

COMMUNITY SPORT AND RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

We love sport, in fact, Canberrans have some of the highest rates of community sport participation in the country.

Sport helps us make friends, stay healthy and make our lives better, and forms the basis of much of the Canberra community.

However, the combined forces of coronavirus and climate change are impacting heavily on our community sports, making it harder to plan events and more expensive to maintain facilities and outdoor recreation spaces.

Now, more than ever, our communities need places where they can come together, and sport is a critical part of that story.

THAT'S WHY THE ACT GREENS WANT TO CREATE A CITY THAT ENCOURAGES AND FACILITATES AS MUCH COMMUNITY SPORT AS POSSIBLE, BY

1. Building a new multi-purpose indoor sports centre, combined with community meeting rooms, in the Woden Town Centre
2. Progressing the Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan to make it a leading Australian multi-sport facility
3. Investing in making the ACT a premier mountain biking destination
4. Reestablishing a Sport and Recreation Industry Peak Body to support the sector respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and beyond
5. Reviewing ACT Government Sport and Recreation Grants to improve transparency
6. Ensuring sporting groups can access the Community Facilities and Clubs Environmental Upgrade
7. Developing a comprehensive long term Facilities Management Plan for the ACT's indoor and outdoor facilities
8. Fill the gap in local skateboarding and build a new competition standard Half Pipe, and a Skatepark in Dickson
9. Providing women specific swimming times for all ACT Government owned public pools
10. Walking and cycling infrastructure improvements
11. Repairing our waterways to improve water quality for our recreational lake water users
12. Facilitate park, playground, water fountain and exercise equipment installation and upgrades to meet local community needs

1. BUILD A NEW MULTI-PURPOSE INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE, COMBINED WITH COMMUNITY MEETING ROOMS, IN THE WODEN TOWN CENTRE

[The ACT Greens have long been calling for more indoor sports facilities and more community facilities in Woden](#), but have been disappointed by the government's lack of action.

We strongly agree with the [Woden Valley Community Council](#) that sport and recreation activities have the ability to bring people of all ages together and provide opportunities for inclusion. They can inspire and motivate individuals while also fostering community pride.

In recent years, we have seen the options for indoor sports use in the Woden Valley diminish. The demolition of Woden's basketball stadium and closure of both the Woden CIT and the MPowerdome in Tuggeranong have left a shortage of indoor sports facilities across the south of Canberra, and the Government's response to date has been inadequate.

The Woden Valley, as a broader catchment area including Weston Creek and the fast growing Molonglo Valley, does not have an indoor multi-purpose sports facility - leaving many sporting teams, including basketball, netball, futsal, gymnastics, badminton and roller derby with limited access to indoor sports facilities.

That is why the ACT Greens will commit up to \$22 million to construct a multipurpose indoor sports facility that can cater for a wide range of community sports and recreation activities, and can also be used for other community functions and events.

2. PROGRESSING THE STROMLO FOREST PARK MASTERPLAN TO MAKE IT A LEADING AUSTRALIAN MULTI-SPORT FACILITY

Stromlo Forest Park (SFP) was designed as a world class facility that can host large events from multiple sports. However, although it has a master plan, SFP has not been upgraded for many years. The Greens support strategic upgrades to SFP to ensure it continues to be a world class facility, and can support local sports, as well as attract national and international sporting events.

SFP has great potential to be a hub for sporting activity, connecting enthusiasts from other areas of Canberra and the region. It has potential to expand facilities such as accommodation, food, and other business, creating a 'ski resort' like location that can support and attract large events and crowds.

We recognise the immediate priorities of the SFP Users Group, which would improve the ability for SFP to host large events, attract private investment, improve existing facilities, and better connect Canberrans to SFP. These include improving north-south access to Stromlo Forest Park between Cotter and Uriarra Roads; linking from SFP to the John Gorton Drive underpass to improve active travel connections; and developing infrastructure to facilitate private investment at SFP, including accommodation and commercial services.

The Greens support an investment plan and rapid timetable to complete these projects, and **commit an initial \$1M to getting them underway.**

The funding would also contribute to an expansion of the existing MTB trails at SFP.

3. INVESTING IN MAKING THE ACT A PREMIER MOUNTAIN BIKING DESTINATION

Canberra has a strong cycling community and it continues to grow rapidly. The ACT Greens believe that, as the bush capital with good facilities, [the ACT has a significant opportunity to become Australia's premier cycling and MTB destination](#). This will not only benefit the local community, it will be a boon for tourism and the local economy. Strategic investment is needed to achieve this. A range of other Australian destinations have invested in mountain biking in recent years, and drawn cycling tourism away from Canberra.

