

# Woden Village

BLOCK 1 SECTION 7 PHILLIP

Engagement & Placemaking Evidence Report –  
*Concept DA Phase*

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May 2025



*Purdon acknowledges Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connection to lands, sea, and community.*

*We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.*



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# Abbreviations

<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>DA</b>	Development Application
<b>SLA</b>	Suburban Land Agency
<b>Plan</b>	Engagement and Placemaking Plan
<b>PDB</b>	Phillip Block 1, Section 7 Place Design Brief, March 2023
<b>NCDRP</b>	National Capital Design Review Panel
<b>WVCC</b>	Woden Valley Community Council

# Glossary

<b>Community</b>	For this plan, community refers to the broader public; anyone within the Woden Valley or the broader Canberra region with an interest in development of Block 1 Section 7 Phillip
<b>Key stakeholders</b>	Those who have influence on or are significantly impacted by the outcome of the project
<b>Targeted stakeholders</b>	Specific groups or individuals that have been identified for their potential to provide valuable input, support, or influence during the development
<b>IAP2</b>	The international Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an internationally recognised organisation that supports organisations who implement public participation in decision-making processes
<b>Suburb and block structure</b>	The framework for a place, made up of relationships between zones of built form, landforms, uses and open space. Encompasses urban systems such as transport and infrastructure networks
<b>Engagement collateral</b>	Visuals, documentation and other media designed to inform the community ahead of and during engagement activities
<b>Channel</b>	The medium or method used to communicate and interact with the community
<b>Tool</b>	The resource, method or instrument used to facilitate the engagement process
<b>Concept DA</b>	The preliminary proposal that outlines the key intentions for a development prior to submitting a full DA to the planning authority



# 1. Executive Summary

This Engagement and Placemaking Evidence Report (the Report) builds on engagement on the Tender Concept in 2024, focusing on delivery of public rooftop, community lawn/pavilion and car parking. It presents a summary and analysis of data collected during the 2-week engagement period for the Concept Development Application (Concept DA).

During this phase, a total of 9,464 people were reached, with 901 actively engaging across various channels. A combined 47 items of qualitative feedback were captured through the second community panel workshop and open-ended survey responses, alongside 26 completed surveys. The vast majority of commentary (91.5%) expressed positive or optimistic views about the DA concept.

The emerging themes across all channels were:

1. There are a variety of available opportunities and applications of First Nations influences within the design for Woden Village
2. Community reactions to Woden Village tended to be positive and constructive
3. Participants mostly anticipate that public rooftop areas will be well used but were also able to identify potential barriers and possible solutions in this regard
4. Participants favoured uses which serve as an 'attraction' over uses focused on environmental dividend for public rooftop spaces
5. A moderate intensity of development is supported for public rooftop areas to balance providing for attraction, level of access and cost of delivery.



*Design by Aspect & Oculus, Image by Tom Adolph*

## 2. Introduction

### Background

Woden Village Precinct is a key strategic site in one of Canberra's most vibrant town centres. This development is a tremendous opportunity to connect the surrounding uses and activities, creating a renewed identity, spirit and vitality for the local community.

Purdon has been engaged by the Hellenic Club (the Proponent) to design and deliver engagement activities for the Woden Village Precinct. The engagement builds upon the foundations of the original place-led community engagement conducted by the ACT Government, which culminated in a Place Design Brief (released by Suburban Land Agency (SLA) in March 2023) summarising the functions, attributes, and development characteristics the community identify as desirable for the new development.

This phase of community and stakeholder engagement sought stakeholder and community feedback on the concept design prepared for lodgement of the development application (Concept DA). The valuable feedback received will be used to inform and adjust the development application design and materials, with a view to optimising the design outcome and ensuring Woden Village aligns with the community's ambitions for the precinct.

This Report presents the key qualitative and quantitative results and discusses the key findings.

### Purpose

The overarching purpose of this engagement phase was to test community and stakeholder perception of the refined Concept DA plans and demonstrate how

previous feedback has informed the evolving design. The Concept DA plans build on the Tender Concept plans developed in response to the Place Design Brief, which reflects the community's aspirations for a liveable, green and vibrant Woden Village.

This engagement aimed to close the loop with the community by showing how their input has helped shape the design and inviting further feedback on the refined plans.

### Scope

The five objectives outlined in the Place Design Brief continued to guide this phase of consultation, helping to frame engagement around how well the refined Concept DA plans align with community aspirations.

This engagement focused on place-making elements, with particular emphasis on the public realm and the design of a public rooftop spaces. Feedback was sought on aspects such as amenity, functionality, accessibility, and activation of these areas, with the intent of refining how they support a vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive Woden Village.

The engagement also included exploration of community use of shared spaces, including the public lawn and pavilion, and sought to understand perceptions around parking demand within the precinct.

While previous community engagement, technical expertise, and site analysis had already shaped the Concept DA, this phase focused on testing and refining the plans through further input from the community.

### 3. Results

#### Participation & Reach

As shown in Figure 1, a total of 9,464 people were reached throughout the engagement period. This figure reflects those who came into contact with engagement materials, media, and collateral across all engagement channels.



