

HUGHES

Neighbourhood Plan

A sustainable future for Hughes



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Prepared by the
ACT Planning and Land Authority



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What this Plan aims to achieve

The Hughes Neighbourhood Plan guides this established garden suburb as it meets the challenges of both contemporary life and those that are predicted to arise over the next fifteen years. The Plan outlines the future character of the neighbourhood whilst protecting and enhancing the features currently valued. This Neighbourhood Plan provides planning strategies for the future of the local shopping centre, open spaces, residential areas, community facilities and movement networks (roads, footpaths etc).

The strategies documented in this Neighbourhood Plan and illustrated in the accompanying drawings must be read in conjunction with the Territory Plan and any other relevant ACT Government standards, policies and guidelines. No part of this Neighbourhood Plan overrides the Territory Plan. Where relevant, policies to implement strategies in this Neighbourhood Plan will be proposed for incorporation in the Territory Plan through the draft Variation process.

Similarly this Neighbourhood Plan cannot override the National Capital Plan, which is prepared and administered by the National Capital Authority under *the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*. The National Capital Plan establishes a broad framework for land use and development throughout the Territory. At a more detailed level, it also controls the planning, design and development of Designated Areas. These areas are considered by the Commonwealth to be of particular importance to maintaining the special characteristics of the National Capital. Within Designated Areas responsibility for development controls rests with the National Capital Authority. Designated Areas comprise Canberra's system of Inner Hills and Ridges, the Main Avenues and Approach Routes to the city, and the Central National Area, including the Parliamentary Zones and environs, the diplomatic areas, Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshores, and the main national institutions and symbols of Commonwealth governance. All development and works proposed within the Designated Areas require approval by the National Capital Authority.

Who this Plan is for

The Plan is particularly relevant if you are:

- An existing Hughes resident or considering being a Hughes resident;
- A Hughes business owner or tenant;
- An investor or investor's agent (for example an architect) interested in Hughes; or
- An ACT Planning and Land Authority officer responsible for the assessment of development applications in Hughes and surrounding suburbs; and
- A provider and/or user of the neighbourhood's community facilities and services.

How this Plan was developed

The development of the Hughes Neighbourhood Plan, in conjunction with that of the Garran and Yarralumla Neighbourhood Plans, commenced in September 2003 and has been a participatory exercise. Participation was invited from all those who live, work, learn, play and invest in the suburb. The following key events held for all three suburbs have been important steps in the production of the Neighbourhood Plans:

- A values survey letterboxed to all residents;
- A Neighbourhood Character Discovery (residents using disposable cameras to tell the ACT Planning and Land Authority about what is valued);
- A major open-forum 'Planning for the Future' Workshop;
- Workshops with local community service groups and organisations, business organisations and ACT Government agencies;
- A future character survey letterboxed to all residents;
- The establishment of a Neighbourhood Reference Group (comprising members of resident/community/associations, other residents, and business representatives);
- A five-day Design Workshop, including three community sessions providing opportunity for participation by neighbourhood representatives, and one session providing opportunity for participation by ACT Government stakeholders;
- An information evening, providing the community with an opportunity to comment on the draft concept sketches developed during the design workshop prior to their refinement for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan; and
- A six-week formal public comment period.

The ACT Planning and Land Authority, through its Neighbourhood Planning Team, thanks all those who participated. We particularly acknowledge the inputs of the Neighbourhood Reference Group. We also wish to thank the staff of the various ACT Government agencies that have participated in the program, including the Department of Urban Services, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, Department of Education and Training, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, ACT Health, the Chief Minister's Department, and Department of Justice and Community Safety.

As this Neighbourhood Plan aims to strike a balance between the diversity of values and aspirations that exist in the neighbourhood it will inevitably not be consistent with all ideas for the future. However, in the spirit of transparency, the ACT Planning and Land Authority undertakes to inform both the Minister for Planning and the community where this Plan differs from broad public opinion.

Unless otherwise noted, participants in the Hughes Neighbourhood Character Study took all photographs appearing in this document.

ACT Planning and Land Authority
September 2004

The Hughes Neighbourhood Plan at a glance

The Neighbourhood Vision

Hughes in the future will be a safe, peaceful and socially diverse neighbourhood enjoying a liveable and sustainable environment. The neighbourhood's abundance of open space will not only be conserved but also enhanced, and the Hughes Local Shopping Centre will be a thriving community and commercial heart. Hughes will have a strong sense of community spirit, belonging and participation.

Key Strategies for achieving the vision

Hughes Local Centre:

- Strengthen Hughes' ability to offer a strong commercial and community heart in order to provide convenient local shopping and meeting places for the neighbourhood.

Residential Areas:

- Provide a diversity of housing choice for singles, couples and families of different sizes and ages in appropriate locations.
- Promote high-quality residential development that is sympathetic to the existing garden suburb neighbourhood character in terms of scale, form and landscape setting.

Urban Open Space:

- Redevelopment will not encroach on areas designated as Urban Open Space under the Territory Plan.

Community Facilities:

- Retain the integrity of land defined under the Territory Plan as Community Facility.
- Ensure that adequate Community Facility land is available for the needs of the current and future residents.

Movement Networks:

- Provide a diversity of accessible transport options.

Note: unless otherwise stated, all statistical information contained in this section is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – Censuses of Population and Housing.

The Place

Hughes is an established South Canberra garden suburb (refer to Drawing 1 – Hughes in Context on page 10). It is popular for its peace and quite and proximity to the Woden Town Centre and Red Hill Nature Reserve. The suburb was first gazetted as a Division name on 20 September 1962 when the area was a treeless sheep grazing area with a population of nine. Residential construction began a year later in 1963. Families began moving into houses in the new suburb in 1964 and by 1974 Hughes had a population of 4,050.

The suburb is named after William Morris (Billy) Hughes, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth during World War I. Hughes' role as Prime Minister during World War I earned him the name of 'The Little Digger', and the theme for the twenty-seven streets and eighteen cul-de-sacs is World War I Armed Services Personnel, and Contemporaries of William Hughes.

Hughes has a generally flat terrain to the west and undulating topography to the east of Kent Street increasing in height towards Red Hill Nature Reserve. The more elevated areas of Hughes enjoy views to Mount Taylor and the Brindabella Ranges and the visual and recreational amenity provided by the open space network.

