



Communication Link

Woolworths Hawker community engagement

Consultation and engagement report

14 September 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Communication Link acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which our head office resides. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our community in Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of all land on which our work and connections may reach, and pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.



Executive summary

KEY POINTS

- Analysis of all community engagement activities revealed majority support for expanding the Woolworths Metro in Hawker into a larger store with a broader offering.
- Feedback also indicated general support for Woolworths' proposal to expand the precinct onto the existing open-air carpark and introduce complementary stores.
- Key priorities for consideration in planning and development included design aesthetics, parking solutions, children's areas, business diversity, community integration, safety, sustainability, and aligning expectations with successful comparative locations.

SUMMARY

Woolworths is considering a transformative project aimed at revitalising the Hawker Place shopping precinct and enhancing the related urban environment. Central to this is the expansion of the existing Metro store into a full-scale supermarket with an expanded and more diverse range of fresh produce and merchandise.

Woolworths recognises the importance of community input in shaping this project's direction. Therefore, a comprehensive community engagement program was undertaken to gather feedback, insights, and aspirations from local residents and users of Hawker Place facilities regarding their vision for the Hawker shopping precinct's future.

The community consultation program had three main goals:

- Gather input on the desired appearance, ambiance, and functionality of a revitalised Hawker Place, focusing on preferences for architectural design, aesthetics, and usability.
- Identify community insights and concerns related to access, traffic, and transportation impacts associated with the proposed Hawker Place revitalisation.
- Gather feedback and insights regarding the types of businesses, services, and facilities that community members and Hawker Place users would like to see established in the area.

The engagement program utilised a combination of workshops, community drop-in sessions, and online submissions to facilitate meaningful conversations and gather feedback. The engagement activities focused on information gathering, targeted engagement, relationship building, and broader engagement to integrate community input. It saw a strong representation from across the community, including:

1. Two community drop-in sessions at Hawker Place attended by over 179 people.
2. A community workshop held at Hawker College on July 19, which drew local business owners, residents, and political representatives.
3. An online feedback mechanism on the project website, which received 49 comments and submissions.

Overall, there was positive community sentiment expressed toward the proposed development:

- 84% of feedback either explicitly supported, or expressed no objection to, the project.
- Of those, 56% expressed support for the entire proposed development; 28% raised general comments or questions without objecting to the development.
- 16% did not support a full-line supermarket or comprehensive precinct refresh.



Throughout the engagement activities, several key areas of interest emerged:

- **Design of the centre:** Community members noted the importance of modernising and revitalising the precinct's physical infrastructure, incorporating green spaces, maintaining natural light, optimising traffic flow, and ensuring ample parking options.
- **Other Businesses/Services:** The impact on existing businesses, especially the Post Office and bakery, was a concern. The community supported a broader range of business offerings in the precinct.
- **Parking:** Opinions varied on whether to retain the open-air car park or introduce an underground car park. The community sought assurances of adequate parking spaces and accessibility.
- **Woolworths Hawker:** Most respondents supported a larger Woolworths store with an expanded product range, including deli, bakery, and separate BWS.
- **Community:** Feedback highlighted the desire to maintain a sense of community within the precinct, incorporating open spaces, community facilities, and community-focused businesses.
- **Safety:** Safety considerations included well-lit areas, secure parking, and addressing antisocial behaviour in basement car parks.
- **Area for Kids:** A new children's playground or dedicated space for children was a recurring request.
- **Comparative Locations:** Successful revitalization examples from other locations were cited for inspiration.
- **Sustainability:** Community members sought sustainability features such as solar panels, recycling centres, and high sustainability ratings.
- **Loading Dock:** Concerns were raised about the location and noise impact of the loading dock.

As Woolworths proceeds with the project, these insights will guide decision-making and work to align any future development with the community's vision for a revitalised Hawker Place shopping precinct.



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1. Introduction

Woolworths is considering a project to revitalise a section of the Hawker Place shopping precinct and improve and modernise the urban environment. As part of this initiative, Woolworths is considering the expansion of the current Metro store to a full-size supermarket with a bigger and more exciting range of fresh produce and products.

To inform the progress and direction of this project, including an application to the ACT Government to acquire the land required to undertake the project, Woolworths sought input from the local community and users of the Hawker facilities around their hopes for the future of the Hawker shopping precinct.

