development and the completion of Gungahlin, a dormitory district.

Two MLA motions have passed the ACT Assembly. A petition with over 700 signatures was tabled in the ACT Assembly regarding failings of the Gungahlin Town Centre development. The ACT Government needs to acknowledge there are serious issues with the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre and take immediate and specific action to address the shortfall in employment, retail, community, and entertainment services.

<sup>1</sup> [gcc.asn.au/getting-development-right-for-the-town-centre-the-gungahlin-residential-towers-story/](http://gcc.asn.au/getting-development-right-for-the-town-centre-the-gungahlin-residential-towers-story/)

<sup>2</sup> [yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/download\\_file/2936/612](https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/download_file/2936/612)

<sup>3</sup> [yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/download\\_file/2929/612](https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/download_file/2929/612)

# ACT Land Use Planning

PETER ELFORD

In Canberra there are no such things as local councils – all matters related to land use planning are administered by the ACT Government, specifically the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and the Minister for Planning, a position currently held by MLA Mick Gentleman.

The Territory Plan is the key legislative document that guides planning and development in the ACT and is part of the ACT Planning Act. The Territory Plan is intended “to provide the people of the ACT with an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and play. The Territory plan is used to manage development in the ACT, particularly how land is used and what can be built, assess development applications and guide the development of new estates and the management of public land”<sup>1</sup>.

The Territory Plan is made up of a statement of strategic directions, a map, showing “zones”, the objectives for each zone, and codes (or rules).

The most recent **statement of strategic direction** (the ACT Planning Strategy 2018) outlines a vision for a Canberra that is:



The territory plan **map** uses **zones** to specify the planning controls for a particular area or block of land. These zones determine how land can be used and what can be built. There are seven main groups of zones, listed below, and multiple types of zone within each group, as illustrated in the map. The full territory map is online<sup>2</sup>.



For each zone there is a table that documents the **objectives** for that domain, and what **developments** are permitted on blocks within that zone. The Territory Plan also includes **codes** that detail additional the rules for developments of certain features (eg. the Parking and Vehicle Access Code) or developments in a certain area or precinct (eg. the Gungahlin Town Centre Precinct Code).

When a block is purchased, the lease will contain references to the applicable zone tables and any relevant codes, as well as any block-specific conditions. When a specific development is proposed, it must go through a **development application** which will assess whether the development meets the applicable rules or not.

<sup>1</sup> [planning.act.gov.au/planning-our-city/territory\\_plan](http://planning.act.gov.au/planning-our-city/territory_plan)

<sup>2</sup> [app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi2/index.html?viewer=tp](http://app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi2/index.html?viewer=tp)

# A Short History of the Gungahlin Town Centre



*Gungahlin, May 1986*

Canberra is laid out as a collection of districts. Each district provides a broad range of services and facilities to support the employment, education, health, community, sporting, recreation, retail, and entertainment needs of its residents, concentrated in the district's town centre. A primary goal of this architecture was to minimise commuting for work and to minimise travel to access services and facilities.

Residents moving to the district of Gungahlin ever since it was established in the early 1990s have expected that the Gungahlin Town Centre would develop like the other Canberra town centres. The early land use planning for the town centre was consistent with this expectation, with substantial space identified for commercial offices. These plans became part of the ACT Territory Plan.

Reserving space for commercial offices within the town centre was an obvious part of ensuring it developed with appropriate facilities and services, particularly employment. Unfortunately, a sequence of significant events has meant this goal is yet to be achieved:

- Before ACT self-government, the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) restricted the total office space in central Canberra. The policy encouraged the construction of large commercial offices to support Federal government agencies in the Belconnen, Tuggeranong, and Woden town centres. With the introduction of self-government, the NCDC was abolished, leaving no regulatory mechanism to guide/enforce the development of commercial space. Government agencies (the major employer in the ACT) were free to build offices wherever they please. The Gungahlin Town Centre is the first town centre developed under self-government.





- The sale of the Canberra Airport by the Federal government enabled the development of a substantial employment hub in Canberra outside the town centres, significantly increasing options for employers and reducing demand for office space within the town centres.

- The enforcement of the ACT Territory Plan has been weak, with significant variations from the plan permitted at the per-site Development Application level and erosion of the overall town centre plan through a series of territory plan variations. The block by block transformation of the Office Park into a series of high-rise residential towers (so-called mixed-use) illustrates this lack of enforcement.

