

ACT Planning Authority

January 1996

**SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
RETAIL CHANGES IN THE ACT
FINAL REPORT**

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PREFACE

This report was prepared by The Planning Team, in consultation with the ACT Planning Authority and in response to a brief from the Planning Authority to undertake a social impact assessment of retail changes in the ACT. The report includes an assessment of the likely impacts on residents of retail changes affecting local centres, and proposes an appropriate methodology for undertaking the social impact assessment of retail changes. The conclusions and recommendations in the report are informed by the findings of consultation with community groups, government and non-government agencies, residents, and members of the business community. The consultants have analysed the results of the consultation, and provided an independent assessment of impacts.

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January 1996

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Planning Team would like to thank those members of community groups, government and non-government agencies, business groups, primary schools, and private individuals who generously contributed their time, knowledge, and views to this study. We would also like to thank the children who drew maps of their local neighbourhoods, and kindly donated them to us.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Overview of Study

The focus of the study was on the impact of retail changes on residents, as distinct from the impacts on business groups. It was assumed that most residents have adequate resources and transport and therefore can and do choose where to shop; for many of these people the changes have increased their choice of shopping hours and venues. It was also assumed that other residents with few resources and/or no private transport are likely to depend on their local centre and could be most affected by local centre closures which have been increasing. This led to a focus on these groups and how they would be affected if their local centre closed.

The brief for this study therefore was to identify the likely impacts on residents of local centre closures, and to develop a methodology for social impact assessment of retail changes. In the process of the study, the following questions were to be addressed:

1. What is the importance of local centres to local residents?
2. What would happen to consumer access if low performing centres identified by the IBECON report were to close?
3. What are the factors that make a local centre successful or vulnerable?
4. Which local centres are crucial for resident accessibility?
5. What strategy should be adopted for future retail planning, and what should be the social criteria for retail planning decisions?

The study focussed on community consultation, primarily through agencies providing services to those residents with inadequate resources and transport options. The extent of consultation was limited due to constrained resources and timing. However, consultation with business groups, selected community groups and agencies, and independent surveys all corroborated the findings of the community consultation. Three primary schools participated in a neighbourhood mapping exercise, which highlighted the importance of local centres to young people. Other sources of information included data prepared by the ACT Planning Authority, the report of a shopper survey provided by the Canberra Property Owners Association, and the IBECON report prepared for the ACT Planning Authority early in 1995.

The assumption that local centres are important to residents was tested through the consultations. The study clearly established the various roles of the local centre, and its importance to a range of groups within the community. The study then proceeded to establish likely social impacts on residents due to retail and demographic changes, and in particular identified those groups in the community most affected by the loss of local centres.

Analysis of ACT Planning Authority data did not reveal any universal correlations between local centre performance and socioeconomic or locational characteristics. In assessing the local traders' capacity to adapt to higher levels of competition such as growth of competitors' retail floor space and extension of trading hours at larger centres, a number of factors were identified. These factors included physical location and accessibility, characteristics of the population within the catchment, design (ie. safety and appearance), maintenance levels, mix of uses, customer service, management and marketing, and financial considerations (ie. rents,

penalty rates, electricity tariffs). The study concluded that those local centres most important to retain are the ones with a relatively high proportion of community members who currently depend on the local centre for their daily needs.

Criteria for assessment of the social impacts of retail change have been identified, and a methodology proposed for assessing the social impacts of retail changes. A number of possible measures for minimising social impacts of retail changes have also been identified for consideration when developing an integrated retail strategy.

In short, this study identifies who is affected by retail change, and demonstrates how they may be affected. The study does not attempt to quantify these effects. Further studies would be needed to establish the relative impacts of change on a centre by centre basis.

B. Study Conclusions

B.1 Role and Importance of Local Centres

Role of local centres

Overall, the local centre plays several important roles for local residents, to varying degrees. Access is the key to local centres performing these roles:

- economic role - particularly for convenience retailing
- social role - particularly as an informal meeting place
- cultural role - particularly providing community focus and sense of belonging
- transport role - enabling residents to reduce dependence on private or public transport.

Particular goods and services which the community needs to access at local centres are:

- food items, especially a supermarket, and including restaurants and take-aways
- pharmaceutical services, postal services, news services, banking services (eg EFTPOS) and medical services.

Importance of local centres

The local centre is important to the community generally, but in particular to "special need" groups, identified in the consultations as:

- those least mobile, especially frail aged persons, young children and people without cars
- those less mobile and often home in the day especially aged persons, people with disabilities and people at home with young children
- those with least resources especially low income earners, single parent families, unemployed people
- those closest to local centres especially residents of nearby medium-density housing and nearby renters.

In addition, local centres were found to be important to:

- people involved in the retail trade, especially shop owners and employees
- charity and non-profit organisations supported by local centre operators.

It is these groups who would be most affected if vulnerable centres were to close.

B.2 Factors Affecting Viability of Local Centres

The following factors were considered to be most relevant to an assessment of viability of local centres:

Socio-economic factors

- size of population in catchment
- number of comparatively disadvantaged households
- number of children in the 0-14 age group
- number of people aged 65+
- number of households with no cars
- number of households in government housing
- age of suburb (and hence stage in life cycle of residents)
- employment levels in and adjacent to suburb

Location factors

- location in relation to other centres/supermarkets
- location in relation to major through roads

Centre characteristics

- size of centre
- tenure characteristics
- adaptability of retailers to market demands and changing community needs
- price of goods at centre
- quality of goods at centre
- convenience of access to centre
- appearance of centre
- comfort of centre
- social amenity of centre
- associated uses collocated at centre
- level and quality (including friendliness) of service

In addition to the above, the following specific factors contribute to the vulnerability of a centre:

- changing demographic trends, shopping behaviour, and retail practices
- level of competition including relative attractiveness of competing centres in terms of floor area, trading hours, retail strategies of competitors, other types of competition
- financial considerations including bank finance policies, rents, unequal electricity tariffs and unequal penalty rates.

Key measurable characteristics of most vulnerable centres were identified as:

- those with independent retailers
- those which rely on supermarkets only
- centres located where there is a wide choice of other centres
- those in "middle aged" suburbs
- small local centres located within the suburb with little passing traffic.

B.3 Likely Social Impacts of Retail Changes

Retail changes at the local level are likely to affect those groups who rely most on local centres, as well as the general community. These "special needs" groups were outlined in Section B.1.

Impacts on the community of retail changes at the local level include:

- cultural effects including erosion of community structure and loss of community focus and identity
- social effects including increased isolation, reduced social opportunities and increased social disadvantage
- health, safety and dependency effects including increased dependence on transport and community services, increased health problems for some aged persons associated with reduced access to fresh food and reduced incentives for walking regularly, increased stress from traffic and parking congestion, decreased safety of access
- transportation effects including increased walking and general travel distances, increased travel cost, increased dependence on public and private transport
- economic effects including loss of important part of economy, loss of livelihoods, increased unemployment, loss in property values
- consumer effects including reduced consumer choice and convenience, increased prices
- government budget effects including increased budget requirements for service and infrastructure providers, loss of government revenue through decreased property values.

These effects include both direct and indirect social impacts. In addition to these effects, retail change has had positive effects for members of the community who are mobile and well-resourced through increased choice of shopping hours and venues.

C. Recommended Strategy

C.1 Consultation

When preparing an overarching strategy which incorporates measures to minimise social impacts of retail changes, it is strongly recommended that further consultations with the community be undertaken. These consultations should be based on an holistic approach to planning for the future of individual suburbs and the diverse needs of communities within those suburbs.

C.2 Measures to Consider for Integrated Strategy

Consultations undertaken for this study suggest that there is only limited support for the restriction of trading hours, and that group and town centres are well regarded by the general community and may be used occasionally by many of the groups who rely heavily on local centres. For people with cars or for adjacent residents, group centres may be perceived as "local" centres, and fulfil the same roles as local centres. However, local centres particularly serve the needs of people with fewer options, and provide an essential support function which enables those members of the community to retain their independence.

The following measures could form part of a strategy to encourage the revival of crucial local centres and minimise the social impacts of retail changes. To be effective, these measures require a whole of government approach, and close cooperation with the retail industry.

The following positive measures to prevent closure, or minimise the social impacts of retail changes, follow from an analysis of the factors which appear to contribute to success or vulnerability of local centres:

- Improve relative accessibility of local centres
- Increase population in catchment area
- Facilitate broadening of services and mix of uses (eg. through lease purpose clauses)
- Programs to strengthen management and marketing skills
- Improve design ie. safety and appearance
- Discourage continued vacancies (eg by temporary uses)
- Ensure fair market practices through regulation and Government policy.

Community consultation addressed the possibility of restricting growth of larger centres, and participants could see no value in increasing floor space there. However, members of the small business community strongly supported restrictions on the further growth of town centres.

Additional measures to ameliorate the social impacts of closure could include:

- facilitating mixed use in suburbs without local centres (eg. 'corner shop' attached to a residence)
- facilitating transport, home delivery and support services.

Members of the business community suggested that possible measures to facilitate redevelopment of closed local centres would, in addition to the above, help to minimise the impacts on local property owners. These impacts are acknowledged to have significant flow-on social impacts. These suggested measures include:

- consideration to waiving of betterment for redevelopment which meets certain objectives (eg. retains local convenience retail function/community meeting place)
- facilitation of lease variations for change of use
- more flexible lease purpose clauses to simplify changes in use.

C.3 Social Impact Assessment Criteria

Based on the analysis of the consultations and ACT Planning Authority data, a set of four social impact assessment criteria was developed, which appears to encompass the full range of issues recorded.

The social impact assessment criteria are summarised in the Table below.

Criteria	Impacts on	Impacts for
ACCESS EFFECTS	access to goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to social opportunities and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
CULTURAL EFFECTS	community structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	community focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	way of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community family businesses
	community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS	vehicular, pedestrian and cycling traffic flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers pedestrians cyclists
	traffic and parking congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers general community
	accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers families of accident victims general community
	pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general community
	energy use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general community
	need for different bus routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bus passengers
	need for different bus timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bus passengers
ECONOMIC EFFECTS	employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth local residents small business people
	small business opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new businesses
	commercial property market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local centre property owners and tenants
	residential property market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> surrounding residential property owners and tenants
	viability of other centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traders at other centres
	planned hierarchy of commercial centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affects overall planning principles, requiring strategic overview of provision of services, location of housing, employment etc.

Cultural effects are the most difficult to quantify in a meaningful way and may be more amenable to assessment through consultation.

Based on these criteria, a series of possible measures is proposed to enable quantification in the course of conducting a social impact assessment of proposed retail change. The criteria have been used in developing the following methodology.

C.4 Social Impact Assessment Methodology

It is recommended that multi-criteria analysis be applied to proposals involving a major expansion in town centres or group centres¹, with consequent likely major impacts on existing retail provision. A major proposal is considered to be one where the economic impacts may result in significant changes to the retail hierarchy. It is further recommended that the impact display table technique be applied to proposals involving changes likely to have impacts only in the local area. The criteria and measures outlined below should be used as the basis for assessing the social impacts of retail changes.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS		MEASURES
ACCESS TO: goods, services, public transport, social opportunities and supports, facilities	INDICATOR OF		ACCESS IMPACTS:
	level of fast access to a range of goods, services etc. normally available at the local level within the district concerned	1.1	population outside walking distance (500m) of local or group centre ²
	likely increases in time and therefore less convenience, and possibly reduced access if time is a constraint	1.2	time taken to walk to alternative centres to maximum walking distance ³ (750m)
	likely increases in cost and therefore possibly reduced access if cost is a constraint	1.3	proportion of people outside walking distance who do not own a car
	major roads to be crossed and so likely reduction in access where safety is a constraint	1.4	people within walking distance of a centre, but outside the suburb in which the centre is located <i>consider location of pedestrian crossings and underpasses</i>
ACCESS FOR: people with reduced mobility,	elderly people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.1	no. of aged outside walking distance (ie 400m) of nearest centre ⁴
people who must walk, people who can walk or cycle, people who can use a bus	people without cars who may be affected by reductions in access	2.2	no. of households without cars outside walking distance of nearest centre
	people with low incomes who may be affected by reductions in access	2.3	no. of low income households outside walking distance of nearest centre
	young people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.4	no. of 5-12 year olds outside walking distance of nearest centre
	people with disabilities who may be affected by reductions in access	2.5	no. of people with disabilities outside walking distance of nearest centre
CULTURAL EFFECTS:			CULTURAL IMPACTS
community structure, focus, identity, sense of belonging, health/cohesion, way of life	existing community focus and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.1	no. of alternative meeting places (which are a focus for activity, with a notice board facility) in areas losing local centre
	health/cohesion of community and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.2	NOT DETERMINED (possibly crime rates in areas with vacant local centres)
	low level of private space, thus increased reliance on external facilities for informal meeting places, and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.3	no. of flats in areas losing local centres

¹ What constitutes a major increase will need to be quantified in order to provide a trigger for social impact assessment.

² ACT Planning Authority (1995), "Draft Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities".

³ South Australian Urban Land Trust (1988), *Human Services Planning Kit*.

⁴ ACT Planning Authority (1995), "Draft Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities".

