



Gungahlin Town Centre

A Prospectus for APS Investment





Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the Canberra Region and acknowledges that the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.

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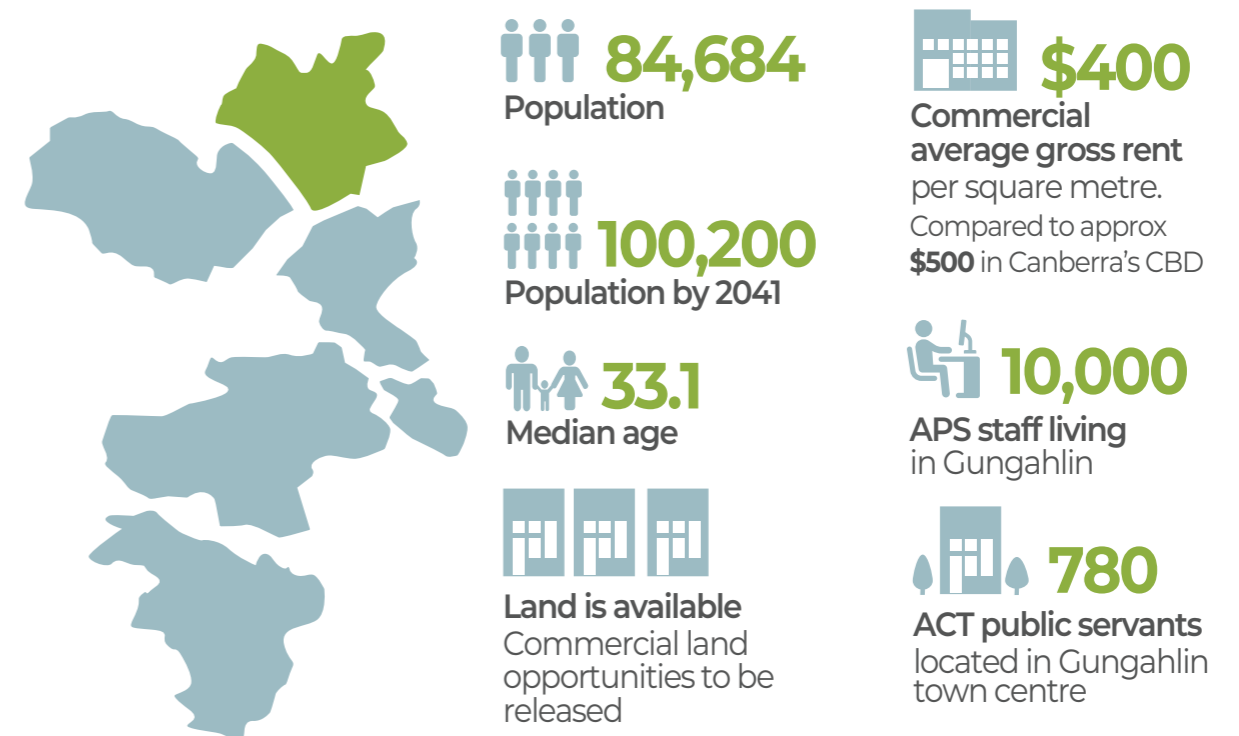
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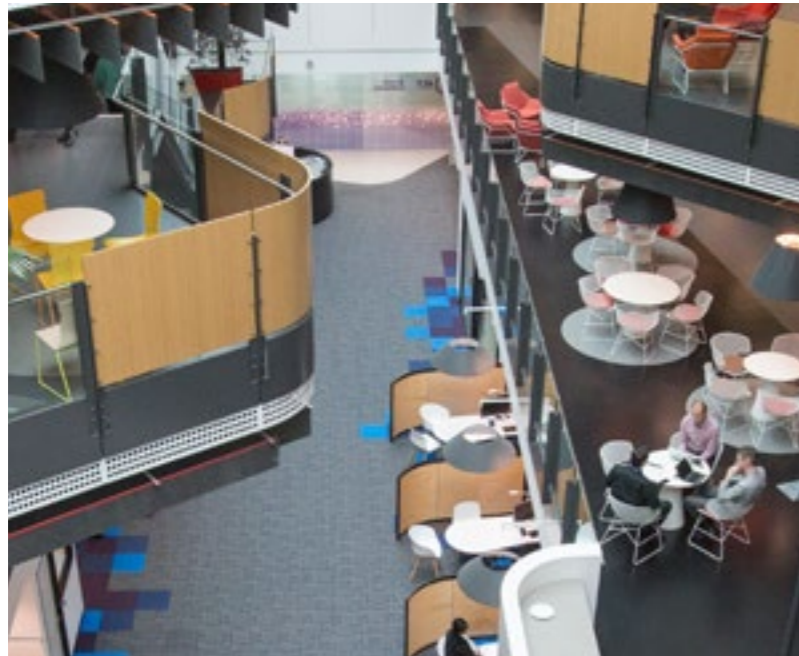
Introduction