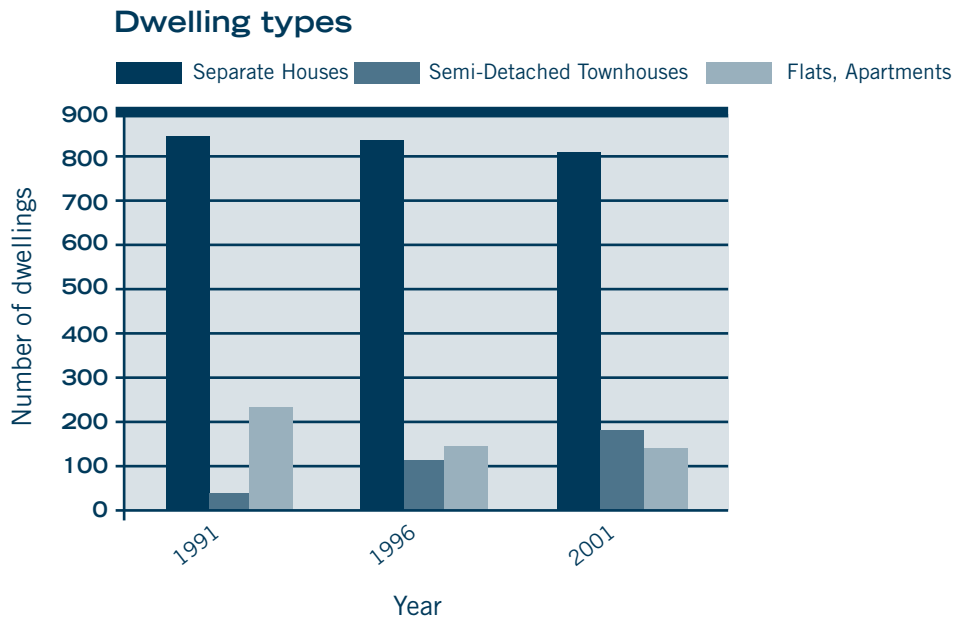


Looking over Hughes to the Brindabellas and beyond

Hughes is very well serviced by access to open space both around and through the suburb, the suburb enjoys four neighbourhood parks, Hughes Oval, which is located on the western edge and an open space corridor running through the suburb from east to west. Hughes is also bordered to the north and to the south by bushland.

The Hughes Local Centre has a lively village style atmosphere, with a mix of retail and community facilities.

The dominant residential character of Hughes is comprised of single storey, detached family dwellings, as illustrated by the following table:

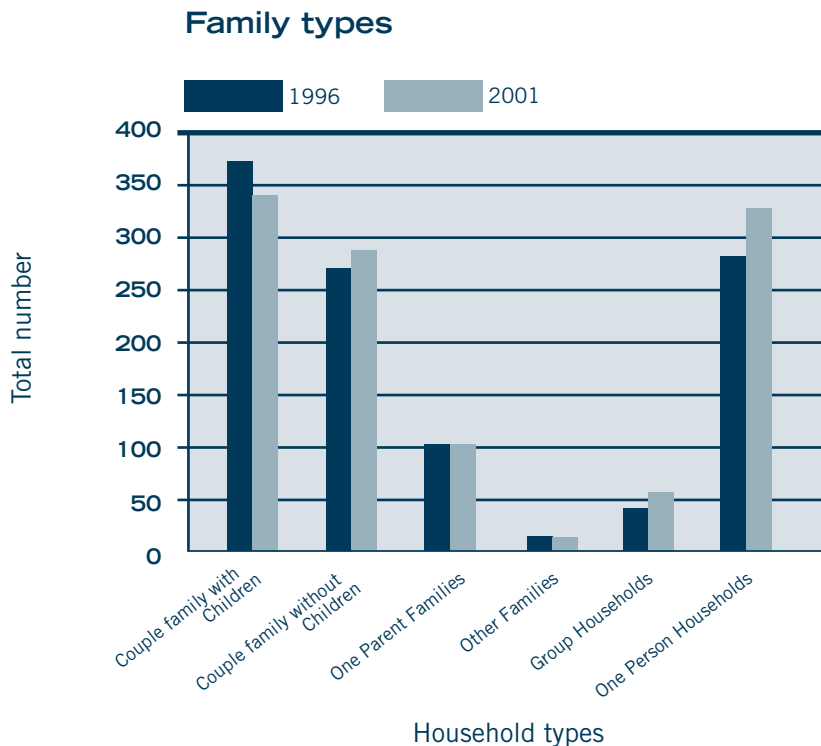


For more information refer to Drawing 1 – Hughes' context on page 10.

The People

In 2001 Hughes' population was 2,866 persons – in 1996 it was 2,939 and in 1991 it was 2,921. The median age of the Hughes population is 40 years, a four-year increase since 1996 when the median age was 36 years. In 1991 the median age was 33 years. In 2001 18.5% of Hughes' population was aged 65 years and over, compared to 18% for Garran and 15.5% for Yarralumla.

The range of family types in Hughes is illustrated by the following:



The above table is in accordance with common nationwide trends, including the decrease in the number of coupled families with children, and the increases in coupled families without children, one-parent families and lone person households. For the ACT as a whole, it is predicted that the average household size will decrease from 2.6 persons currently to 2.2 persons by 2032.

In Hughes at present the median house price is \$470,000 (obtained from the current market. source: www.allhomes.com.au) compared to the ACT's median of \$305,000 (source: *The Canberra Plan*, 2004). This represents a dramatic increase since 1999, when the median property price for Hughes was \$138,000.