CRITERIA	INDICATOR OF:		MEASURES
	existing community structure - the more the number of households without internal support the more vulnerable to reduced services	3.4	no. of households with single parent families or single person households in areas losing local centres
	existing community identity and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.5	no. of community groups in area losing local centre eg P&C, residents groups, preschool parents groups, land care groups etc
TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS:			TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS
traffic flows, pollution, safety, energy use, public transport	added stresses for travellers through increased traffic and parking congestion	4.1	increase in traffic volumes and increased parking demand
	reduced quality of life, health	4.2	likely decrease in visibility levels
	reduced quality of life, health	4.3	likely increase in accidents
	reduced quality of life	4.4	increased travel time
	increased cost to public and private purse, of additional bus routes, bus and taxi usage, consequent potential loss in other services	4.5	increased no. of bus routes/extra services including increased concessions and increased taxi vouchers
ECONOMIC EFFECTS			ECONOMIC IMPACTS
employment, small business opportunities, commercial property market, residential property market, viability of other centres, planned hierarchy of commercial centres	social effects on community	5.1	likely increase in unemployment of people employed in local centres
	possible downgrading of local area, in extreme cases resulting in ghettos, decrease in amenity of area	5.2	likely decrease in property values
	affects livelihood of a significant part of community	5.3	no. of centres likely to close
	affects overall planning principles - requiring strategic overview of provision of services, location of housing, employment etc	5.4	likely remaining distribution of centres long term availability of sites for community and commercial purposes

The relative importance of the criteria and the measures by which they may be assessed cannot be fully determined without information derived from two important sources:

- shopper and household surveys to determine where people shop now, and why, and who relies on local centres, and what for; and
- community consultations to elicit community weighted values in relation to the criteria and measures developed.

These surveys and consultations should be carried out when a major proposal for retail change is being considered. The definition of significant change should be identified during development of the integrated retail strategy, to provide a trigger for such assessment.

C.5 Prioritising Centres to Retain

The centres which are most important to retain are those centres with the highest relative levels of "special need" groups who currently depend on local goods and services. It is likely that it will not be possible to save some centres, and therefore those centres with reasonable prospects of recovery should be targeted.

Three factors are critical in determining which local centres are most important to retain in order to minimise social impacts of local centre closure. These are

1. the relative location of other centres
2. centres with the highest proportion of "special need" groups in their area
3. the likelihood of the centre surviving beyond the next 12 months given irreversible trends in retail demand and shopping patterns.

The Purdon Associates survey⁵ indicated that between 10% and 30% of local centre consumers walk to their local shops, with the majority of others driving. Nevertheless, walking distance is very significant for those members of the population who have limited transport options.

Therefore, the centres which are most important to retain are those with the highest relative levels of "special need" resident groups within walking distance, where no other centre is available to those groups within reasonable walking distance (which will vary depending on the group concerned). "Special need" groups were defined in Section B.1.

Of the centres with these characteristics, the ones which are most important to target are those with a reasonable chance of surviving in the current retail climate. The vulnerability of centres was identified during discussions with business groups, and a list of more and less vulnerable centres developed (refer Appendix 2H). Of these, the centres categorised as more vulnerable, but likely to continue trading beyond 12 months, and those which are less vulnerable represent the set from which the "highest priority for action" should be selected.

C.6 Further Studies

Further studies may be needed to complete the work begun by this study. These could include:

- Catchment analysis to determine the true catchment boundaries for local centres (to provide an accurate base for ACT Planning Authority data analysis)
- Home based survey of local residents to determine where they shop and why
- Wider consultation to validate the study's findings, confirm the proposed social impact assessment criteria, and establish weightings for multi-criteria analysis
- Test the useability of the measures through full case studies of selected proposals for retail change, applying the proposed Social Impact Assessment methodology
- Collection of client data from non-government organisations representing groups for whom ABS data is unavailable (eg. people who are frail and ageing, or who have various disabilities) to determine probable numbers and geographic distribution
- Assessment of the relative impacts of retail changes comparing selected local centres
- Testing the relationship between changes in retail provision at the group and town centre level and effects on local centres
- Identification of those local centres where urgent action is required to ensure that some retail services are provided for local residents with high dependence on local services
- Cost estimates for upgrading local centres where appropriate.

⁵ Purdon Associates Pty Ltd (11 December 1995), "Neighbourhood Retail Centres Survey - Canberra," Report to Canberra Property Owners Association

D. Report Outline

This report contains 7 sections:

Section 1 introduces the study, outlining the purpose of the study, the background to the study and provides an overview of the study process.

Section 2 includes an analysis of consultation which covers surveys of government and non-government agencies and community groups, the community focus groups, small business groups, shopper surveys undertaken by Purdon Associates Pty Limited and a series of conclusions drawn from the results.

Section 3 is an overview of the results of data analysis by ACTPA.

Section 4 analyses a local area mapping exercise by children in government primary schools.

Section 5 develops a methodology for the social impact assessment of retail change in the ACT.

Section 6 contains the study conclusions, which are summarised in this Executive Summary.

Section 7 contains the study recommendations, which are summarised in this Executive Summary.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

The brief for this study was to identify and evaluate the social impact of changes to retailing particularly the impacts on accessibility for residents of the ACT.

The primary purpose of the study was to develop a social impact assessment methodology to be used by the ACT Planning Authority when assessing future retail proposals.

The study was intended to perform a number of important functions in the course of developing a suitable methodology. Through consultation with a range of stakeholders, it was intended to answer a series of key questions concerning:

- the role and importance of local centres
- effects upon consumer access if vulnerable local centres were to close
- factors which make a local centre successful or vulnerable
- which local centres are crucial to retain for accessibility.

Finally, the study was intended to provide input to the development of a retail options paper by the ACT Planning Authority, together with inputs from several related studies. In order to achieve this, the study needed to address ways of minimising social impacts through possible policy options and active measures.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Original planning principles

From the outset, Canberra's planning philosophy has been based upon the suburban unit, conceived as the basic building block of the town structure. These neighbourhood sized suburban units, each with a local school and shops within walking distance of all residents, accessible via a separate pedestrian/cycle system, embody the principles of the Garden City movement. Neighbourhood-sized suburbs were seen as being particularly relevant to Canberra in view of the dominance of families with young children in Canberra's rapid growth phase (during the 1960s and 70s).

1.2.2 Territory Plan

Retail planning principles and policies are contained in the Territory Plan, gazetted 14 September 1993. The Territory Plan provides for a retail structure consisting of a hierarchy of Civic, town, group and local centres in order to offer residents convenient and equitable access to goods, services and facilities.

Relevant policies and land use objectives

Part A of the Territory Plan reaffirms the importance of the suburban unit:

The suburban unit will continue to be the basic building block of the town structure, consisting of a legible road hierarchy of distributor, collector and local access roads; local facilities in a generally accessible location (including a primary school, local

shops, and appropriate non-retail commercial and community facilities and neighbourhood playing field); an off-road movement system to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists; and accessible public transport. (A2 Planning Principles and Policies, Metropolitan Structure 2.5)

The objectives of the Commercial 'D' (Local Centres) Land Use Policies are stated to be:

- (a) to provide a viable and convenient focus for shopping, community and business services to meet the daily needs of the local population*
- (b) to provide opportunities for business investment and local employment*
- (c) to retain a mix of land uses appropriate for this level in the hierarchy of centres*
- (d) to retain or improve the environmental amenity and urban design of the centres.*

1.2.3 Social changes

Since the period of the 1960s and 1970s when most local centres were developed, there have been significant social changes. These changes include:

- ageing of the population (leading to reduced household sizes as children leave home)
- rising proportion of one- and two-person households (fewer marriages, fewer couples having children)
- rising proportion of single-parent families
- increased car usage
- increased workforce participation by women (leading to changes in shopping patterns).

The early dominance of families with young children has been replaced in the older suburbs with a growing proportion of one- and two-person households of older people. Whereas the newer suburbs continue to attract a large proportion of families with young children, other suburbs show a range of household types and sizes, as people pass through the various stages of the life cycle and as those suburbs are redeveloped, attracting different household types.

In view of the social changes which have occurred since the original planning of Canberra, it is appropriate to review the relevance of the original neighbourhood concept.

1.2.4 Changes to retailing and the retail environment

Significant retail changes have been occurring throughout Australia which have contributed to a decline of local centres, both in the ACT and elsewhere. These include:

- extension of major supermarket range into fresh groceries, meats, delicatessens, and in some cases bakeries and seafoods
- inclusion of entertainment centres (cinemas, food courts, video arcades) in large malls
- inclusion of convenience shopping at petrol stations
- expansion of bulk retailing
- more restaurants and fast food outlets as more people eat out.

Within the ACT, a number of other significant changes have occurred which have impacted on local centres. These include:

- extended trading hours (resulting in increased turnover on average by major supermarkets)⁶

⁶ IBECON Pty Ltd, ACT Retail Study, March 1995

- closure of some local primary schools
- closure of many baby health clinics
- introduction of "Canberra Times Direct" newspaper delivery service
- rationalisation by the Federal Government of pharmacies
- rationalisation of banking and post office services.

Recently, a number of local centre supermarkets have closed, threatening the viability of the remaining shops and services located at those centres. There have been:

- four closures in Belconnen
- four closures in Tuggeranong
- five closures in Woden/Weston Creek.

1.2.5 IBECON Report

A review of commercial centres was undertaken for the ACT Planning Authority in early 1995 by IBECON Pty Ltd. The purpose of the study was to test the viability of the local and group structure in South Tuggeranong and to assess the impact of expansion of town centres on the viability of all group and local centres in Canberra-Queanbeyan.

The review analysed the amount of retail floorspace which could be provided to meet the retail expenditure of Canberra's residents and workers. The report concluded that although the region currently has an oversupply in the bulk retail categories, it is approximately in balance in all other categories of shops. Population and growth in per capita spending are expected to result in floorspace deficits in the near future, especially in the outer suburbs.

The study also concluded that Canberra's retail structure is skewed compared with other Australian cities, with a relatively high provision of town centres, a relatively low provision of group centres, and an absence of "district centres". This is considered to result in poor accessibility to major supermarkets, given the relatively difficult access to town centres for frequent trips.

1.2.6 Retail Trading Hours Review

In parallel with this study, a separate review of trading hours in the ACT was in progress. The terms of reference for the Review were to consider:

1. the economic and social impact of existing trading hours on consumers (both local and major shops); on shop owners/lessees; and on the ACT economy;
2. the social and economic role of local centres, and local area planning;
3. the extent to which the existing trading hours regime and other factors affect the viability of small suburban and group shopping centres;
4. the viability of developing a special tourism zone in Civic;
5. any other issues relevant to trading hours arrangements.

The report from the Review was completed in December 1995. This study was undertaken in liaison with the Review team and addresses the issue of the social (and economic) role of local centres, and to a certain extent, the social impact of trading hours on consumers and shop owners and lessees.

Extracts of submissions to the Trading Hours Review addressing social impact issues were provided to this study. A summary of the pertinent issues raised in the submissions is provided in Appendix 1A to this report. All the issues raised were also raised in subsequent consultations undertaken as part of this study. The results of these consultations are summarised in Section 2 of this report.

1.3 Study Process

The study commenced in the last week of October and was completed in the second week of December. The very short time available for the study influenced the methodology. The study comprised three main components: data analysis, consultation, and development of a methodology for assessing the social impact of retail change. In addition, a local area mapping exercise with government primary school children was undertaken.

1.3.1 Data analysis

Data on local centres which was analysed by ACTPA formed the primary source of data for this study. Section 3 summarises the relevant results of the analysis by ACTPA. The analysis addresses socio-economic characteristics of suburbs, and the physical characteristics of centres located in those suburbs. These characteristics were compared for local centres in three categories: low performance, average performance and high performance. Other data used to inform this study included results of a survey of shoppers conducted by the ACT Department of Urban Services in three local centres in 1994 (see Section 2.8.2), and a shopper survey in a number of local centres conducted by Purdon Associates Pty Ltd for the Canberra Property Owners Association (see Section 2.8.1).

1.3.2 Consultation process

The focus of the study was on the impact of retail changes on residents, as distinct from the impacts on business groups. These impacts were to be determined through consultation with a broad range of government and non-government agencies, business groups and community groups and individuals. The extent of consultation was limited due to constrained resources and timing. In particular, the time frame for consultation was not only very short, but also was set at a time of year (November) when many agencies and individuals were unavailable to participate. These limitations meant that a number of assumptions had to be made in order to facilitate worthwhile consultation with the community.

It was assumed that most residents have adequate resources and transport and therefore can and do choose where to shop. It was also assumed that other residents with few resources and/or no private transport are likely to depend on their local centre. This led to a focus on these groups and how they would be affected if their local centre closed.

Thus the study focussed primarily on consultation with agencies providing services to those residents with inadequate resources and transport options. The aim was to reach those groups most likely to be dependent on local centres through a series of focus group meetings. Additional consultation with business groups, selected community groups and agencies, and independent surveys all corroborated the findings of this community consultation.

Government and non-government agencies were consulted to develop a preliminary understanding of the following:

- the role of local centres in the community
- which groups in the community may be adversely affected by recent changes to retailing
- how those groups may be affected
- the most significant consequences of recent changes
- what could happen to groups in the community if vulnerable centres were to close, and
- which community groups should be consulted to find out more about the social impacts of recent and possible future retail changes.

A series of focus groups with representatives from community groups, community based service agencies and members of the general community were held in order to determine community views regarding:

- the importance of local centres to local residents
- the factors which make a local centre attractive or unattractive,

and to canvas community views regarding a number of retail change options, to help determine:

- what would happen to consumers if the option considered were to result in closure of, or reduction in, services at the local level
- what should be included in a future retail strategy to minimise social impacts
- the social factors planners need to take into account when making decisions about retail changes.

Business groups were consulted to determine, from the business perspective:

- the factors contributing to the importance of local centres in the community
- what role a local centre plays in the community
- factors contributing to the success or vulnerability of a local centre
- the social impacts of retail change on the small business owner and employee.