- Gungahlin Town Centre is the newest town centre in Canberra. The ACT Government has made significant investments in the Gungahlin region and has supported the Town Centre in particular, by locating a hub accommodating up to 780 public servants in the ACT Government building, Winyu House. It is well serviced by transport connections and public transport, including through Canberra's light rail.
- Gungahlin has also been the site of significant residential growth in recent years, creating an opportunity for accompanying commercial expansion. While the Gungahlin region accounts for 19.6% of Canberra's population, only 6.3% of Canberra's employment opportunities are based in the region.
- One of the fastest growing regions in the country in recent years, Gungahlin's population has grown by 75.2 per cent since 2011, and is now home to almost 85,000 people. Much of this growth has been made up of young families buying their first homes, making Gungahlin one of our city's youngest regions.
- As Gungahlin's population is forecast to continue to grow towards 100,000, and given its proximity and accessibility to growing regional towns and settlements, there are significant opportunities for locating new work hubs in Gungahlin whilst delivering mutual benefits for the National Capital, and the Canberra Region, as a whole.
- While the ACT Government continues to invest in Gungahlin, increasing the presence of Australian Public Service (APS) workers in Gungahlin would provide additional economic activity and support the Gungahlin Town Centre as a key regional work hub in the National Capital.
- The Commonwealth Government's announcement of an additional 5,000 APS employment positions in the 2021-22 Budget provides a timely opportunity for the Commonwealth to consider the merits of locating an APS department or a flexible work hub in the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Gungahlin District – A Snapshot



Benefits to the Commonwealth



- Gungahlin is an attractive investment proposition for the APS as it will allow the Commonwealth to save significantly on leasing costs compared to sites in the city centre or Parliamentary Triangle. The March 2021 Canberra Office Market Report published by Knight Frank notes that A Grade office space in Canberra's CBD has an average gross rent per square metre of around \$500 compared to around \$400 per square metre for equivalent office space in Canberra's town centres including Gungahlin.

Benefits - Transport Accessibility

- Gungahlin is well supported by public transport links and road infrastructure into the city from regional towns via the Barton and Federal Highways.
- With disruption and longer journey times anticipated for the city centre for a number of years during the raising of London Circuit, the construction of Light Rail Stage 2A and Commonwealth Avenue bridge strengthening, Gungahlin provides an attractive alternative for the potentially large workforce residing in and around the region.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is serviced by 11 local bus routes and 2 rapid routes (including light rail into the city every 5 minutes in the peak and a rapid route to and from Belconnen every 30 minutes).



- The ACT Government is also making further improvements to transport in Gungahlin, including the Gundaroo Drive Stage 2 duplication, the Horse

Park Drive duplication, and investigation of a new park and ride facility on the north-eastern corner of Well Station Drive and Flemington Road.

Commercial Land Opportunities in the Gungahlin Town Centre



Benefits – Land Availability

- Gungahlin Town Centre includes large holdings of undeveloped but high-quality serviced land (around one third of the town centre or approximately 13.5ha), providing the Commonwealth with significant choice for a new development.
- Each year the ACT Government prepares an Indicative Land Release Program (the Land Release Program) to set out the Government's intended land releases of residential, mixed use, commercial, industrial, and community and non-urban land.
- The Land Release Program plays a strategic role in catering for our population growth, building a compact, liveable city, attracting investment in the ACT land market and strengthening economic advantage in the ACT region.
- Several commercial land opportunities are, or will become available in the Gungahlin Town Centre. For example, the most recently published Land Release Program identifies Block 1 Section 228 in the Gungahlin Town Centre is to be released in 2021-22 (see Map 1). This block has a site area of over 10,000m² and is zoned to permit a range of uses, including offices.
- Gungahlin Town Centre also contains other large commercial sites available for employment purposes that could be brought to market quickly to respond to demand or interest (see Map 1). These sites are located immediately adjacent to light rail. Land can also be subdivided or consolidated to fit any specific site area or building need.

Benefits – A significant existing local APS workforce

- ACT Government Treasury estimates that there are 10,000 APS staff already living in Gungahlin, indicating significant potential demand for a flexible work hub facility.
- The most recent Land Release Program specifies that between 2021 and 2026, there will be around 4,000 new residential dwelling releases in the Gungahlin district. This is around a quarter of all anticipated residential dwelling releases across the ACT over that period, which will support expected population growth and a growing potential local workforce.