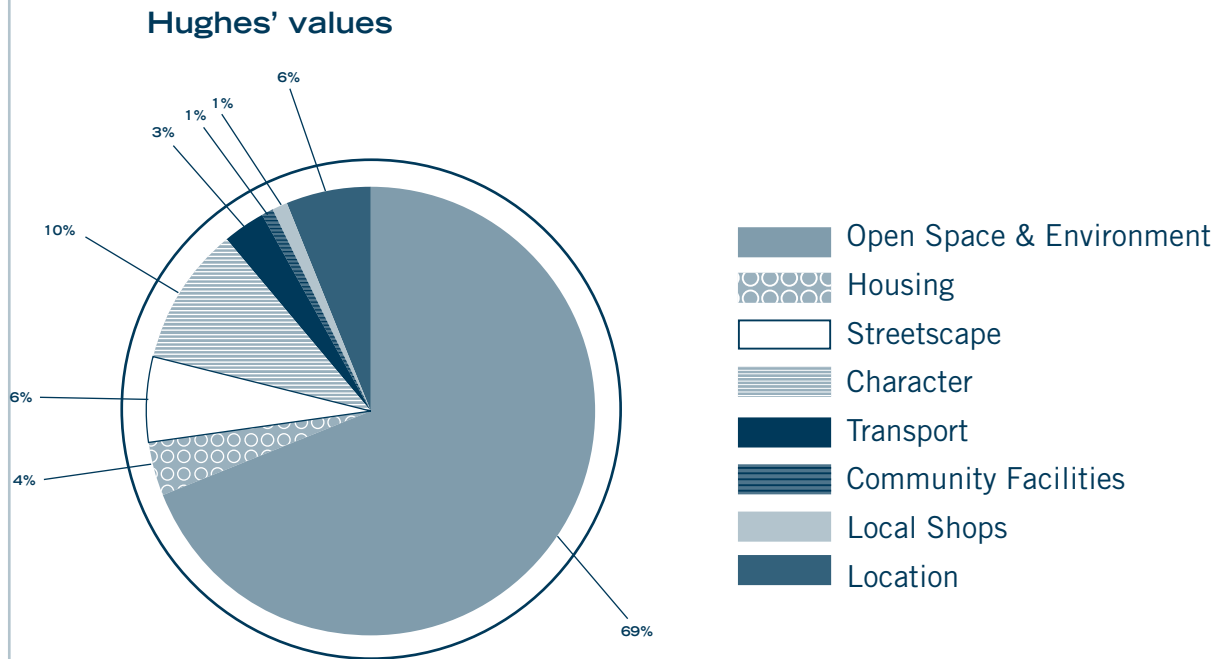
The values of the Hughes community

Those that attended the 'Planning for the Future' workshop valued Hughes' open space network within the suburb and the Red Hill Nature Reserve. Participants also valued the suburbs extensive pathway network and the suburbs local shops and community facilities.

Hughes residents that responded to the Values Survey, valued, above all else, its open space and environment, in terms of the amount of open space and the diversity of plants, birds and native animals. Also highly valued is the suburbs character, in particular the peace and privacy, safety and community feeling; and location specifically its centrality to other parts of Canberra.

Respondents to the Values Survey were asked to choose one value out of eight that they considered the most important. The eight values listed were: Open Space and Environment, Housing, Streetscape, Character, Transport, Community Facilities, Local Shops and Location.

The following chart indicates which of the values listed in the survey respondents regarded as most important.



Key

Open Space & Environment (parks, ovals, bush land for recreation)

Housing (density, blocks of land, built environment)

Streetscape (street trees, vegetation, gardens, and wide streets)

Character (well-planned, peaceful, safe community feeling)

Transport (access to transport, including public transport)

Community Facilities (access to schools, churches, medical etc)

Local Shops (proximity to & variety of)

Location (central location to other parts of Canberra, employment, friends & family, investment, services & facilities)

The following table illustrates the specific values of the neighbourhood. The values survey requested respondents provide information in terms of “which aspects of your neighbourhood do you value most?” There were thirty-eight specific values listed, ranging from: good investment, single blocks of land, access to buses, churches, bike paths, play equipment and a variety of others. Of these thirty-eight options, the following table shows the ten considered the most important.

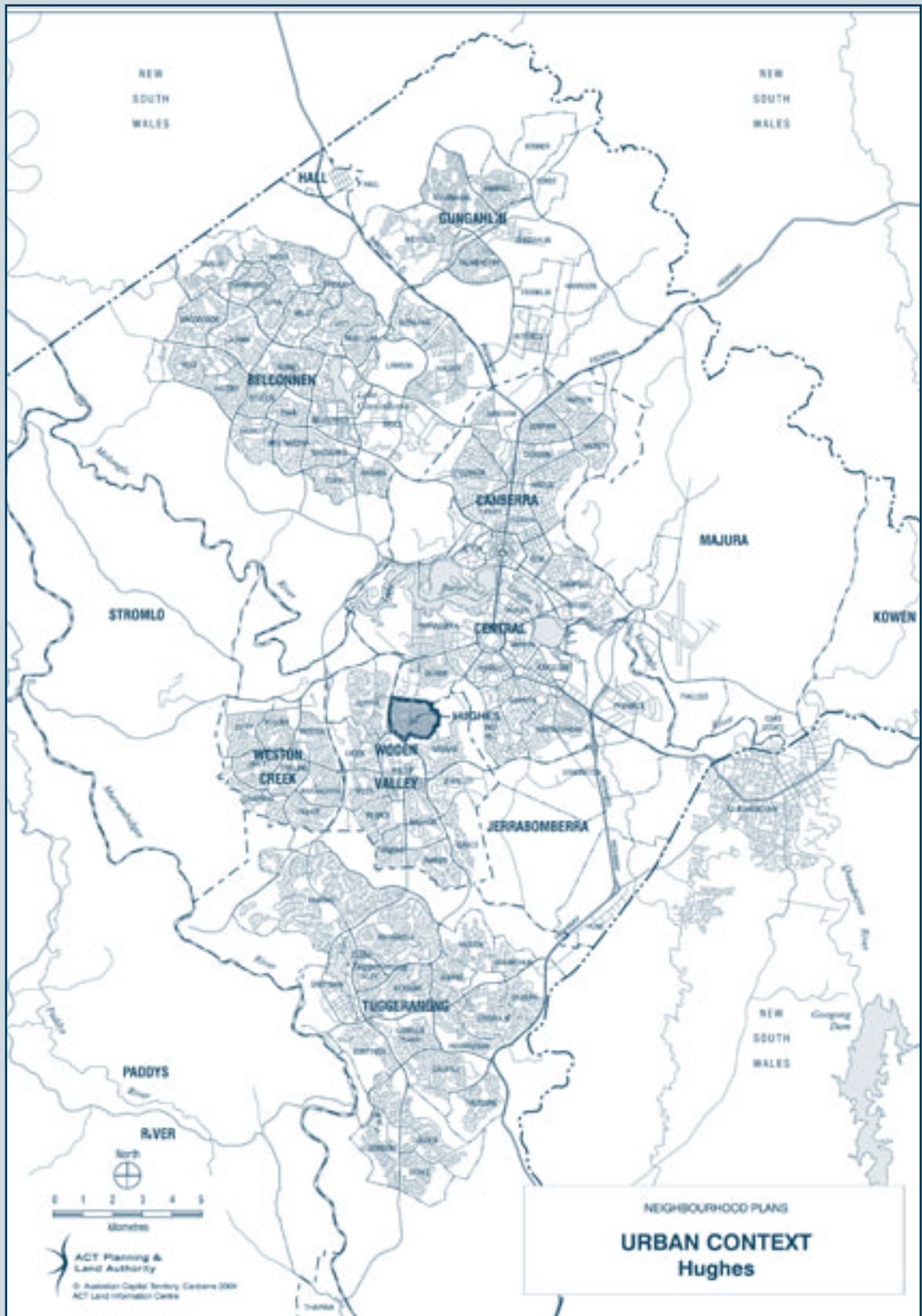
Hughes’ top ten community values

Specific Value	Percentage of respondents
Central to other parts of Canberra	91
Green Space and Mature Trees	90
Close to shops	90
Safety	89
Peace and privacy	88
Visually appealing built environment	88
Range of facilities and services nearby	87
Easy to move around	87
Well planned, well laid out	86
Established gardens	86

What are Hughes’ favourite places?