The ACT Government has not sufficiently mitigated these events. The ACT Government should put in alternative or additional interim mechanisms to ensure the development of the remaining sites contributes substantially to the viability of the town centre. Many options are available such as an increase in employment, retail, entertainment, and community services. Substantive and concrete incentives need put in place to attract employment (or employment alternatives) to the town centre.



# Kenny - The Last Major Gungahlin Suburb?

The suburb of Kenny at the eastern edge of Gungahlin is named in honour of Elizabeth Kenny, an Australian who pioneered muscle rehabilitation practices that serve as the foundation of physiotherapy. It is adjacent to the suburbs of Watson, the Mitchell industrial estate, Harrison and Throsby, and bound by the Federal Highway to the east and Horse Park Drive to the north. Kenny is situated about 4 km from the Gungahlin Town Centre, 8 km from the centre of Canberra and has an area for future development of approximately 170ha.



In May 2020, the Government approved a site of 7.2ha in the western portion of this area for an education precinct, allowing a high school to be planned, designed and constructed to open at the start of the 2023 calendar year (see separate article). The 7.2ha site is intended to accommodate the future high school and a separate primary school to open at a later date.

Much of the area initially envisaged for the suburb has been set aside as the Kenny Nature reserve as required by the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment (2013). Consequently, the remaining area of the Kenny future urban development is about 163ha. The Land Development Agency expects development will result in 1,200 to 1,500 dwellings across a range of dwelling types.







*Kenny Nature Reserve*



While smaller in comparison to other Gungahlin suburbs, Kenny will accommodate residential, commercial (local centre), limited community facilities, and public open space. Kenny's road access will be from Horse Park Drive with two intersections and Well Station Drive with two intersections, aligning with existing intersections adjacent to Harrison.

Before any land releases in Kenny, all statutory planning processes and required technical studies will be completed. The conclusion of the necessary statutory process may result in a Territory Plan variation and possibly an amendment to the National Capital Plan. The Territory Plan is shown below (Attachment 1 - Existing Territory Plan). The 2021-22 to 2025-26 Indicative Land Release Program will indicate when blocks in Kenny will be coming to market – this will be released with the 2021-22 ACT Budget.



# New Schools and School Expansions in the Gungahlin Region

Gungahlin is a fast-growing region in the ACT with a growing population of families with children. Public schools have proven a popular choice for families. As enrolments rise, the ACT Government is actively planning to meet enrolment growth in Gungahlin, which is expected to continue.

The Directorate's planning process considers a range of inputs to respond to enrolment growth. These include non-infrastructure solutions such as enrolment policy changes to limit out of area enrolments in schools with high enrolments (changing from Category B to Category A schools), NSW Pathway Schools and changes to Priority Enrolment Areas. Gungahlin now has very low out of area enrolments, and NSW student enrolments have been significantly reduced in recent years and directed towards schools with the capacity to accept them.

Transportable infrastructure provides an important source of flexibility for schools experiencing temporary growth, and they are part of the school planning response for every state and territory in Australia. Importantly they also provide time to plan for and deliver permanent investment in a capacity needed for the long term. Many schools choose to retain transportable infrastructure beyond an enrolment peak as they provide additional flexible learning spaces.

Modern transportable classrooms are different to those of the past. Students and teachers highly regard them as they are comfortable and provide inviting climate-controlled learning environments that are fully insulated and meet current energy targets. Permanent expansions are considered where enrolment growth is projected to continue in future years, and additional permanent capacity is the most appropriate response.

New schools are appropriate where projections demonstrate ongoing and sustained population growth, which will, in turn, sustain the viability of the school over the long term. The overall school infrastructure program is designed to address significant, sustained changes to enrolment and demographic trends on a regional basis.

The ACT Government has committed to planning for new northside college capacity, and that work is underway. As well as providing for the educational needs of young people, schools are important hubs for the local community and provide facilities for many of our local clubs and groups.

A range of investments in public schools in Gungahlin is underway, including expansions to existing schools and construction of new schools. Weather and COVID-19 restrictions may impact completion dates.

## Ready in 2022



*Artist's impression of Amaroo School learning space*

### **Amaroo School (Senior Campus) Expansion**

Amaroo School's senior campus is expanding to provide an additional 200 permanent places for students.

The expansion will provide new general and specialist learning areas for year 7 to 10 students, a covered walkway to the library and new staff working spaces. Existing science and technology buildings will be refurbished.

