

Minister for Sport and Recreation
ACT Indoor Sports Facility Study – ACT Government Response

As the Minister for Sport and Recreation, I am committed to supporting all Canberrans to have access to quality facilities and to encourage active living. As our city grows and our population increases, it is essential that we have a broad range of sport and recreation offerings for an equally broad range of activities. From gymnastics to badminton, futsal to roller derby and everything in-between, indoor activities are a vital part of the sport and recreation landscape. Given this, it is important that we continue to work closely with our indoor sporting groups and facility owners to make sure no one misses out on the chance to be active.

In 2015, the ACT Government commissioned this report which examines the state of indoor sport facilities in the ACT, and which will now inform a number of actions to be taken in the short term and also help to guide future planning and decisions over the next 15 years.

This study has resulted in a range of findings regarding indoor sports facility provision, management and planning, and has also made a number of recommendations as to how the ACT Government can support both sporting groups and facility owners to ensure there is enough space to meet the needs of a range of users.

The government has agreed with the majority of the recommendations, and work will begin immediately to implement these important findings.

By working together as one government and better co-ordinating use of existing resources, we can ease the pressures facing indoor sports and recreation users, and by considering the future needs of our existing and growing suburbs, we can support a viable and more sustainable industry in the coming years.

Shane Rattenbury
Minister for Sport and Recreation
18 January 2016

ACT Indoor Sports Facility Study

ACT Government Response

Consultant Recommendation	Identified Strategies	ACT Government Response
1. Increase community use of public school indoor court facilities.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated policy should be developed that combines both education and sport and recreation provision and seeks to ensure that all public school indoor sport facilities are made available for public use where feasible. This policy should also look at implementation mechanisms critical to success such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing a central and easily accessed, point for information on available spaces and available hours. A central web based booking system could be explored. Critical information will be the size and configuration of a facility, hire fees and availability. ○ The introduction of an appropriate subsidy scheme to offset costs associated with the hire of school facilities to ensure hire rates in schools remain competitive with other commercial indoor facilities. 	<p>Agreed. ACT Education and Training Directorate (ETD) have released a policy which encourages community access to public school indoor sport facilities outside of school hours where feasible. The policy is now publicly available at: http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/796455/CommunityUseSchoolFacilitiesPolicy.pdf</p> <p>Noted. The ACT Government will consider options to improve the booking processes for ACT Government indoor facilities, paying particular attention to public school indoor facilities.</p> <p>ETD has completed an audit of its existing facilities and this information is publicly available at: http://www.det.act.gov.au/about_us/A-Z.</p> <p>Noted. The ACT Government will give further consideration to this recommendation in the context of a working group to be established involving ETD and Sport and Recreation Services (SRS).</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilities to resolve access and other operational issues so that facilities can support greater levels of community access outside of school hours. ○ Amendments to relevant grant programs (i.e. Sport and Recreation Grants Program) that may support funding for school – sport sector partnerships to upgrade school facilities. 	<p>Agreed. The ACT Government, via SRS, will contribute \$50,000 in 2016 to assist in resolving immediate access issues that can be undertaken at ACT Government schools to improve community access opportunities. ETD will consider what opportunities there may be to match this contribution in 2016-17.</p> <p><i>Agreed. The guidelines for the Sport and Recreation Grants Program will be amended in 2016 to enable eligible sport and recreation organisations to seek funding for infrastructure improvements at ACT Government schools. Applicants will need to demonstrate that any such investment will improve access and usage of these facilities by the community outside of school hours. This initiative will be available for the 2017 Sport and Recreation Grants Program, which will open for applications in August 2016.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The opportunity to create vibrant and active community hubs based around schools should continue to be pursued. Campuses should be designed with community use of sporting and other facilities planned “up-front”. 	<p>Agreed. The ACT Government will continue to provide indoor facilities capable of access and use by the community, including the sport and recreation industry, as part of any new government school to be constructed in growth areas.</p> <p>A key consideration in any future design of new government schools will be the provision of appropriate community storage to better support the access and use of indoor facilities by the community outside of school hours.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Priority support to access school facilities should be offered to user groups who are being displaced with the closure of the courts in Woden. 	<p>Agreed. The newly established ETD/SRS working group will, as a priority investigate if any of the ACT Government schools in Woden can be utilised to partially or fully offset the loss of the courts at the Woden Basketball Stadium.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities to partner school campuses with provision of indoor sport centres serving the school and local community should be pursued 	<p>Noted. The provision of community accessible indoor facilities will be considered in the design for any future ACT Government schools.</p>