Figure 1: Total reach and engagement

During the same period, 901 people actively engaged with the process. This includes people who interacted with the engagement materials, media, and collateral in some way, such as through completion of a survey, clicking on a link or communicating with us directly via email, social media or attending a panel session.

Figure 2 highlights the various engagement channels used and the extent of their reach, with social media emerging as the most effective platform in terms of audience exposure.

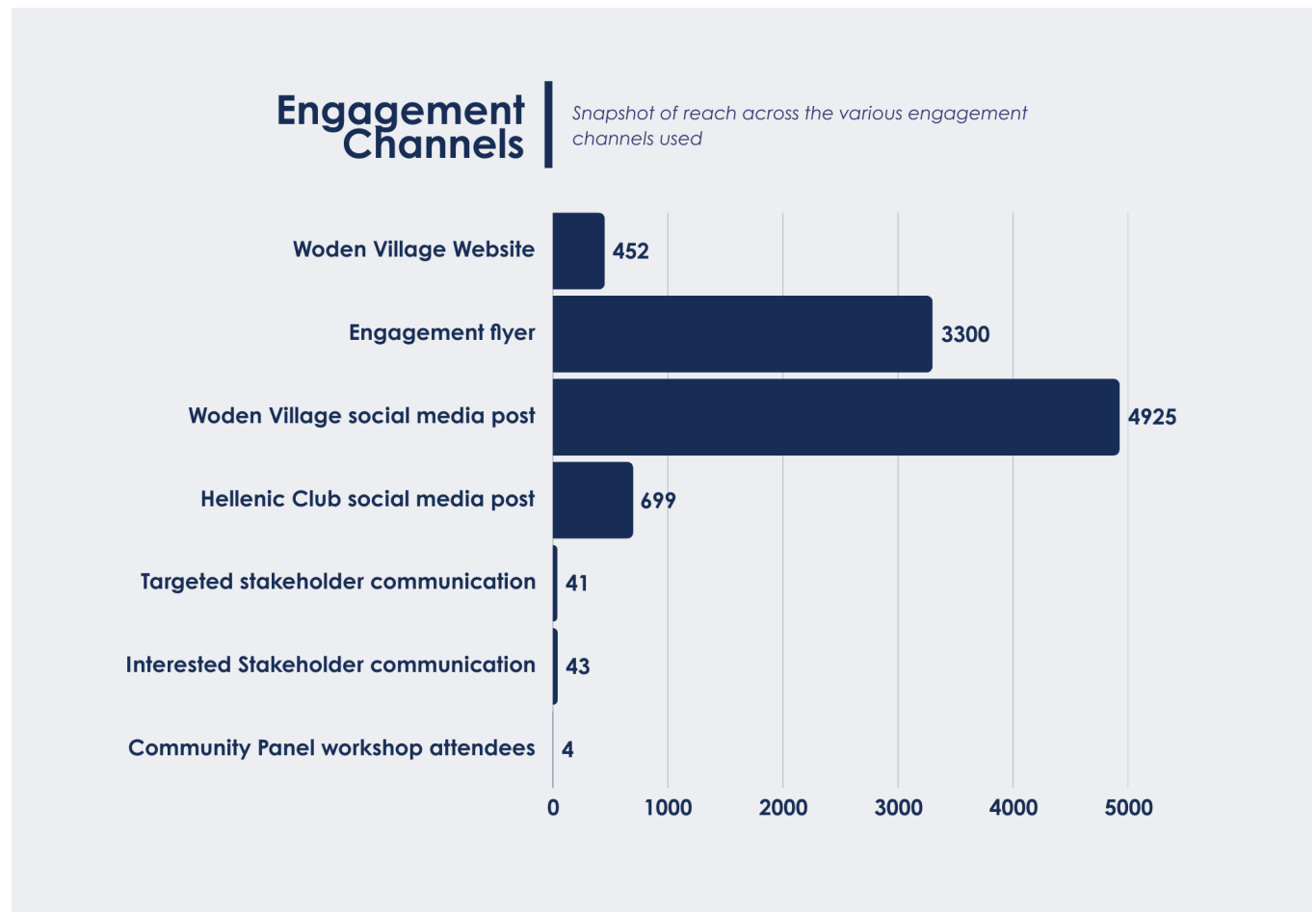


Figure 2: Engagement reach by channel

## First Nations Walk on Country

This engagement activity sought to ensure the design for Woden Village was informed by First Nations insights and perspectives, drawing on. Paul Girrawah House's multiple ancestries in the South East Canberra region.

The walk on Country gave rise to rich and detailed insights for direct use by the design team. Limited key findings are summarised below.

- All groups claiming connection to Country should be equally recognised at Woden Village via sharing of provenance stories, language and artwork
- Use of native species and sharing of histories concerning their ancestral use is supported
- Representing Country and Sky Country within the landscape and built form is encouraged, with specific opportunities identified at the ground floor and podium rooftop.
- Potential totems discussed included the Walgalu (Ngambri and Ngurmal) totems – Australian Crow (Umbe-Yukeembruk) and Australian Wedge Tail Eagle (Malian)
- The age, texture and resilience of one of the oldest trees within the ANU campus was noted as a potential influence for the materiality and tactility of the project.