To view the new learning areas visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5tE3GeU1KA>



**Artist's rendering of Gold Creek School expansion**

integrated into the existing school buildings. It will also include a new staff workspace, meeting rooms and amenities (toilets) for staff and students, and bicycle and car park upgrades

## Gold Creek School (Senior Campus) Expansion

The expansion of Gold Creek's Senior School will accommodate an additional 200 senior students, raising the overall capacity of the preschool to year ten school to just over 1,000 students for the beginning of the 2022 year.

The expansion will deliver a range of contemporary learning areas, including large studios, adaptable learning spaces and smaller quiet spaces, all connected to the outdoors and

## Franklin School P-6 Expansion

Franklin School is expanding to become a full preschool to year six school by 2022. The expansion delivers an additional 450 places for students and delivers on the ACT Government's commitment to meet the needs of the Gungahlin community for local primary and early childhood services. The expansion includes constructing new permanent school buildings, a multi-purpose community hall/gymnasium, sports field, hard courts, upgrades to the landscaping and additional car parking.

For more information and to view a flythrough, visit [http://www.franklinschool.act.edu.au/new\\_information\\_and\\_change](http://www.franklinschool.act.edu.au/new_information_and_change)



**Franklin School aerial view**

## Throsby School P-6

The new preschool to year six school will accommodate 132 preschool students and up to 450 kindergarten to year six students, with space available for future student growth.

High-quality learning environments, incorporating both indoor and outdoor learning areas and integrated spaces to support students with specialised needs, are in this modern, sustainable facility. Other facilities will provide community access (out of school hours) to a large community room and kitchenette, multipurpose double gym, sports courts, change-room facilities, an outdoor turf sports field, and outdoor multipurpose hard courts.



**Preschool building on-site at the Throsby P-6 school**

For more information and to view a flythrough of the school, visit the school's website.

## Ready in 2023

### New high school in East Gungahlin

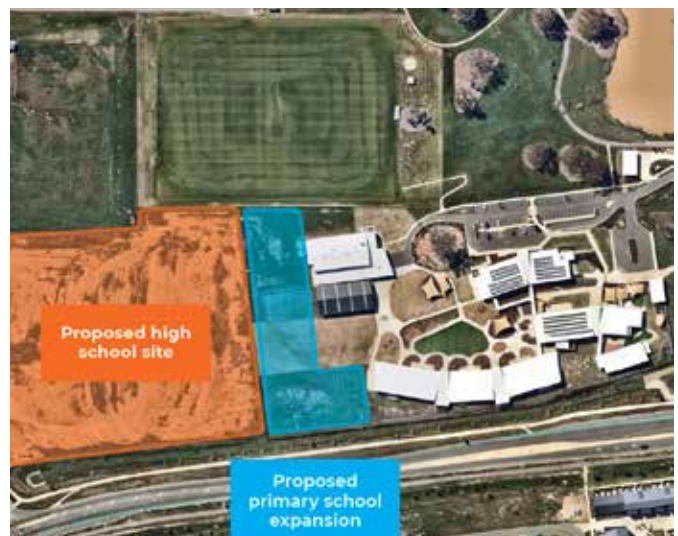
The new high school in Kenny will have an initial capacity of 800 student places, potentially expanding the capacity to 1,000 students. High quality learning environments, incorporating both indoor and outdoor learning areas, as well as integrated spaces to support students with specialised needs will be provided at this modern, sustainable facility.



### Margaret Hendry School Expansion

Margaret Hendry School in Taylor will expand to accommodate an additional 600 primary school students by the 2023 school year. A new two-storey building will accommodate general and specialist learning areas, small group program space and staff workshops. The current library and administration areas will be reconfigured to accommodate the increased school capacity. Additional car parking spaces will also be provided. Work on the school expansion will commence later this year.

*Proposed sites for Margaret Hendry expansion and high school in Taylor*



## Ready in 2024

### New high school in Taylor

A new high school in Taylor will be built adjacent to Margaret Hendry Primary School and accommodate 800 high school students. The high school will offer general and specialist learning areas, small group programs, a library and an interactive learning centre. Sport and recreation spaces for students and the community (out of hours) include a double gymnasium/hall, performing arts spaces, an oval and hardcourts. Car parking spaces will also be available on the high school site.