A meeting with independent retailers resulted in a better understanding of:

- effects on vulnerability of local centres
- factors in success of local centres
- groups who may be affected by closure
- measures to save local shops or come to terms with closure.

In summary, consultation helped to develop an understanding of:

- the importance of local centres to local residents,
- the effects on the community if vulnerable centres close,
- the critical factors in determining what makes a local centre successful or vulnerable, and
- essential elements of a strategy for future retail planning.

1.3.3 Mapping exercise

In parallel with the consultation component of the study, government primary schools were contacted and asked to undertake a mapping exercise with their year 6 students. The purpose of the mapping exercise was to determine how younger people perceive their local area, and whether the local centre features in their concept of their local area. Three schools were able to respond in the short time available, and the results are reported on in Section 4 of this report.

1.3.4 Development of a methodology for social impact assessment of retail change

A methodology for social impact assessment of retail change was developed with reference to techniques utilised in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. Appendix 5A includes an overview of approaches and review of techniques used elsewhere. The methodologies selected were tested through the development of a list of criteria and measures based on the results of the consultation outlined in Section 2 of this report. Section 5 provides an outline of the selected methodologies.

2. ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION

2.1 Comparison of Consultation Findings

Various groups were consulted to obtain information about the social impacts of retail changes: community groups and agencies (government and non-government), focus groups of residents, and business groups. The core findings of the consultation are summarised in Tables 2.1-2.6 below, and relate to:

1. Role of Local Centres
2. Groups Adversely Affected by Closures
3. Likely Social Impacts of Closures
4. Factors Contributing to Success of Local Centres
5. Factors Contributing to Vulnerability of Local Centres
6. Possible Measures to Save Local Centres

Comparison of the findings shows that each group consulted had a slightly different focus but there is a significant degree of overlap in their responses. All groups agreed that local centres are important to residents, and that they play a very important role for certain groups in the community who rely upon them for their daily needs.

Table 2.1 Role of Local Centres

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<i>Retail/service role</i>	<i>Economic role</i>	<i>Economic role</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> convenient shopping essential shopping for some groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> convenient supplier of goods and services needed on a daily basis by general community and less mobile individuals in offering low commercial rents which enable small businesses to operate as a source of livelihood for small businesses as a source of employment for local youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> convenience retailing quality daily food needs (eg. bread)
<i>Social role</i>	<i>Social role</i>	<i>Social role</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community focus informal meeting place personal relationships with shopkeepers support for continued independence of older people support for reintegration of marginal groups into the community monitoring role for older people and chronically ill people place where children can safely be sent for small purchases place for fundraising information distribution point for local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as a source of social opportunities as an informal meeting place as the hub of local social and community networks support for people trying to maintain their independence support for people raising children support for people suffering from an illness or recovering from illness or surgery support for local primary school support for medical practitioners support for other nearby services and facilities in retaining a high level of personal customer service in terms of health and fitness: encouraging people and teaching children to walk in terms of health and nutrition: supplying fresh food to people who shop daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> services for aged and infirm eg. medical and social providing social support network
<i>Cultural role</i>	<i>Cultural role</i>	<i>Cultural role</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> source of community identity source of sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for a range of household types and social mixes providing a local community focus providing a source of identity for the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> important part of community structure sense of community feeling part of fabric of community

Table 2.1 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a sense of community ownership and sense of belonging to a place preserving a way of life for family businesses and community members 	
<i>Transport role</i>	<i>Transport role</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public transport hub destination point for pedestrians and cyclists enables residents to reduce their dependence on private or public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> point of access to the public transport system reducing the cost of travel to goods and services 	
	<i>Ecological sustainability role</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing use of motorised transport reducing energy use 	

Table 2.2 Groups Adversely Affected by Closures

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<i>Those least mobile</i>	<i>Those least mobile</i>	<i>Those least mobile</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frail aged persons people without transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frail aged persons people without transport young children people with infrequent use of cars people with poor public transport housebound people people who require home delivery service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ageing people who can't afford to travel to another centre people without transport school children
<i>Those less mobile and often home in the day</i>	<i>Those less mobile and often home in the day</i>	<i>Those less mobile and often home in the day</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aged persons people with disabilities carers mothers/parents at home with young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aged persons (a growing population) people with disabilities people at home in the day with young children people not in the paid workforce people recovering from illness or surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ageing people people with disabilities
<i>Those with least resources</i>	<i>Those with least resources</i>	<i>Those with least resources</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disadvantaged residents low income groups unemployed people single parents people of non-English speaking background Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders migrants youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low income groups single parent families single income families unemployed people people receiving pensions and welfare assistance people of non-English speaking background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low income earners single parents charity and non-profit organisations (local businesses support these strongly)
<i>People involved in the retail trade</i>	<i>People involved in the retail trade</i>	<i>People involved in the retail trade</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small business owners families of small business owners employees of small business owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small business owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wholesalers and employees of wholesalers supplying the retailers other shop owners in the centre youth - increasing unemployment

Table 2.2 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local centre property owners 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth workers - forced to work unreasonable hours, difficult to access employment opportunities shop owners and employees - loss of livelihood and therefore extreme psychological and family effects
<i>Those people closest to local centres</i>	<i>Those people closest to local centres</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local office workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residents of nearby medium-density housing primary school teachers nearby renters 	
<i>Those people with most limited time</i>	<i>Those people with most limited time</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> families women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working couples families commuters on their way home carers and volunteer service providers 	
	<i>Those people drawn by the presence of special services</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health centre patients and patients of other associated medical services non-residents attracted to specialty shops (eg. bakery at Hughes) 	
<i>The wider community</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consumers other residents 		

Table 2.3 Likely Social Impacts of Closures

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<p><i>Direct effects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of income • loss of livelihood • unemployment • family hardship 		
<p><i>Cultural effects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced community focus • reduced community identity 	<p><i>Cultural effects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • breakdown of community structure • loss of community focus • loss of community identity • loss of sense of belonging • significantly reduced social cohesion • massive changes to the way of life for family businesses and disadvantaged members of the community • reduced community safety • reduced equity 	<p><i>Loss of service</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole of community loses the one-on-one relationship with friendly local shopkeepers • there will be a greater reliance on government services • loss of free home delivery for aged persons • loss of "customer credit" service and personal customer service <p><i>Loss of safety/amenity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased traffic movements • loss of safety of access • influx of people to larger centres will decrease amenity in those centres • overall reduced quality of life for community <p><i>Loss of government revenue</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of government revenue in long term as values decrease and as more community support services required
<p><i>Social effects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of personal contact with shopkeeper • reduced opportunities for social contact with local residents • reduced attraction of local meeting place • reduced local amenity • reduced community safety • reduced quality of life • increased social isolation • loss of social networks for residents forced to relocate 	<p><i>Social effects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased isolation • reduced social opportunities • formation of ghettos in some areas where people are unable to relocate • creation of pockets of highly disadvantaged and isolated people possibly leading to depression, increased violence, increased drug dependency 	

Table 2.3 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased antisocial behaviour if children and young people are forced to travel farther to larger centres with less supervision 		
<i>Health and dependency effects</i>	<i>Health and dependency effects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced capacity for some people to function within the community increased reliance on support services increased opportunities for confusion/disorientation of older people at larger centres reduced health through lack of exercise, fresh food increased health risk through lack of medication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased dependence on transport and community services reduced independence for aged living in their own homes increased incidence of health problems among aged persons reduced access to fresh food and medication on a daily basis 	
<i>Consumer effects</i>	<i>Consumer effects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced consumer choice reduced convenience price increases at local centres reduced range at local centres increased one-stop shopping reduced familiarity with goods and services available reduced personal customer service reduced availability of credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced consumer choice reduced convenience rising prices at local centres, forcing many to make other shopping arrangements 	
<i>Economic effects</i>	<i>Economic effects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced viability of other local retailers reduced employment opportunities for young unskilled labour reduced surrounding property values reduced viability for nearby businesses, eg. medical practitioners improved surrounding residential property values if redevelopment follows closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> possible loss of important part of economy loss of livelihoods for failed small business owners increased unemployment possible oligopoly in supermarkets resulting in less competition, higher prices, possibly reduced trading hours significant loss in property values in affected suburbs 	

Table 2.3 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
<i>Transport and access effects</i>	<i>Transport and access effects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased travel distances increased travel times increased reliance on public transport increased reliance on private transport increased cost of transport increased demand for limited supply of disabled parking possible risk of losing bus stop at some local centres increased walking distance for some groups increased travel hardship reduced access for groups who are less mobile and without transport reduced frequency of shopping trips increased size of shopping loads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased walking distance to centres and bus stops increased travel distances more people depending on buses to take them to larger centres increased travel cost increased traffic flows and associated traffic and parking congestion 	
<i>Ecological effects</i>	<i>Government budget effects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased greenhouse gas emissions increased pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced viability for primary schools without local centres (if closures resulted in reduced attractiveness) increased budget requirements for service providers (eg. visiting, shopping and transport services) increased community costs (eg. graffiti removal, maintenance of bus interchanges, road repairs and accidents, traffic congestion) cost shift to public sector in longer term (short term public to private shift) 	

Table 2.4 Factors Contributing to Success of Local Centres

Groups & Agencies not questioned on this	Focus Groups	Business Groups
	<i>Service</i>	<i>Catchment/location characteristics</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> friendly customer service good range of services - consumers value the convenience of combining a number of tasks so may travel to another centre if one key service is lacking (eg. chemist) free delivery of goods within local area availability of credit financial services (EFTPOS outlet, automatic teller, bill-paying agency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of suburb ie. location in older suburbs (developed prior to 1955-60) where population has re-established location of centre (ie. visible location on or near a main arterial road) location in suburbs where population more affluent location in suburbs with younger population (ie. young families needing services very locally) size of catchment population
	<i>Price</i>	<i>Centre characteristics</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prices - higher price may be acceptable for small loads but if the bill is over a certain amount people who are mobile prefer to go to a large supermarket competitive prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> size of centre (ie. total floorspace) range of services
	<i>Quality</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality and consistency of goods and services freshness of food availability of specialty goods (eg. pastries, non-allergy foods, specialty lines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of service and products offered ability to respond to demand and changing needs (ie. not in engineered planning situation)
	<i>Convenience</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> convenience of shopping in a small place which you can get to quickly and park at easily good pedestrian access (safe, uninterrupted by road crossings, attractive approach, well maintained footpaths) good wheelchair access good vehicular access - accessible location, sufficient parking location on frequently travelled route and on bus route free parking quick shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presence of restaurants which may add to vitality presence of basic services ie. supermarket, newsagent, chemist, service station niche markets competitive prices freshness of food

Table 2.4 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
	<p><i>Appearance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good maintenance • good design and layout • good presentation • good landscaping • cleanliness • outlook <p><i>Comfort</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seating including outdoor seating • shaded car parks • state of footpaths • wide footpaths • weather proofing (awnings, shade trees, air conditioning) • security/safety (perceived and actual) • lighting <p><i>Social amenity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reason to linger (coffee shops, place to sit, place to meet) • likelihood of meeting other people • sense of community • quality of experience as an outing <p><i>Associated uses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overlooking of play areas • presence of additional services (eg. health centre, library outlet) • public amenities (toilets, baby change facility, telephones, postbox, private postboxes, community noticeboard) • attractive and useful adjoining land uses (eg. park, school, doctors' offices) <p><i>Community awareness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of importance of local shops and the need to support them • sense of shopkeeper as part of the community 	

Table 2.5 Factors Contributing to Vulnerability of Local Centres

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
not questioned on this	<p><i>Perception of poor safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of decline (vacant shop(s), empty shelves, poor maintenance) takeover by a section of the community (eg. youth) evidence of vandalism (obvious security measures, graffiti, breakages) <p><i>Relatively poor access</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proximity to alternative larger centre better public transport access to larger centres poor visibility of shops and/or parking from road <p><i>Negative perceptions of key factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> service price quality convenience appearance comfort social amenity associated uses <p><i>Lack of community awareness</i></p>	<p><i>Type of local centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> independent retailers unable to compete with chains and major stores in relation to price, range and quality those which rely on small independent supermarkets as magnets those unable to respond to changing demands and needs <p><i>Location of local centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> centres located where there is a wide choice of other centres eg. Aranda, Macquarie, Hawker, Weetangera those in "middle aged" suburbs ie. Belconnen, Weston, Woden, where the population is more mobile and with fewer children (ie. more flexible lifestyle) small local centres in existing areas, especially those located within suburbs next to a primary school with little passing traffic

Table 2.6 Possible Measures to Save Local Centres

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
not questioned on this	<p><i>Organise defences to strengthen unity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> form organisation of local centres to provide public transport, undertake marketing improve management and marketing skills of local traders embark on publicity campaign to restore confidence in local centres promote "shop local" strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organise local markets at local centres to boost trade <p><i>Improve accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve ease of parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide safe pedestrian crossings, underpasses/overpasses improve footpaths - widen for prams, repair uneven and slippery surfaces provide bus stop at local centre provide local area transport service <p><i>Improve safety and appearance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve safety physical upgrading to improve appearance improve maintenance <p><i>Broaden services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broaden the range of uses permitted at local centres offer additional services at local centres (eg. courses for people at home, library outlets) diversify services offered by individual retailers co-locate health centres with shops co-locate library with shops co-locate doctors' surgeries with chemist and shops co-locate child care centres with convenience shops 	<p><i>Develop marketing strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote a "buy local" strategy <p><i>Regulate to ensure fair competition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> government regulation to ensure itinerant markets are "local" government regulation/intervention to create level playing field regarding rents, electricity tariffs, penalty rates <p><i>Restrict growth of major centres</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stop expansion of major centres for at least 5 years <p><i>Restrict competition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not allow major supermarkets in suburban areas (eg. no more than 1-2000m² at Conder, to prevent major chain from establishing)

Table 2.6 continued

Groups & Agencies	Focus Groups	Business Groups
	<p><i>Increase population in catchment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decentralise employment to local centres • locate medium-density housing suitable for families and aged persons' units close to local centres <p><i>Widen catchment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage restaurants, specialty shops and services, electronic communication users • locate significant attractors eg. community centres, child care centres • relocate university campuses <p><i>Regulate to ensure fair competition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create "level playing field" - remove rent discounts and electricity discounts and inequities in penalty payments • control inappropriately high rents (and low rents for big supermarket chains at larger centres) • regulate local markets through licensing to ensure that dollars spent are retained in ACT <p><i>Prevent vacancies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer incentives to lease out buildings • enforce lease purpose clauses to prevent vacant shops • occupy vacant space with other uses <p><i>Redevelop to attract new tenants</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow redevelopment of local centre space for shops with residential above 	

2.2 Survey of Selected Groups and Agencies

A preliminary scoping of the issues was conducted, involving consultation with selected community groups and agencies (both government and non-government). A list of organisations contacted is contained in Appendix 2A. A telephone survey method was used, and a standard set of questions asked to elicit information concerning the role and importance of local centres, possible groups who may be adversely affected by retail changes, and possible impacts of retail changes and of closures. The survey was also used to identify sources of further information (who were subsequently invited to the focus groups). The findings are detailed in Tables 2.1-2.6, summarised below, and set out in greater detail in Appendix 2B.

