

PROPOSED INNER SOUTH HEALTH FACILITY

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The President of the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA) says “We believe that the services to be offered by, and location, of the proposed inner south health facility are inappropriate, and we deplore the rezoning of parkland for the site and the application of Territory Priority Project status to the proposal.”

The GNCA and many inner south residents are alarmed by the Planning Minister, Chris Steel’s autocratic declaration of the health facility project as a Territory Priority Project (TPP) on 25 February 2026. By removing any right of appeal this declaration removes any obligation on planning officials to pay attention to public feedback. “As the Health Facility was originally proposed to be built where City Services had already announced plans to build a stormwater retention basin until locals drew attention to this, sometimes this is not always the best approach.”

On 30 April 2026, urban open space, parkland and recreational facilities behind the Griffith Shops in Throsby Park, were rezoned to a Community Facility Zone for the proposed health facility. This action is in preparation for the removal of a considerable number of mature trees, and destruction of birdlife and other animal habitats, and the loss of limited and valued parklands, situated next to a children’s playground, which is itself also to be demolished to make way for a large stormwater retention basin. While an arborist report has been prepared for the ACT Government it has not yet been publicly released.

The GNCA is concerned that the health facility will primarily deliver dental care for concession card holders only. Other proposed services include appointment only post-acute care and recovery support, access clinics and chronic disease management, and secondary health services such as nutrition advice and podiatry. Unfortunately, the majority of health services requested by the community have been ignored, including a nurse-led Walk-In Centre and radiology facilities (apart from possible breast cancer screening), similar to most other health centres in ACT.

The proposed two-storey health facility (rumoured to cost \$22m) will only be open during standard weekday business hours. The building’s bulk will dominate the landscape, constrained parking (only about a third of the parking required under its own Technical Specifications), will affect local businesses and clog nearby residential streets. Additionally, the proposed health facility site is accessible from only one bus route, with the closest bus stops to the facility on Stuart Street, 200m away and 6.5m lower, posing difficulties for parents with prams and those with mobility issues.

“The Griffith shops are well patronised and are not in need of any ‘revitalisation’ by the Government” said GNCA President Mr Edquist. “All things considered the GNCA believes that any health facility intended to service the whole inner south would be better located at one of the existing Groups Centres at Manuka and Kingston, or possibly in the as yet undeveloped area of Eastlake.”

The GNCA's petition, sponsored by long-serving Kurrajong MLA, Elizabeth Lee, was tabled in the ACT Assembly yesterday, with **1,833 petitioners** calling on the ACT Government to:

1. Reconsider the location of the proposed inner south health centre in order to protect the character, established trees and amenity of the open space and recreational parkland behind the Griffith shops;
2. Instead utilise currently zoned community facility land in either Manuka or Kingston Group Centres, or in Eastlake or its vicinity;
3. Provide a full range of Walk-In services;
4. Consider inner south residents' future needs;
5. Undertake genuine, open consultation with residents (including a town hall meeting); and
6. Reverse the decision to declare the health centre a TPP.

With support for the petition from the local community, the GNCA invested over 200 hours of consultation across seven inner south suburbs on multiple occasions.

Both the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel, and Health Minister, Rachel Stephen-Smith, have received submissions from the GNCA, Kingston and Barton Residents Group (KBRG) and local residents, proposing a more suitable location that is appropriately zoned (Community Facility), cost effective, and has better public transport accessible at level at 19 Giles Street Kingston.

The Giles Street site is being redeveloped with a four-storey office-type building, with three levels of underground parking. Through mediation at ACAT, KBRG ensured that the lease requires the new building to be predominantly for community facility use. The developer of the Giles Street site has subsequently indicated their desire for the building to be primarily a health facility. and to have all or part of the proposed Inner South Health Centre in their building. Relocating the proposed health centre to this site in Kingston would save the ACT budget the cost of construction. Any rents could be expected to be similar to those currently paid for the health services in their current locations, or less if these are currently in the city or Town Centres. Given the space available, ACT Health could provide a nurse-led Walk in Centre, radiology services, and a range of other health services.