# Playgrounds

**ASTORIA BRIGHT**

Founder of @playgrounds\_canberra on Instagram

Inspired by the curious mind of a growing toddler, our journey started over the summer school holidays of 2020. Exploring a new Gungahlin playground each day, it soon became obvious that there was a distinct lack of information available to parents and caregivers hunting for their next play stop.

Pictures and notes taken from each playground were added to google maps as reviews which often led to the location being added to the map itself. By Summer's end, we had finished playing at all 84 of Gungahlin's playgrounds. Knowing this would be great information to spread further, we started our social media account on Instagram: @playgrounds\_canberra.



*Enjoying a play at Heritage Park, Forde*

We set out to document Canberra's 521 and growing Transport Canberra and City Services Playgrounds with this account in hand. Doing this, we were presented with opportunities to boost community engagement in future play spaces through information about playgrounds that we help gather and share outlined below.

Upcoming upgrades in "Infrastructure projects to kick off 2021" will see three existing playgrounds upgraded with fully fenced boundaries and six existing playgrounds given new shade sails. Among the parks receiving these upgrades are Joey Park, found along Bettong Avenue in Throsby, which will receive upgraded fencing along the playground's perimeter, including the existing children's bicycle track and Bonner's district playing fields playground located on Burnum Burnum Close, which will receive a new shade sail in time for summer.



*District Playing Fields Playground, Bonner*



*Joey Park, Throsby*

We are tracking the upgrades to the closed Taylor Adventure Park on Sutherland Crescent, which has seen delays, with the July 2021 reopening date pushed back to late August. The Suburban Land Agency has promised to address residents' heat concerns on the three metal slides with three shade sails installed across 11 poles.

The Suburban Land Agency is completing a new nature play space in Taylor. Located on the corner of Judith Macintosh crescent, the playscape is next to the Taylor waterways and will include both nature play elements and a challenging BMX dirt track for adventurous riders.



*Closed Taylor Adventure Park*



*Soon to be opened Nature Playspace, Taylor*

On the 10th of August 2021, the ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr announced the locations of playgrounds being reviewed and upgraded in the 2021-22 ACT Budget, which will see significant investment in suburban infrastructure across Canberra. The Gungahlin region will see Ngunnawal included in the six suburbs supported in the budget. Additionally, Franklin will receive a new dog park for happy dogs and owners.

Minister for Transport and City Services Chris Steel said, "I am thrilled to announce new or upgraded play spaces in these suburbs. Each play space is unique, and we will be engaging with the local communities in each suburb to ask what kind of play elements they'd like to see. This could include more nature play or traditional play features".



*Map of the 12 Ngunnawal Playgrounds*



*Homestead Park, Ngunnawal*

As part of our efforts, we will be following along the planning and community consultation stages to help inform locals of each suburb of what is needed within their communities. As part of this effort, we will point out suitable candidates for a refresh, including places that may benefit from better seating, shade, footpaths, amenities, gardens, and replacement of play pieces. You can assist by reporting things you see on Instagram: @playgrounds\_canberra.



**Request > Repair hole in soft rubber flooring**



**Request > Replace missing plastic drum**

Previously efforts by communities engaging in surveys resulted in the 2019/2020 Better Suburbs – Play Space Suburb Review. Violets Park, Ngunnawal, received upgrades under the fast track program, including new paint for existing play equipment and extra soft fall (mulch) and new timber retaining walls.

We continue to enjoy Canberra's many playgrounds and encourage play across Canberra. If you've noticed something broken in your local playground reporting, it is easy using the 'Fix My Street' form by Access Canberra.

Some things to look out for are old picnic tables and bench seats, broken fencing and playground floor boundaries, lack of shade, graffiti on play surfaces, play equipment that's become squeaky, wobbly, loose or damaged, and broken play equipment. Where there is an issue in your local playground that is considered a safety concern, follow Access Canberra's Guidelines and immediately call - 13 22 81. Select option 1 for high priority to provide detailed information on the safety concern.

# Gunners Place - Gungahlin's Youth Drop-in

SHAUN HODSON



In 2015 it was identified as a gap that Gungahlin had no designated Youth drop-in space that linked with Youth and Community services. As a result, the Inner / North Gungahlin Network Coordinator conducted a meeting with services that supported Youth and Families with-in the region with an idea of a youth Drop-in.

A sporting venue was sourced at Harrison school and the gym was booked on a Monday afternoon 3 - 5 pm. Services that linked to the program was Barnardos Australia, MYS, PCYC and Y-engage. The key aspect was sport related that the Young People could pick whatever sport they wanted to play.