2.2.1 Role and importance of local centres

Local centres were considered to be very important to certain sections of the community who presently depend upon the multiple roles of local centres, which were considered to include:

- retail/service role
- social role
- cultural role
- transport role.

The roles and importance were considered to depend to a certain degree upon the mix of uses.

2.2.2 Possible groups adversely affected by recent changes

A long list of possible groups who may be adversely affected by recent retail changes was generated. Small business owners, their families, employees, and local centre property owners were considered to be the groups most directly affected.

2.2.3 Possible adverse impacts of recent changes

Possible adverse impacts identified included direct effects upon small businesses and property owners, together with a variety of other effects:

- cultural effects
- social effects
- health and dependency effects
- consumer effects
- economic effects
- transport and access effects
- ecological effects.

Respondents considered the most significant social impacts to be the direct effects upon small businesses, their families and employees.

2.2.4 Possible impacts of closure of vulnerable local centres

Closure of vulnerable local centres was considered to increase and accelerate the impacts of recent changes, especially for disadvantaged and older people.

2.3 Focus Groups

Four focus groups were held at the end of November, one each in Canberra Central, Belconnen, Tuggeranong, and Woden/Weston Creek. A list of focus group invitees is contained in Appendix 2C, and focus group participants are listed in Appendix 2D. Participants provided a wealth of valuable information, which is detailed in Tables 2.1-2.6, summarised below, and set out in greater detail in Appendix 2F.

The format consisted of two sessions. The first session addressed the major questions to be answered concerning the role and importance of local centres, who uses local centres and who would be most affected by their closure, access issues for those groups, and factors affecting the attractiveness of local centres. The second session addressed the likely impacts of three retail change options, and examined who would be most affected and how. Participants also proposed possible measures for preventing closure of local centres and minimising the social impacts of unavoidable closures.

2.3.1 Role and importance of local centres

There was general consensus that local centres are important to the community, and that they play a number of significant roles:

- economic role
- social role
- cultural role
- transport role
- ecological sustainability role.

It was also considered that suburbs without local centres (eg. Banks and Oxley) suffer from their lack, and that some local centres (eg. McKellar) may fail to fulfil their role because of poor accessibility.

2.3.2 Profile of local centre users and those likely to be affected by closure

Participants identified a large number of different groups of people who use local centres and are likely to be affected by their closure. They were characterised by their level of mobility, level of resources, physical proximity, limited time available, and their attraction to special services.

It was noted that the types of customers at individual local centres depended on the mix of services available, particularly the presence of a chemist.

In addition to customers, it was noted that other traders at local centres and other small businesses would be affected by closures.

2.3.3 Access needs

Participants identified a range of different things which members of the community need to access.

Services

- pharmaceutical services: filling prescriptions, supplying other goods and information
- postal services: sending and receiving mail, supplying stamps

- news service: supplying newspapers and magazines, bus tickets
- banking services: offering EFTPOS, bill-paying facility
- medical services: doctors, health facilities (especially for aged persons), specialists
- personal services: hairdressing, tailors, dry cleaning

Food

- fresh food
- convenient basic items - bread and milk
- delicatessen
- butcher
- baker
- restaurants
- specialty food shops
- sandwich shops/takeaways

Public transport

- bus stop

Social opportunities

- social contact
- aged persons may need to access church and community hall in addition to the above.

2.3.4 Access considerations

Depending on how people travel to their local centre and their personal mobility, different constraints apply. These access constraints need generally to be considered in the location and design of facilities (not just retail facilities). Participants did not consider it possible to generalise about time constraints for different groups, except to say that people shopping on their way home after work usually arrive at peak period and are in a hurry, and that carers shopping for other people usually have limited time.

Pedestrians and cyclists

- generally people with low levels of mobility (people who are aged or disabled, people with young children, without private means of transport, poorly served by public transport)
- need to be within walking distance
- may find cost of bus or taxi to be too high
- need footpaths to be in good condition
- are limited in the amount they can carry, or push in a trolley, so must shop more frequently
- if aged or with certain disabilities, need level access/ramps/smooth pavements
- if aged, need somewhere to sit and rest after walking
- may have limited capacity to use buses (eg. people with certain disabilities, people pushing prams, people with young children)
- need local centre to be accessible to wheelchairs and prams (avoid steps, provide ramps, widen footpaths and aisles, remove turnstiles)
- if frail aged, need places free from crowds, skateboarders
- if frail aged, may rely on carers or volunteers to do their shopping and these people need to shop quickly (time constraints)
- need doors which open easily

- need somewhere to safely park bicycles
- need suitable place to tie dogs

People using buses

- cannot carry large loads of shopping

People driving

- need parking to be easy to find and to get in and out of
- need centre to be located on main commuting route for quick vehicular access

2.3.5 Features which influence use of local centres

Participants were asked what makes a local centre attractive and unattractive. Their responses suggest some of the possible factors affecting the viability of centres:

- service
- price
- quality
- convenience
- appearance
- comfort
- social amenity
- associated uses
- community awareness.

If these factors were positive, local centres were perceived as being attractive, and vice versa.

Other factors which deterred customers (and thereby contributed to decline of local centres) included relatively poor access compared to an alternative larger centre, poor visibility from the road, and perceptions of poor safety.

2.4 Retail Change Options

The three retail change options examined in the focus groups represent different responses to market forces and are motivated by different rationales (see Appendix 2E). They were selected in order to chart the possible social impacts of a range of quite different policy options available to the government. It may be feasible to combine various elements of these options into a single retail strategy.

The potential social impacts of these options were examined in the second session of the focus groups.

Option 1: Responding to Market Pressures (Status Quo)

<i>Objective:</i>	to respond to expressed consumer demand through minimal government intervention in market forces.
<i>Rationale:</i>	that the market will best reflect the desires and needs of the general community.
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expansion of floor space in group and town centres • continued loss of market share by local centres

Option 2: Restricting Growth in Group and Town Centres

<i>Objective:</i>	to dampen consumer demand for larger centres in order to return the market to a previous state.
<i>Rationale:</i>	that local centres should be protected from further competition.
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no growth of group and town centres • regulation of trading hours in larger centres • slower decline of local centres • possible recovery of some local centres as market share is regained

Option 3: Encouraging Revival of Local Centres

<i>Objective:</i>	to preserve and increase consumer demand for local centres by improving their competitiveness.
<i>Rationale:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that local centres play a vital role in community life which should be supported • that small businesses located in local centres have limited skills and resources to compete effectively • that overall demand can be expanded to the benefit of the retail sector generally.
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slower expansion of floor space at group and town centres • increased overall retail demand • increased public expenditure • resident opposition to infill development (if infill development were one of the methods used to boost demand at local centres)

2.4.1 Option 1: Responding to market pressures

The first option was regarded by focus group participants as having drastic effects on local centres, leading to the closure of all but a few centres within the next few years. It was also seen as being a "do nothing" approach. It was noted that redevelopment of centres would result in a lack of future sites for retail facilities, which may be needed when the suburban population enters later stages of the life cycle.

This option was regarded as having the most severe social impacts at a broad community level affecting the general community and social service providers.

The most likely residents to be affected by this option were considered to be those people who have low mobility levels, those who have least resources, and those located closest to local centres. Of the different groups who were initially identified as users of local centres (see Section 2.3.2) this list includes all users except those people with limited time. This suggests that participants assumed that people with limited time presently shop at larger centres in addition to local centres, and are therefore less reliant on local shops.

Local centre traders and property owners, and small businesses generally, were considered to be heavily affected by this option. Other services operating in the vicinity of local centres (eg. primary schools, medical practitioners) were also considered to be adversely impacted, with consequent flow-on impacts for local residents.

Possible impacts are detailed in Table 2.3.

2.4.2 Option 2 : Restricting growth in group and town centres

The second option was generally regarded as being of limited value in terms of maintaining local centres. Participants considered that the majority of local centres likely to close under Option 1 would close under Option 2, but perhaps not as quickly. It was also noted by one focus group participant (a resident and former small business person) that the nexus between growth of larger centres and decline of local centres is assumed but unproven. It may be that social changes are the real cause of decline, in which case restrictions on larger centres would be of little value.

Despite the pessimistic forecast for local centres, the option of restricting growth in town centres was generally supported, and a number of participants commented that there was "no need" for more space. There was also widespread support for restriction of trading hours to "normal hours" (ie. closure before midnight). However, restriction of growth in group centres or of Sunday trading was not supported, and participants argued that the wider community benefited from the flexibility and choice that these provided.

Participants considered that larger centres would be likely to respond in unanticipated ways if restrictions on growth were imposed, and that the impacts of these responses were impossible to predict.

The most likely residents to be affected by this option were considered to be the same groups as in Option 1, but to a lesser degree. Some participants considered that local centre traders would not be greatly assisted by restrictions, whereas others were more hopeful of recovery.

If this option were to include severe restrictions on trading hours at larger centres, then it was felt that the general community would be adversely affected, together with property investors and traders in the larger centres. If this option involved restriction to "normal hours", then shift workers, late-night supermarket employees, and teenagers who frequent town centres may suffer from reduced access. However, small retailers and specialty stores in the larger centres were considered likely to benefit from partial restrictions on trading hours, as the volume of passing trade during their opening hours would increase.

Several different approaches were discussed under this option and their possible impacts are summarised below.

Floorspace limits for larger centres

- expanded role for group centres if growth of town centres were restricted (but not that of group centres)
- possible transfer of specialty shops to local and group centres because of lower rents

Restriction of hours

- reduced convenience for the general community
- reduced consumer choice
- increased safety for workers presently leaving work late at night
- increased local employment if local centres were able to recover
- increased opportunities for social contact with other local residents

Imposition of parking charges at larger centres

- greater equity if parking charges were consistent at larger centres
- economic impact greatest for low income groups

2.4.3 Option 3: Encouraging revival of local centres

The third option was unanimously considered to be the most desirable option, even though it involved increased public expenditure. It was noted that both of the other options would involve hidden community costs (in terms of social, cultural, economic, transport, and ecological sustainability effects) which might be avoided by the third option. However, it was considered likely that some local centres would be forced to close in spite of positive intervention.

Participants considered that Option 3 would result in benefits to the community as a whole, including all groups adversely affected in Options 1 and 2. It was also considered that unemployed youth would benefit from access to more local jobs, that local wholesalers would benefit from more customers, and that real estate agents would benefit from an increased number of properties and higher property values.

The only groups disadvantaged by this option were considered to be people who might oppose infill or redevelopment (if these were some of the methods adopted to revive local centres), and possibly traders at larger centres if competition from local centres were increased. It was considered likely that some specialty shops would relocate from larger centres to local centres if they were successfully revived.

Possible impacts include:

Social benefits

- increased social cohesion
- regained/strengthened sense of community
- greater sense of belonging
- improved customer service
- improved local amenity

Economic benefits

- increased income and viability for small businesses
- increased property values at local centres
- lower prices as capacity to compete effectively is improved
- possible lower rents as vacancy rates normalise

Economic costs

- cost of upgrading for public purse
- possible increased rates due to higher public expenditure.

2.5 Minimisation of Social Impacts of Unavoidable Closures

The focus groups also considered ways of minimising the social impacts if some local centres were forced to close. Participants emphasised the need for local area planning to be undertaken jointly with the local community, looking at the whole of the suburb's needs rather than focussing solely on the retail component. Each suburb was considered to have its own special characteristics which could best be understood and strategically considered through local area planning exercises.

In addition to local area planning, three types of measures were described by the focus groups to minimise the social impacts of unavoidable closures. These could be combined with any one of the three options. They represent different ways of meeting consumer demand in cases where local centres may not be viable. Measures B and C may also be applicable to situations where local centres are not provided or are inaccessible.

2.5.1 Measure A: Require basic minimum retail convenience

<i>Objective:</i>	to ensure that a basic minimum level of retail activity is available at every local centre
<i>Rationale:</i>	to protect the essential features of the local centre concept regardless of other options
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued decline of vulnerable local centres to minimum levels

Measure A was considered by the focus groups to be of uncertain value, as it could mean subsidising a local shop unless the business were viable (in which case no intervention would be required).