A program of community engagement was undertaken to gather the thoughts and opinions of community members and understand how people envision the appearance, atmosphere, and functionality of the area.

The purpose of this engagement was to:

- Gather input from the local community and users of the businesses and facilities at Hawker Place on how they would like a revitalised area to look and feel, considering preferences for built form and design as well as general aesthetics and useability.
- Identify any community insights and / or concerns regarding how the revitalisation of the proposed section of Hawker Place could be accessed, including impacts on traffic and travel to and from the location.
- Gather feedback and insights on the businesses / services / facilities that community members and the users of Hawker Place would like to see established at the site. This will form part of the proposed urban renewal project and inform an application to the ACT Government to purchase the land.

Engagement activities focused on providing information to networks across each location with a specific focus on:

- Residents
- Community groups
- Local businesses
- School communities

Engagement was undertaken over a 6-week period commencing Monday 26 June and concluding Sunday 13 August 2023.

Across the engagement activities, feedback was received from over 225 community members with a further 49 comments and submissions received digitally. This generated 453 pieces of feedback data that have been analysed to inform this report.



2. About the project

2.1 Purpose of this report

This report summarises the feedback, insights, and considerations from the local community during engagement activities held from June to August 2023.

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of community commentary and sentiment to assist Woolworths in considering the expansion of the current Hawker Metro store to a full-size supermarket with the potential addition of complementary shops and facilities. Insights will also help to inform an application to purchase land, currently owned by the ACT Government, that would enable the realisation of the full scope of the proposed development.

This report captures data from a stakeholder meeting, community workshop and community drop-ins facilitated by Communication Link, as well as public submissions received through the dedicated project website.

2.2 Consultation objectives

The purpose of this community consultation program was to seek input from community members, businesses and representatives who had a personal or professional interest in the future of the shopping precinct in Hawker ACT.

The consultation objectives were to:

- Gather input from the local community and users of the businesses and facilities at Hawker Place on how they would like a revitalised area to look and feel, considering preferences for built form and design as well as general aesthetics and useability.
- Identify any community insights and / or concerns regarding how the revitalised area could be accessed, including impacts on traffic and travel to and from the location.
- Gather feedback and insights on the businesses / services / facilities that community members and the users of Hawker Place would like to see established at the site. This will form part of the proposed urban renewal project and inform an application to the ACT Government to purchase the land.

2.3 Related documents

- Hawker- Stakeholder Engagement Plan - Woolworths Engagement approach.
- Project and engagement plan_Woolworths Hawker_20062023



3. How we engaged



Figure 1. Community workshop: Hawker College

3.1 Consultation approach

Community consultation was undertaken utilising workshop and community drop-in formats to foster various levels of conversation and discussion, while also supporting individuals to express their opinions on aspects of the potential development that mattered most to them.

Engagement activities were undertaken with a focus on three key priorities:



Figure 2. Priority areas.

The workshop was structured with three areas for input, offering participants a process to provide their considerations and reflect on elements of the potential development. These activities allowed participants to self-manage their input. There was also opportunity for participants to have larger group discussions that encouraged questions and clarification around details of the project.

Community drop ins were undertaken to provide a convenient way for community representatives to engage one-on-one with Woolworths representatives and consultation professionals who recorded their feedback.



3.1.1 Timeline of engagement activities

Table 1 outlines the timeline of engagement activities undertaken throughout this program of consultation.

Table 1. Engagement program

Item	Timeframes and details
Government briefings –by Woolworths personnel	July 2023
Website live	Monday 26 June 2023
Stakeholder meeting with Friends of Hawker Village	Thursday 6 July 2023
Belconnen Community Council Meeting (evening)	Tuesday 18 July 2023
Drop-in 1 – Hawker Place (1pm-4pm)	Wednesday 19 July 2023
Workshop (evening)	Wednesday 19 July 2023
Drop-in 2 (1pm-4pm)	Saturday 22 July 2023
Close of submissions (via website)	Sunday 13 August 2023

3.1.2 Promotion and awareness

Targeted promotion and awareness activities were undertaken to inform key stakeholders and the surrounding community of consultation activities, inviting them to participate and provide feedback on the potential development.

