

## **CANBERRA HOSPITAL MASTER PLAN**

Canberra Hospital Master Plan Project Team  
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Strategic Infrastructure Division | ACT Health Directorate

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Meridian is Canberra's leading LGBTIQ and HIV+ community organisation. Formerly the AIDS Action Council, Meridian was established in 1983 in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and has a strong and proud history of working with and representing diverse groups of people. This includes gay and bisexual and other men who have sex with men, lesbian and queer women, transgender and gender diverse people, people with disability, sex workers, people who use drugs, and people in custodial settings. Over this time, we have adapted to community need to ensure we are dynamic, intersectional, and progressive with our approach to tackling complex social health issues such as HIV/AIDS and the health and wellbeing of sexuality, sex and gender diverse people. Our vision is to build strong, connected and supportive communities that are free of new HIV transmission, marginalisation, discrimination and stigma. We create opportunities for our communities to live their healthiest lives and be their true selves.

Meridian supports many of its members, clients and stakeholders to access the Canberra Hospital and has had a quality ongoing relationship with Canberra Sexual Health Centre and many of the specialists providing services at the hospital.

We would like to make the following submission to ACT Health master-planning consultation for Canberra Hospital

### **Parking & Access**

- The existing multistorey carpark is very functional and thankfully no cost. No cost parking is essential for equitable access.
- There are many times this carpark is full and other parking areas, also often full, will be removed in upcoming works. More parking is definitely required.
- Carpark it is a long distance from many of the functions of the hospital with indirect pathways to various entrances.
- Could be improved with indoor/all weather access between carpark and Building 1, via Buildings 19, 3, & 2. Currently this is poorly signposted and discontinuous, with two changes in level (from L2 – L1 – L2 again).



- For dropping disabled people for appointments at Building 1 Outpatients, Pharmacy, Pathology, etc, it is necessary to leave them at the entrance unattended and drive away to the carpark and return on foot. A return trip of up to 20 mins depending how difficult it is to find parking. Note many people attending Hospital are temporarily disabled due to injury or illness, and do not have Disabled parking.
- Wayfinding through Buildings 1, 12 & 10 for Outpatients, Pharmacy, Radiology and Pathology is complicated and signage is barely adequate. The recent solution of the coloured lines on the floor are helpful after someone tells you about which colour to follow. But it would be preferable if the layout of departments and reception desks was more intuitive.
- Access for cars and pedestrians to the entrance of Building 19 is dysfunctional: crossing pedestrians over driveways, Ambulance bay crossing pathway and driveway, tight turning circles that are blocked when people stop to drop passengers off, then a long drive to find parking after dropping off passengers. Nothing works until inside the building. The entrance and visitor experience inside this building is otherwise the best of any building in the hospital: light-filled waiting areas, easy wayfinding, adequate toilets, easy to find reception desks
- Previously ACT Buses stopped at the entrance of the hospital which is very important to low income residents. It is unclear what is planned when the new SPIRE project is complete. Current bus stop on Yamba Drive is not adequate for people who use walking frame or other mobility issues.

### **Waiting areas**

- Waiting areas in many departments are inadequate size at peak times. Canberra Sexual Health, Outpatients, Pharmacy are examples we are familiar with. While this has been different under Covid conditions it will return to overcrowding after restrictions are removed.

### **Food and Drink**

- The cafeterias in Building 2 have a good range of food from snacks to meals. However pre-Covid they were often full with no seating available. Assuming this will become an issue again after restrictions are lifted. Additional outlets and/or more seating is required.

### **Smoking**

- The smoking ban on hospital property is necessary and welcome. However it's unrealistic to expect that everybody will cease smoking altogether. Currently smokers have created their own informal smoking areas sometimes near entrances, sometimes in garden areas or carparks. All of these undermine the health motivation for protecting non smokers from harm. We believe that dedicated, signposted and segregated smoking areas should be established to remove smoking harm from other visitors and staff. We note that a significant portion of smokers are staff.

*Finally, the relationship between the settings, users and delivery of health services is considered essential to strengthen the quality of care. However, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Gender Diverse population often suffer from prejudice and discrimination in access and use of these services. The importance of a safe and appropriate environment (a setting approach) cannot be understated. Signs and signals to demonstrate to LGBTIQ people and their allies that the hospital is a friendly and welcoming space would be essential. However, as equally important is training, practice policies, forms and data collection that enables LGBTIQ people to be counted and to be acknowledged.*

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Meridian acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which work and live and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

*Meridian (formerly AIDS Action Council) is a community-based and peer led organisation. For over 35 years we have been working with diverse people and communities to improve their health and wellbeing.*