Frequently Asked Questions

The Project

What is the City to the Lake project?
‘City to the Lake’ is a key initiative of the ACT Government, establishing a framework to better utilise the broad southern flank of the City. The study area stretches from the West Basin to Anzac Parade including Canberra Olympic Pool, the existing convention centre and large surface car parks.

Key elements already investigated include identifying new lakeside and City to the Lake residential, business and leisure opportunities, as well as improvements to Parkes Way to better connect the City and the lake.

Identifying and reserving potential locations for a replacement convention centre (Australia Forum), a 30,000+ seat rectangular stadium and a regional aquatic centre has been part of future proofing the study area.

The project also provides a lakeside anchor for the first stage of the light rail implementation, the Northbourne Corridor development and the Constitution Avenue upgrade.

Why is it happening now?
Canberra is poised for a new phase of growth and development to create a sustainable, urban vision more than just a ‘drive through’ city. As Canberra grows to a population of 500,000 and beyond, it is time to consider how the City will evolve in its second century.

City to the Lake is a transformational project being developed within The City Plan. The City Plan has been funded by the Australian Government Liveable Cities Program to develop a plan to unlock the potential of the City by realising unbuilt parts of the Griffin Plan. City to the Lake is ‘planning ready’, requiring no amendments to the National Capital Plan.

The proposal is broadly consistent with the National Capital Plan (Amendments 59 – City Hill, Amendment 60 – Constitution Avenue, and Amendment 61 – West Basin). However, Amendments to the National Capital Plan may be required as more detailed planning is undertaken.

What is the expected project development period for City to the Lake and when will it commence?
This is a long term project that provides for the City centre to grow into the 21st century. The early project feasibility work being undertaken suggests that the project period will be approximately 15 to 20 years duration. Initial infrastructure works could commence in 2015, subject to a range of development and financing assumptions.

How much is City to the Lake going to cost?
Costing estimates will be developed over the next 12 to 18 months based on a range of design options. The exact cost of individual elements and the expected total project costs are therefore not confirmed at this time. An important consideration to the overall project feasibility will be the staging of project development and the ability of selected project elements to fund key infrastructure components.

Will Canberrans get to have a say on how they think the City and the lake should be connected and the lakeside better utilised?
The ACT Government is committed to full community consultation on the plan to link the City to the Lake. Free public seminars will be held during April 2013 and a project display will be open to the public from 3 April to 21 May 2013. Members of the public can also provide their feedback online at www.timetotalk.act.gov.au or by completing a survey in person at the project display.

Several focused discussions and roadshows with different groups in the community are also planned. For details on these consultation activities please visit www.cityplan.act.gov.au

Community consultations will continue throughout the life of the project and the views of the community will be sought on a regular basis.

Which planning authorities will ultimately approve this project?
The land falls under the planning control of the National Capital Authority who will be responsible for approving planning and development activities. The National Capital Authority’s Griffin Legacy provides the basis for unlocking the potential of the City by realising unbuilt parts of the Griffin Plan. City to the Lake is ‘planning ready’, requiring no amendments to the National Capital Plan.

There is also a Parliamentary Agreement (2012) between ACT Labor and the ACT Greens to “Work with stakeholders to progress the Australia Forum initiative to a stage where it is ‘investment ready’ for consortium partners”.

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How will City to the Lake be funded?
It is proposed that the project is funded through a combination of government and private financing.

How will the impact of the project be measured?
The Linking the City to the Lake project office (managed through the ACT Government’s Economic Development Directorate) has commenced cost benefit analysis of the project to understand project demand, available costs, possible revenues and the overall economic impact. More detailed cost benefit analysis will occur as planning of the various components occurs. As analysis is completed it will be developed into detailed business cases in conjunction with ACT Treasury.

What stakeholder input have you had to the project so far?
The first stage of the project has involved consultation with non–government stakeholders represented on a Project Reference Group (PRG) formed to provide input into the early research phase of the project. The PRG comprised representatives from the Canberra Business Council, National Convention Centre and Convention Bureau, Canberra CBD Ltd, National Museum of Australia, Australian National University, Property Council, key professional institutes, National Trust, Lake Users Group and Heart Foundation.

The Griffin Society has also been involved in an expert design review process involving the ACT Government Architect and other nationally recognised design professionals.