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	<p>along with the potential to establish “resident” users who will use facilities out of school hours and could manage community hire and use as part of their agreement. Further work is recommended to develop a set of tenure/ partnership options to progress this.</p>	<p>The ACT Government is willing to consider alternate delivery models in the future where it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are economically viable and supported by a robust business case.</p>
<p>2. Ensure new multi-court facilities are provided to service growth areas.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure maximum use of school facilities to meet training (and some competition) demand, while progressing plans for a few well planned and sustainable 3+ court centres provided as part of major mixed use leisure centres. New centres should be commercial or partnership/ hybrid models based on a feasibility analysis that demonstrates viability. 	<p>Noted. The scope for the internal ACT Government working group will include identifying opportunities and facilitating increased usage of public school facilities.</p> <p>Any future provision of indoor sport facilities provided by the commercial sector or the ACT Government should be supported by a robust business case to demonstrate viability.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the development of a 3+ court facility in Gungahlin. Based on the current demand and emerging models of sustainable centres, a commercial facility combining a number of uses to diversify revenue opportunities will be successful. This facility could be provided in partnership with a school, commercial agency or community based organisation and ideally would be operational 	<p>Noted. Additional indoor facilities in Gungahlin will be considered by the ACT Government in the design of any new school.</p> <p>The ACT Government would support the provision of a suitable commercial facility in Gungahlin and would consider partnership opportunities if a viable business model is identified.</p>

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	by 2020.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the 3 indoor courts at the Stromlo Leisure Centre that were proposed in the original feasibility study. 	Noted. The ACT Government will consider the viability of providing dedicated indoor sport facilities subject to future budget appropriations and delivery model options.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider opportunities in smaller growth areas such as West Belconnen to develop commercial or semi-commercial two court fitness and leisure facilities in partnership with a school campus. 	<p>Noted. As the planning for West Belconnen progresses, indoor facilities will be considered in the design for any future ACT Government school.</p> <p>The ACT Government is willing to consider alternate commercial or semi-commercial delivery models where it can be demonstrated that such models are economically viable and supported by a robust business case.</p>
3. Investigate sustainable options for increasing capacity at and use of existing centres.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the interim use of the Coorong Building at EPIC by Capital Football as a futsal and court sports centre. 	Agreed. The ACT Government is currently in discussions with Capital Football to utilise the Coorong Building at EPIC as an interim arrangement to help meet existing demand.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the University of Canberra to pursue their plans to expand their current sports facility, particularly additional indoor sports courts and additional squash courts. However, the final facility mix and number of new courts provided should be considered in the context of supply within the greater Belconnen catchment. 	Noted. Any proponent seeking ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other existing or proposed indoor sport facilities.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball ACT should be encouraged to continue planning the expansion of courts at their centre, however there is a concern that with indoor courts, both the University and Basketball ACT would be competing for the same catchment. 	<p>Noted. Any proponent seeking ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other existing or proposed indoor sport facilities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While Capital Football is using EPIC they should be encouraged to continue their investigation into feasibility and funding models for a longer term solution that provides a 2-4 court futsal centre managed by Capital Football as per their strategic facilities planning. Capital Football may also wish to explore partnering with a school campus or conversion of a disused lawn bowls facility. 	<p>Agreed in principle. Any proponent seeking ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other existing or proposed indoor sport facilities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When Futsal ceases use of EPIC, the level of demand for indoor court use (at the time) should be assessed and if unmet demand exists there should be consideration of establishing another regular sporting user for the space. 	<p>Noted. The continued use of EPIC to address any unmet facility demands will be considered on a case by case basis and in the context of other commercial hiring commitments and opportunities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT Government should continue to liaise with Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) to understand if the Commonwealth Government's Winning Edge Strategy may 	<p>Agreed. Various discussions are in train and are ongoing with the AIS.</p>

