

# 2025-26 Budget Proposal – ACT Government

## Shade Sail – Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Park

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*We are seeking a funding allocation in the capital works program, for a **shade sail** to be installed over the playground equipment in the **Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Park in Chapman***

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### Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Park

Our local park is situated along Bertel Crescent, Chapman, Weston Creek bordered by residential properties, and also has pedestrian and cycling access from Brough Place and Boucicault Place. It is within walking distance of Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, Chapman Primary School and the local Chapman shops.

We have some remnants of the grassy woodland including a 200-year-old Blakely's Gum.

After indigenous occupation the park was part of Cooleman Farm sheep property and when the suburb was developed in the early 70's, became a local park.

For many years the park remained underutilised and just had a children's play area and some established trees. More recently due to the effort of local residents, the park has been rejuvenated, and through various placemaking initiatives is now a local hub for community interactions including children's play, bike riding, local events and informal gatherings.



## **The need for a shade sail**

We have collected approximately 120 signatures so far from local residents in support of a shade sail. These signatures were collected at the Carols in Park community event in December 2024 and can be provided on request.

With the support from the ACT Government our own fundraising and many hours of community volunteer work, we have upgraded our park over the last three years, with plantings, picnic tables, bike track, landscaping and some art work.

Pleasingly we are now seeing increased usage in the park especially from young families and their children who are moving into the area. We have observed that Chapman is undergoing generational renewal with more young families moving into the suburb.

One of the concerns that keeps getting raised by local residents is the need for shade over the playground.

## **Benefits of a shade sail**

There is a plethora of research that points to the benefits of shade over play equipment and especially as Canberra's temperature is warming. Benefits include extending the play time for children, shielding the equipment against bad weather, protection from harmful UV rays and providing a cool space for play.

We recognise the importance of play in enriching the lives of Canberrans of all ages and creating a healthy, connected, vibrant and sustainable place to live.

We support and have incorporated into the upgrading of our park, the ACT Government Play Space Strategy objectives which seeks to ensure an equitable, inclusive, diverse, safe and engaging mix of play opportunities across Canberra:

1. Develop playgrounds for better health, wellbeing and connectedness
2. Keep playgrounds safe and welcoming
3. Make playgrounds for everyone
4. Improve the quality and diversity of play experience
5. Foster sustainable playgrounds that are resilient to a changing climate
6. Partner with community to make better playgrounds.



## Rebalancing local infrastructure investment

At the time of the 2021 Census, Weston Creek had a population of 24,630 and Molonglo Valley, 11,435. We also acknowledge that looking into future infrastructure needs, Molonglo Valley has a much higher growth rate (5.3%) than Weston Creek (0.1%)<sup>1</sup>.

An audit undertaken by Playgrounds of Canberra<sup>2</sup> in 2020/2021 indicates:

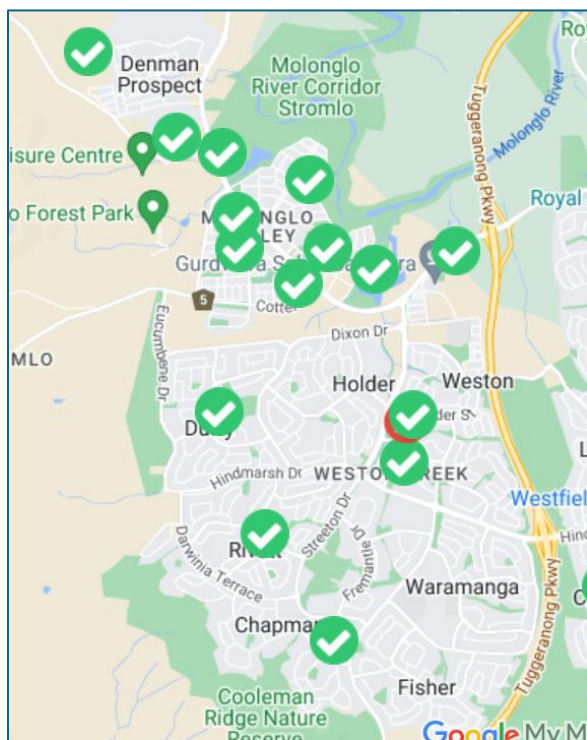
- 5 parks in Weston Creek had shade sails and
- 10 parks in Molonglo Valley had shade sails.

The suburb of Chapman which has 2,867 people and 853 families<sup>3</sup> has one park with a shade sail, near the Chapman oval. There is also a shade sail within the Chapman Primary School however this is off limits to the general public.

In summary, using the 2021 ABS data and the 2020/21 playground audit, the ratio of shade sails to population indicates inequities between the growth area of Molonglo Valley and older established suburbs in adjoining Weston Creek.

- Weston Creek – 1 shade sail to 4,926 people
- Chapman – 1 shade sail to 2,867 people
- Molonglo Valley – 1 shade sail to 1,143 people

The green ticks on the map below indicate parks that have shade sails



Source: [Playgrounds of Canberra](#)

<sup>1</sup> ACT Government - ACT Population Projections 2022 to 2060

<sup>2</sup> [Shade Sail Playgrounds ACT - Google My Maps](#)

<sup>3</sup> ABS 2021

## About the Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Committee

The Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Park Committee comprises six local residents and we have up to 15 local residents that support our monthly park maintenance. We are part of the Southern Catchment Landcare Group.

Over the last two years the Cooleman Farm Neighbourhood Park Committee has:

- sought local residents' views about what they want to see in the park;
- secured funding through grants and our own fundraising, to allow landscaping, a bike track and seating to be built;
- supported social interactions with the community and local business engagement through events and opportunities to congregate including a recent Carols in the Park which attracted over 300 local residents;
- developed a relationship with the local primary school including regular visits to the park from the Year 3 Enviro Squad;
- created a local place where residents of all ages feel welcome; and
- promoted environmental sustainability through drought tolerant and shade plantings.

Further information can be found at our Facebook Page with the link below:



## Contact for this submission

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We would be happy to speak further to this submission and welcome a visit to the park.