- **Urban Open Space** (particularly Hawk Hill and the open space corridor linking Hughes Oval to the Federal Gold Course)
- **Red Hill Nature Reserve** (especially for walking)
- **Hughes Local Shopping Centre**

Drawing 1 – Hughes' context



The Canberra Plan

The Plan for Canberra in the 21st century will guide the city's growth and development for this generation, and beyond. It provides a clear direction that will ensure Canberra retains the character that has been central to our first 90 years. As a framework for action by community and governments, *The Canberra Plan* has several major components. These include *The Canberra Social Plan*, *The Economic White Paper* and *The Canberra Spatial Plan*. *The Canberra Plan* envisages the following – a city:

- Confident in its role as national capital.
- With a high-quality built environment that celebrates Canberra's planning legacy and national role.
- Uplifting and inspiring, with liveable neighbourhoods and an extraordinary range of public spaces that attract us to meet, relax and celebrate.
- Respecting our magnificent natural environment and cultural heritage.
- The model of sustainable urban development in the 21st century.

The Canberra Spatial Plan

The Canberra Spatial Plan's Strategic Direction responds to changes that will occur within the community of Canberra over the next 30 years and beyond. Population growth, demographic change and household change underpin the need to plan for growth and change in Canberra. In order to ensure that we can sustainably provide for this community of the future, *The Canberra Spatial Plan* puts in place a framework to accommodate a range of population growth scenarios, up to half a million for the Canberra-Queanbeyan metropolitan area. The key initiatives that are critical to achieve the Strategic Direction include:

- Higher density residential development within the existing urban area, providing easy access between home and places of work, education, community services and cultural activities. Primarily this increased population will occur within Central Canberra in Civic, along Northbourne Avenue, Constitution Avenue, in Barton, Kingston and around the town centres with limited change to existing suburban areas. People will enjoy a choice of housing.
- Future residential settlement will continue to take place in Gungahlin, and subject to detailed suitability and feasibility investigations followed by necessary policy amendments, will also commence in the Molonglo Valley in the short to medium term. If the city continues to grow in population beyond the capacity of these areas, further settlement will be accommodated on the Kowen Plateau.
- Civic and the central area will form a strong dynamic heart to the Territory and surrounding NSW – a centre of culture, business, ideas and creativity; retaining and attracting jobs, people and important events.
- Civic and existing centres will be the focus of employment growth, with existing corridors of employment being reinforced by clustering at nodes along transport corridors (additional district activity nodes will be located in the Molonglo Valley and the Kowen Plateau when these areas are developed).

- Future industrial, broadacre and transport related employment growth will be accommodated within existing industrial areas and the corridor comprising Majura and Symonston valleys including the airport and Hume.
- Nature reserves and other land which provides significant habitats for wildlife within the urban and non-urban areas will be managed for biodiversity conservation and linked together with the region by corridors that enable wildlife movement.
- Major transport connections, including public transport, will link the town centres to Civic, and link future urban settlement in the Molonglo Valley and the Kowen Plateau to major employment corridors; Majura Highway will be upgraded to form part of a critical regional transport link and together with Gungahlin Drive will form the major outer by-passes of Civic, keeping through traffic away from the heart of the city.
- A Bushfire Abatement Zone will be declared and managed to protect the city from the possible impacts of major bushfire events.
- The non-urban areas that form the rural setting of the city (outside of nature conservation areas) will be primarily used for sustainable agriculture (including forestry west of the Murrumbidgee River). Historical rural settlements form part of the rural setting.
- The water catchments for the existing dams supplying water to Canberra and the catchment of possible future potable water supply dams for the ACT and its region will be protected from any development that would adversely affect the quality of that water. The sub-catchments of the ACT watercourses will be managed to protect water quality.
- The elements that contribute to the national capital significance of the ACT will be preserved. These include the Central National Area, the landscape setting including the National Capital Open Space System, major approach routes (Barton Highway, Federal Highway, Majura Highway and Monaro Highway) and the roads connecting them to the Central National Area (described as National Capital Vista Routes).
- Significant assets that provide opportunities for future economic growth of the Territory will be protected. These include the Mount Stromlo Observatory and Canberra International Airport. An Aircraft Noise Protection Corridor is identified for the Majura-Symonston Valleys. The Territory will not locate any residential development within these valleys where residents would be unacceptably impacted by airport noise. A low light zone is established around Mount Stromlo Observatory to enable the continued operation of this facility as the Molonglo Valley is developed.
- Development in the region is the responsibility of the NSW Government and surrounding local government. *The Canberra Spatial Plan* introduces strategic policies to input to the sustainable development of the ACT and region particularly with regard to water, biodiversity conservation, urban form and employment location, transport and service delivery.

Elements of the Strategic Direction to realise *The Canberra Spatial Plan* that are particularly relevant to Hughes are as follows:

- Higher density residential development within the existing urban area, providing easy access between home and places of work, education, community services and cultural activities. Primarily this increased population will occur within Central Canberra in Civic, along Northbourne Avenue, Constitution Avenue, in Barton, Kingston and around the town centres with limited change to existing suburban areas.
- Nature reserves and other land which provides significant habitats for wildlife within the urban and non-urban areas will be managed for biodiversity conservation and linked together with the region by corridors that enable wildlife movement.
- The elements that contribute to the national capital significance of the ACT will be preserved. These include the Central National Area, the landscape setting including the National Capital Open Space System, major approach routes (Barton Highway, Federal Highway, Majura Highway and Monaro Highway) and the roads connecting them to the Central National Area (described as National Capital Vista Routes).

Implications for Hughes

The Canberra Spatial Plan's Strategic Direction requires Hughes to provide a diverse range of housing choice at strategic locations, in particular:

- In Hughes' Residential Core Area, which is in the vicinity of the Hughes Local Centre.

This section provides planning strategies for the future of the local shopping centre, open spaces, residential areas, community facilities and transport networks (roads, footpaths etc). A statement of existing character is provided for each of these neighbourhood elements, followed by a statement of the likely **future** character.

This section should be read in conjunction with Drawing 2 – Hughes in the future on the inside rear cover.