# Survey Results

## Question 1 - Best use(s) of public rooftop space

Question 1 of the survey targeted insights in connection with themes 1-4 of the Place Design Brief, with a focus on delivery of these themes within a public rooftop setting. As depicted in Figure 3, passive recreation was identified as the community's preferred option for public rooftop spaces, closely followed by active recreation.

Performance/events spaces and socialisation scored similarly in the middle-ground while the options focusing on environmental outcomes received relatively lower scores, particularly when considering participant's first preferences.

### THE OPTIONS explained

**Passive recreation:** sitting with nature, being outdoors, relaxation.

**Active recreation:** e.g. half-court basketball, yoga deck/group exercise, play spaces, running track.

**Socialisation:** A meeting place, outdoor dining, sitting with friends.

**Performance / events spaces:** small-scale community events, outdoor cinema.

**Sustainability:** Minimising carbon footprint through renewable energy e.g. solar panels .

**Climate resilience:** Drought tolerant planting, combating urban heat by maximising greenery.

**Biodiversity:** focus on providing for bees and other insects, birds and pollinator plants.



Figure 3: Chart summarising survey responses to survey question 1.

## Question 2 - Great examples of rooftop design

This question encouraged participants to provide a great example of their top preference for Question 1. It also provided an opportunity to provide more specific, qualitative feedback in connection with Question 1.

Figure 4 shows the examples provided by participants and Figure 5 includes the specific feedback provided. Notably, several comments provided as more specific feedback focus on the potential for flexible or adaptable uses such as a basketball court which can also support other sports and cultural functions such as a cinema or performance space.



Figure 4: 'Great examples' of rooftop developments provided by participants in response to survey question 2.



# Q2

Specific feedback (e.g. specific active recreation or how the top choice for Q1 could be provided)

Love a **running track**, maybe a **pool**, and/or a **bar**

A **Safe relaxing** place that connects to **nature** (**alcohol free** space)

For **active recreation** I would like to suggest feedback for 1. ample **sustainable shading** in place 2. half **basketball court** 3. Built in **ground trampolines**

Love the **running track**. Would also love a rooftop outdoor **cinema** and **bar** so that **events** can be held after hours

**Basketball courts** - there isn't one in Woden, considering that a running track and skatepark are in Eddison Park. Large courts allow **adaptability** to other sports and **activations** (e.g. festivals, cinema). Throw in a trendy **bar/food** bit. **string lights**

A **basketball court** or two could be used during the day for sport, then for multiple **events** (like a **cinema** at night) and a **permanent bar**

More comfortable **seating**.

Outdoor ensemble **music concerts, cinema, performances, art work**. Things that bring people to **gather** and provide enjoyment in a beautiful **landscaped** space. Something totally missing from Woden

Combining B. and A. would be good. A **child plays area**/basket court and nice **seating** area for adults.

My top preference could of been either of the top 2. My second preference is because I have 3 young sons who I love watching them enjoy the **outdoors** and being so close to the Hellenic Club.

A **pull up bar** would be great

Figure 5: Collation of respondent comments in connection with survey question 2.



### Question 3 - Success of public rooftop spaces

This question was designed to explore an area of concern amidst the design team; the likelihood of the public navigating to and making use of public rooftop spaces in view of the vertical disconnect between the ground plane community spaces and the rooftop.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of scores selected by participants, with the majority of responses being above 50% (somewhat likely) and 5 participants being certain (100%) that public rooftop spaces will be well used. The mean, median and mode were calculated as follows:

