

Changes to support Active Living in the ACT



What is included in this advisory document

What is Active Living?

Why is Active Living important?

How active are Canberrans?

What is the natural and built environment and how does it influence Active Living?

Barriers and recommendations to support Active Living across the ACT

- Walking and Cycling
- Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds
- Public Transport
- Proximity to local facilities and amenities

Lessons from Crace

Where can I find out more?

We know that Canberra is a great place to live for physical activity, but there are still many ways that we can all support Canberrans to be more active, healthy and happy.

In 2015, the Canberra community participated in the Urban Wellbeing Survey (University of Canberra 2014), an investigation of how satisfied people are with aspects of their local neighbourhood as well as active travel behaviours and public transport use.

What is Active Living?

A way of life that integrates physical activity into daily life through:

- Walking and cycling for transport (active travel)
- Sport and recreation
- Walking and cycling to access public transport

Why is Active Living important?

Moving more and sitting less helps improve our physical and mental health, and reduces our risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes (Australian Government Department of Health 2014).

How active are Canberrans?

In the ACT 49.6% of adults are not sufficiently active for health.

Highest level of inactivity was in Tuggeranong (57.4%) and Weston Creek (55.7%)

(Heart Foundation 2016)

What is the natural and built environment and how does it influence Active Living?

The natural environment encompasses land, natural resources, climate, atmosphere, water, ecosystems and biodiversity.

The built environment is the physical structures and supporting infrastructure where people live, work and play.

There is growing recognition that the natural and built environment influence active living



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Barriers and recommendations to support Active Living across the ACT

Walking and Cycling

What the community said

As many as 75% of Canberrans in most parts of the ACT agreed there are alternative routes to reach a destination. However, between 30% and 40% of Canberrans did not agree there are adequate crossings and signals on busy roads.

The main barrier to cycling in the ACT was appearance at destination with two thirds of participants reporting that 'cycling means it's difficult to make sure I am clean and well-dressed at my final destination'.

More than a quarter of participants in all ACT regions were not satisfied with the adequacy of lighting in their neighbourhood. The level of disagreement was as high as 50% in North Canberra.

Recommendations

Undertake audits to identify where pedestrian crossings might be needed, particularly around public places such as schools, shopping centres and playgrounds.

Locate lighting for night time safety on cycling and walking paths, meeting places, crossings, signage, public transport stops and other well used night time areas.

Parks and Open Spaces

What the community said

More than forty percent of residents in Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek were not satisfied with the amount of shade and shelter in their local parks and open spaces.

In Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek, more than a third of residents were not satisfied with the amount of seating available in parks and open space.

Recommendations

Provide adequate seating, such as bench seats located under shaded tree canopies or shade structures.

Children's Playgrounds

What the community said

More than a third of participants in Tuggeranong and Woden reported they did not perceive children's playgrounds to be clean and safe.

There was large variation in satisfaction with the variety of play equipment in children's playgrounds across Canberra. The highest level of dissatisfaction occurred in North Canberra and Woden.

Recommendations

Locate and design children's playgrounds to have clear natural surveillance and multiple entry/exit points.

Incorporate the Active Living Principle of 'environments for all' in the design of children's playgrounds to provide an appropriate range of play equipment for different ages and abilities.



Public Transport

What the community said

The main barriers to public transport use across the ACT were:

- Takes too much time
- Too complicated

Recommendations

Design for clear, safe and accessible routes to public transport stops.

Provide amenities such as seating, lighting and bicycle lock up facilities at public transport stops.

The low density and dispersed nature of the ACT means private vehicles are the predominant mode of transport.

Proximity to Destinations

What the community said

Tuggeranong, Belconnen and Weston Creek had the lowest percentage of amenities, services and facilities within a ten-minute walk from home.

Recommendations

Ensure travel links are safe, attractive, direct and convenient for all people (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, people with prams, and those with a walking aid device or wheelchair).

Address the Active Living Principle 'connected places' by improving connections between streets with sufficient crossings, safe and attractive alleys, and signage that identifies the direction and distance to local public destinations.

References

Australian Government Department of Health. Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines. 2014. Available from: <http://www.health.gov.au/paguidelines>

University of Canberra. Urban Wellbeing Survey: <http://www.curf.com.au/news/article/?id=take-part-in-the-2014-urban-and-regional-wellbeing-surveys>

Heart Foundation (2016). Heatmaps: https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/HeatMaps_PrevCVD_and_Risk_factors_ACT.pdf

Lessons from Crace

Crace (suburb of Gungahlin, Canberra) was designed on best practice to create an attractive and safe neighbourhood that fosters enhanced health and wellbeing.