2.5.2 Measure B: Encourage mixed uses in suburbs without local centres

<i>Objective:</i>	to ensure that the opportunity to respond to unmet demand is available in suburbs where local centres are not provided or are inaccessible
<i>Rationale:</i>	to enable small businesses to supply local demand from residential locations which are not in competition with an existing local centre
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dispersed provision of goods and services within local areas • possible adverse reaction to commercial activity within residential areas

Measure B was considered by the focus groups to be the most effective of the three measures, so long as the local community were willing to support the policy of allowing mixed uses within the residential area.

2.5.3 Measure C: Facilitate transport, home delivery and support services

<i>Objective:</i>	to ensure that supply of essential goods and services is available and does not depend on the provision or accessibility of local centres
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<i>Rationale:</i>	to meet the special needs of groups and individuals who may be unable to access local centres
<i>Likely outcomes:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased budget requirements for existing support services• requirement that larger centres provide or fund shuttle buses as a condition of consent to further expansion• additional funding to enable home delivery• more rapid decline of local centres• growth of group and/or town centres

Measure C was considered by the focus groups to be of some value, but it was suggested that it may fail to capture all of those people in need, and may require that people identify themselves for special assistance which could conflict with their sense of dignity and independence. It was also regarded as a measure which would further benefit larger centres to the detriment of local centres.

2.6 Suggested Measures to Prevent Further Closures

Participants suggested a variety of possible measures to prevent further closures, and these are detailed in Table 2.6 above. The government could play various roles, either as regulator, coordinator, facilitator, or funding body. Suggested measures include:

- organise defences to strengthen unity
- improve accessibility
- improve safety and appearance
- broaden services
- increase population in catchment
- widen catchment
- regulate to ensure fair competition
- prevent vacancies
- redevelop to attract new tenants.

2.7 Survey of Business Groups

A range of groups representing the business community were contacted through a telephone survey to determine, from the business perspective:

- the factors contributing to the importance of local centres in the community
- what role a local centre plays in the community
- factors contributing to the success or vulnerability of a local centre
- the social impacts of retail change on the small business owner and employee.

Tables 2.1-2.6 summarise the findings for the core questions. In addition, a meeting with independent retailers resulted in a better understanding of:

- effects on vulnerability of local centres
- factors in success of local centres
- who will be affected by closure
- possible measures to save local shops or come to terms with closure.

The meeting with independent retailers also developed a list of centres, categorised by their vulnerability to change.

Appendix 2G contains a list of respondents to the survey and attendees at the meeting of independent retailers.

2.7.1 Role of local centre in the community

There was a wide range of business views about the role of the local centre, from a purely economic to a broader social role. The community consultations tended to emphasise the social and cultural roles, whereas discussions with business groups tended to emphasise the economic role, but there are obvious variations depending on the configuration of individual centres. Responses are detailed in Table 2.1 above.

2.7.2 Factors contributing to success or vulnerability of local centres

A long list of factors was generated by business respondents. These are reported below.

Adaptability to market demands

- difficulty in adapting to demands of local market (a function of size and ability, not hours)
- niche markets eg. Griffith fresh food/organically grown, drawing from wider catchment
- providing services people want

Quality

- consumer demand for fresh food
- importance of price, product and service

Changing community needs

- planning of suburban centres based on 1960s concept of service (including Commonwealth Bank and post office)
- electronic banking, ATMs and EFTPOS replacing cash transactions
- Commonwealth Bank no longer the main banking agency due to competition from other major banks, therefore CB agencies which were a key attractor in local centres are no longer there

- postal practice has changed - fewer people write letters, more people use telecommunications so post office is of lesser importance in local area
- Canberra Times direct delivery has had profound effect on newsagents
- many service stations are closing due to competition from group centres and larger outlets
- community now more affluent
- population is more health conscious, so drinking and eating less
- trend towards more restaurants and take away food: people are spending more of disposable income on eating out and less on groceries as they cook less
- gambling absorbs disposable income in some cases
- workers in major centres use services in major centres because of extended trading hours
- older population's requirements for food diminish

Changing retail practices

- increasing concentration of shopping
- greater level of mechanisation and ability to draw on interstate stocks
- extended trading hours of larger supermarkets
- bulk buying capacity of large retailers
- absorption of small food specialties into large chains (eg, butcher, greengrocer)

Surrounding uses and catchment

- local centres closely linked to schools, service stations
- age of suburb
- size of centre
- location
- range of services
- size of catchment population
- mobility of population - more people drive than walk
- catchment needed for viable supermarket now 10-12,000, not as it was 12 years ago, 5-6000 people
- lower population/household density

Level of competition

- much higher proportion of m²/capita than 20-30 years ago ie. there is a basic oversupply of retail floorspace
- expansion of malls directly impacts on trade in local centres
- increased trading hours was equivalent to doubling of floor space
- strategies adopted by major chains to force out small competitors
- clubs sell liquor at cost competing with local stores
- local markets compete with local centres, but income for itinerant ones goes outside Territory
- hawkers also compete

Financial considerations and rents

- difficult to finance improvements - banks unwilling to lend
- unequal electricity tariffs (discounts to big business and residential consumers, but not to small business)
- cost of negotiating enterprise agreements: major stores do not pay penalty rates
- "reasonableness" of landlord - landlords imposing high rents have resulted in centre closure in some cases

2.7.3 Essential elements of a successful centre

The essential elements of a successful centre are detailed in Table 2.4 above. They include:

- catchment/location characteristics
- centre characteristics.

2.7.4 Social impacts of retail change on the small business owner and employee

Impacts on small business were considered in relation to three factors: the effects (if any) of extended retail trading hours, the effects on employment levels of retail change, and the social effects on the business owner and employee.

Impacts of changes in retail trading hours on small businesses

Some respondents considered that longer trading hours had increased trading hours at the local level, whilst others considered that there had been no change in trading hours for small business. The indications are, however, that for many small businesses trading hours have had to increase to compete with the hours at major shopping centres.

Impacts of trading hours and other changes on employment

There was again a range of responses to this question, depending on the perspective of the respondent. Some considered that there was a greater cost for every business in longer trading hours. Small business was more affected because of higher penalty rates associated with extended trading hours. Family businesses were not likely to employ more, but simply to increase their own hours worked. No benefits in employment through increased hours were perceived. Decrease in trade at local supermarkets was seen to be leading to reduced staffing levels and hence loss of overall employment opportunities.

Social impacts on business owners

These were generally perceived to be significant, and included:

- profound impact on lifestyles
- loss of investment, job, sanity, marriage, family
- devastating impact for those unable to adapt to changing demands; especially for those not highly educated or with limited skills.

2.7.5 Local centres most vulnerable to closure

There was some variation in the assessment of the types of centres most vulnerable, depending on the perspective of the respondent, but determinants of vulnerability related to the type of local centre and the location of the centre..

Based on their personal knowledge of performance of local centres in Canberra, the independent retailers helped to categorise local centres into two fundamental categories: those most vulnerable to changes in the retail provision and shopping patterns in the ACT (in particular expansion of town centres) and those less vulnerable. The full list of local centres thus categorised is included in Appendix 2H to this report.

In summary, the list comprised 23 centres which were considered to be less vulnerable and 43 that were most vulnerable. Of the most vulnerable, ten centres had recently seen the closure of their only supermarket and another three had seen closure of one of their two supermarkets. In addition, it was assessed that another fourteen supermarkets in local centres would close within the next 12 months, including supermarkets in three centres where one supermarket

2.8 Shopper Surveys

2.8.1 Independent survey for the Canberra Property Owners Association⁷

A survey of shoppers commissioned by the Canberra Property Owners Association and undertaken by Purdon Associates Pty Limited in November 1995 provides data which is of considerable relevance to this study. The survey was conducted at seven group centres and 23 local shopping centres. 85 interviews were completed at each of the local shopping centres. Appendix 2I summarises the pertinent results in relation to local shopping centres.

The surveys provide information relating to the catchment of local centres, the characteristics of people who use the local centres, the frequency with which they use the centres, the mode of transport to access centres, which shops and services they use, how much they spend, specific attractions of the local centres and possible improvements to local centres. The surveys do not provide a complete picture of the shopping patterns of residents in the catchments of local centres, and do not provide sufficient data to definitively allocate catchments to centres. However, the surveys do provide useful information about the characteristics of the population who currently use, and may rely on local centres. A home based survey of residents is still necessary in order to provide a complete picture of where people shop, why they shop there and what their needs are in order to determine the likely impacts of retail changes in the ACT.

An outline of relevant results is contained in Appendix 2I.

The results of the Purdon Associates survey serve to reinforce the results of the community consultations undertaken as part of this study, and reported on in Sections 2.1-2.6. In particular, the results show that:

- a wide range of people use local centres frequently, including ageing people and people with dependent children
- many walk to their local centre
- most people using local centres visit the local supermarket and other key shops and services including chemists, newsagents, butchers, bakers and post office, with the supermarket acting as the main attractor
- most people do not spend large amounts of money on each trip to the local centre, reinforcing the convenience role of the centre
- the most important attractor to local centres is convenience of location, but other significant attractors include friendly service, availability of parking and the range of goods and services
- other important factors in the attractiveness of local centres (ie. areas where improvements could be made) include location of banking facilities within the centre, lower prices, parking, landscaping and appearance.

2.8.2 Survey of suburban precincts of O'Connor, Narrabundah and Hughes

Surveys of shoppers at selected local centres were undertaken by the Precinct Management Program run by the ACT Department of Urban Services in 1994. The results of these surveys reinforce the results of the community consultation in this study, outlined in Sections 2.1-2.6.

⁷ Purdon Associates Pty Ltd (11 December 1995), "Neighbourhood Retail Centres Survey - Canberra," Report to Canberra Property Owners Association

Pertinent results are summarised in Appendix 2J, and relate to the best and worst things about the shopping centre.

Access (including parking, convenience and closeness) and physical attractiveness were clearly the most important factors influencing the respondents' opinions of these three local centres. These factors were also considered to be important factors in the attractiveness of local centres in the consultations undertaken as part of this study.

2.9 Validation of Consultation Results

A broad range of community groups and agencies were consulted with during this study. However, the limited time frame in which the consultation was undertaken meant that there was relatively low attendance at the focus groups. Thus, whilst the results from the different consultative approaches taken during this study are consistent, implying that they are reasonably accurate representations of the views of a broader community, there is no certainty that these results are truly representative of community opinion.

A considerably extended time period for consultation would have ensured a better community representation at focus groups, but would probably have produced similar results to the limited consultation undertaken during this study. Those results would still need to be validated because, as in any voluntary community interaction, the willingness and ability of individual members of the community to participate may skew the results.

The best way to ascertain community opinion accurately is to carry out statistically controlled surveys, of both shoppers and households. The time frame and the budget for this study did not allow for either of these options to be exercised. However, in parallel with this study the Canberra Property Owners Association commissioned Purdon Associates Pty Ltd to undertake a survey of shoppers at a range of local and group centres in the ACT. Selected results of that survey are summarised in Appendix 2I. Relevant results of an earlier limited survey by the Department of Urban Services' Precinct Management Program are also summarised in Appendix 2J.

The results of the Department of Urban Services' survey of three local centres indicate that access (including parking, convenience and closeness) and physical attractiveness were clearly the most important factors influencing the respondents' opinions of these local centres.

The results from these surveys, again although limited, serve to reinforce the results of the consultations undertaken as part of this study, and reported on in Section 2.

2.10 Conclusions

Perhaps the most significant conclusion which can be drawn from the extensive consultation reported on in this Section is the degree of consensus between different groups in the community about the issues discussed. There was a particularly strong call from the community for a holistic strategy to deal not only with retail changes but with the changes that are occurring within the community generally in terms of structural changes, life style changes and the associated changing needs for housing, infrastructure and services, particularly at the local level.

2.10.1 The role and importance of local centres in the community

Overall, the local centre was perceived to play several important roles for local residents, to varying degrees. Access is the key to local centres performing these roles:

- economic role - particularly as convenience retailing
- social role - particularly as a community focus and meeting place
- cultural role - particularly providing community identity and sense of belonging
- transport role - enabling residents to reduce dependence on private or public transport

Members of the community to whom the local centre was particularly important were listed at great length. The overall conclusion is the local centre is important to all members of the community, but in particular to:

- those least mobile, especially frail aged persons, young children and people without cars
- those less mobile and often home in the day especially aged persons, people with disabilities and people at home with young children
- those with least resources especially low income earners, single parent families, unemployed people
- those closest to local centres especially residents of nearby medium density housing and nearby renters

In addition, local centres were found to be important to:

- people involved in the retail trade, especially shop owners and employees
- charity and non-profit organisations supported by local centre operators.

It is these groups who would be most affected if vulnerable centre were to close.

Particular goods and services which the community needs to access at local centres were identified as:

- services, in particular: pharmaceutical services, postal services, news services, banking services, medical services
- goods, in particular food items, including restaurants and take aways

Access constraints for the community related to their mode of access, with pedestrians, cyclists and drivers having specific needs. Key issues relevant to all groups were physical ease of access (including quick access for both pedestrians and drivers) and safety.