- Mean: 67.3%
- Median: 70%
- Mode: 100%

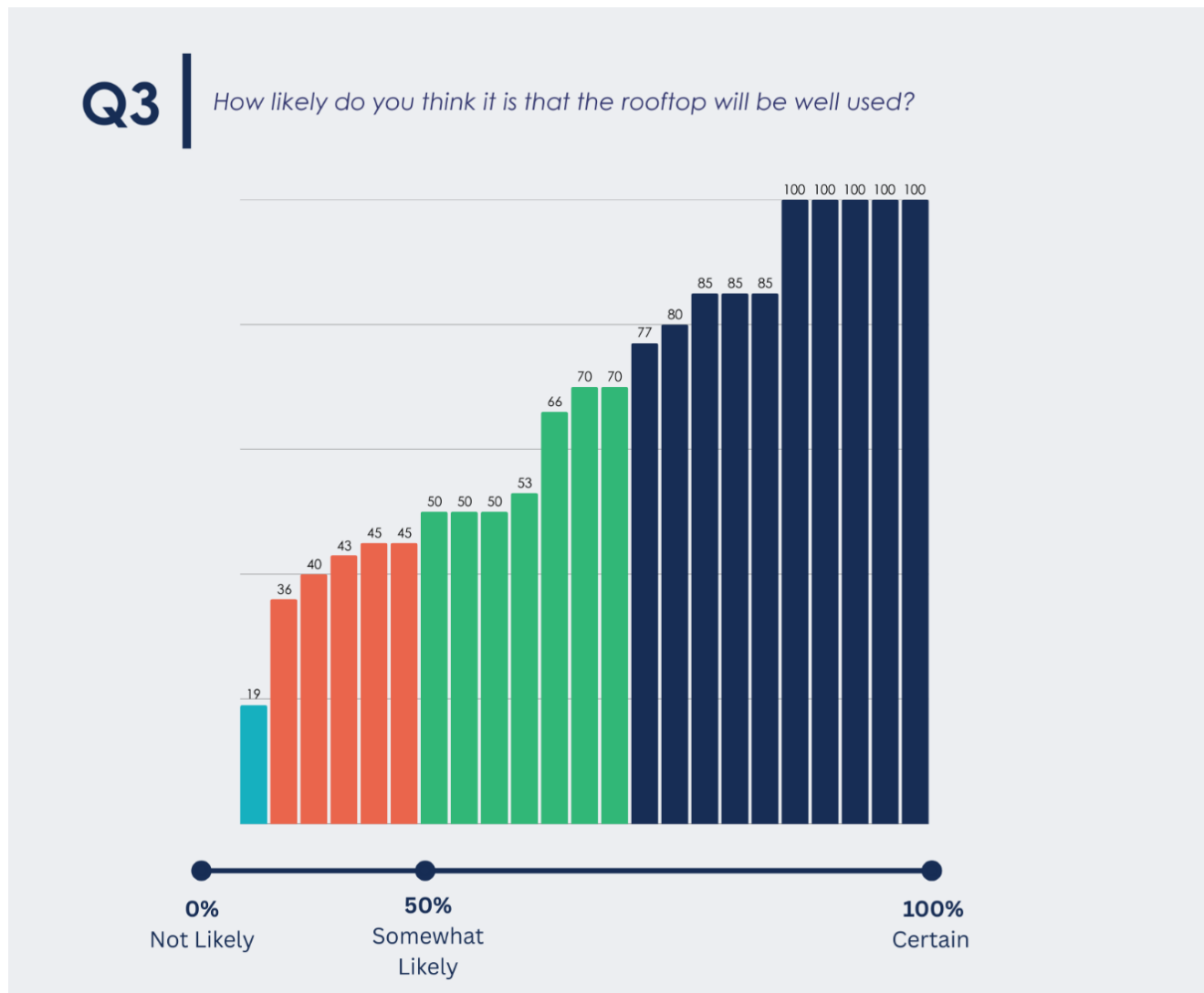


Figure 6: Chart summarising responses to survey question 3.

## Question 4 - Barriers to rooftop use

This question sought to provide further insights in connection with the previous question, focusing on responses which attributed a score of up to or including 50% - i.e. the responses which doubted the likelihood of successful use of public rooftop areas. All commentary provided in connection with this question (Figure 7) was subject to a thematic analysis, with four key themes emerging to describe perceived barriers to successful use of public rooftop spaces:

1. Attraction: the likelihood that people would be drawn to visit these spaces
2. Access and awareness: the knowledge of publicly accessible rooftop spaces and ability to successfully navigate there
3. Safety and inclusivity: perceptions surrounding the likelihood of well-designed and maintained spaces free of crime
4. Canberra climate: the potential for uncomfortable conditions in connection with cold during the Canberra winter and heat during the Canberra summer.

The relative prevalence of these themes amidst the commentary provided is depicted at Figure 8.



Figure 7: Record of commentary provided in response to survey question 4.

**Q4**

Prevalence of themes amidst commentary

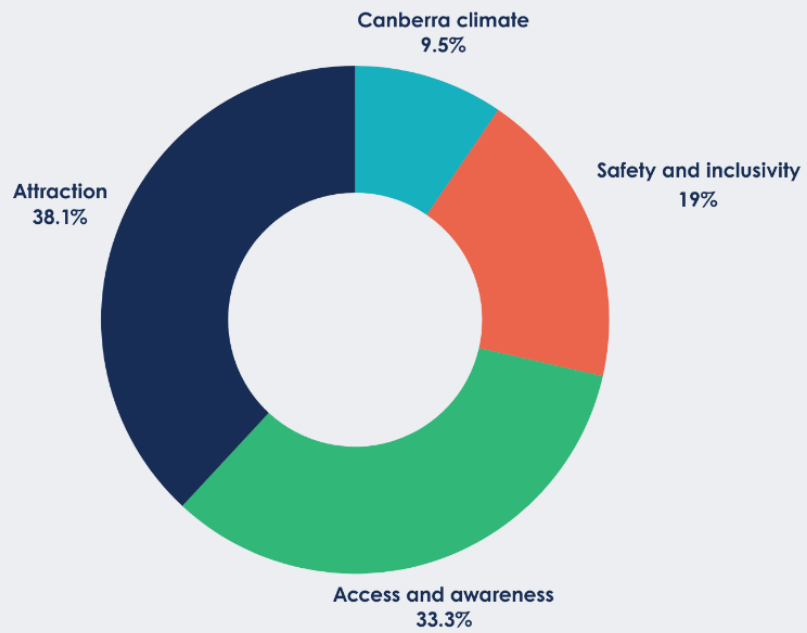


Figure 8: Relative prevalence of themes amidst commentary provided in response to survey question 4.