The [Canberra Mountain Biking Report](#) identifies a strategy, including costs, for **establishing the ACT as the MTB Capital of Australia**, offering a superior trail network with outstanding experiences for visitors.

The ACT Greens will provide an additional investment of \$700,000 to implement the priority recommendations from the [Canberra Mountain Biking Report](#). This includes:

- Upgrades to existing mountain biking areas and development of new areas. The areas west of Stromlo Forest Park, Cotter Reserve, and Blue Range offer exciting opportunities. The Greens are committed to any trail development being sustainable and done in an ecologically sensitive way.
- Marketing and tourism materials, and market sounding for further investment.
- Further Government efforts to attract mountain biking events to Canberra, especially to utilise Stromlo Forest Park.
- More and improved signage.
- A dedicated tourism campaign to promote mountain biking in Canberra, including a user-friendly web portal to assist tourists considering visiting.

4. REESTABLISH A SPORT AND RECREATION INDUSTRY PEAK BODY TO SUPPORT THE SECTOR IN RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF COVID 19

Organised sports and recreation activities bring us together as a community, and now more than ever we need to find new ways of connecting as we try to build a better normal. The relationship between governments, peak and advisory bodies, and user groups must also be more consultative and in fact collaborative than ever before.

Utilising the existing representative body of the Coalition of Major Participation Sports as a foundation, the ACT Greens will work to establish and provide ongoing funding to a permanent sports industry peak body, which will liaise with government agencies on matters relevant to members (such as planning, land use, needs analysis and funding requirements); work collaboratively to consider the best possible use of public spending on major sporting events; and will also have a leadership role to play in advocating for sporting groups needs during the COVID recovery phase.

We will allocate \$200,000 in seed funding for the first two years of operation and consider its longer term needs in 2021.

5. REVIEW OF ACT GOVERNMENT SPORT AND RECREATION GRANTS TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY

For many years, the ACT's sporting groups have raised concerns and questions regarding the transparency of the Government's sport and recreation grants and funding program. **The ACT Greens believe that as we move into this challenging period, organisations deserve a transparent grants program and more consistent and predictable base funding.**

We will also pay special attention to the Triennial Assistance program, to ensure it is actually fairly and equitably fulfilling its purpose to:

- provide organisations with financial certainty in the continuing implementation of participation programs;
- allow organisations to undertake longer term planning initiatives;
- allow organisations to employ and retain the required expertise; and
- assist the administrative efficiency of the organisation

6. ENSURE SPORTING GROUPS CAN ACCESS THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CLUBS ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADE FUND

The Greens understand that water use, particularly over summer, is a high cost for many clubs that manage significant sports assets such as playing fields, golf courses and bowling greens. Many sporting clubs also have indoor facilities that require heating and cooling of large spaces, and these costs are only increased by climate change impacts such as heat waves and smoke.

The Greens will ensure that our [Community Facilities and Clubs Environmental Upgrade Fund](#) supports our sporting and community clubs to improve the water and energy efficiency and sustainability of community assets and spaces.

We will initially allocate \$5 million for environmental grants and a revolving no-interest loan fund for clubs, and also to standalone sporting groups that are not associated with established community clubs, to undertake upgrades which will reduce their bills and improve environmental outcomes. Examples include water and energy efficiency measures, installation of solar panels and batteries, and the upgrade of gas heating infrastructure with electric replacements.

The fund will stimulate investment in improvements to community and sporting facilities, reduce energy and water bills, and create good environmental outcomes - making it a win for all Canberrans.

We will also link clubs in directly with the ACT Government body responsible for water, to look at how water use could be reduced, and examine whether any targeted subsidies should be provided to offset water costs (once the sustainability and efficiency has been assessed and any recommendations implemented). This could include a review of the Water Abstraction Charge.

7. DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-TERM FACILITIES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ACT'S INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES

The ACT has a large and diverse portfolio of sporting facilities, from simple sheds used for storage to premier competition playing fields, however, much of this infrastructure is ageing, and many needs of the tenants have changed since first constructed. The Government should have a much more detailed understanding of its own assets, and importantly have a genuinely strategic approach to maintenance, repair, and possible reuse. We also recognise the impact that [climate change](#) is having on all areas of sport and recreation, as noted by both [locally](#) and [nationally](#), and believe that more can and should be done to both adapt and prepare for the future.