The future character of each element is driven by a **neighbourhood vision**:

- *Hughes in the future will be a safe, peaceful and socially diverse neighbourhood enjoying a liveable and sustainable environment. The neighbourhood's abundance of open space will not only be conserved but also enhanced, and the Hughes Local Shopping Centre will be a thriving community and commercial heart. Hughes will have a strong sense of community spirit, belonging and participation.*

Hughes Local Centre

Existing Character

The Hughes Local Centre (Section 44) has a lively village atmosphere, and provides a central meeting point for the neighbourhood. It currently contains a variety of commercial services located in two separate buildings. Services include a supermarket, bakery, café, take-away, real estate agent, violin store, hair salon, post office, laundromat and second hand book shop. A third building contains the Hughes Community Centre. A central paved area unifies the three buildings and contains tree and shrub plantings, seating and 'Mabel'. 'Mabel' is the affectionate name the local community has given to a cast bronze statue of a life size female figure designed by Giovanna Lanniello and Gerard Murphy in 1997. 'Mabel' was erected as part of the refurbishment of the Hughes Local Centre, which commenced in December 1996. A Service Station is located at the Local Centre across the road from the main three buildings. A public toilet facility is located immediately to the west of the facility, behind the Community Centre.



'Mabel' and the Hughes Local Centre

The Commercial land-use aims to provide for convenience retailing and other accessible, convenient shopping and community and business services to meet the daily needs of the local population. This land-use allows for businesses, offices, community facilities, light industry as well as residential.

Future Character

Generally speaking, the Hughes Local Centre will continue to offer a bustling commercial and community facility with its own sense of place. It will provide a range of shops, including cafes and restaurants, professional office suites, community facilities as well as a range of public places and spaces. Connections to the shops for people with limited mobility will have been improved. A mix of long and short-stay parking will have been provided in appropriate locations. Any future growth of the Centre will be in keeping with the neighbourhood 'catchment' it serves.

Some ideas for the longer-term include the redevelopment of the building currently accommodating the post office/book store etc which could provide an opportunity for a landmark building of two storeys; this building could also create a well-defined public space. Better visual and physical linkages with the surrounding residential areas, including the public housing area, could be created – reinforcing and enhancing the public open space linkages will have gone some way in achieving this. The Centre's buildings could be renovated or developed to include shop-top housing on the upper floor (redevelopment will be a maximum of two storeys). A well-designed dual-use carriageway (raised pavement) could ensure safe pedestrian access to the park opposite whilst allowing limited vehicular movement along Wisdom Street. The park itself (Block 1 of Section 36) could be enhanced by planting a variety of trees, as well as providing seating and lighting. The proposed landscapes improvements could be used to visually and physically link the park to the shops.

Block 5 Section 45 (petrol station site): very long-term opportunity for two-storey commercial development in order to capture the northerly aspect, offering an active street frontage with cafes, restaurants and appropriate landscape treatments; residential accommodation and/or professional office suites could be located on the first floor.

Strategies for the future of Hughes Local Centre

Key strategy:

- Reinforce Hughes' ability to offer a strong commercial and community heart in order to provide convenient local shopping and meeting places for the neighbourhood.

General strategies:

- Recognise the close relationship between the Garran, Deakin and Curtin Local Centres and the Woden Town Centre.
- Encourage Hughes to provide a unique Local Centre choice for its neighbourhood.
- Reinforce the physical relationship between the Hughes Local Centre and the surrounding Residential Core Areas, particularly in terms of built form, tree planting and pedestrian movement.
- Prioritise the needs of people with special mobility needs.
- Support a diversity of community, commercial and residential opportunities.

- Explore opportunities for the best possible bus-stop location to service the community's needs.
- Local centre redevelopment will not encroach on adjacent Urban Open Space.
- Explore opportunities to provide additional outdoor eating/meeting places.
- Maintain and enhance physical facilities for community-based activities.
- Provide adequate parking.
- Provide adequate lighting.
- Ensure appropriate access for service vehicles.
- Consideration will need to be given to the ACT Government's Graffiti Management Strategy in the provision of assets such as seats, lights, walls etc.
- Reference should also be made to the *ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual (2000)*.
- Ensure any future developments have an acceptable Waste Management Plan and adhere to the Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management so that waste and recycling is stored correctly and separately within lease boundaries, and access is provided for both commercial and domestic collection vehicles.

Principles for best-practice urban design

The following is provided as a guide to possible new development associated with Hughes' local centre facilities. It is not a definitive list.

Character

Place making should respond to the existing natural and developed features of the environmental context. A place that enhances the distinctive local landscapes, sense of place and history whilst providing a quality living environment will establish a rich environmental character unique to its locality. A response context analysis will identify:

- distinctive landscapes
- natural features
- locally distinctive built form
- street patterns which respond to the context
- special spaces of natural or cultural significance
- skylines and roofscapes
- building materials
- local culture and traditions
- avoiding standard solutions

Continuity and enclosure

The form and fabric of a place define the living environment and establish a hierarchy of both public and private spaces providing clarity of function and movement:

- streets, footpaths and open spaces overlooked by buildings
- clear distinction between public and private space
- avoiding gaps in the lines of buildings
- enclosing streets and other spaces by buildings and trees of a scale that feels comfortable and appropriate to the character of the space
- no leftover spaces unused and uncared for

Quality of the public realm

Good urban design promotes a sense of well-being and amenity by ensuring recognition of the natural context and the functional requirements of the community and responding with:

- public spaces and routes that are lively and pleasant to use
- a feeling of safety and security
- uncluttered and easily maintained streets and public places and carefully detailed with integrated public art and functional elements
- well-designed lighting and street furniture
- places suited to the needs of everyone, including those with particular mobility needs
- attractive and robust planting appropriate to the locality

Legibility

Legibility principles establish an understanding of place and way finding for residents and visitors. A discernable planning structure and complementary place making ensure that the living environment has a clear image and is easy to understand. Enhancing the legibility of a place will include the identification and incorporation into planning of such components as:

- natural landmarks and focal points
- views and view corridors
- clear and easily navigatable routes
- discernable gathering places
- gateways to particular areas
- edges and buffers
- lighting
- works of art and craft
- signage and way-markers

Diversity

Diversity of space and function provides our community with a range of experience and choice. This can be achieved through:

- place making to provide for variety of function and land use
- provision for a broad cross-section of community and cultural values
- variety of built form and development character which is sensitive to context
- opportunities for biodiversity

Residential Areas

Current Character

The dominant residential character of Hughes is comprised of low-density, detached single storey family dwellings. Though to the eastern undulating edge of the neighbourhood two storey dwellings with a garage situated in the lower storey are prevalent. Streetscapes are planted with a mix of exotic and native tree plantings of average quality. In general, dwellings are brick and tile in construction, some of which have been modernised through renovation or rebuilding. For the most part, setbacks (the distance between the property boundary and the front face of the building) are generous as is the distance between houses, two factors that contribute significantly to the garden suburb nature of the neighbourhood.