2.10.2 The effects on the community if vulnerable centres close

The members of the community listed above are those most likely to be affected if vulnerable centres were to close. The consultation established that the effects of closure would be significant, particularly for those groups. Specific impacts included:

- cultural effects including erosion of community structure and loss of community focus and identity where there is no alternative community focal point
- social effects including increased isolation, reduced social opportunities and increased social disadvantage
- health, safety and dependency effects including increased dependence on transport and community services, increased health problems for some aged persons associated with reduced access to fresh food and medication, and reduced incentives for walking regularly, increased stress from traffic and parking congestion, decreased safety of access
- transportation effects including increased walking and general travel distances, increased travel cost, increased dependence on public transport
- economic effects including loss of important part of economy, loss of livelihoods, increased unemployment, loss in property values
- consumer effects including reduced consumer choice and convenience, increased prices
- government budget effects including increased budget requirements for service and infrastructure providers, loss of government revenue through decreased property values.

2.10.3 The critical factors in determining success or vulnerability of local centres

Although consultation on this issue included both users and suppliers of retail and other services at the local level, a very clear picture emerged of the factors affecting the success or vulnerability of local centre.

In sum, the factors which impinge on the success and attractiveness of a local centre include:

- location
- adaptability to market demands and changing community needs
- surrounding uses and catchment
- rents
- characteristics of consumers in catchment (affecting their needs for goods and services)
- level and quality (including friendliness) of service
- price
- quality
- convenience
- appearance
- comfort
- social amenity
- associated uses
- community awareness

In addition to the above, the following factors contribute to the vulnerability of a centre:

- catchment characteristics including mobility of population, size of population and age of population
- changing retail practices
- level of competition including floor area of competition centres, trading hours, retail strategies of competitors, other competition
- financial considerations including bank finance policies, unequal electricity tariffs and unequal penalty rates

- perceptions of poor safety
- relatively poor access compared to an alternative larger centre
- negative perceptions of key factors (service, price, quality, convenience etc.)
- lack of community awareness.

Characteristics of most vulnerable centres were identified as:

- those with independent retailers unable to compete with chains and major stores in relation to price, range and quality
- those which rely on supermarkets, with no other strong attractors
- those unable to respond to changing demands and needs
- centres located where there is a wide choice of other centres
- those in "middle age" suburbs where the population is more mobile and with fewer children
- small local centres in existing areas, especially those located within the suburb next to a primary school with little passing traffic

2.10.4 Measures to prevent or deal with closure: elements of a future retail planning strategy

A wide range of measures has been identified to assist in the retention of local centres, and where the closure of a centre is inevitable, to minimise the adverse social impacts of closure on the community.

Possible measures to prevent closure include:

Improve relative accessibility of local centres

- improve ease of parking
- improve pedestrian, wheelchair, pram access
- provide local area transport service

Increase population in catchment area

- decentralise employment
- additional medium density, aged persons' housing

Facilitate broadening of services and mix of uses

- broaden range of uses
- collocate with other services

Programs to strengthen management and marketing skills

- improve management and marketing skills of local traders
- promote a "buy local" strategy

Improve design ie. safety and appearance

- physical upgrading
- improved maintenance

Discourage continued vacancies

- enforce lease purpose clauses
- occupy vacant space with low rent/no rent or temporary uses

Ensure fair market practices through regulation and government policy

- creation of level playing field regarding rents, electricity tariffs, penalty rates

Members of the small business community strongly supported restrictions on the further growth of town centres, and restriction of competition through greater controls on release of new commercial sites. These measures assume a relationship between the expansion of retailing in Town and Group Centres and the decline of local centres. Such a relationship is complex and it is not within the scope of this brief to assess its nature. Members of the business community suggested that possible measures to facilitate redevelopment of closed local centres would assist in minimising the impacts on local property owners. Suggested measures include:

- consideration to waiving of betterment for redevelopment which meets certain objectives (eg. retains local convenience retail function/community meeting place)
- facilitation of lease variations for change of use
- more flexible lease purpose clauses to simplify changes in use.

2.10.5 Summary

In summary, consultation helped to develop an understanding of:

- the importance of local centres to local residents,
- the effects on the community if vulnerable centres close,
- the critical factors in determining what makes a local centre successful or vulnerable and
- the social factors planners need to take into account when making decisions about retail changes.

The results have direct relevance to the development of social impact assessment criteria for retail change proposals and the development of a retail strategy to minimise the social impacts of retail change.

3. LOCAL CENTRE ANALYSIS

3.1 Overview of the Local Centre Analysis

An analysis of local centre data was undertaken by ACTPA to assist in understanding the characteristics of suburbs and centres, particularly those with low performance levels. The analysis addresses socio-economic characteristics of suburbs, and the physical characteristics of centres located in those suburbs. These characteristics are compared for local centres in three categories: low performance, average performance and high performance. A correlation analysis was undertaken as part of the analysis, as well as some preliminary multiple regression analyses.

3.2 Assumptions and Limitations of the Local Centre Analysis

The local centre analysis assessed information on the characteristics of 45 of the 71 local centres located in the ACT, and of the suburbs within which these centres are located. The analysis was therefore limited to a selection only of the local centres in Canberra.

The centres and suburbs analysed in the ACTPA report are those where only one centre was located within the suburb. This was due to the limitation of the primary data source for centre performance: the IBECON Retail Study, which provided figures by suburb and did not disaggregate those figures where more than one centre was located in the suburb. This is a significant limitation.

Further, the data analysis was based on the assumption that each suburb represented the catchment for the centre located within the suburb. There was no empirical data available to verify the validity of this assumption at the time the Analysis was prepared. The shopper survey commissioned by the Canberra Property Owners Association (refer Section 2.8.1) has provided some data regarding actual catchments of selected centres in the ACT.

Finally, the categorisation of local centres into three performance levels was based on the IBECON Retail Study, adjusted according to observations of the Trading Hours Inquiry Working Group and the vacancy levels identified in the 1995 Retail Inventory (Programming Section, Land and Environment Bureau). Consultations undertaken during this study indicate that the categorisation was not necessarily accurate (refer Section 2.7).

Therefore, whilst the local centre analysis did assist in understanding relationships between socio-economic characteristics of a suburb and performance of local centres, the information derived must be seen as indicative only.

3.3 Findings of the Local Centre Analysis

The findings of the local centre analysis are summarised in this sub-section. The analysis provided an indication of possible social/locational characteristics related to centre performance. However, the low correlation between characteristics and centre performance meant that these factors were not adequate to predict performance, and similarly no direct relationship between performance and social impacts could be drawn.

Where there appeared to be a relationship between social/locational characteristics and centre performance a closer investigation is required (through consultation and interpretation of data) in order to establish whether those populations identified by the characteristics would indeed be affected by retail change. The consultation undertaken as part of this study (refer Section 2) was therefore vital in determining the characteristics of the population most likely to be affected by changes in retailing provision at the local level.

3.3.1 Population characteristics as they relate to performance of centres

The findings summarised below are all based on the local centre data analysis undertaken by ACTPA. The data used in that analysis came from a variety of sources.

Population numbers (ABS Estimated Residents, 1994)

A tendency towards higher population numbers in suburbs with high performance centres is indicated, however, there is also a high proportion of suburbs with relatively low populations which contain high performance centres.

Socio-economic disadvantage (ABS indicator, 1991 Census)

Suburbs with low performance centres have a much higher proportion of comparatively disadvantaged households, with about 75% with less than the median for the ACT.

Age groups (ABS Estimated Residents, 1994)

Suburbs with low performance centres have a much lower proportion of people in the 0-14 age group and a lower proportion of people in the 65+ age group.

Car ownership (ABS 1991 Census)

There seems to be little relationship between centre performance and proportion of households in suburbs with no cars. It should be noted, however, that 20% of centres with low performance centres have a relatively high proportion of households with no cars, but that suburbs with low performance centres had the highest proportion of households with 2+ vehicles.

People living in government housing (ABS 1991 Census)

Suburbs with low performance centres have a much higher proportion of people living in government housing.

Employment levels (ABS 1991 Census)

60% of low performing centres are located in suburbs with low levels of employment in and around the suburb, but 30% of low performing centres are located in suburbs with very high levels of employment and of the high performing centres, 45% are located in suburbs with low levels of employment in the surrounding area.

Age of suburb

Over half of low performance centres are located in suburbs aged 26-35 years and very few are located in young or old suburbs.

3.3.2 Physical characteristics as they relate to performance of centres

The findings summarised below are all based on the local centre data analysis undertaken by ACTPA. The data used in that analysis came from a variety of sources.

Size of centre

Only about 10% of high performance centres have a floor area of 431-750m² (ie. the smallest floor area category). NB the Analysis does not include smaller centres than this.

Number of uses

A negligible number of low performing centres have 16 or more activities, whilst over 20% of average and high performing centres have 16+ activities.

Vacancy

As would be expected, low performing centres have higher vacancy rates (50% have more than 16% vacancy).

Adjacent to school

Both high and low performing centres are adjacent to the same proportion of open schools, indicating little direct relationship between performance and location of schools.

Distance from group centres

About 85% of low performing centres are within 1500m of group centres. However, about 45% of high performing centres are also within 1500 m of group centres. More detailed analysis of specific physical characteristics would be needed to identify why high performing centres occur so close to group centres.

Number of supermarkets within 2km

Only 25% of low performing centres have 0-1 supermarkets within 2 km, whilst about 45% of high performing centres have 0-1 supermarkets within 2km. However, about 25% of both low performing and high performing centres have 4-5 supermarkets within 2 km.

Tenure characteristics

A greater proportion of high performing centres are single lessee centres (about 45%), whilst only about 20% of low performing centres are single lessee centres, and over 60% are owned by several lessees.

3.3.3 Correlations between characteristics

The local centre analysis undertaken by ACTPA included an analysis of the correlations between socio-economic and locational characteristics for suburbs with low performance and high performance centres. Correlations between these characteristics was relatively low, and as a result a multiple regression analysis to determine a set of characteristics which would help to explain performance was not attempted in the analysis. However, some useful conclusions may be drawn from the correlation analysis. In particular, the consultations outlined in Section 2 have indicated that a number of groups in the community are likely to be affected by the closure of local centres. In developing a set of criteria to assess future changes, it is important to have an understanding of the relationships between these groups in the community.

The correlation analysis showed that there may be a relationship between:

- 65+ age group with
- total rental housing
- employment in surrounding suburbs

no vehicles with
housing trust and other government housing
total rental housing
65+ age group with
no vehicles
total rental housing
employment in suburb
service station adjacent to local centre
number of facilities in centre
retail floor space in centre
service floor space
retail and service floor space
vacant floor space
other floor space
total floor space
% vacant
no vehicles with
1 vehicle
housing trust and other government housing
total rental housing
service station
number of facilities in centre

3.4 Conclusions

The local centre analysis provided some indication of the factors contributing to performance of centres, but did not establish any clear relationships between performance of centres, socio-economic characteristics and locational characteristics. However, if low performing centres were to close, the analysis provided some indication of the characteristics of the population that may be affected.

Factors which may contribute to performance of local centres included:

Socio-economic factors

- size of population in catchment
- number of comparatively disadvantaged households
- number of children in the 0-14 age group
- number of people aged 65+
- number of households with no cars
- number of households in government housing
- age of suburb (and hence stage in life cycle of residents)
- employment levels in suburb

Locational factors

- size of centre
- location in relation to other centres/supermarkets
- tenure characteristics.

Characteristics of population likely to be affected if low performance centres were to close:

- comparatively disadvantaged households
- households in government housing.

4. ANALYSIS OF MAPPING EXERCISE

All of the government primary schools in the urban areas of the ACT were invited to attend the focus groups and participate in a mapping exercise involving Year 6 students. Students were asked to draw maps of their "local neighbourhood". Three schools were able to provide maps of their local neighbourhood, which are analysed below. Many other schools expressed interest, but were unable to participate because of the shortness of notice and the timing (ie. end of the school year).

Younger peoples' views of what constitutes their neighbourhoods are often ignored in the planning process. The mapping exercise represented an opportunity to explore what is important to children, who make up a significant section of the community. The neighbourhood maps were considered to be a valuable means of gaining an insight into the key features of local areas for younger people. We were also interested to see whether children's perceptions of local area boundaries were the same as adults', and to what degree their cultural maps reflected the neighbourhood planning concept.

A Table summarising the features depicted is contained in Appendix 4A. The most common features depicted are discussed below.

4.1 Maribyrnong Primary School

Maribyrnong Primary School, situated on the local distributor road in Kaleen, produced 16 maps. Twelve of these were by children who lived in Kaleen, plus one each by children who lived in Giralang and O'Connor, and two by children who lived in Palmerston.

Based on the maps, all of the children are very aware of their local centres. The most common features varied depending on where children lived and are ranked by frequency depicted in Table 4.1. Local centres ranked third overall, and were featured on all of the maps by children who lived outside of Kaleen. It appears that roads, one's own house, local centres, schools, and open space form the basic structure of the neighbourhood for younger people, followed by paths, car parking, and friends' houses. Interestingly, friends' houses (ie. social networks) featured prominently on maps drawn by children who both lived and went to school in Kaleen, but not on other maps. All but one of the maps showed the extent of the local neighbourhood to be considerably smaller than the total suburb.

Table 4.1 Key Features of Maribyrnong School Maps Ranked by Frequency Depicted

Rank	Feature	No.	%
1	Roads	16	100%
2	Own house	15	94%
3	Local centre	13	81%
4	Primary school	10	63%
5	Oval	9	56%
5	Trees	9	56%
6	Park	7	44%
6	Paths	7	44%
7	Car parking	6	38%
8	Friends' houses	5	31%

9	High school	3	19%
9	Bus stop	3	19%
9	Pedestrian crossing	3	19%
9	Paddocks	3	19%

4.2 Holt Primary School

Holt Primary School provided 17 maps, and all of these children lived in Holt.