## Question 5 - Community Lawn and Pavilion

This question represented a shift in focus to the ground plane public realm, particularly the community lawn and pavilion spaces. Participants were asked to select their top two preferences from the list of potential uses or nominate an alternative suggestion. Responses to this question are depicted in Figure 9.

As shown, seasonal and cultural community events, regular markets and performance uses were most popular, and four participants nominated alternative suggestions or comments.



Figure 9: Charts summarising responses to survey question 6.

## Questions 6 - Car parking availability

These questions were designed to test public perception surrounding the timing and extent of public parking provision proposed following a number of informal conversations between the project team and members of the public which were focused on frustration surrounding current critical issues in this respect.

Across 24 participants, half of participants (12) noted that parking can be difficult, 7 people noted a critical shortage of parking and 5 people considered parking to be easily available in the area (Figure 10). Notably, commentary provided in connection with question 7, which sought insights into the rational behind responses to question 6, identified a strong polarity between responses. Statements featured a relatively high incidence of strong/emotive language and were split between two opposing views; (i) focus should be on delivery and uptake of public transport in a well-connected town centre precinct and (ii) that the current shortage of parking is extremely critical and a cause for regular inconvenience and frustration.



Figure 10: Perceptions surrounding respondent's experience of parking availability within the area as recorded in connection with survey question 6.

## Community Panel Results

### Activity 1 - Scale of usable rooftop spaces

Activity 1 during the community panel workshop sought to derive insights regarding the intensity of rooftop development. A worksheet was developed depicting small areas of high intensity (high cost) development on the left-hand side, scaling across to larger areas of low intensity (low cost) development on the right-hand side. The activity was designed to facilitate a better understanding of the communities optimal balance between access to the full extent of the public rooftop area versus delivery of smaller areas of highly functional infrastructure.

As shown in Figure 11, participants tended to favour a moderate intensity of development for public rooftop areas, selecting the 'middle ground' along the sliding scale provided. Participants noted a desire for some provision of infrastructure, offset by delivery of larger areas of lower intensity development supporting sitting with nature, planting and biodiversity. One participant indicated particular support for apiary.