A typical Hughes dwelling, taken shortly after completion (early 1960s)

There is medium density housing located in the immediate vicinity of the Hughes Local Shopping Centre: to the west along Groom, Coxen and Carroll Streets; to the south along Coxen and Curlewis Streets; and to the southeast along Kitchener Street. The medium density housing is a mix of public, supportive and privately owned housing. The medium density housing along Carroll Street is an example of the Radburn planning design that features a housing layout in which vehicles and pedestrians are segregated by keeping one side of the house free of vehicles and a 'rear' access road for garaging etc. The style is characterised by housing facing inwards and looking over common open space opening onto a pedestrian walkway.

The de Quetteville Residence in Downes Place (Block 29 Section 3) has been nominated for inclusion on the Interim Heritage Place Register.



A fine streetscape in Hughes – Glasgow Street

Future Character

This Plan proposes that the majority of the suburb will remain predominantly detached single dwellings on generous blocks. It also proposes the retention of the Residential Core Area (otherwise known as A10 according to the Garden City provisions of the Territory Plan) on blocks in association with the Hughes Local Centre. As a result, Hughes will contain two distinct residential areas:

- Suburban Area – the majority of the neighbourhood; and a
- Residential Core Area (A10 land-use policy) – in association with the Hughes Local Centre.

It is important to note that changes allowed for by the Neighbourhood Plan, in conjunction with the Territory Plan, will occur over time. In many cases it will be dependent on current lessees deciding either to redevelop the blocks themselves or to sell to another lessee with the intention to develop.

For more information please refer to Drawing 2 – Hughes in the future on the inside rear cover.

Future character of the Suburban Areas

The Suburban Area of Hughes is the residential area that will change the least over time. However, as has been the trend over the last decade or so, some of the existing dwellings in the Suburban Area will be renovated to varying degrees to modernise or to adapt to contemporary ways of life. Some residents may elect to demolish their dwellings altogether and rebuild new houses that better suit their needs; some will elect to build dual occupancies. Whatever the change the low-density character, established street trees and mature garden setting will remain.

The rules applying to the Suburban Area preserve the existing 'garden city' character of the majority of the Hughes neighbourhood by restricting redevelopment. Developments prohibited in Suburban Areas are: apartments, townhouses and triple occupancy housing development on blocks originally used for single dwellings. The redevelopment of new single dwellings and dual occupancies must be in keeping with the existing suburban character. Dual occupancies are subject to significantly tighter controls on the overall size of both houses. This reduces the impact of dual occupancy development and ensures the retention of significant areas for trees and gardens. Dual occupancy dwellings at the rear of blocks are subject to additional specific height and size controls; the maximum height of buildings is two storeys (8.5 metres). In order to further limit the impact of dual occupancy development the minimum block size for such developments in Suburban Areas (as well as Residential Core Areas) is 800m². Unit titling is only allowed for supportive housing (accommodation for those requiring care provided by a Territory-approved organisation).

This Neighbourhood Plan encourages those wishing to renovate or redevelop residential buildings adjacent parks to take advantage of these highly valued neighbourhood assets – this could be achieved, for example, by ensuring liveable rooms and/or decks and/or windows overlook parks. A similar approach could be taken to improve the safety of laneways.

Future character of the Residential Core Area

The Residential Core Area is identified in the Territory Plan as Area Specific Policy A10. This policy allows opportunities for medium density housing in areas immediately around Town, Group and Local Centres. The Residential Core Area is located on blocks in the vicinity of the Hughes Local Centre and over time will offer a diverse range of dwelling types, including one and two-storey dual-occupancies and town houses of no more than two storeys (8.5 metres). Despite the modest increase in density the established street trees and mature garden setting will remain.

In addition to the maximum building height of two storeys, attics and basements may also be permitted. A maximum 50% plot ratio applies to street-based layouts (dual occupancy developments where the building is to the front of blocks). The two units of a dual occupancy development cannot exceed 35% coverage of the block. Subdivision of single blocks is not permitted on blocks less than 800m².

Strategies for the future of the Residential Areas

Key strategies for all residential areas:

- Provide a diversity of housing choice for singles, couples and families of different sizes and ages in appropriate locations.
- Promote high-quality residential development that is sympathetic to the existing garden suburb neighbourhood character in terms of scale, form and landscape setting.

General strategies:

- Maintain the high-quality landscape setting and abundance of mature and healthy street trees on both public and private land.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate housing for the aged, retired and disabled in central rather than peripheral locations within easy access to shops, public transport and community facilities.

- Maintain and enhance the existing street pattern by ensuring buildings relate to the street rather than detract from it.
- Identify, recognise and protect the qualities that establish the neighbourhood's South Canberra suburban identity and distinctive character.
- Retain and reinforce the backdrops, vistas and view corridors that are part of the suburb's identity, including those to Red Hill, Mount Taylor and the Brindabella Ranges.
- Retain mix of public and private housing.
- Conserve heritage places and spaces.
- Maximise permeable surfaces to reduce run-off and erosion and assist hydration.
- Safeguard privacy and maximise and maintain light and sun access to dwellings.
- Protect, maintain and replace street trees.
- Promote residential development that facilitates a reduction in water and energy consumption.
- Ensure any future developments have an acceptable Waste Management Plan and adhere to the Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management so that waste and recycling is stored correctly and separately within lease boundaries, and access is provided for domestic collection vehicles.
- Encourage residential redevelopment around parks and laneways to focus on these assets in order to increase passive surveillance and family-friendly environments.
- Explore adaptable housing opportunities.

Strategies for residential development in Residential Core Areas in addition to the above:

- Maintain landscape setting and protect street trees (note: significant trees are addressed by the *ACT Tree Protection (Interim Scheme) Act 2001*).
- Retain verge widths and soft landscape surfaces to create open space areas to improve privacy between dwellings, and assist with absorption of water.
- Siting and design of buildings should address the street to maximise views to the street and pedestrian/cycle paths.
- Building should fit with existing street patterns.
- The faces of buildings should be articulated and avoid continuous “walls of development” (i.e. long, uninterrupted and unbroken building frontages produced by redevelopments).
- Interesting, place appropriate and environmentally sensitive design and innovation should be encouraged in new developments.
- Encourage residential redevelopment around parks to front onto the parks and laneways to increase passive surveillance and family-friendly environments.
- Reference should be made to the *ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual (2000)*.

Principles for best-practice residential redevelopment

Good design...