What will City to the Lake look like?
Possible conceptual designs of the various components of the project have been developed. This includes a ‘fly-through’ diagrammatic representation of key project elements. The fly-through will assist the community to understand early design concepts and city to the lake linkages. The fly-through is available at [www.youtube.com/user/actgovernment](http://www.youtube.com/user/actgovernment)

How sustainable will City to the Lake be?
The PRG has agreed that City to the Lake should ‘encourage sustainable development, design excellence and environmental leadership’ mirroring the ACT Government’s commitment to sustainable development. The project is also informed by other ACT Government policies including the Canberra Plan, the Canberra Social Plan, the Sustainable Transport Plan, Transport for Canberra 2012–2031, the Infrastructure Plan, Weathering the Change Plan, and the AP2 Greenhouse Reduction Targets.

How has the annual demand for inner city living been assessed?
Significant residential and retail demand analysis has been undertaken. The demand analysis considers all major identified impacts to residential property demand including current and anticipated population projections; migration (interstate and overseas); the ACT Government’s land release program; residential take up rates; and current and potential future pricing. Similar analysis has been undertaken regarding retail property. It is proposed that the short, medium and long-term financial analysis will be regularly updated throughout the life of the project.

What will be the traffic impact?
Strategic transport and traffic studies have informed the development of the plan. The project has been designed to reinforce Gungahlin Drive and Majura Parkway as the peripheral parkways for inter-town vehicular traffic while integrating light rail into the City centre along Northbourne and Commonwealth Avenue corridors to reduce the impact of north/south traffic funneling through the City centre. Parkes Way is retained as the main east/west arterial for cars linking to Gungahlin/Tuggeranong Parkway to the west of the City centre and Majura Parkway to the east.

Parkes Way currently has two lanes, which are congested at peak periods. City to the Lake recommends transforming Parkes Way into a ‘smart boulevard’, making it a split level road with two lanes each way plus an emergency lane on the lower level to allow free flowing traffic and creating local City streets on the surface or upper level. The proposed redevelopment of Parkes Way will include street and pedestrian linkages between the City and the lake.

Traffic impact studies are being undertaken to account for anticipated developments to the City, Parkes Way and the impacts of the various components of City to the Lake, including testing the number of lanes that Parkes Way should be to carry current and future traffic volumes with anticipated changes to the street pattern. The traffic impact studies will test different traffic demand options including the impact of changes to public transport and the effects of the proposed light rail.

In reserving sites for infrastructure needs, has consideration been given to future demand criteria including regional participation?
Time to Talk Canberra 2030, a recent and detailed ACT Government community engagement, identified Canberra’s role in the region as a critical community issue. It found that “By 2030 the community seeks a national capital, with a strong sustainable economy
Regional communities will benefit from City to the Lake through access to the proposed facilities such as a new stadium, convention centre and a superior aquatic centre. They will contribute to community pride, social cohesiveness and regional liveability.

**What is the lifecycle longevity of the existing stadium, convention centre and Olympic swimming pool?**

Detailed lifecycle analysis has been undertaken on the current Canberra Stadium, the Civic Olympic swimming pool and the National Convention Centre. The remaining useful and physical life of each facility varies, depending on a range of engineering and capital works assumptions. The analysis has found that without considerable capital investment in the facilities within the next five years, economic and or physical obsolescence considerations could result in decisions (at worst) to close a facility.

**What are the heritage considerations in relation to the current Civic Pool site and Lake Burley Griffin environs?**

The only element that may be subject to existing heritage interest is parts of the current Civic Olympic swimming pool site, noting that the facility is not currently a registered heritage site.

The City to the Lake project team includes a heritage architect to advise on the significance of the site. In regard to the Lake Burley Griffin environs the National Capital Authority undertook a significant review of heritage matters (in particular the Griffin Legacy) during the development of Amendment 61 – West Basin to the National Capital Plan in 2007.

**What are the Draft Objectives and Principles to guide the project?**

The Project Reference Group (PRG) has agreed Draft Objectives and Principles to guide the project. They are:

- Recognise the unique qualities, significance and prominence of the site.
- Improve connections and public access – City to waterfront, Commonwealth Park and City Hill.
- Create the waterfront and reconstruct Parkes Way to provide public connections to the new waterfront and Commonwealth Park early in the project.
- Support more people living in the City.
- Ensure no detriment to the existing City.
- Ensure investment delivers broad community benefit and enhances project viability.