Based on the maps, local centres ranked third in importance, equal to ovals but less important than roads, the primary school, trees and parks. Interestingly, the group centre at Kippax ranked fourth. Again, the basic structure of the neighbourhood for younger people appears to consist of roads, the school, open space, and the local centre. The group centre and church also featured prominently in the Holt maps. The extent of the local neighbourhood appeared to be greater than that for Maribyrnong students, but was still smaller than the total suburb.

Table 4.2 Key Features of Holt School Maps Ranked by Frequency Depicted

Rank	Feature	No.	%
1	Roads	15	88%
1	Primary school	15	88%
2	Trees	10	59%
2	Park	10	59%
3	Local centre	8	47%
3	Oval	8	47%
4	Group centre	7	41%
5	Church	6	35%
6	Car parking	5	29%
6	Playground	5	29%
6	Vacant land	5	29%
7	Service station	4	24%
7	Health centre	4	24%
8	Own house	3	18%
8	Paths	3	18%
8	Preschool	3	18%
8	Basketball court	3	18%
8	Library	3	18%
8	Pizza Hut	3	18%

4.3 Richardson Primary School

The Richardson Primary School provided 6 maps drawn by groups of students. These maps were quite different from the others, but the children were obviously well aware of their local centre, which featured on all of them.

The most common features depicted on the Richardson maps are ranked in Table 4.3. Again, roads, the school, the local centre, and open space appear to form the basic structure of the neighbourhood for younger people, together with car parking and playgrounds in the case of Richardson students. The extent of the local neighbourhood also appeared to be significantly

greater for Richardson students than for those at the other schools, perhaps because they were drawn by groups of students rather than individuals.

Table 4.3 Key Features of Richardson School Maps Ranked by Frequency Depicted

Rank	Feature	No.	%
1	Roads	6	100%
1	Primary school	6	100%
1	Local centre	6	100%
1	Oval	6	100%
1	Car parking	6	100%
1	Playground	6	100%
2	Preschool	4	67%
2	Doctors' surgery	4	67%
2	Rollerblade bowl	4	67%
2	Scout Hall	4	67%
3	Park	3	50%
3	Paths	3	50%
3	Child care centre	3	50%
4	Trees	2	33%

4.4 Conclusions

It is clear from the maps provided that local centres are one of the main components of the neighbourhood structure as it is experienced by younger people, together with roads, schools, and open space.

Car parking, paths, playgrounds and public facilities (sporting, community and health facilities) were also frequently depicted on the maps. It is possible that car parking areas (and vacant land in the case of Holt) are another form of open space which can be used for skateboarding, bike riding, etc. Alternatively, it may be that many children are frequent vehicle passengers, and are accustomed to viewing the world from the back seat.

The importance of social networks is vividly highlighted by the maps drawn by children who live and go to school in Kaleen.

Participants in the focus groups emphasised the importance of local centres as a place where children could safely be sent, a place where they were socialised and educated in the ways of the community. The maps confirm that local centres play an important role in younger peoples' lives, and that the essential features of the neighbourhood concept are relevant to them.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF RETAIL CHANGE IN THE ACT

5.1 Overview

This section develops an appropriate methodology for assessing the social impacts of retail change in the ACT.

A brief overview of approaches to social impact assessments undertaken in New South Wales and Victoria and the current process in the ACT is documented in Appendix 5A. Derived from this review, an appropriate methodology is suggested to assess the social impacts of retail change in the ACT. A particularly relevant and useful text is one produced by the NSW Office on Social Policy, Social Policy Directorate (February 1994) *Techniques for Effective Social Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide* (Best Practice Paper 8).

The New South Wales experience (see Appendix 5A) stresses the need to have a range of possible analytical techniques available to assess social impacts. The appropriate technique should be selected only during the scoping phase of the assessment and would depend on the type of development proposed, the scale of likely impacts and available resources and data.

5.2 Selection of Appropriate Techniques

Seven techniques to measure social impacts are examined in detail in Appendix 5A, which are:

- cost-benefit analysis
- cost-effectiveness analysis
- social indicators
- social auditing
- multi-criteria analysis
- impact display table
- participatory computer modelling.

A comparison of the techniques shows the relatively high ease of use and low methodological weaknesses of three techniques. These are cost-effectiveness analysis, social indicators and impact display table. Multi-criteria analysis, although having relatively high data and cost/time frame requirements, does offer the technique for assessing different criteria against various objectives. The specific weaknesses of the cost-effectiveness analysis and the social indicator approaches make them inappropriate for use in the assessment of social impacts of retail change in the ACT.

There are therefore two techniques which are considered suitable for evaluating social impacts of retail change in the ACT: multi-criteria analysis and impact display tables. These are described in detail below.

5.2.1 Multi-criteria analysis

Multi-criteria analysis covers a wide range of methods rather than one specific technique (eg. planning balance sheet, goals achievement matrix). All methods have three common characteristics:

- (i) ability to assess a number of alternative proposals or options;
- (ii) inclusion of a set of criteria by which the alternatives are judged; and
- (iii) use of a range of different weights or measures in assessing the criteria.

Most methods produce an impacts/effects summary table. Some methods proceed to rank the alternatives, so producing a preferred option. However, in some circumstances this may not be necessary or appropriate (eg. where there is wide disagreement over values, political decision-making).

Stages in basic multi-criteria analysis

Stage 1: specifying alternatives

- culling the available options on the basis of a discrete set of performance criteria which have been developed by the Planning Authority and community. For some projects there may only be two alternatives: to undertake or not undertake the proposed development
- resulting in a limited number of options, ideally four to six, for the full multi-criteria analysis procedure

Stage 2: specifying the criteria

- listing all the criteria (or attributes) on which to perform the analysis (in some cases where many alternatives were culled, a set of these criteria would have started to be developed)
- grouping similar criteria into sub-groups for ease of analysis, eg. social impact, economic effect, environmental impact (in this case, concentrating on social impacts)
- sub-dividing each sub-group further is suggested. This can be displayed as an impact tree, where the roots are key objectives and the branches are criteria and sub-criteria (eg. social objective -> to maximise quality of life -> housing, safety, culture)
- restricting total number of criteria to optimally 6-7 (although up to 10 is possible)
- noting features of good criteria sets:
 - complete - as full a set of criteria as possible to reflect all alternatives thoroughly
 - operational - set of criteria must be able to be used in a meaningful way in the analysis
 - discrete - criteria should be independent from one another
 - non-redundant - no aspect of the problem should be accounted for more than once
 - minimal - keep the number of criteria as small as possible.

Stage 3: scoring alternatives in relation to each other

- assigning scores to each criterion for every option to each criteria
- using different measurement scales:
 - nominal scale - only enumerates the number applicable to each category; not possible to rank
 - ordinal scale - only orders or ranks but does not provide for precise quantification of differences between categories. Differences between categories can be ranked numerically

- interval or ratio scale - allows for both ranking and a precisely quantified difference between categories (eg. the number of jobs generated by the proposal)
- interval scale is the easiest data to use in multi-criteria analysis, but for social impact assessment can be the most difficult to produce.

Stage 4: composing the impact table

- constructing the impact table from all the above stages
- often the table alone can inform the decision-making process

Stage 5: standardising and weighting the criteria

- standardising the criteria scores to reduce implicit criteria bias, before weighting
- many standardisation methods exist (eg. dividing all values by the maximum value for that criterion)
- weighting all the criteria scores
- noting that weighting will always reflect the different social preferences of those who apply them, ie. differences between the analysts, the community and the business sectors.

Stage 6: evaluating the alternatives

- ranking the alternatives by applying an evaluation formula to the weighted and standardised scores
- applying sensitivity analysis to scores, standardisation method, weights and evaluation methods to systematically vary the different components of the multi-criteria analysis to show their effect on the final ranking of alternatives.

Stage 7: presenting the results

- present the results in the simplest form possible
- indicate areas of weakness or uncertainty in the analysis
- address equity issues, possibly through the use of an equity matrix (which provides an analysis of disaggregated impacts, in terms of affected groups and locational effects)
- avoid forcing one single answer if the analysis does not allow for this unambiguously
- ensuring transparency of analysis as much as possible.

Summary of multi-criteria analysis

Strengths:

- provides structure for decision making while still allowing flexibility
- particularly useful for complex problems with a great deal of information to manage and assess
- follows naturally from the way people tend to approach problems with multiple objectives
- flexible data requirements - methods available for qualitative data, quantitative data, or a mixture
- allows different points of view to be dealt with explicitly through the use of weights
- allows information that is agreed upon by all parties to be distinguished from areas of contention (indicated by different weights)
- amenable to sensitivity analysis to determine how robust the final results are to changes in the underlying assumptions and methods
- does not require assignment of a monetary value to all quantities

- can identify where additional data would be useful and where additional data would have little impact on the final decision
- applicable for government programs and services with a social objective.

Weaknesses:

- does not overcome fundamental problems associated with comparing quantities that may not be comparable, but does provide more flexibility than is available with, say, cost-benefit analysis
- variety of evaluation methods available without clear indication that one is better than another
- since many of the methods are complex and remain a 'black box' to the decision maker, they can lead to either mistrust or excessive faith in the results
- concentration on the definition of explicit weights can provide a false sense of objectivity about the remainder of the analysis - there are opportunities for introducing implicit weights at all stages of the analysis and these may remain undetected
- considerable effort is needed to obtain the information for the impact table and the weights
- methods for incorporating uncertainty explicitly into the analysis are not yet well developed.

5.2.2 Impact Display Table

An impact display table is a simple and easy to understand method of informing decision makers of central issues in a proposal. It is particularly useful where existence values are involved or where there is a gap between the interests and values of key stakeholders. It uses a descriptive approach to developing a table summarising the benefits and losses resulting from a proposal and the assessment of the impacts of various options. As an assessment technique, impact display tables are not as resource intensive as other techniques.

Stages in impact display table

- listing all major costs and benefits of a proposal
- backing all statements in table with substantiated evidence
- inserting actual measurements of particular impacts as available
- explicitly assessing any significant equity issues involved in a particular course of action
- if appropriate, recommending a particular course of action

Summary of impact display table

Strengths:

- easy to use and understand
- most useful when significant existence values make other techniques inappropriate
- clearly displays critical dilemmas to decision makers
- can view all the major losses and benefits at once
- useful in comparing a few options
- may be employed when resources to conduct fuller valuations are limited
- can be used for evaluating government programs or services with a social objective where time and resources are limited.

Weaknesses:

- no attempt is made to weight impacts or rank alternatives

- it can mislead, if statements are not sufficiently backed by justifications
- difficult to assess a large number of options.

5.3 Definition of Impact Assessment Criteria

A set of impact assessment criteria have been developed following analysis of the consultation findings, in terms of likely impacts and groups affected. Four main social impact criteria have emerged, concerning access effects, cultural effects, transportation effects and economic effects. They are summarised in Table 5.1 below.

The criteria form the framework for the social impact assessment, and are independent of the technique.

Table 5.1 Social Impact Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Impacts on	Impacts for
ACCESS EFFECTS	access to goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to social opportunities and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
	access to facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with low mobility levels people with least resources
CULTURAL EFFECTS	community structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	community focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
	way of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community family businesses
	community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local community
TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS	vehicular, pedestrian and cycling traffic flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers pedestrians cyclists
	traffic and parking congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers general community
	accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle drivers and passengers families of accident victims general community
	pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general community
	energy use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general community
	need for different bus routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bus passengers
	need for different bus timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bus passengers
ECONOMIC EFFECTS	employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth local residents small business people
	small business opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new businesses
	commercial property market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local centre property owners and tenants
	residential property market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> surrounding residential property owners and tenants
	viability of other centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traders at other centres
	planned hierarchy of commercial centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affects overall planning principles, requiring strategic overview of provision of services, location of housing, employment etc

5.3.1 Access Criteria

Access (in terms of time taken, distance travelled, cost, degree of difficulty, one-trip convenience) to:

- goods
- services
- public transport
- social opportunities and supports
- facilities (schools, parks, telephones, postboxes, etc)

for people with a range of mobilities (weighted to favour people with limited mobility as their independence will depend on access to the above), ie.

- people who can't get out
- people who must walk
- people who have the options of walking or cycling (but not driving or taking the bus)
- people who have the option of taking the bus (but not of driving)
- people who have the option of driving.

Based on the consultation, the key groups to focus on are expected to be:

- aged people and carers
- families with young children
- low-income earners
- people with disabilities
- unemployed people.

The Territory Plan contains specific policies and land use objectives relevant to access, including:

Policy: The planned hierarchy of Civic, town, group and local centres will be maintained in order to offer residents convenient and equitable access to goods, services and facilities. (Part A2, Metropolitan Structure 2.2)

Policy: The suburban unit will continue to be the basic building block of the town structure and will generally have a legible road hierarchy of distributor, collector and local access roads; local facilities in a generally accessible location which could include a primary school, local shops, and appropriate non-retail commercial and community facilities and neighbourhood playing field; an off-road movement system to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists; and accessible public transport. (Part A2, Metropolitan Structure 2.5)

Policy: Residential development will continue to be arranged in distinct suburbs and urban precincts, each containing appropriate commercial, community and recreation facilities. (Part A2 Residential Areas 3.2)

Policy: Planning will make provision for an adequate range of local, district and regional community facilities and services, distributed equitably according to need. (Part A2, Community Facilities and Services 6.1)

Control: A proposal to carry out development in a local centre: shall not change the basic function of the centre in such a way that the needs of the surrounding community will not be adequately met (Part B2D Local Centres 2.3)

5.3.2 Cultural criteria

This set of criteria involves consideration of the impacts of change upon:

- community structure
- focus
- identity
- sense of belonging
- social cohesion
- way of life
- community safety

for the local community, and for family businesses in the case of way of life.