- **...responds to and reinforces the quality and identity of the area context.** Context can be defined as the key natural, built and social features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's current character or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character as stated in planning and design policies.
- **...appropriately arranges buildings and spaces – this is also part of the development context and will influence the quality of the residential environment.** Issues include building footprint and envelope, private open space, semi-public open space (setting for dwellings), setbacks for amenity, street appearance, access and parking, and services and facilities.
- **...aims to deliver an appropriate scale in terms of the bulk and height that suits the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings.** Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to the scale of existing development. In precincts undergoing a transition, proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the desired future character of the area.
- **...achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose, in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type and the manipulation of building elements.** Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.
- **...delivers a density appropriate for a site and its context, in terms of floor space yields (number of residents and functions).** Appropriate densities are sustainable and consistent with the existing density in an area or, in precincts undergoing a transition, are consistent with the stated desired future density. Sustainable densities respond to the regional context, availability of infrastructure, public transport, community facilities and environmental quality.
- **...integrates landscape and buildings to achieve greater amenity, sustainability and aesthetic quality for occupants, neighbours and the adjoining public realm.** Landscape design builds on the existing site's natural and cultural features in responsible and creative ways. It enhances the development's natural environmental performance by coordinating water and soil management, solar access, microclimate, tree canopy and habitat values. It contributes to the positive image and contextual fit of development through respect for streetscape and neighbourhood character. Landscape design should optimise usability, privacy and social opportunity, equitable access and respect for neighbours' amenity, and provide for practical establishment and long-term management.
- **...ensures amenity in relation to physical, spatial and environmental qualities.** Optimising amenity requires appropriate room dimensions and proportions, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, outlook and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.

- **...optimises safety and security, both internal to the development and for the public realm.** Optimising safety and security is achieved by maximising internal privacy, avoiding dark and non visible areas, maximising activity on streets, providing clear, safe access points, providing quality public spaces, lighting and clear definition between public and private spaces.
- **...responds to the social context and the aspirations of the local community in terms of lifestyles, affordability and access to social facilities.** Development should be responsive to the existing social context and the needs of the neighbourhood or provide for future desired community needs in the case of redevelopment areas.
- **...incorporates good design principles that establish the aesthetic quality of the development in the composition of building elements, textures, materials and colours, and the integration of function, structure and enclosure elements.** Development of design principles should incorporate a response to the environment and context, particularly to the desirable elements of the existing streetscape or, in precincts undergoing transition, contribute to the desired future character of the area.

Urban Open Space

Current Character

Hughes is bordered on both the southern and northern edges by bushland connected to the Red Hill Nature Reserve, which separates it from its neighbouring suburbs, Deakin and Garran. The Red Hill Nature Reserve is designated land under the National Capital Plan and is predominately characterised by native and indigenous vegetation with some areas of deciduous/exotic vegetation. The Federal Golf Course borders the suburb on the eastern edge. Hughes also contains an open space corridor running through the suburb from east to west providing recreational opportunities as well as convenient access through the suburb to the Red Hill Nature Park. The open space corridor contains a mix of native and exotic tree plantings; a playground facility is located in Goble Street. The foothills of Red Hill are highly valued for a range of recreation activities, and 'land care' groups assist with maintenance. Four neighbourhood parks are evenly placed throughout the quiet, suburban parts of the neighbourhood. These parks vary in size, but in general are small spaces containing dryland grass and scattered plantings of trees. Some parks contain playground facilities. Whilst the parks are used for informal recreation, such as children's play and dog walking, they also provide a visual resource for the neighbourhood. Hughes Oval (Clarrie Hermes Park) is located on the western fringe of the suburb, and is a well-utilised community facility. It is used for formal and informal sporting activities as well as other passive recreations.



Part of the open space network in Hughes.

Future Character

The Hughes Neighbourhood Plan proposes the retention of all Urban Open Space. However, the Neighbourhood Plan recommends that Urban Open Spaces in the future will be better augmented with elements such as seating, lighting (for safety and orientation) and footpaths to ensure that they continue to serve the community well, particularly as the population gradually changes and increases. The Urban Open Spaces will also be planted with a more diverse range of indigenous and native vegetation to maximise Hughes' contribution to the biodiversity of the city. This is particularly relevant due to the suburb's proximity to the Red Hill Nature Reserve. Accessibility for all, particularly those with special mobility needs, will be made a priority.

Specifically, the park between Wisdom Street and Kent Street adjacent the Hughes Local Centre could be augmented with tree planting, artworks, seating and lighting to make it a more attractive place to be. Some fencing may be required. The augmentation of this space is to include consultation with interested residents.

Strategies for the future of the Urban Open Space

Key Strategy:

- Redevelopment will not encroach on areas designated as Urban Open Space under the Territory Plan.

General Strategies:

- Maintain and enhance the quality of Hughes' Urban Open Spaces.
- Emphasise existing view corridors to Red Hill, Mount Taylor and the Brindabella Ranges by ensuring new buildings respond to the views that are currently afforded from various vantage points in the neighbourhood.
- Create a friendly and useable environment by providing Urban Open Spaces with appropriate assets such as seating and lighting.
- Enhance biodiversity by planting appropriate species and creating diverse habitats on appropriate Urban Open Spaces. (Consideration will need to be given to the ACT Government's Strategic Fire Management Plan.)

- Encourage wildlife into the suburb by providing suitable habitats; ensure wildlife can move about safely.
- Urban Open Space associated with the Radburn Housing Estate: use landscaping to better define the entry and egress points in order to maximise the usability of the open areas.
- Use a coordinated suite of facilities and installations, such as barbecue, seats and lighting, to create cohesive Urban Open Space. Consideration will need to be given to the ACT Government's Graffiti Management Strategy.
- On Webster Street support the formalisation of Urban Open Space by removing the Territory's X overlay in the area adjacent Webster Street.

Community Facilities

Current Character

Hughes contains a number of community facilities, predominately clustered around the Local Centre and in the northwest corner of the suburb. Community facilities located in the suburb include: the Hughes Preschool, Hughes Primary School, Baptist Church and St Andrews Village aged persons accommodation and hostel on Groom Street, Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall on Hughes Place, Hughes Community Centre located within the Hughes Local Centre, North Woden Tennis Club on De Largie Place, Hartley Court aged care accommodation on Wisdom Street, and Hughes aged persons units on Carroll Street. The National Brain Injury Foundation's Dorothy Sales Cottages are located in Wynter Place.



A preschool in Hughes.

Community Facility land-use makes provision for the health, educational, intellectual, religious, cultural and welfare needs of the ACT community.

Future Character

Hughes will continue to enjoy a range of community facilities. In particular, it will provide facilities appropriate for both an ageing population and for younger families. Accessibility for all, particularly those with special mobility needs will be made a priority.