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	<p>provide future opportunities for local community sporting organisations to increase the usage of indoor facilities at the AIS campus in Canberra.</p>	
<p>4. Ensure that all new facility proposals or proposals for expansion of existing facilities are tested for viability and sustainability.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any future provision of indoor sport facilities in Belconnen will need to strongly consider the overall catchment demand and sustainability of facilities, particularly as existing facility owners such as Basketball ACT and University of Canberra have aspirations to expand facilities. 	<p>Agreed. Any proponent that wishes to seek ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other nearby indoor sport facilities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any future indoor facility should, to the extent possible, be designed to accommodate a broad range of indoor sport and activities. Design should include consideration of hybrid models which include outdoor or covered court space to cope with peak demand and reduce capital and operating costs. 	<p>Agreed. Where the ACT Government is involved in supporting future provision of indoor sport facilities, consideration will be given to incorporating outdoor/covered space.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Sport and Recreation Services develop 	<p>Agreed. <i>The ACT Government through Sport and Recreation Services</i></p>

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	<p>guidelines, including feasibility criteria, to assist in the assessment and prioritisation of indoor sport facility proposals where government assistance is being sought by a proponent. This should be based on the questions and issues identified in Section 3.6 of the Summary Report.</p>	<p><i>will develop guidelines to assist those sport and recreation organisations intending to seek government support to achieve their facility aspirations.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No financial support for new or expanded facilities should be provided without a feasibility study. 	<p>Agreed. The ACT Government may choose to support a proponent in completing a feasibility study, however, this would not commit the Territory to provide financial assistance for any capital works.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity on any organisation to manage a facility sustainably should be a critical consideration when considering requests for financial or other support to develop new or enhance existing facilities. 	<p>Agreed. Any proponent that wishes to seek ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal (in the short and long term) and also consider what the potential impact may be on other nearby indoor sport facilities.</p>
<p>5. Encourage sustainable provision of squash facilities at the current level.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the University of Canberra's plans to include additional squash courts in the expansion of their centre. If sufficient courts are added to that facility to create an 8-10 court centre then additional courts are not likely to be needed in Gungahlin. 	<p>Noted. Squash ACT are encouraged to discuss this opportunity with the University of Canberra.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the University of Canberra expansion not include a minimum of 4 additional squash courts then consideration should be given to encouraging 4-6 courts to be included in the facility mix for a future leisure facility in Gungahlin. 	<p>Noted. The ACT Government is aware that Squash ACT holds aspirations for additional courts to service the Gungahlin region. Recognising that squash courts have generally been provided by the private sector, the ACT Government would encourage Squash ACT to explore possible partnerships with the commercial sector in the first instance.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any existing courts are lost, strategies for replacement should consider the sustainability issues discussed in Recommendation 4.4. Development of a few stand-alone courts as part of a smaller centre is not recommended. 	<p>Noted. The ACT Government will continue to work in partnership with Squash ACT in assessing their facility requirements.</p>
<p>6. Encourage ice sports to develop a future facility strategy.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice Sports should develop a cooperative approach with commercial interests to investigate potential alternatives to the current aging facility. This investigation should consider the mix of sport, recreational and event needs and explore how newer facility models may be able to address these needs in a commercially viable way. 	<p>Agreed in principle. Any proponent that wishes to seek ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other nearby indoor sport facilities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of ice facilities is unavoidably linked with Canberra's Planning Scheme and the caveats on the current site to provide ice and swimming. The ACT Government will need 	<p>Noted. Any proponent that wishes to seek ACT Government support for any new indoor sport/recreation facilities will need to prepare a robust business case that appropriately considers the financial viability of the proposal and also consider what the potential impact may be on other</p>