During the three and half years at the school the program tried to be relocated to a central location in Gungahlin. The perfect location that was on the list was Indoor Basketball courts at Gungahlin college. But due to college times and hiring of the courts it was imposable to use them facilities for a Sports Drop-in and with Gungahlin not having any other indoor sports venue.

The Youth Support at that time left the school and the Drop-in ceased. The Network Coordinator continued to review other means to continual the drop-in in another location. In 2018 Gungahlin College agreed to host the new drop-in that would be located in the 'NEXES' space. The space was an area that the students would hang out in and was close to the student engagement Youth Worker and Indigenous Education Officer that supported the program with Barnardos Australia, Y-engage, Multicultural Hub Canberra and Messengers.





**Thomas Santleben and Maya Belmont at Gunners Place - Kerrie-Brewer**

The turnout was great with a lot of the students been College student with only a few been from other schools. The Nexes area was in the center of the college so it was hard to identify that it was there off the street. COVID hit and the Drop-in stopped and restarted mid 2020 with the same focus and collaboration of services. The times we had on return wasn't suited for Drop-in as we where required to be out by 4pm and where only getting College students. We had a meeting and discussed have a space under the library that was for the street for easy access for Young People.

This was not forthcoming, so the quest was on to find another venue somewhere in Gungahlin. After searching we were offered a space in the Marketplace at a cost to the 3 services Barnardos Australia, Northside and Multicultural Hub Canberra.

We conducted our launch on the 7th April with Ministers and representatives from services that support the Gungahlin region. The key to the message was that we really needed a space that was inclusive, friendly, non-judgmental, a chillout space and a space you can get support or someone to talk to.

We decided that the space should be available for Youth Drop-in, Community, meetings and programs that would suit a larger setting.

From the launch in April we have had Community events, Student base programs and Youth Drop-in with more conversations with services and advertising (word of mouth) to come and look at the space.

Gunners Place is only short term and we don't have a plane 'B' as we don't have another space we can use and still waiting for any information about a space in the Gungahlin township area that would support this Gap and need for Community and Young People.



# Ngunnawal Street Pantries

(The little suburb that does)

Margaret McGrath started the Ngunnawal Street Pantries (NSP) in 2019. Initially the response was slow but then it picked up. The food would be taken from the pantry and more food donated. The Gungahlin community embraced the concept and suggestions of other pantries were readily identified and implemented.



*Cecilia and Margaret*

The pantries run on the basic philosophy of “take what you need and give what you can”. To achieve this, we use the 4R’s principles of Recycling, Reallocating, Repurposing and Re-using.

NSP currently provides food, toiletries, pet supplies, clothes and household items to Gungahlin residents in need, free of charge. Some recent additions to the services provided are daily bakery items from Dobinson’s in Gungahlin who are so happy to support our work and not have to throw the food away. The Brumby’s Bakery in Lyneham kindly provides NSP with bakery items every Sunday evening. Additionally, we are working with Canberra City Care to have excess fresh fruit and vegetables from supermarkets made available for to the community, for free.



*Household Pantry*

NSP is under the auspices of This is my Brave Australia Inc. (TIMBA) which is a registered NFP/charity with the ACNC which allows any cash donation to NSP to be tax deductible. TIMBA is a mental health charity looking to reduce the stigma and discrimination around mental health through story telling.

**NSP has two locations.** The clothing and household pantries are located at **22 Bullala Court**, as are the fresh foods and bakery goods. The non-perishable food, pet, and personal family items are located at **2 Gamban Square**. There are also two other pantries in Ngunnawal that run independent of NSP.



*Clothes Pantry*



## TIMBA and NSP

**Please like and share our Facebook page. Keep the pantries in mind if you ever find yourself in need or want a chat as the pantries are becoming a community hub. Use Facebook messenger to talk to any of the pantry people as we try to work with the community wherever possible.**



**Food Pantry**

# Country Women's Association Gungahlin Recycling a Win for Local Charities

When Country Women's Association Gungahlin started fundraising with the ACT Container Deposit Scheme in July 2018, Branch Treasurer Melissa Lee says they thought they would raise \$10 or \$20 each month to buy baking ingredients. In just over two years, they raised \$5,700, with container returns becoming an integral part of the association's fundraising, allowing them to donate to more than half a dozen local charities.