To reach the greatest number of stakeholders local schools, sporting clubs, businesses and religious facilities were also provided content to be shared with and distributed to their communities and networks. Table 2 outlines the targeted communication undertaken.

Table 2. Promotion timeframes

Item	Timeframes and details
Information and content circulated for distribution in community newsletters	Monday 26 June 2023
Letter box drop	5 -12 July 2023
Belconnen Community Council Meeting (evening)	Tuesday 18 July 2023

Additional coverage

Further coverage was captured through local media, Members of the Legislative Assembly communications and representative groups. This included a segment in the Canberra Weekly (13 July 2023), social media content published by MLA Tara Cheyne, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Human Rights, Business and Better Regulation, the Arts and Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Jo Clay MLA and Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, a mailout by the Belconnen Community Council and website content published by the Friends of Hawker Village.



3.2 Consultation participation

Community drop-ins

Two community drop-in sessions were held within the Hawker shopping precinct focused on gaining feedback from the broader local community. The drop-in sessions attracted over 179 people.

Each session was promoted through dedicated project communication and amplified by community networks.

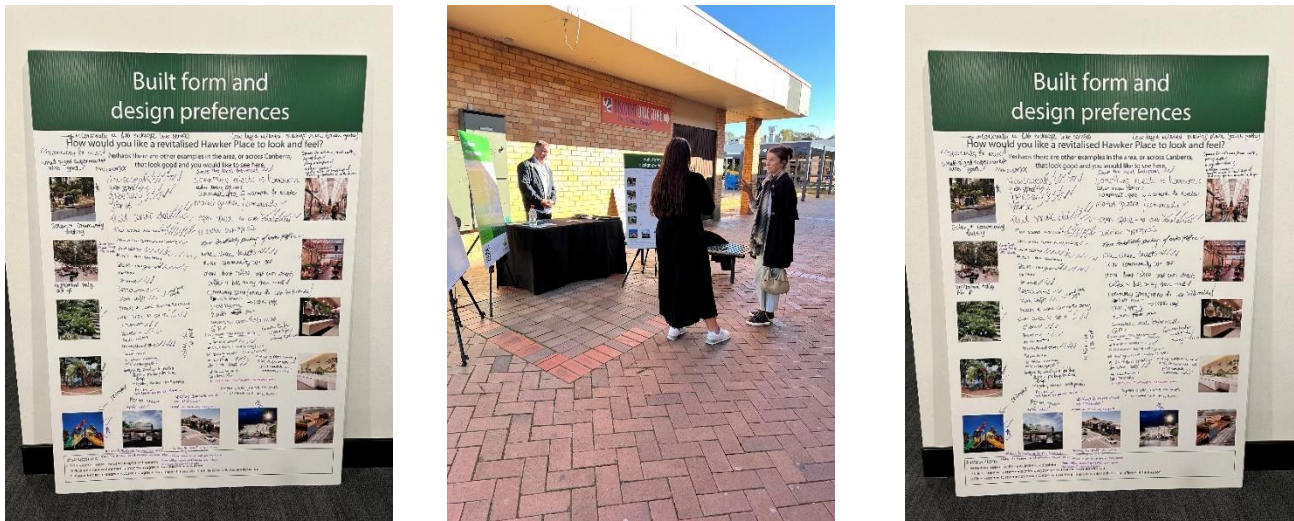


Figure 3. Community drop-in at Hawker shopping precinct + engagement boards with feedback.

Community workshop

A community workshop was held at Hawker College on 19 July. Attendees included local business owners, long-term and new residents of Hawker and the surrounding suburbs of Weetangera, Page, and Scullin as well as political representatives, including Minister Tara Cheyne. The intent of the workshop was to gather feedback on the future aspirations for the Hawker shops and sentiment around the potential development of a larger Woolworths store in place of the existing Metro.



Figure 4. Community workshop at Hawker College.





Figure 5. Community workshop participants undertaking feedback activities.

Online submissions

For those who were unable to attend the workshop or drop-in sessions, or who wanted to share additional feedback, there was an online feedback mechanism available on the Woolworthshawker.com.au website.

A total of 49 comments and submissions were received via the online feedback mechanism available on the dedicated project website.