### Activity 1: Scale of usable rooftop spaces

Markings and notes made by participants

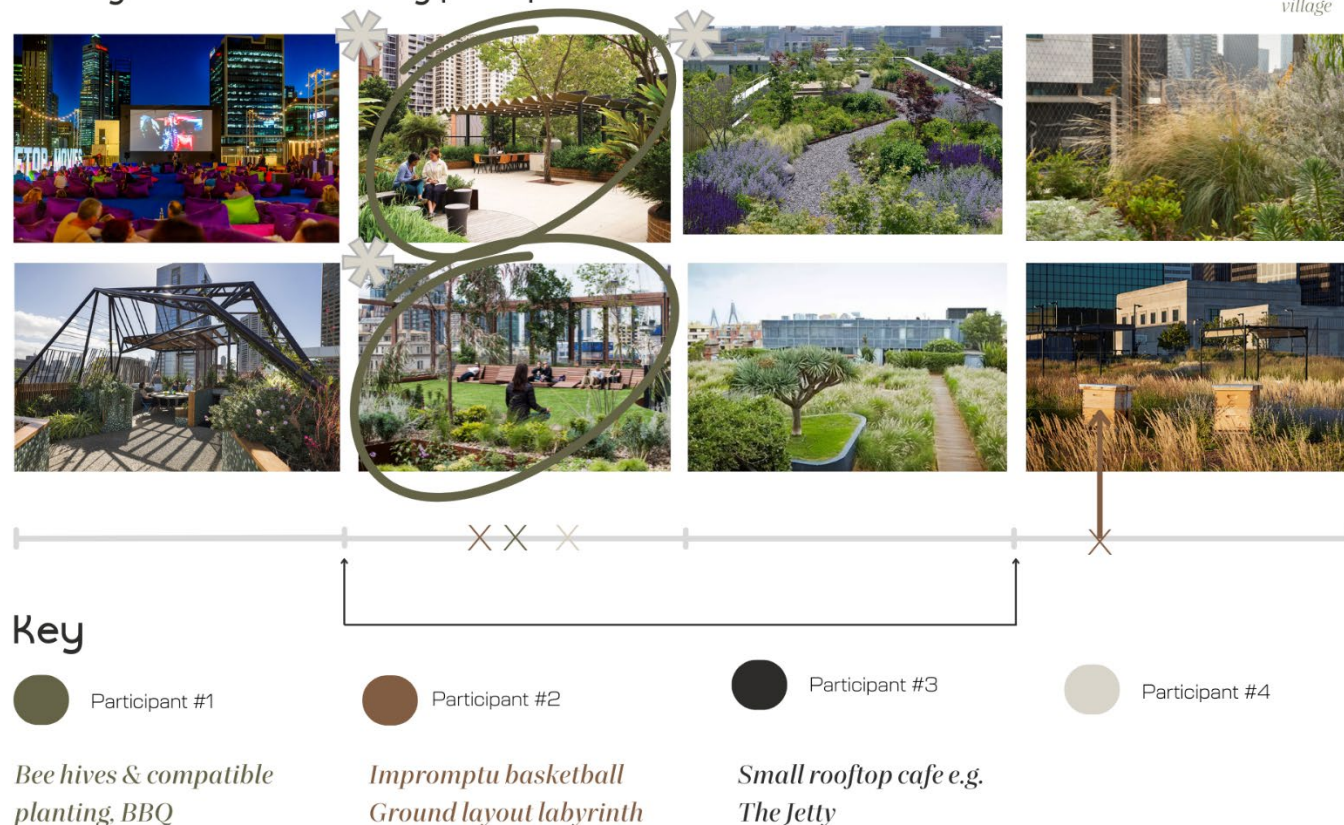


Figure 11 Markings made by participants in connection with workshop activity 1.



## Activity 2 - Public rooftop planning

Activity 2 aimed to provide participants with insights into the design decision-making process, including the challenges associated with prioritising a number of desirable uses, balancing the cost of delivery, providing for environmental dividends and providing a functional, attractive and successful public space. It also sought to investigate the community's preferences when informed by this need to balance various outcomes.

Results (Figure 12) gave rise to a visual concept plan featuring a mix of uses, amenities and facilities. While the community's preferences tended to centre on arrangement of the mix of ideas provided by the design team, one new and novel idea, being the suggested 'kiosk'. Participants noted a desire for an outlet for food/beverages to enjoy in the rooftop setting but were appreciative of the various challenges associated with delivering a café, bar or similar given the rooftop context. The proposed kiosk emerged as a potential low cost and small-scale solution, offering ground floor tenancies an option to make light meals, drinks etc available via the rooftop and bringing convenience to users of the rooftop.

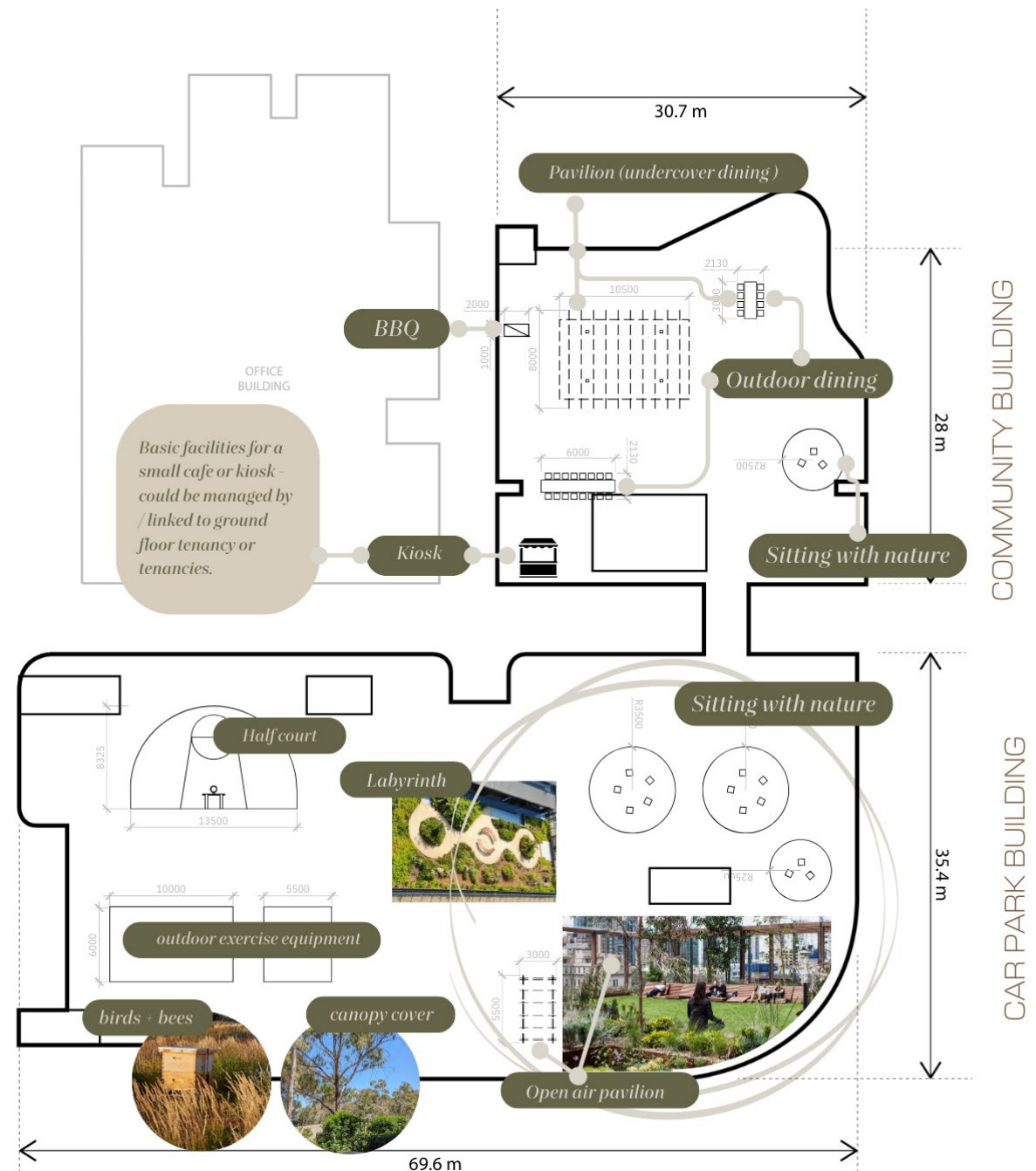


Figure 12 Results collated in connection with workshop activity 2.