Melissa says a huge part of the success can be credited to the Grove Retirement Village in Ngunnawal.

"One of our members, Kay, and her husband John are residents at the village," says Melissa. "And they saw the potential to involve the residents in container collection for CWA."

With the support of the retirement village manager and residents' committee, 14 dedicated CDS bins were placed around the village.

"Kay and John spoke at residents' meetings to educate residents on eligible containers and explain how CWA Gungahlin would use the proceeds," says Melissa. "The bins quickly began filling with eligible containers – soon, more volunteers were needed to manage the volumes of containers!"



Other village residents soon got involved, and now there is a group of 10 volunteers who collect, process and deliver the containers to the Mitchell Depot. The group is known as 'The Grove Recycling Team' and have had shirts printed, so they are easily identified as they carry out their work in the village.

"The team averages \$200 in containers a month for CWA, and we are so grateful," says Branch President Roslyn Looyen. "Especially this year as we have not been able to conduct any other of our usual fundraising activities due to covid restrictions."

Other Gungahlin businesses, including the G-Spot Food Van and M&I Barber Shop, also help out by collecting containers on behalf of CWA.

Funds have gone towards projects including educational grants, medical research and disaster relief, and local charities, says Roslyn.

"Charities we have supported through our CDS proceeds include Backpack Beds for the Homeless, ACT Cancer Council, Radio 1 RPH, Roundabout Canberra, Alannah & Madeline Foundation, Ronald McDonald House Canberra and Share the Dignity."

Melissa says the ACT CDS is very easy to use.

"CWA has an account with the scheme, which means our volunteers can simply bag the containers and print a label at the deposit centre. Funds are then transferred each month directly into the CWA Gungahlin bank account."

"We usually deposit our containers at the Mitchell Depot," she says. "The staff there are very helpful – shout out to Catherine!"

COVID-19 UPDATE: Drive & Drop is now available at the Mitchell and Fyshwick cash-back depots and can be accessed according to the latest Public Health Directions. Drive & Drop enables you to drive up to the entrance, drop off your eligible containers and receive your refund by electronic payment. You will need to have a Return-It Express Account to receive your refund as no cash payments will be available at this time. Refunds will be processed within one business day.

When visiting the depot, please ensure you follow the latest Public Health Directions, including wearing a mask and checking in via the QR code on-site, and please follow the directions of staff. Containers must be securely bagged before they are dropped off.

The Mitchell and Fyshwick depots will be open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Saturday and from 9 am to 3 pm on Sundays. The Belconnen and Phillip cash-back depots remain temporarily closed at this time.

**Visit the ACT CDS website to find your nearest available return point at [actcds.com.au/return-points](https://actcds.com.au/return-points).**

**To keep track of any updates and changes to ACT CDS operations, please follow ACT CDS on Facebook at [facebook.com/ACTCDS](https://facebook.com/ACTCDS).**

# Make the Switch

HELEN OAKLEY



A new website called [maketheswitch.org.au](http://maketheswitch.org.au) is helping households minimise the hit of high energy bills to the hip pocket.

The website, developed by the Conservation Council ACT Region, was created to help households move from gas appliances to a home run only on clean, green electricity. Because 100% of the ACT's electricity now comes from renewable wind and solar, switching from gas to electricity will immediately reduce CO2 emissions while saving families hundreds of dollars per year in energy costs.

The Make the Switch website features a simple calculator that, after entering information about your gas appliances and gas bills and selecting the electric appliances you would like to install, compares the upfront costs and running costs over ten years.

The good news: you will save money on your power bills, and within a few years, the investment in new electric appliances will pay for itself.

## So how will making the switch off gas save you money?

Electric appliances are generally cheaper to run than gas. Reverse cycle air conditioners and hot water heat-pumps are much more efficient technologies and use less electricity to provide the same amount of heat. So even though gas prices might seem cheaper than electricity when you compare units of energy, the efficiency of the appliances makes the electric options cheaper to run. On top of that, there is the bonus that air conditioners can be used for heating in winter and cooling in summer, making them very flexible appliances.



If you close your gas account, you will save \$320 per year on the gas supply charge. If you are only using gas for hot water and cooking, this is such a saving! Why pay to have two different fuels coming into your home when you can do everything you need - cook, stay warm and heat water - using just one? It's especially noticeable in summer when you might find that your connection charges for gas far outweigh the cost of the gas you are using.