A screenshot of a green website page titled "We want to hear from you". The page contains three main sections: "Attend a workshop" with a "Register" button, "Talk to us" with dates and times for two sessions, and "Provide a submission" with a "Submission" button. The text on the page reads: "If you have ideas or thoughts you would like to share we welcome your feedback. There are several ways to provide your thoughts as we look to revitalising Hawker shops." The three sections are: 1. "Attend a workshop" with a "Register" button. 2. "Talk to us" with the text "Come talk to us at Woolworths Hawker" and two time slots: "1pm - 4pm, Wednesday 19 July" and "1pm - 4pm, Saturday 22 July". 3. "Provide a submission" with a "Submission" button.



4. What we heard – feedback and analysis

Feedback was received from over 45 workshop participants, 179 community drop-in attendees and 49 online comments and submissions (including a community representative submission from the Belconnen Community Council), representing the views of the general community, as well as local businesses and community organisations. Combined, this represented more than 445 items of feedback data.

The following outlines what was heard across all engagement activities.

4.1 Overall sentiment

The majority of views (56%) expressed by the community were supportive of part or all of the proposed development. A further 28 per cent of feedback provided comments or questions about the development proposal being explored and did not express a view either for or against the development, while 16 per cent of feedback did not support an update to a full-line supermarket or wider refresh of the shopping precinct.

Support for the project came from surrounding businesses, including those outside of the proposed refreshment zone, with the Manager of Bonza Bangers (Hawker butchery), submitting online comment noting *“I think that this a great proposal what you are looking at doing would bring new people to the centre. And help the appearance of the centre because as everyone know the whole centre is looking a little tired and worn down and it’s well overdue for an overhaul and bring it into the 21st century. And the centre would be able to compete with Jamison shopping centre because I believe that it is a much more attractive place to shop then Hawker. I would really love to see this whole proposal to go ahead.”*

Figure 6 shows the breakdown of community sentiment expressed through feedback received.

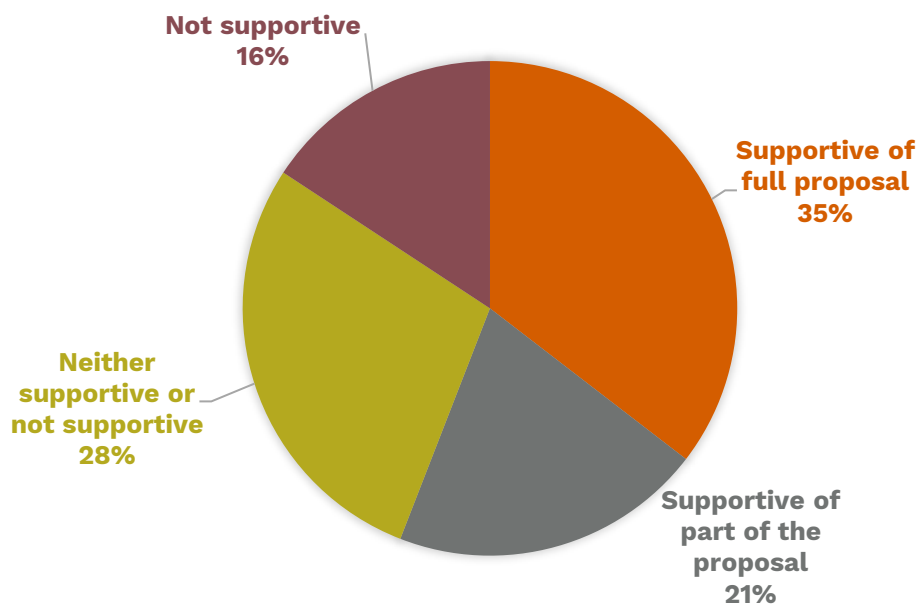


Figure 6. Breakdown of community feedback showing levels of support for proposed development.



Support for full proposal

35 per cent of feedback received expressed support for the full breadth of the development proposal being explored, including comments such as

'I think that this a great proposal what you are looking at doing and would bring new people to the centre and help the appearance of the centre because as everyone know the whole centre is looking a little tired and worn down and it's well overdue for an overhaul and bring it into the 21st century.'