Strategies for the future of the Community Facilities

Key Strategies:

- Retain the integrity of land defined under the Territory Plan as Community Facility.
- Ensure that adequate Community Facility land is available for the needs of current and future residents.

General Strategies:

- Any redevelopment on Community Facility land should respect the landscape qualities of the area.
- Retain significant trees on Community Facility land.
- Allow for the increased use and development of adaptable buildings that meet current needs and can adapt for the changing needs of the future.
- Support the provision of a range of aged care facilities to meet the needs of a diverse community.
- Encourage a diversity of community uses on the larger areas of Community Facility land.

Movement Networks

Current situation

Hughes' movement networks consist of roads, footpaths, and public transport routes. In terms of roads, the neighbourhood has a street hierarchy of 'access roads' servicing the subdivisions, connecting to 'collector streets' such as Groom, Kent, Wisdom and Kitchener Streets that in turn feed traffic into the major arterial roads such as Yarra Glen and Yamba Drive. 'Collector streets' by design collect vehicles from nearby local streets and are often used by buses. Hughes' footpaths are in various states of repair: street trees, whilst providing important visual amenity, can reduce the effectiveness of facilities such as street lighting and signage; they can also damage footpaths. Some of the neighbourhood is well serviced by public transport, with bus stops placed on Groom, Kitchener, Kent and Carruthers Streets and Yamba Drive providing access to Phillip, Woden, Civic and Belconnen. Hughes does not have its own dedicated cycle paths however at the north west edge of the suburb there are connections available to other parts of Canberra for example through to Woden and Tuggeranong, Yarralumla, Civic and towards Belconnen.



Moving around Hughes

Future situation

Hughes in the future will continue to offer a diverse range of accessible transport options, including car-based travel, public transport, cycle routes and pedestrian footpaths. In general, roads will be free of through traffic originating from adjacent neighbourhoods. Residential redevelopment will take advantage of Hughes' bus routes and stops, particularly those closest to the Hughes Local Shopping Centre, Wisdom and Kent Streets and Yamba Drive. For commuting cyclists, Hughes will be connected to Civic and Woden by the Woden to Dickson On-road Cycle Path (due for completion in mid-2004). Hughes' footpaths should be well maintained, linking the suburban areas with Urban Open Spaces and the Hughes Local Shopping Centre as well as the surrounding neighbourhoods. People will be able to move through the suburb freely and easily, enjoying the benefits of mature street trees on verges as well as good lighting and pathways free from hazard. Explore opportunities for the best possible bus-stop location.

Strategies for the future of Hughes' movement networks

Key Strategy:

- Provide a diversity of accessible transport options.

General Strategies:

- Prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Discourage through traffic.
- Provide appropriate lighting levels of lighting for pedestrians and vehicles and safe routes of travel for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles; provide an accessible route of travel to accommodate those with special mobility needs.
- Promote and support the use of public transport; ensure bus stops are in the right locations.
- Provide appropriate lighting and footpaths.
- Provide a safe and accessible route of travel for residents to facilities.
- Ensure any traffic problems are not exacerbated by the implementation of Residential Core Area policies.
- Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to Yamba Drive and Woden Town Centre.

How the Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented

The Hughes Neighbourhood Plan recommends the implementation of the following key actions:

- **Key Action:** The ACT Planning and Land Authority to undertake the process of **varying the Territory Plan to remove the X overlay** from Block 5 Section 28, which will allow formalisation of the Urban Open Space.
- **Key Action:** The ACT Planning and Land Authority to prepare a **companion guideline document** to the Good Design guideline series, to provide direction for the developer, the community and the development assessment officers, as to what will be sympathetic and complementary design for the type of development permitted to occur within **Residential Core Areas (A10)**.
- **Key Action:** In due course and should funding become available, the ACT Planning and Land Authority to undertake a **Local Centre Master Plan for Hughes**. Specific issues to be addressed include: parking; Wisdom Street road closure; improving the quality of Urban Open Space in the Radburn Housing precinct; improving pedestrian access; and the feasibility of upgrading the park between Kent and Wisdom Streets.
- **Key Action:** In due course and should funding become available, Roads ACT to review the **Local Area Traffic Management Study** for Garran and Hughes (1995) and, if necessary, undertake additional investigations to resolve current and future traffic management requirements. Scope of works to include an investigation of the traffic situation around Hughes Primary School, pedestrian safety and parking issue at shops, traffic flow into and out of Hughes, and traffic volume and speed Kent and Kitchener Streets.
- **Key Action:** In due course and should funding become available, Roads ACT and Canberra Urban Parks and Places to develop **network plans for cycle and pedestrian paths and street lighting**. Scope of works to include investigation of the conflict between assets (e.g. lighting and pavement) and street trees and how to ensure people are able to move through the suburb safely and easily, enjoying the benefits of mature street trees on verges as well as good lighting and pathways free from hazard.

How the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed

A major and comprehensive review of the Hughes Neighbourhood Plan will be conducted seven (7) years after the Plan has been placed on the ACT Planning and Land Authority's Register of Planning Guidelines. The review process will seek to ensure that the Hughes Neighbourhood Plan remains responsive to the changing physical, social, environmental and demographic characteristics of the neighbourhood. The review process is critical, as the development of the neighbourhood needs to remain consistent with the vision and strategies set out in this Plan and *The Canberra Spatial Plan*. Minor reviews will be conducted prior to the seven-year time frame, although this will be dependent on major changes in policy framework and will only be conducted by an agreed process.

For more information visit the ACT Planning and Land Authority:

Website: <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au>

Email: neighbourhoodplanning@act.gov.au

Phone: 02 6205 0087

Summary reports are available for each of the activities undertaken in order to develop this Neighbourhood Plan – they are available on the ACT Planning and Land Authority’s website or by telephoning 6205 0087.

Documents relevant to the Hughes Neighbourhood Plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Territory Plan (updated regularly)
- The National Capital Plan
- The Canberra Plan (2004)
- The Canberra Spatial Plan (2004)
- The Sustainable Transport Plan (2004)
- The Guide to Good Design (2004)
- The Sustainability Guide (2004)
- The Garran Neighbourhood Plan (2004)
- The Yarralumla Neighbourhood Plan (2004)
- The Deakin Neighbourhood Plan (2002)
- People, Place and Prosperity: A Policy for Sustainability in the ACT (2003)
- Safe Routes Pilot Study (2001)
- ACT Parking and Vehicular Access Guidelines (2000)
- ACT Crime Prevention and Urban Design Resource Manual (2000)
- Canberra Bicycle 2000 – A Bicycle Strategy for the ACT

Drawing 2 – Hughes in the future