- Leverage the natural competitive advantage of Canberra as the nation’s capital.
- Assess impacts on key infrastructure.
- Encourage sustainable development, design excellence and environmental leadership.

**Who will live in and use City to the Lake?**

The demographic and demand studies already undertaken indicate a wide-range of people who will live and use the various elements of the project. The demand for the residential project components is expected to come from those within the existing Canberra population wishing to relocate to a new environment that provides a wide range of residential living and lifestyle alternatives (including affordable and student accommodation), as well as from immigration demand, both interstate and overseas.

Residential demand is expected to be heavily influenced by the proximity and access to the City, significant upgrades to the public realm (including the new aquatic centre, urban beach and superior access to lakeside parks), and new city based facilities such as the stadium, a new convention centre and southern city retail development.

A wide-range of sporting, cultural and recreational facilities has been proposed as part of the project and will attract all demographics.

**How will pedestrians, cyclists and cars be accommodated?**

An important project driver is to improve connectivity and public access to and from the City to the waterfront and Commonwealth Park. Planned street and public realm layouts will include wide, safe designated pedestrian and cyclist areas while incorporating appropriate and logical car access to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

The ACT Government Sustainable Transport Plan has a mode share target of 7% by 2026 for all cyclist journeys from doorstep to work/school. This target is partly driven by the Government’s commitment to a 40% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2020, based on 1990 levels, and an 80% reduction by 2050. These policy objectives link with the ACT Government’s intention to develop a safe, direct and legible bicycle network that is a viable healthy alternative to driving.

**What are the impacts for regional communities?**

City to the Lake is being planned for both the local Canberra and wider regional and national communities.

While the project is located in Canberra, the ACT represents only approximately half the
region’s population. The population of the ACT (356,000) represents 60% of the SEROC area; and less than half (48%) of the combined South East Regional Organisation of Councils (SEROC) and wider regional communities (e.g. Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bega, Cowra). Planning has considered that the ACT and south-east NSW have a unique cross border/regional relationship. The project meets the collaboration aims between the ACT and NSW for infrastructure and integrated service planning through the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Collaboration, the Regional Leaders’ Forum and SEROC, that now includes the ACT Government. For example, the proposed ACT Regional Aquatic Centre provides the opportunity for local communities in the Capital Region that do not have the population base to sustain superior aquatic and wellness facilities to access this critical infrastructure.

What community benefits does City to the Lake provide?
Planned key local and regional community benefits from the completed project include:

- Access to superior and unique facilities, some of which are not currently present.
- A substantial increase in the range, quality and type of cultural, sport and recreational opportunities.
- Social infrastructure that improves the overall mental and physical health of the community through active lifestyle, participation and social inclusion.
- Opportunities to promote diverse activities for socially disadvantaged groups.
- Broad economic benefits and business opportunities in the Capital Region from the various projects.
- Increased housing supply to boost overall levels of affordable homes in Canberra.

How and when will the results of the consultation be provided to stakeholders and the public?
A Consultation Summary Report will be prepared at the end of the current phase of community consultations. The Consultation Summary Report will analyse the qualitative and quantitative data from the consultation process and provide a summary of the outcomes for feedback to consultation participants.

Does the project have the support of close neighbours such as the ANU and NMA?
The Australian National University (ANU) and National Museum of Australia (NMA) are both members of the Project Reference Group. Both institutions are important neighbours along West Basin and have confirmed their support for this project. The ANU has a strong interest in the proposed development of a new regional aquatic facility, as the university does not have an aquatic facility and student and staff feedback is supportive of such a development. The ANU is also the manager of the Centre for Dialogue. The NMA is a major stakeholder in the development of West Basin and its shoreline, associated pedestrian, cycle and car access arrangements and how these and other project initiatives link to the museum’s future strategic planning.

How will the results of the consultation be used?
Feedback from this consultation will be used to guide future stages of the project’s development.

Will this proposal limit the lakeside activities of current sports and other lake users, and what opportunities are there to improve current club amenities and future demand?
The project is being designed in concert with current lake users (on water and shore) and will not limit the lakeside activities of current sports and other lake users. The Project Reference Group includes the Lake Users Group which has been an important contributor on behalf of current users. There will be exciting opportunities for both current and new sporting users, as well as non-sporting recreational users. The consultation is designed to include the ideas of all current and potential lake users.