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	<p>to be engaged in any investigation of facility options to ensure that the range of options is not constrained by this linkage.</p>	<p>nearby indoor sport facilities.</p> <p>Any implications for current zoning or lease conditions would necessarily be considered in this context.</p>
<p>7. Investigate options for improving provision of gymnastics facilities within Canberra.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gymnastics ACT should work with the current provider in Gungahlin to commence planning for the establishment of a larger gymnastics facility. With the growing population catchment it is expected that any gymnastics facility will be well patronised and have strong viability. The inclusion of gymnastics could be considered as part of a future mixed use facility in Gungahlin. 	<p>Noted. Gymnastics ACT are encouraged to commence discussions with the current facility provider in Gungahlin to identify opportunities for expansion.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The investigation of school partnership models is recommended for gymnastics facilities. This approach may ensure provision in the growth areas such as Molonglo and Gungahlin. It is possible that a permanent gymnastics facility could be associated with a school indoor sports centre that allowed for event use creating an opportunity for an efficient model of providing Gymnastics ACT with a full time centre with access to event space as needed. 	<p>Noted. The ACT Government, through ETD will consider this recommendation as part of initial feasibility studies for future ACT Government schools in Gungahlin and Molonglo.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gymnastics ACT and ACT Government should consider undertaking a feasibility study for the development of a state level facility suitable for hosting major competitive events as well as being the base for gymnastics and allied sports. 	<p>Noted. The ACT Government will commence discussions with Gymnastics ACT regarding the undertaking of a feasibility study.</p>
<p>8. Ensure that smaller and emerging indoor sports are supported to find suitable locations for training and competition.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport and Recreation Services should investigate options to make the search for venues easier. A “live” list of those seeking space and their requirements could be circulated to venue managers, schools and ACT Property Group as a way of promoting potential users. Creating a central contact point for groups could be established using the web based systems already in place for field bookings. 	<p>Noted. The ACT Government will give further consideration to this recommendation in the context of a working group to be established involving ETD and SRS.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new policy and database of school facilities released by Education and Training Directorate should be promoted widely to all clubs and groups. 	<p>Agreed. The ACT Government will give further consideration to this recommendation in the context of a working group to be established involving ETD and SRS.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport and Recreation Services could develop a number of standard lease or tenancy agreements that might make it easier for venue operators or property owners to accommodate sports. 	<p>Noted. ETD has developed standard licensing templates for use of ACT Government school facilities. SRS will investigate the extent to which this and/or other tenancy agreements used by government can be applied.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table Tennis may be a good fit for a regular user of a school facility, particularly an indoor space that is not compliant for courts sports. Alternatively there maybe surplus space within ACT Property Group’s assets that could be repurposed, or a centre that is looking for a permanent tenant. 	<p>Agreed. SRS will facilitate discussions regarding alternative facility options for Table Tennis. This should also be a pilot focus of the working group.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration could be given to a minor grants program that funds small modifications of existing facilities to allow a new sport to become a permanent user of a facility. 	<p>Agreed (in principle). The ACT Government, via Sport and Recreation Services, will contribute \$50,000 in 2015-16 to assist in resolving immediate access issues that can be undertaken at ACT Government schools to improve community access opportunities. ETD will consider matching this contribution in 2016-17 budget permitting.</p> <p>In addition, the guidelines for the 2017 Sport and Recreation Grant Program (which will be advertised in August 2016), will be amended to support eligible sport and recreation organisations to seek government grant funding to undertake improvements at government school indoor facilities where it can be demonstrated that that any such investment will improve access and usage of these facilities by the community outside of school hours.</p>