While making the switch from gas may seem daunting, the Make the Switch website takes you step by step. The website suggests listing the appliances you use for home heating, hot water and cooking, choosing their replacements, and setting a timeline for purchasing and installing the new electric appliances. With many homes in Gungahlin being newer, you might not need to replace the full trifecta of appliances - perhaps you just need to plan for a new hot water system or a cooktop.

The Make the Switch website also directs homeowners to financial support to help them go all-electric. For example, if you own a flued- or ducted-gas heater, you could be eligible for between \$2000 and \$5000 of savings when switching to an electric reverse-cycle air conditioner. So not only could you save money on Making the Switch, you might also have something in place to keep you cool as we head into the warmer months.

An air conditioner can also help keep your indoor air free of fumes, pollens and bushfire smoke, improving your family's health.



Whatever your motivation – saving money, increasing your home comfort or saving the planet – the Make the Switch website will be helpful to support your move towards an all-electric home.

# Let's Talk About Taylor

ALEXANDER QUINN - ICON WATER

At Icon Water, we do everything we can to ensure everyone in our community receives a steady supply of high-quality drinking water. For Taylor, this meant the construction of brand-new reservoirs capable of meeting the suburb's rising demand.

Our teams built two 900,000 litre reservoirs and installed nearly three kilometres of pipe, so that water could be gravity-fed to residents. From their position atop One Tree Hill, these reservoirs now proudly overlook the suburb below. While these structures are a permanent fixture of Taylor's skyline, we wanted residents to be part of the process. That's why we chose to alter their appearance to match Taylor's vibrant community spirit.

For years now, we've been decorating our buildings with murals to help keep our bush capital looking beautiful. These murals are painted by local artists and are often chosen by Canberrans. We wanted to give Taylor residents the same opportunity.

We contacted the Suburban Land Agency and, with their help, opened a dialogue with the Taylor community. Residents were given a chance to vote on a final design for the mural. We then commissioned Geoff Filmer of Graffik Paint to make those designs a reality. Today, the One Tree Hill reservoirs are decorated with images of Australian wildlife. We hope that this mural is something the people of Taylor can look to with pride.



We're a local company that's been providing essential services to Canberra for over 100 years. As Canberra has continued to expand, we've done our part to support its growing community. Every time a new suburb begins development, we're there to play our role. Taylor, one of Canberra's newest suburbs, is just one example of this commitment.

We believe it's critical to engage our customers in continuous dialogue. These meaningful conversations will then translate into tangible good for the community. With this in mind, we've started a new initiative called Let's Talk Water and Wastewater. This online community is where Canberrans can explain what they need, value and expect from us as their water and wastewater service provider.

If you want to have a say in Canberra's water future, head to [letstalk.iconwater.com.au](http://letstalk.iconwater.com.au) and take our survey. You'll not only be in the running for a \$200 Eftpos gift card but also helping us figure out how best to provide the quality service you deserve.

# Gungahlin Smoke Signals Refresh

KEVIN COX

Gungahlin Smoke Signals is for the Gungahlin community and continues to evolve. It started in 1995 with Roma Hoskins as the first editor. Roma produced 100 editions until early 2007. The first issues were one double-sided A4 page that became two double-sided pages. By edition 100, it was 20 pages and a distribution of 8000 delivered by Auspost to every household in Gungahlin. Advertising covered the cost of printing and distribution until Auspost increased its charges. At the same time, social media took over the newsletter role, and advertising dollars went to Google and Facebook.

Since edition 100, there has been another 50, along with a substantial change in the purpose and format. Gungahlin Smoke Signals is now an occasional magazine that records issues and developments in Gungahlin. It is no longer a newsletter or a way for businesses and community organisations to advertise.

The magazine needs your help. It needs ideas on its role. It needs writers, editors, and the community to assist with distribution. It needs to know what articles you find interesting.

If anyone has some of the early editions, please let us know, and we will arrange for them to be digitised.

Send your thoughts to [info@gcc.asn.au](mailto:info@gcc.asn.au) or go online and fill out a form at [forms.gle/1eZqZG6DWbmCnD6a6](https://forms.gle/1eZqZG6DWbmCnD6a6) or look for the link to Gungahlin Smoke Signals Feedback on the [gcc.asn.au](http://gcc.asn.au) website.



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We want to know what you value from your water and sewerage provider.

Tell us by completing our online survey. All participants will go into the draw to win a \$200 Eftpos gift card.



Gungahlin Community Council

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