

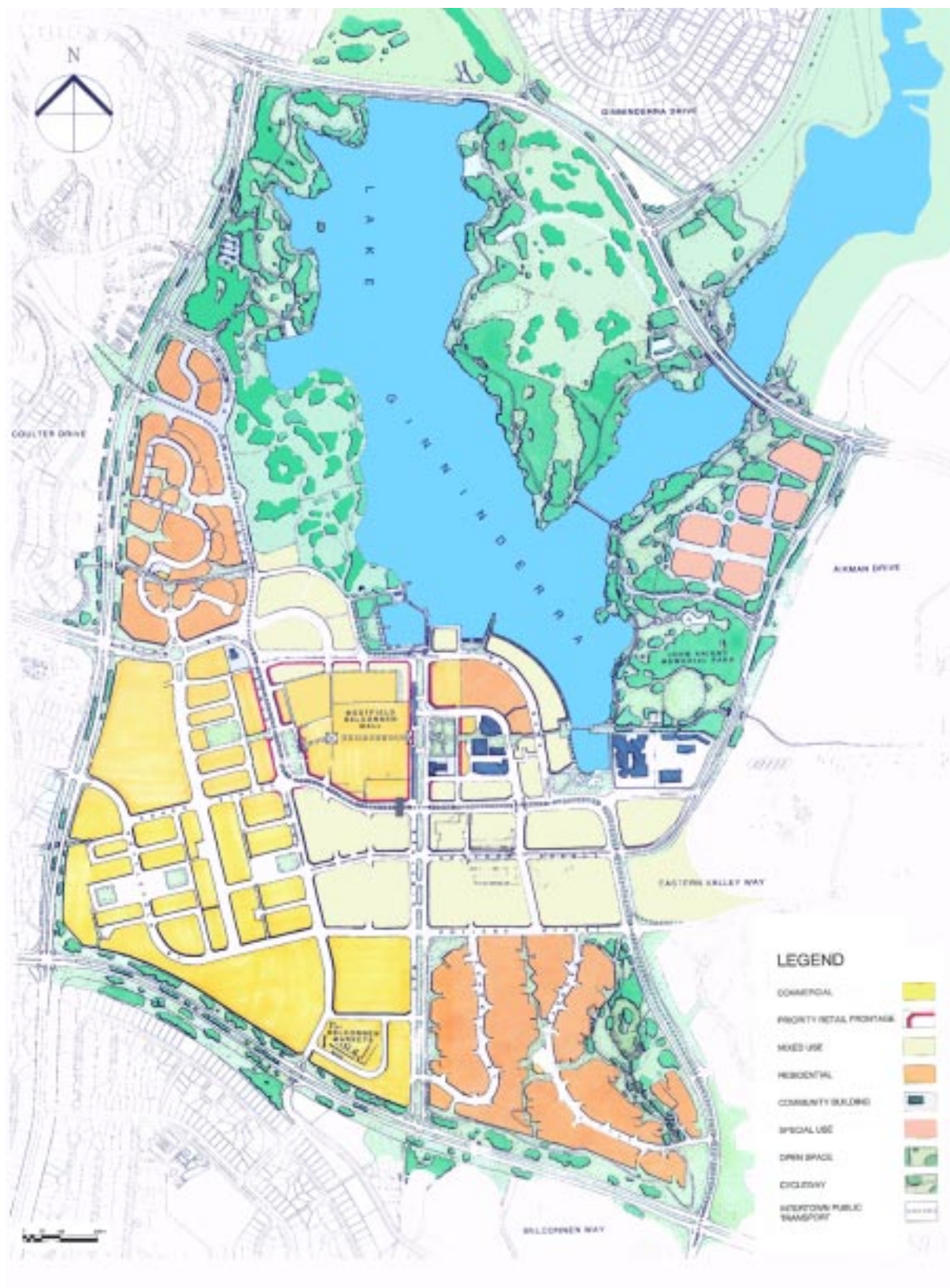
# **BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The town centre is described as the area bounded by Ginninderra Drive to the north, Coulter Drive to the west, Belconnen Way to the south, and Eastern Valley Way/Aikman Drive to the east.
2. The master plan proposes to increase the provision of residential accommodation within easy and attractive walking distance of the town centre, improve the efficiency and convenience of public transport and promote walking and cycling as an alternative transport mode to private vehicle use.
3. The community is concerned that:
  - Physical and visual linkages are needed between the mall surrounding uses including community facilities and retail and personal services, the lake edge, Emu Bank and the Mixed Uses Area.
  - There are physical and visual barriers to pedestrian movement around the town centre and disabled access is poor.
  - There is no appropriate housing for older persons in close proximity to the town centre core area.
  - There is poor lighting and pedestrian areas are unsafe particularly at the Interchange and Mixed Uses Area.
  - Lake Ginninderra has pollution and access problems with limited opportunities for passive and active recreation.
  - Parks and open spaces, including Margaret Timpson Park are not being optimised.
  - The bus interchange has problems of safety, lighting, cleanliness and security.
  - Small businesses outside the Mall around Margaret Timpson Park have viability problems.
  - The Benjamin Way median strip is too wide to allow connectivity between the mall, the park and community facilities beyond the park.
4. In the 8 years between 1991 and 1999 the Belconnen district population fell from 89,500 to 84,300 primarily as a result of the ageing of the district and the consequential impacts of 'empty nest households', reduced birth rates, and higher separation and divorce.
5. In 1996 employment in Belconnen represented some 15 per cent of ACT employment. Of those 64 per cent lived in the district, almost 10 per cent travelled from Tuggeranong and 7 per cent from Gungahlin.
6. The overall parking provision is adequate and parking demand can be adequately addressed by ensuring that future developments meet their own parking requirements. Localised shortfalls can be expected associated with specific initiatives such as the relocation of the bus interchange, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Building, office redevelopment or increased use of the Emu Bank foreshore.