### **Activity 3 - Barriers and solutions for successful rooftop use**

Activity 3 revolved around identification and resolution of potential barriers to successful use of public rooftop areas. Participants were asked to first identify potential issues before then proposing possible solutions to mitigate these challenges.

The identified barriers and their associated solutions (shown in ; Canberra's climate, attraction (pull to visit), access and awareness (to and of the public rooftop) and safety and inclusivity.

Table 3) were analysed to identify four key themes; Canberra's climate, attraction (pull to visit), access and awareness (to and of the public rooftop) and safety and inclusivity.

Table 1 Barriers and corresponding solutions for successful rooftop use identified by workshop participants during activity 3, with outputs grouped by emerging sub-themes.

Barrier	Solution
<b>Canberra Climate</b>	
Winter / the elements	Wind breaks – natural and/or artificial Heating around seating / pergola areas
Physical comfort	Not too hot / cold Sheltered from wind and sun Pleasant, sheltered places to sit, be active etc.
Weather – heat, wind, cold	Corners, shelters, trees
<b>Attraction</b>	
Overcrowding (fitting too much on the roof)	Consider appropriate spacing to enable quiet and tranquil settings
Duplication of amenities	Consider what exists nearby that is proposed for the roof e.g. basketball hoops at Eddison / Woden Park
Reason to use the rooftop	An activity, something attractive to make people go up there e.g. café / bar, seating, sports facilities
Ugly 12 storey building next door	Green screen on the north side carpark
Conflicting uses – active v quiet	Confine active spaces to southwest of carpark roof
Why go up there	Something you won't find elsewhere
Nothing to do	Impromptu basketball, conversation corners, labyrinth, gym equipment (outdoors)
<b>Access and Awareness</b>	
Ease of access	Entry points easy to find Open staircase Not too much waiting for lifts
Visible access to rooftop	Glass lift Open / screen enclosed stairs Visible stairs for stair climb
<b>Safe and Inclusive</b>	
Misuse / Vandalism	Appropriate maintenance Security controls (time-based access) Surveillance passive / CCTV etc.
Comfort	Areas that can be used by lots of different people (young, old, active etc.)



## Collective Results

### Sentiment and Contribution

Cross-analysis of sentiment (positive, neutral, negative) and contribution (comment only, constructive, out of scope, question) was used across all qualitative data gathered to provide insights into the community's reaction to the continued evolution of the concept.

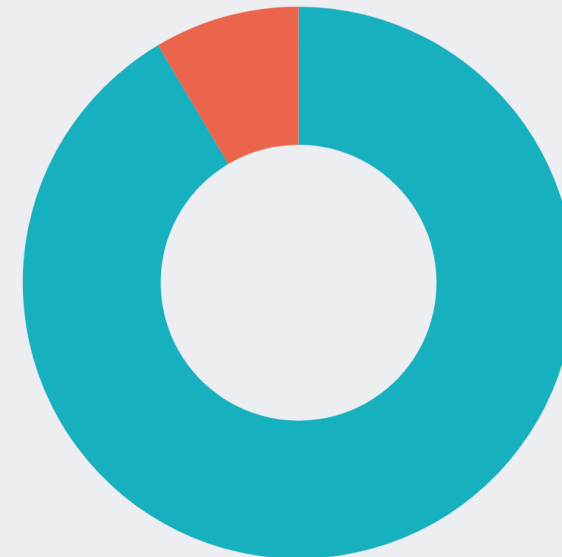
The data collated suggests that the vast majority of respondents (91.5%) reacted positively towards the proposal and had constructive feedback and insights to offer to guide further development of the design concept.

8.5% of qualitative data included a response indicative of dissatisfaction with an element of the proposal coupled with constructive feedback.

### Sentiment and contribution

*Sentiment and contribution across all qualitative data emerging from survey and workshop activities*

**Dissatisfied with suggestions for improvement**  
8.5%



**Satisfied with suggestions for improvement**  
91.5%

Figure 13: Cross-analysis of sentiment and contribution across all qualitative data received throughout the engagement period.

## 4. Discussion

### Key Findings

#### **There are a variety of available opportunities and applications of First Nations influences within the design for Woden Village**

Key findings and insights gathered during the walk on Country gave rise to rich and detailed insights which may be translated into the design for Woden Village. Doing so would accord with Objective 1 of the PDB, which notes the absence of recognition of First Nations culture within the Woden Town Centre and the importance of strengthening connections to Country to the community.