Benefits - Regional Investment

- Investing in Canberra means investing in the Capital Region.
- As well as being a fast-growing city in its own right, Canberra has become the regional services hub for some of the fastest growing communities in south-east NSW.
- Today, Canberra provides key social services like health and education, good jobs, transport and trade links for a region that is home to around 750,000 people within and around the ACT.
- A significant percentage of the working population in Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley travel to the ACT for work; 63 percent and 50 percent respectively.



- Gungahlin is the closest ACT location to growing populations in surrounding NSW including towns such as Murrumbateman, Yass and Goulburn, providing cost effective commuting and employment opportunities both during construction and for future workforce fulfilment.
- Investing in Gungahlin would therefore be a demonstration of Commonwealth leadership in contributing to economic development in the Capital Region by improving access to good jobs not only for those living in Gungahlin, but also those living in the surrounding regional areas.



Benefits – Skills and Innovation

- Investment in Canberra offers unique advantages over other regional areas such as access to skilled labour and infrastructure within a constrained labour market.
- The ACT Government has worked hard to attract and facilitate investment for a growing and vibrant centre to create great places where people thrive. Canberra is attracting national and international talent and expertise lured by excellent employment opportunities combined with world leading liveability ratings.
- Gungahlin provides a compelling opportunity for the Commonwealth to invest in innovative and sustainable building design, construction and fit out methodologies to meet its own workforce wellbeing and sustainability objectives.
- With ready access to Australia's highest rated secure data centres, immediate and future IT infrastructure needs could be easily incorporated into new Gungahlin facilities.
- In addition to Light Rail infrastructure, innovative transport and other inclusions (such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure) could easily be incorporated to support Commonwealth operations and vehicle fleet in the area to meet green credentials.
- With the availability of a diverse range of housing, APS offices located in Gungahlin would provide realistic accommodation options for graduate recruits and new hires to meet lifestyle and liveability choice for employees.



Flexible Work Arrangements

- If the APS were to pursue flexible work arrangements and establish a flexible workplace hub, it could secure additional significant cost savings, and attract and retain the best staff by providing flexibility.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government adopted flexible work arrangements for all ACTPS staff. The significant benefits of these arrangements have led to the ACT Government retaining and attracting staff both during and following lockdown periods.
- Emerging research suggests that access to flexible working arrangements will be a key factor in attracting and retaining talent in a post-covid workforce.
- The ACTPS is building its flexible capability through an initiative to refit vacant accommodation in Belconnen and Tuggeranong to establish 'flexi offices', providing bookable workspace for staff who live in those regions as an alternative to their primary place of work.
- Additionally, a scoping exercise is underway to determine how key ACT Government locations, such as Winyu House in Gungahlin and Bowes Place in Woden, could be adapted to better support flexible working arrangements for ACTPS employees.
- The establishment of a flexible APS workplace hub in Gungahlin would present a cost-effective means of accommodating a local workforce. This would deliver financial benefits for the APS, benefit Gungahlin residents, and help to attract and retain talent in the Gungahlin region – potentially leading to the Commonwealth strengthening its reputation as an 'employer of choice'.

The ACT Government's commitment

- The ACT Government is committed to making ongoing investments in Gungahlin to develop a thriving local community.
- As part of the 2021-2022 Budget, the ACT Government committed to a significant investment in Gungahlin's infrastructure, ensuring the community can continue to grow and meet the growing demands of residents.
- The Gungahlin Town Centre is already home to some of Canberra's major infrastructure investments including an ACT Government office block which accommodates up to 780 ACT Government employees, and the City to Gungahlin Stage 1 Light Rail.
- Gungahlin Town Centre offers great shopping and recreation experiences in its retail precinct, including Gungahlin Marketplace and Gungahlin Village, hardware and bulky goods stores and a sports club and hotel.
- Other community services include Gungahlin College, a public library, childcare centres, medical centres and open space to enjoy including the Valley Ponds, the Gungahlin Enclosed Oval and the Gungahlin Leisure Centre.
- By locating an APS Department in Gungahlin, the APS would directly benefit from these significant investments, not only through more affordable and accessible office space but through facilitating of the APS to respond and adapt to future ways of working that enable staff to live, work and play locally – ensuring a better work-life balance, it will also provide a better quality of life for many APS employees and their families.
- The ACT Government is committed to working with the Australian Government to identify sites and opportunities for the location of APS staff in the Gungahlin Town Centre and would welcome further discussions on this proposal.

Key Contact

The ACT Government is looking forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth on the development of the Gungahlin Town Centre as a critical hub of the National Capital.

To discuss this proposal, please contact: **Wilhelmina Blount, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet Division, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Wilhelmina.Blount@act.gov.au**