7. The relocation of the bus interchange functions onto Benjamin Way is broadly supported by ACTION subject to the resolution of a number of issues including:
  - Physical arrangements
  - Minimising vehicular conflict
  - Pedestrian management
  - Routing implications
8. Improved bus access to Lathlain Street, would support the western side of the mall and key activity points in the Mixed Uses Area.
9. Parking strategies will reduce the convenience of long stay parking and increase the viability of other modes of transport. Short term parking will be promoted to provide good access for businesses, community and recreational activities throughout the town centre. Strategies should be employed to avoid and overcome any localised shortfall that could arise as a result of the relocation of the bus interchange, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Building, the redevelopment of the Cameron and Benjamin Offices or an increase of pedestrian use of the Emu Bank foreshore area. Longer term parking strategies should aim to maintain efficient and effective use of parking facilities and seek to support sustainable transport and parking management in the Belconnen Town Centre.
10. The Belconnen Lakeshore Master Plan (1998) is supported with its five main elements:
  - A foreshore promenade, including a new boardwalk on the foreshore.
  - An entertainment, recreation, leisure and cultural area stretching from the skateboard park to the intersection of Benjamin Way with Emu Bank.
  - An outdoor recreation area to the north of Beissel Street, with appropriate scale facilities.
  - A mixed use area at the southern end of Beissel Street, near Emu Bank with a mix of accommodation and commercial uses.
  - Reduced traffic volumes on Emu Bank through the construction of the Aikman Drive extension.
11. The permeability and legibility of the town centre will be improved by completing a number of east/west and north/south road connections to and through the town centre. These will make the centre easier to access, remove the worst of the current separation between zones, relieve traffic pressure on existing roads and facilitate changes to public transport arrangements.
12. Pedestrian activity and retailing will be balanced between the Mall, Benjamin Way/Emu Bank and the Mixed Uses Area with active retailing, facilitating changes to Lathlain Street and improving the viability of Margaret Timpson Park.
13. Benjamin Way will be developed as the 'Main Street' of the town centre, focusing public transport, encouraging pedestrian activity at ground level, creating stronger links to the park and with upgraded landscaping.
14. Margaret Timpson Park will be enlivened with increasing pedestrian activity around its periphery, a stronger entrance and appropriate cultural and recreational development within the park.
15. Pedestrian links to the Emu Bank foreshore will be strengthened with selective release of development sites and implementation of the key initiatives of the Belconnen Lakeshore Master Plan (1998).

16. Relocating the bus interchange to a street based system on Benjamin Way between the Mall and Margaret Timpson Park will address the problems of the current interchange, increase pedestrian activity on the street and improve the accessibility of the park and the lake foreshore.
17. The bus lane and ITP route will be relocated to make better use of the land, remove the barrier created by the current grade separation and encourage activity on Lathlain Street.
18. The character of Lathlain Street will be changed, creating new connections to Belconnen Way and Benjamin Way, encouraging appropriate retail uses and active frontages on both sides of the road and facilitate improved public transport.
19. The Mixed Uses Area will be linked by establishing pedestrian and vehicular connections and strengthening these with appropriate paving, planting, signage and lighting.
20. An environmental wetlands on Eastern Valley Way will be developed to provide increased amenity to the local area and to improve the quality of stormwater entering the lake.
21. Recreation opportunities will be created on the western side of the lake linking to Emu Bank and supporting the current and future residential development in the area.
22. The west Belconnen Town Centre residential area (Totterdell St) will be visually and physically linked to the lake and additional residential development.
23. Land on the eastern side of the lake will be released for community facilities and residential development to make use of existing infrastructure and support, housing for the aged and the extension of public facilities around the lake foreshore.
24. A public art program, for buildings, open spaces, roads and streetscapes, will be supported in co-operation with the Belconnen Cultural Planning Group.
25. The area to the north of Lake Ginninderra College will be assessed to determine the potential for a playing field.
26. An upgraded and complete pedestrian network will be established by:
  - reinforcing and upgrading the east-west spine (University Walk),
  - extending this system through Belconnen Mall to Lathlain Street,
  - linking the Mixed Uses Area, the retail mall, the town focus (Margaret Timpson Park), the community – cultural area, and the lake foreshores in a continuous system,
  - linking redevelopment of Cameron Offices, a redeveloped bus interchange, and the eastern edge of Margaret Timpson Park,
  - reinforcing the north-south pedestrian route through the centre of Benjamin Offices,
  - establishing a comprehensive street footpath system with quality paving, street tree furniture, planting, and public art, and
  - reinstating and completing footpaths.
27. The cycleway system will be extended and upgraded.
28. Development of the town centre will aim to minimise waste in the demolition and construction process, and to design and establish facilities within developments that will enable the effective management of wastes and recyclables.



## Belconnen Town Centre Master Plan **STRUCTURE PLAN**