



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health

Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister

Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning

Elizabeth Lee MLA, Member for Kurrajong

Thomas Emerson MLA, Member for Kurrajong

cc **Mark Parton MLA**, Shadow Minister for Health/Men's Health & Wellbeing
and Planning

Jo Clay MLA, Member for Ginninderra and Chair, Standing Committee on Environment

Fiona Carrick MLA, Member for Murrumbidgee and Deputy Chair, Standing Committee
on Environment and Planning

Peter Cain MLA, Member for Ginninderra, Standing Committee on Environment and
Planning

Caitlin Tough MLA, Member for Brindabella, Standing Committee on Environment and
Planning

PROPOSED INNER SOUTH HEALTH CENTRE

The Griffith Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA) supports the letter of 31 March 2026 from the Kingston Barton Residents' Group (KBRG), which pointed out that the Community Facility zoned site at 19 Giles Street Kingston would be a better location for the proposed Inner South Health Centre, and asked that the Government's decision on the Centre's location be reconsidered. This attractive option was not available at the time the currently proposed site was decided on, at the latest sometime in early 2023, but that is no reason why the issue cannot be reopened in light of this new opportunity.

You will be aware that there is considerable opposition to the ACT Government's proposal to build an Inner South Health Centre in Throsby Park Griffith (behind the Griffith shops), on the major car park for the Griffith shops, but also taking in a considerable area of land currently zoned as parkland (PRZ1).

The GNCA is collecting signature for a petition to the ACT Legislative Assembly, requesting that the ACT Government reconsider the location of the proposed Health Centre and instead utilise currently zoned community facility land at either the Manuka or Kingston Group Centres. In addition, many of the proposed services offered are not what the residents of the inner south requested.

The grounds for opposing the currently proposed location of the Health Centre are various, and frequently overlap. Many fear that the parking provided for the new facility will not be adequate, as it ignores the ACT's own planning guidelines of 4 parking spaces for every service provider. And that this lack of parking will have an undesirable impact of the Griffith shops traders and businesses. The sad fate of businesses in Civic with the tram works, and at Red Hill during the construction of the new housing there, are not encouraging.

Others are unhappy about the loss of many mature trees and other vegetation, and the birds and animals that enjoy this habitat. This is particularly so when no argument has been

advanced by the Government as to why this arbitrary taking of parkland is desirable, let alone necessary.

Some are puzzled as to why such a facility would be located at a site which does not possess excellent transport links (many would not agree with the Government's consultant's assessment that one bus service equates to excellent transport facilities). If the Government wished to improve access for those without cars surely a more central location would be desirable?

While a centre providing acute medical services on an extended hours basis such as the walk in centre at Weston Creek would be welcome, an appointment only facility providing secondary health services only available by appointment does not seem to justify the inconvenience and disruption the new centre will bring.

And then there are those who wonder if the capital investment required for a new centre is best for the ACT given its current financial circumstances. The services proposed for the centre could be provided perfectly adequately from a private sector building.

You may also be aware that of the circumstances outlined in the KBRG's letter, that one of the few community facilities in Kingston closed recently (formerly the early childcare centre at 19 Giles Street) and the site is to be redeveloped with a four-storey office-type building. The KBRG was successful in achieving a lease variation through mediation at ACAT, requiring the new building to be predominantly for community facility use. Pleasingly, KBRG was then able to encourage the developer for the new building in Kingston to approach ACT Health to see whether all or part of the proposed Inner South Health Centre could be located in their building, rather than in Throsby Park Griffith, thereby saving building costs and the ACT budget at least \$22m.

We further understand that the developer of the Giles St site has indicated their desire for the building to be primarily a 'health facility', but at this stage has not identified any particular tenants. They say they would be very happy for their building to house all or part of the proposed Inner South Health Centre. This would remove the need to spend capital funds on a dedicated Health Care building while the rent could be expected to be similar to that currently paid for the health facilities in their current locations. Purdon's, representing the developer, met with senior executives from ACT Health who declined the Giles Street opportunity. We ask you as the relevant ACT Government Ministers to reconsider this rejection. It is very clear to the GNCA, KBRG and other inner south residents' groups that the Kingston site would be a more appropriate location for the Inner South Health Centre.

As the KBRG has already advised, the Giles Street Kingston site is already developed land that is Community Facility zoned, and has accessible public transport on the 56 and R6 rapid bus routes from Civic to Woden via Manuka. Development approval has been granted for a four-storey, 3,860 m² gross floor area building with a landscaped roof deck and three levels of basement parking, subject to at least 1,931m² of gross floor area to be community use. While the Government has not announced the floor area of the Health Centre proposed for Throsby Park Griffith, we understand it to be around 2,000m² over two floors, excluding parking, and could therefore easily be accommodated in the proposed Giles Street development.

The GNCA understands that work on the Griffith site cannot commence until the children's playground in Throsby Park has been moved to an as yet unidentified site somewhere in Blaxland Park, and the former children's playground site subsequently redeveloped as a stormwater detention basin. None of this work has commenced as yet, suggesting that work on the Health Centre will not start for some considerable time. The Giles Street Kingston

development is already appropriately zoned and approved, and while minor changes to the internal layout might be needed to accommodate the bariatric dentistry suites, this offers the possibility of a much earlier opening of an Inner South Health Centre.

The ACT Government has declared the health facility to be a Territory Priority Project (TPP) which will preclude appeals by residents. This has further disappointed many members of the public. Previous experience suggests that with no recourse to the ACAT, ACT public servants are likely to ignore input from the community if not in accordance with the public servants' views. As the Health Directorate had initially proposed to build the Health Centre where the storm water basin is to be built, it seems that the Directorate is not always fully informed of local conditions. What other ill-informed decisions might be locked in with the absence of community feedback?

The majority of those signing the GNCA petition have been clearly aware that location of a Walk-In nurse-led health centre in Kingston would be a win-win outcome. The ACT Government would reduce the call on its scarce financial resources, Griffith parkland, trees and open space would be preserved, businesses at Griffith shops would not be threatened by loss of parking, and inner south residents would be better able to manage their health needs without drawing on limited hospital resources. If the ACT Government has a requirement to concentrate dental services away from the current locations of these facilities, they too could be accommodated at the proposed 19 Giles Street Kingston premises.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these and related issues with you and your departmental representatives.

Yours sincerely

John Edquist
GNCA President
May 2026