#### **Community reactions to Woden Village tended to be positive and constructive**

Results of data analysis and impressions developed during engagement activities are indicative of support for the DA concept and very limited concerns with 91.5% of qualitative inputs being classified as positive and constructive. This finding is representative of continuation of the findings of sentiment analyses carried out in connection with engagement during the tender concept phase.

#### **Participants mostly anticipate that public rooftop areas will be well used but were also able to identify potential barriers and possible solutions in this regard**

Results collected in connection with survey question 3 indicated that the majority of participants believe that the proposed public rooftop areas will be well used, with a mean confidence level of 67.3% (where 100% is indicative of certainty). Both survey question 4 and workshop activity 3 sought deeper insights and a richer understanding in this regard, delving into participant's perceptions of barriers to successful use of public rooftop spaces. Inductive coding of responses led to the emergence of four key perceived barriers, which remained consistent across both outputs. These barriers are characterised and listed in order of prevalence amidst the commentary below:

1. **Attraction:** Referring to the 'reason' people would be drawn to visit the rooftop

2. **Access and awareness:** Referring to the ease of navigation and wayfinding to reach the rooftop as well as the knowledge amongst people frequenting Woden Village that there is a publicly accessible rooftop area available for their use
3. **Safety and inclusivity:** Referring to people's perception of their personal safety and the accessibility of the space across abilities, gender, race, culture and age groups. Comments concerning safety tended to be focused on the potential for a lack of casual surveillance if poorly utilised and associated potential for antisocial behaviours.
4. **Canberra climate:** Referring to the intensity of Canberra's seasons and the potential for discomfort in the absence of adequate climate responsive design.

The majority of solutions identified by participants centred on well known design principles such as climate responsive design (e.g. consideration of prevalent wind patterns, shading) and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), however, solutions posed in connection with ensuring an adequate 'attraction' is generated by the design offered more site-specific and place-based insights such as a small kiosk with the potential to be operated by one or more ground floor tenancies, opportunities to sit with nature and a basketball half court. Similarly, comments centring on adequate access and awareness also generated novel suggestions such as glass elevators and highly visible/open stairwells.

#### **Participants favoured uses which serve as an 'attraction' over uses focused on environmental dividend for public rooftop spaces**

When presented with potential land uses for the public rooftop areas comprising 4 'attractions' and 3 uses focusing on environmental outcomes (sustainability, climate resilience, biodiversity), survey participants demonstrated a strong preference for inclusion of attractions. Passive recreation (sitting with nature, being outdoors, relaxation) and active recreation (e.g. basketball, yoga, running track) were the top 2 preferred uses.

These findings from the survey were partially confirmed by results arising from the community panel workshop, with participants opting to include significant areas devoted to both passive and active recreation (open air pavilion, sitting with nature, labyrinth, outdoor exercise equipment, half court). Despite this, participants were

also heavily focused on options for socialisation (meeting place, outdoor dining, sitting with friends) as part of this exercise. Inclusions such as a BBQ and covered pavilion, outdoor dining and kiosk were proposed in support of this use.

Workshop activity 3 also indicated that while perceived to be of relatively lesser importance, uses supporting environmental benefits were still included in remaining areas and focused on apiary and generating canopy cover.

### **A moderate intensity of development is supported for public rooftop areas to balance providing for attraction, level of access and cost of delivery**

When presented with a scale transitioning from infrastructure focused development (outdoor cinema, heavily designed structures) to environmentally focused land use (planting, renewable energy and apiary with minimal public access), workshop participants consistently favoured an intermediate intensity of development, which featured a mix of shading, seating and planting. This selection is in keeping with the findings of previous engagement during the tender concept phase, which found that PDB objective 2 – Green and sustainable – emerged as the most frequently mentioned theme throughout all commentary. Respondents were most focused on the sense of being surrounded by greenery rather than “the proverbial concrete jungle” and the inclusion of generous public open space meeting a broad variety of user needs.

### **Seasonal and cultural events, regular markets and performances spaces are the preferred uses for the ground level community lawn and pavilion**

Each of these uses scored similarly as part of survey question 5, with this result correlating with tender concept phase engagement results. Those results found that objective 4 of the PDB – showcasing the best of urban life – was very important to the community, with the community citing an aspiration towards convenient access to the things that give rise to a sense of wellbeing and joy such as arts, theatre, recreation and a broad range of food and beverage options. There was a broad consensus that busy, active edges and a vibrant, prosperous Woden Village offering night life and a variety of dining options is highly desired.

### **Perceptions surrounding car parking are indicative of strongly opposing views but the majority indicated a current shortfall**

The majority of participants (~79%) consider that there is a current shortfall of parking in the area, with 29% of respondents indicating that the perceived shortage is ‘critical’.

Statements provided in connection with this area of enquiry are suggestive of a strong polarity of views on this topic, with commentary including a relatively high incidence of strong/emotive language and being split between two opposing views: (i) the merits of focus on delivery and uptake of public transport in a well-connected town centre precinct and (ii) the critical nature of the current shortage of parking being the source of regular inconvenience and frustration.



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