Further feedback supporting the full proposed development recognised the opportunities a larger Woolworths and new businesses would bring the community, noting *'I like that this will bring more job opportunities to the area.'*

There was also recognition that previous development proposals had been stalled by people who did not share the same views as those supporting a change. Feedback expressed by several community members noted that they did not want to see this happen again, *'I'm delighted to hear this as I was very disappointed when some community residents previously stymied any change. The area is very tired and in desperate need of an upgrade. A bigger and better Woolworths would be great especially if it went more upmarket than Coles Jamison.'*

Support for part of the proposal

Of the 21 per cent who expressed support for part of the proposed development a number said they would like to see more detailed plans of the area to be upgraded before providing further feedback on all elements.

Further feedback from those expressing support for part of the project included support for a larger Woolworths store – *'An expanded Woolworths with more options such those found at larger shops would be nice.'*

There was also feedback on the existing businesses that they would like to see retained in any development: *'We'd like Hawker bakery to remain.'*

With further feedback provided on elements they would like focused on as part of the development – *'Let me firstly say clean up the area. It is a dirty unattractive centre. The design and appearance of the shopping precinct needs to be addressed, along with service options, to meet current needs and expectations.'*

Not supportive of proposal

A common theme amongst the 16 per cent of feedback that did not support change to the Hawker shopping precinct centred around not wanting basement car parking and wanting to retain the shopping precinct in its current state. The nature of the comments suggest they come from long term residents in the area. Comments capturing this sentiment include *'Basement parking is not needed. There are other big Woolworths not far from here, so expanding would only ruin the little community store you have at the moment.'*

Further feedback exemplifying this sentiment includes the following view of a long-time resident – *'I have lived in the area for 50 years and don't see this as an upgrade for the community, only a business opportunity for Woolworths. It will depersonalise the area, put several businesses which have been in place for many years out of business, and change the entire dynamic of what is already a well serviced area.'*

Neither supportive or not supportive

28 per cent of feedback received did not reveal support for or against the proposed development. Within this feedback community members sought clarification on issues that they were unsure of at this stage of the project. These questions included how existing businesses in the proposed development area would be involved in the project, with particular focus on wanting to retain the current post office and bakery.



Further questions received were specific to the establishment of a larger Woolworths supermarket, including ‘*Roughly what will be the sqm of the new Hawker Woolworths?*’ and ‘*Would the new Hawker Woolworths be used as an online shopping delivery hub for other stores?*’

Parking again featured in feedback with questions around how many spaces would be available in underground parking and comments that there was a community need to retain lots of short-term parking near shopping entrances.

4.2 Areas of interest

The topics that were commonly raised by community members across engagement activities is reflected in Figure 7.