Results from participants living in Crace indicate that not only do people in Crace have a range of services, facilities and amenities within a 10 minute walk from home, they are also likely to walk there.

There are several aspects of the design of Crace that enable residents to have greater opportunity to be active in their local neighbourhood.



Walking and shared paths

*Level of agreement with characteristics about walking and cycling**

Characteristic	ACT region with highest and lowest level of agreement, compared with Crace		
<i>Walking</i>			
Distance between intersections is usually short	Crace 82.5%	Gungahlin 70%	Tuggeranong 46.0%
Alternative routes	Crace 82.5%	Nth Canberra 79.2%	Woden 35.6%
<i>Shared paths</i>			
They are in decent condition	Crace 93.0%	Gungahlin 81.7%	Weston Creek 48.6%
They are conveniently located	Crace 93.0%	Sth Canberra 76.8%	Weston Creek 65.0%
Are well lit at night	Crace 55.0%	Gungahlin 41.0%	Belconnen 22.4%

* Figures derived from analysis of the Urban Wellbeing Survey data

CONNECTED PLACES

Many design features of Crace support walkability.

A high percentage of participants from Crace agreed there are short distances between intersections and alternative routes to get to different destinations.



Services, facilities and amenities

Proximity to services, facilities and amenities within a 10 minute walk in Crace compared to ACT regions*

Destination	ACT regions compared to Crace		
Access to food			
– within 10 min walk	Crace 76.7%	Nth Canberra 66.5%	Tuggeranong 53.1%
– walks there	Crace 74.0%	Nth Canberra 61.8%	Tuggeranong 44.8%
Access to social opportunities**			
– within 10 min walk	Sth Canberra 56.8%	Crace 55.6%*	Tuggeranong 36.2%
– walks there	Crace 53.1%	Sth Canberra 46.9%	Tuggeranong 21.8%
Access to health services#			
– within 10 min walk	Sth Canberra 72.1%	Crace 71.4%	Tuggeranong 47.8%
– walks there	Crace 52.5%	Sth Canberra 48.1%	Tuggeranong 37.3%

* Figures derived from analysis of the Urban Wellbeing Survey data


**The low percentage of access to social opportunities is due to a lack of community facilities in Crace with just 6.4% of participants reporting to have a community facility within a 10 minute walk.

The lower level of participants walking to health services is likely to be explained by a reduced ability to walk if affected by ill health




ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL

Crace has several playgrounds for children and different types of open space. The main recreation park in Crace has several different types of facilities for a range of ages, interests and abilities including a large field, children's playground, outdoor gym and wetland.



SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Canberra has many inviting playgrounds, parks and open space. However, a consistent barrier to their use across all ACT regions and in Crace is a lack of shade and shelter. While many playgrounds provide seating, it is often exposed to the elements.



MIXED LAND USE AND DENSITY

Crace has numerous amenities, services and facilities located centrally with open space and residential property all within close proximity. A higher proportion of Crace residents walk to local destinations in comparison to all ACT regions.

Children's playgrounds, parks and open spaces

Agreement with characteristics about playgrounds, parks and open spaces*

Characteristic	ACT region with highest and lowest level of agreement, compared with Crace		
Playgrounds			
Good variety of equipment	Crace 76.3%	Gungahlin 71.4%	Nth Canberra 38.5%
Located in several places	Crace 92.1%	Gungahlin 88.5%	Tuggeranong 62.8%
Clean and safe	Crace 89.5%	Gungahlin 81.3%	Nth Canberra 57.7%
Parks and open space			
Enough places to sit or rest	Crace 77.5%	Woden 70.0%	Weston Creek 42.5%
Clean and safe	Crace 80.0%	Sth Canberra 76.8%	Tuggeranong 51.4%

* Figures derived from analysis of the Urban Wellbeing Survey data

Where can I find out more?

ACT Active Living Principles – advisory document

Benefits of Infrastructure to Support Active Living – advisory document

Statement of Planning Intent. Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate – Planning. ACT Government

Incorporating Active Living Principles into the Territory Plan, Information Paper August 2016. ACT Government

Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 348. Incorporating Active Living Principles in the Territory Plan September 2016. ACT Government