The sporting user groups have told us that there is a lack of transparency regarding Government funding - while they are willing to wait their turn for these upgrades, as long as they actually happen eventually, they are concerned about the "first in, best dressed" approach. We also know from the Government's "[Better Suburbs](#)" [vision statement](#) that the broader community greatly values these sporting assets, and want better maintenance and more engagement with their uses.

We will commit \$250,000 to undertake a comprehensive long term Facilities Management Plan for the ACT's indoor and outdoor facilities to ensure that funding is transparently distributed to clubs and associations on a needs basis, and to provide a forward plan for asset upgrade approvals.

8. FILL THE GAP IN LOCAL SKATEBOARDING AND BUILD A NEW COMPETITION STANDARD HALF PIPE, AND A SKATEPARK IN DICKSON

While Canberra was once the [skate capital of the Southern Hemisphere](#), unfortunately Canberra is beginning to fall behind in the provision and management of contemporary skateparks. Some facilities are lacking in repair and maintenance, and Canberra does not yet have a vertical halfpipe that meets international competition standards. The 2011 redevelopment of Belco Skatepark required the demolition of the existing halfpipe. A replacement was included in the design of the new facility, but was never delivered.

The ACT Greens would like to see skateboarding sites recognised in the broader strategic asset management plan for other sports and recreation facilities. **We also commit to \$100,000 towards working with the local skateboarding community to develop a competition standard Half Pipe to attract future competitions and events.**

We have also **committed to a new dedicated standalone skate park for the Inner North, around Dickson**, with costs to be determined in consultation with the local community and the Canberra Skateboarding Association.

9. WOMEN SPECIFIC SWIMMING TIMES FOR ALL ACT GOVERNMENT OWNED PUBLIC POOLS

Providing women's only swimming would increase the availability of swimming to a number of women and children in our community, both for safety, and for fun.

Some women and families currently do not use our public pools due to religious reasons, accessibility concerns, or for body image reasons. The ACT Government owns and contracts out management of many public swimming pools, and we believe that each of these should be guided by a common policy that embeds women only schedules as a standard.

The ACT Greens have also previously announced a range of initiatives that will support sporting groups and enhance our city's recreation and exercise offerings.

10. WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Canberrans clearly want better walking and cycling options. As the COVID crisis continues, [Canberra cycle shops have reported a surge in bike sales in recent months](#).

The Greens will [build a world-leading Canberra-wide walking and cycling network](#), to ensure everyone can ride and walk for recreation and active travel, and help attract cycling-related tourism and events.

Hundreds of Canberrans recently responded to a Greens call to [help map out the gaps in Canberra's cycling network](#), identifying over 100 potential areas of improvement across the city. [Recent research also showed that women and families with children are more likely to walk or ride on a safer, more connected walking and cycling network](#). Following this community consultation and consultation with community advocates Pedal Power, the Greens have committed to major investments in cycling corridors in seven priority areas.

11. REPAIRING OUR WATERWAYS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY FOR OUR RECREATIONAL LAKE WATER USERS

The Greens will roll out a \$30 million [Repairing Waterways](#) infrastructure program to continue the successful Healthy Waterways project to reduce pollutants entering Canberra's water catchments, including Lake Tuggeranong, Yarralumla Creek, West Belconnen, and Molonglo. While there has been significant investment in ACT catchments over the past decade or more, there are still high nutrient-levels in most of our waterways: from high amounts of leaf matter in Autumn, high loads of sediment and pollutants from construction sites - especially in our developing suburbs, and overuse of fertilisers and detergents in our suburban gardens and yard. This has seen our lakes often closed for long periods, with floating debris or deemed a health hazard.

The ACT Greens Repairing Our Waterways program will prioritise improving the health of the ACT's aquatic ecosystems, which are essential for sporting and recreation activities, biodiversity and the community. We want our lakes open and healthy, and able to support water sports such as rowing, paddleboarding, swimming, triathlon, sailing and dragon boating.

12. FACILITATE PARK, PLAYGROUND, WATER FOUNTAIN AND EXERCISE EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION AND UPGRADES TO MEET LOCAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Greens believe that everyone should have access to quality local activity facilities, and the people who know best about what their neighbourhood needs are the people who live there. Our [Neighbourhood Democracy](#) program will facilitate sports amenities installation and upgrades like small-scale park upgrades, new playground equipment, water fountains and exercise equipment to meet local community needs, so that everyone has access to quality local activity facilities.

That is why we recently **announced a commitment to deliver [Canberra's first Neighbourhood Democracy package](#), giving the Canberra community, not just the government, a say in how investments in their neighbourhood are made.**