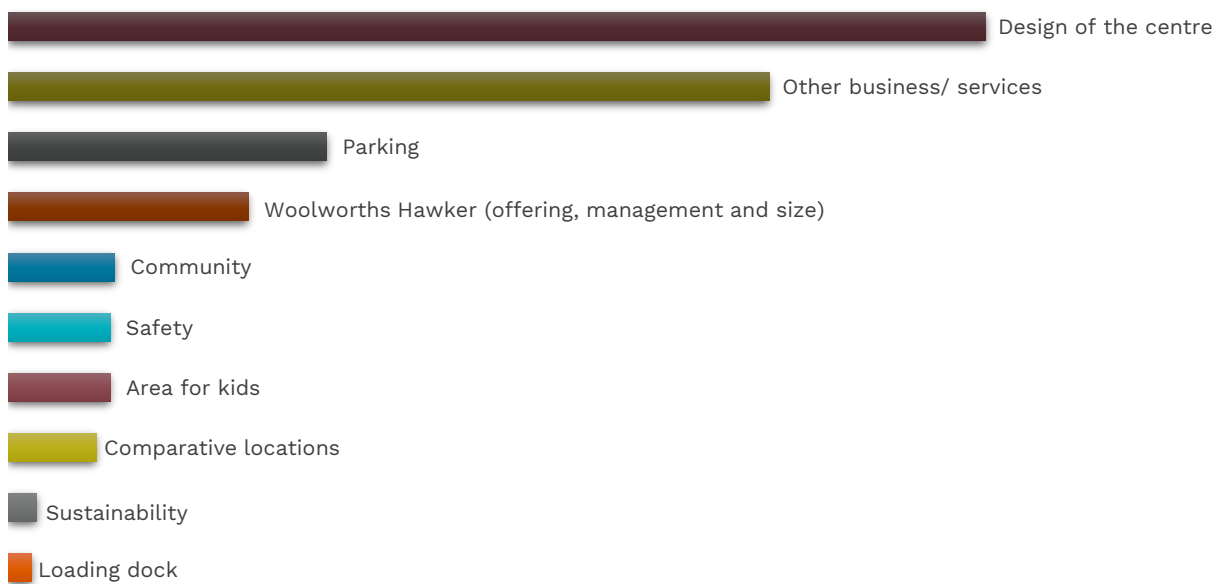


Figure 7. Breakdown of topics most raised.

Design of the centre

A range of views were expressed about the design of the centre reflecting the atmosphere the community is hoping for as well as facilities and services the community would like incorporated into the design.

Feedback included:

- Physical design of building and infrastructure with a desire for a revitalised, more modern, and updated facility with active shopfronts.
- A smaller number of comments asking for no change to the look of the current shopping precinct were received.
- The incorporation of green space and greenery (shrubbery) into the design of the space.
- Retention of natural light and sunshine in the shopping area, with the incorporation of shade and cover as required to address the changing climate and eliminate the current wind tunnel walkways.
- Ensuring the location of parking is beneficial to both the smaller complementary stores as well as to Woolworths.
- Building on the existing outdoor carpark suggested there should be a better use of the space the existing car park is in.
- The flow of traffic in, out and around the proposed development - traffic flow that would make it easy to travel around the location as well as not impose on local homes and main thoroughfares.



- Accessible trolley return points
- Lots of disability parking
- Incorporation of public art
- A variety of parking options
- Community seating
- Motorbike parking
- Safe and clean public toilets
- Facilities for pets (water and safe places to tie them up when shopping)
- Electric vehicle charge points
- Bike racks
- Gardens
- Flat, graded walkways

Questions received about the design of the centre focused on how large the new Woolworths store would be, whether there would be online and direct-to-boot options available to shoppers, and whether Woolworths had considered acquiring and incorporating the old Belconnen Soccer Club into their design.

There was also some interest in the rest of the shopping precinct being incorporated into Woolworths plans.

Other business / services

Perceived impacts on existing businesses were of greatest concern for people when considering other businesses around the Woolworths location. There was a lot of concern expressed about the retention of the current Post Office and the existing bakery.

Community feedback sought to ensure that businesses currently operating within the area would be considered and worked with throughout any development. It was also noted that new small businesses should not be considered competition for Woolworths and that they should be able to stand alone with offerings outside of Woolworths' offering.

There were concerns expressed about the impact on businesses during construction, however overall, feedback was supportive of a greater range of business offerings at the Hawker location.

Other business and services people would like access to in a revitalised Harker shopping precinct include:

- Newsagent
- Cafes, bars, and bistros
- Dog café
- Small, locally owned businesses
- Gym
- Childcare centre
- Bank
- Community focused organisations (youth hub, community centre, government shop front)
- Nursery or florist
- Small electronics store
- Dry cleaning
- Juice bar
- Chemist



Parking

Community feedback focused on the removal of the existing on-grade carpark with differing views on whether an underground carpark would be acceptable. While there was a vocal minority who expressed a desire to retain the current open air car park, there was a larger number of comments received from people who supported utilising the space for businesses and moving parking underground or who did not mention any objection to a basement carpark but did mention parking facilities they would like included in the design. Feedback included:

- Questions around how many car parking spaces would be available in a basement carpark.
- A basement carpark should not provide less parking than is currently available.
- With an increase in patrons there would be a need for more parking than what is currently available.
- Current on-street parking is not safe with two-way access and parallel parking as well as perpendicular parking.
- A lot of short-term parking close to shop entrances was a priority.
- More disability parking than what is currently available, as well as priority parking for people with prams.
- More motorcycle parking.
- Availability of parking for larger vehicles if parking was taken underground, but also acknowledgement that there would still be on-grade parking available on the KFC side of the precinct.
- Personal safety within car parks.
- Address availability of parking during construction so that businesses across the shopping precinct could still be accessed.

Community sentiment on parking at the Hawker shopping precinct revealed a desire and expectation for easy access, secure parking options and the ability to move safely from shops to car at any time of day.

Woolworths Hawker (offering, management and size)

The community was eager to provide feedback on the potential expansion of the current Woolworths Metro store.

Specific to the proposed development being considered, the community was eager to understand how Woolworths would acquire the land required to fulfil all plans. It was felt that Woolworths should pay '*an appropriate amount for any land*' acquired from the Government.

While there was some feedback supporting the current Metro services, most feedback received supported a larger Woolworths with more staff and more offerings.

Further feedback highlighted elements that the community would like to see incorporated into a larger Woolworths, including:

- Delicatessen
- Allergy and gluten free options
- Bakery
- A separate BWS
- Cheese and dairy offerings
- Seafood offerings
- Click and collect parking spaces.



Community

While there was some feedback suggesting retaining the current community and “village” feel of the Hawker shopping precinct, most of the feedback, in a community context, provided suggestions for how to enhance a community vibe for the location.

Those in support of a revitalised location noted that redevelopment needs to be on the basis of combined commercial and community benefit, while a modern location would be desired, they did not want this to come at the cost of a community feel.

There were requests to provide open, community-focused spaces where people can gather and spend time, outside of visiting the shops and services available, spaces to support community events (i.e. markets), and a space that was of high quality, to enhance the community’s experience.

Suggestions to incorporate community facilities include:

- A youth hub
- Community space
- Library
- A bag exchange
- Repair café (community led meet at local café where people can bring bikes and other items for repair – similar to a men’s shed)
- Community rooms for hire.

Safety

When considering community safety within a new development there were a range of views expressed regarding the development of a basement carpark including:

- Basement carparks feel less safe and draw antisocial behaviour
- Security is required to ensure basement carparks are safe

The following elements were raised to ensure safety more broadly across the shopping precinct:

- Open space
- Low noise
- Safe toilet facilities
- Good lighting.

Area for kids

The existing children’s playground was a feature of much of the feedback received. While people acknowledged that the current playground was not in a clean or safe condition and was the “saddest playground ever”, it was noted that it was used by parents, grandparents, and carers as a place to bring children to decompress when they needed to run errands (to the post office) or do some grocery shopping (at Woolworths).

The majority of feedback called for a new playground or space dedicated to children to replace the existing playground. Features people asked for included:

- A safe play area
- A location away from roads
- Wooden / natural features
- Close to spaces where people can gather
- Pram storage
- Located close to toilets.



Comparative locations

Locations identified as examples of successful revitalisations of existing local shopping precincts included:

- Stocklands Balgowlah (Sydney)
- Duffy shops
- Ainslie shops
- Cook shops
- Dickson shops
- Garema Place
- Curtin shops
- Dickson laneways
- Verity Lane
- Jamison
- Proposed development in Whitlam.

Sustainability

There were question raised around Woolworth's definition of a sustainable design with feedback seeking:

- Solar panels on roofs
- Recycling centre
- 6-star rating for development
- Solar community batteries.

Loading dock

Feedback requested that the supermarket loading dock not be located on Springvale Drive as this currently disrupts the residential properties along the street in the early hours of weekday mornings. This was supplemented by a request for careful consideration around where the loading dock is located as it is not the trucks but the forklift that disrupts residents each morning.



5. Conclusion

Despite different priorities amongst community members there was majority support for the expansion of the current Woolworths Metro in Hawker to a larger store with greater offering.

Through analysis of feedback from all engagement activities there is also majority support for Woolworths' proposal to expand the shopping precinct onto the existing open-air carpark and introduce new complementary stores.

Through this engagement clear topics of priority were raised across community groups, these were:

- Specific suggestions on what should be included in the design of a revitalised Hawker shopping precinct
- Location of the Woolworths loading dock
- Parking
- Area dedicated to children
- Other business and services available at the location
- Including community offerings
- The size and operation of Woolworths Hawker
- Safety
- Sustainability
- Meeting expectations in line with comparative locations.

Community members who participated in engagement activities felt strongly that these topics should be considered by Woolworths in planning for the acquisition of any land and progress of any development.