These criteria are considered to be difficult to quantify and may best be dealt with through consultation.

The Territory Plan contains specific policies and objectives relating to cultural values:

Policy: Heritage and cultural values, including those associated with Aboriginal heritage and culture, will be taken into account in determining both broad patterns of land use and specific development and works proposals. (Part A2 Urban Design, Culture and Heritage 13.3)

Objective: to provide a viable and convenient focus for shopping, community and business services to meet the daily needs of the local population. (Part B2D, Local Centres 1(a))

5.3.3 Transportation criteria

This set of criteria involves consideration of the impacts of retail change upon:

- vehicular, pedestrian and cycling traffic flows
- traffic and parking congestion
- accidents
- pollution
- energy use
- need for different bus routes
- need for different bus timetables

for vehicle drivers and passengers, pedestrians, cyclists, families of accident victims, bus passengers, and the general community.

The Territory Plan contains several specific policies relating to transportation, including:

Policy: Planning for land use and transport will be closely inter-related in order to enhance the efficiency of the transport system, limit traffic congestion, promote safety, support the desired pattern of development, reduce energy consumption and safeguard environmental quality. (Part A2 Transport and Access 8.1)

Policy: Development will be planned so as to promote the use of public transport and create opportunities for walking and cycling, including commuter cycling. (Part A2 Transport and Access 8.4)

Policy: The needs of people with disabilities will be taken into consideration when designing transport and access systems and assessing development proposals. (Part A2 Transport and Access 8.7)

Policy: Planning policies will promote the efficient use of energy. (Part A2 Environmental Planning 12.9)

5.3.4 Economic criteria

This set of criteria involves consideration of the impacts of retail change upon:

- employment
- small business opportunities
- commercial property market
- residential property market
- viability of other centres
- planned hierarchy of commercial centres

for youth, local residents, small business people, new businesses, local centre property owners, surrounding residential property owners, and traders at other centres.

The Territory Plan contains several specific policies relating to economic matters, including:

Policy: An appropriate range of commercial activities will be encouraged at each level of the planned hierarchy of Civic, town, group and local centres, and in other selected locations. (Part A2 Commercial Development 4.1)

Policy: Changes to the pattern of development within commercial centres will be permitted wherever desirable to respond to altered economic circumstances and community needs, subject to consideration of likely impacts on the planned hierarchy of centres. (Part A2 Commercial Development 4.2)

Objective: to provide opportunities for business investment and local employment. (Part B2D Local Centres 1(b))

Objective: to retain a mix of land uses appropriate for this level in the hierarchy of centres. (Part B2D Local Centres 1(c))

Control: A proposal to carry out development in a local centre: shall not have a significant unacceptable impact on the planned hierarchy of commercial centres (Part B2D Local Centres 2.3)

5.4 Application of the Selected Methodologies

Two case studies were developed to demonstrate how the selected methodologies might work in practice. The multi-criteria analysis was applied to a hypothetical proposal involving a

major increase in retail floor space, with consequent likely major impacts on existing retail provision. The impact display table technique was applied to a hypothetical proposal involving a change of use for a local centre - a type of application likely to have impacts only in the local area. Appendix 5B outlines the results of the application of the methodologies to the case studies. Listed below is a summary of the measures developed in relation to each of the criteria. Indicators of the relationship between measures and criteria are also given. Measures are intended to be used to compare the relative impacts of a number of alternatives (rather than the "before and after" effect of a proposal). That is, one alternative may be a "do nothing" option, whilst another involves significant change.

Table 5.2 Criteria, Indicators and Measures

CRITERIA	INDICATORS		MEASURES
ACCESS TO: goods, services, public transport, social opportunities and supports, facilities	INDICATOR OF		ACCESS EFFECTS:
	level of fast access to a range of goods, services etc normally available at the local level	1.1	population outside walking distance (500m) of local or group centre ⁸
	likely increases in time and therefore less convenience, and possibly reduced access if time is a constraint	1.2	time taken to walk to alternative centres to maximum walking distance ⁹ (750m)
	likely increases in cost and therefore possibly reduced access if cost is a constraint	1.3	proportion of people outside walking distance who do not own a car
	major roads to be crossed and so likely reduction in access where safety is a constraint	1.4	people within walking distance of a centre, but outside the suburb in which the centre is located <i>consider location of pedestrian crossings and underpasses</i>
ACCESS FOR: people with reduced mobility, people who must walk, people who can walk or cycle, people who can use a bus	elderly people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.1	no. of aged outside walking distance (ie 400m) of nearest centre ¹⁰
	people without cars who may be affected by reductions in access	2.2	no. of households without cars outside walking distance of nearest centre
	people with low incomes who may be affected by reductions in access	2.3	no. of low income households outside walking distance of nearest centre
	young people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.4	no. of 5-12 year olds outside walking distance of nearest centre
	people with disabilities who may be affected by reductions in access	2.5	no. of people with disabilities outside walking distance of nearest centre

⁸ ACT Planning Authority (1995), "Draft Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities".

⁹ South Australian Urban Land Trust (1988), *Human Services Planning Kit* - we have assumed 750m to be the maximum walking distance beyond which people will not walk, based on the South Australian work, but this distance needs to be tested.

¹⁰ ACT Planning Authority (1995), "Draft Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities"

Section 5 - Development of an Appropriate Methodology for Social Impact Assessment

CRITERIA	INDICATORS		MEASURES
CULTURAL EFFECTS:	INDICATOR OF:		CULTURAL EFFECTS
community structure, focus, identity, sense of belonging, health/cohesion, way of life	existing community focus and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.1	no. of alternative meeting places (which are a focus for activity, with a notice board facility) in areas losing local centre
	health/cohesion of community and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.2	NOT DETERMINED (possibly crime rates in areas losing local centres)
	low level of private space, thus increased reliance on external facilities for informal meeting places, and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.3	no. of flats in areas losing local centres
	existing community structure - the more the number of households without internal support the more vulnerable to reduced services	3.4	no. of households with single parent families or single person households in areas losing local centres
	existing community identity and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.5	no. of community groups in area losing local centre eg. P&C, residents groups, preschool parents groups, land care groups etc
TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS:	INDICATOR OF:		TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS
traffic flows, pollution, safety, energy use, public transport	added stresses for travellers through increased traffic and parking congestion	4.1	increase in traffic volumes and increased parking demand
	reduced quality of life, health	4.2	likely decrease in visibility levels
	reduced quality of life, health	4.3	likely increase in accidents
	reduced quality of life	4.4	increased travel time
	increased cost to public and private purse, of additional bus routes, bus and taxi usage, consequent potential loss in other services	4.5	increased no. of bus routes/extra services including increased concessions and increased taxi vouchers
ECONOMIC EFFECTS	INDICATOR OF:		ECONOMIC EFFECTS
employment, small business opportunities, commercial property market, residential property market, viability of other centres, planned hierarchy of commercial centres	social effects on community	5.1	likely increase in unemployment of people employed in local centres
	possible downgrading of local area, in extreme cases resulting in ghettos, decrease in amenity of area	5.2	likely decrease in property values
	affects livelihood of a significant part of community	5.3	no. of centres likely to close
	affects overall planning principles - requiring strategic overview of provision of services, location of housing, employment etc	5.4	likely remaining distribution of centres long term availability of sites for community and commercial purposes

5.5 Conclusions

As demonstrated in Section 2, a very broad range of issues need to be considered in assessing the social impacts of retail changes in the ACT. These issues have been distilled into a discrete set of criteria, outlined in Section 5.3. The related measures outlined in Table 5.2 provide an indication of the breadth of possible impacts. Table 5.2 and the case studies in Appendix 5B also demonstrate that many, but not all of the measures developed are quantifiable using a relatively simple statistical approach.

The criteria and related measures provide a useful checklist for the application of a simple assessment technique, the impact display table, to minor applications for retail change.

The criteria and related measures developed do not, however, have all the features of an ideal set for multi-criteria analysis. Although relatively complete, and able to be used in a meaningful way, they are not all discrete (some measures are subsets of others). Similarly, because of the complexity of the social issues, some impacts are accounted for more than once (for example, increased travel time has direct social effects, as well as indirect ones through increased levels of pollution). In addition, whilst the number of criteria is small, there are several measures for each criterion. All these factors make the full application of multi-criteria analysis, resulting in a single score for each alternative impossible. However, of greater value is the ability to use the assessment table to analyse comparative impacts of each alternative. Partial scoring and weighting is feasible for the quantifiable measures.

The relative importance of the criteria and the measures by which they may be assessed can not be determined without information derived from two important sources:

- shopper and household surveys to determine where people shop now, and why, and who relies on local centres, and what for; and
- community consultations to confirm measures and to elicit community weighted values in relation to the criteria and measures developed.

Surveys and consultations should be carried out when a major proposal for retail change is being considered. A major proposal is considered to be one where the economic impacts may result in significant changes to the retail hierarchy.

6. STUDY CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Role and Importance of Local Centres

The key component of this study which has informed conclusions regarding the role and importance of local centres has been the consultations. Surveys by Purdon Associates and the Department of Urban Services reinforced the consultation findings.

Role of local centres

Overall, the local centre plays several important roles for local residents:

- economic role - particularly for convenience retailing
- social role - particularly as a meeting place
- cultural role - particularly providing community focus and sense of belonging
- transport role - enabling residents to reduce dependence on private or public transport.

Particular goods and services which the community needs to access at local centres are:

- food items, especially a supermarket, and including restaurants and take aways
- pharmaceutical services, postal services, news services, banking services and medical services.

Importance of local centres

The local centre is important to the community generally, but in particular to "special need" groups, identified in the consultations as:

- those least mobile, especially frail aged persons, young children and people without cars
- those less mobile and often home in the day especially aged persons, people with disabilities and people at home with young children
- those with least resources especially low income earners, single parent families, unemployed people
- those closest to local centres especially residents of nearby medium-density housing and nearby renters

In addition, local centres were found to be important to:

- people involved in the retail trade, especially shop owners and employees
- charity and non-profit organisations supported by local centre operators.

It is these groups who would be most affected if vulnerable centres were to close.

The results of this analysis were used to develop the social impact assessment criteria and measures outlined in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 and summarised in Section 7.2.

6.2 Factors Affecting Viability of Local Centres

The local centre analysis undertaken by ACTPA provided an indication of the socio-economic and locational factors which may contribute to the performance of local centres. The consultations undertaken as part of this study produced a much wider list of factors affecting the viability of local centres. The results from the consultations both reinforced and added to the local centre analysis results. The following factors were considered to be most relevant to an assessment of viability of local centres.

Socio-economic factors

- size of population in catchment
- number of comparatively disadvantaged households
- number of children in the 0-14 age group
- number of people aged 65+
- number of households with no cars
- number of households in government housing
- age of suburb (and hence stage in life cycle of residents)
- employment levels in suburb

Locational factors

- location in relation to other centres/supermarkets
- location in relation to major through roads

Centre characteristics

- size of centre
- tenure characteristics
- adaptability of retailers to market demands and changing community needs
- price of goods at centre
- quality of goods at centre
- convenience of access to centre
- appearance of centre
- comfort of centre
- social amenity of centre
- associated uses collocated at centre
- level and quality (including friendliness) of service

In addition to the above, the following specific factors contribute to the vulnerability of a centre:

- changing demographic trends, shopping behaviour, and retail practices
- level of competition including floor area of competing centres, trading hours, retail strategies of competitors, other types of competition
- financial considerations including bank finance policies, rents, unequal electricity tariffs and unequal penalty rates.

Key measurable characteristics of most vulnerable centres were identified as:

- those with independent retailers
- those which rely on supermarkets
- centres located where there is a wide choice of other centres
- those in "middle aged" suburbs

- small local centres located within the suburb with little passing traffic.

6.3 Likely Social Impacts of Retail Changes

Those members of the community likely to be impacted by changes at the local level include those groups for whom local centres are especially important (refer Section 6.1) and the general community.

Impacts on the community of retail changes at the local level:

- cultural effects including erosion of community structure and loss of community focus and identity
- social effects including increased isolation, reduced social opportunities and increased social disadvantage
- health, safety and dependency effects including increased dependence on transport and community services, increased health problems for some aged persons associated with reduced access to fresh food and reduced incentives for walking regularly, increased stress from traffic and parking congestion, decreased safety of access
- transportation effects including increased walking and general travel distances, increased travel cost, increased dependence on public transport
- economic effects including loss of important part of economy, loss of livelihoods, increased unemployment, loss in property values
- consumer effects including reduced consumer choice and convenience, increased prices
- government budget effects including increased budget requirements for service and infrastructure providers, loss of government revenue through decreased property values.

These effects include both direct and indirect social impacts. In addition to these effects, retail change has had positive effects for members of the community who are mobile and well-resourced through increased choice of shopping hours and venues.

The results of this analysis were used to develop the social impact assessment criteria summarised in Section 7.2.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Elements of a Retail Strategy to Minimise Social Impacts of Retail Change

During the consultation phase of this study, the option of encouraging revival of local centres was strongly supported and a wide range of measures was identified to assist in retention of local centres. Where the closure of a centre was inevitable, several additional measures were suggested to minimise adverse social impacts of closure on the community. There was only limited support for the restriction of trading hours. For people with cars or for adjacent residents, group centres may be perceived as "local" centres, and fulfil the same roles as local centres. However, local centres particularly serve the needs of people with fewer travel options, and provide an essential support function which enables those members of the community to retain their independence.

The following measures could form part of a strategy to encourage the revival of crucial local centres and minimise the social impacts of retail changes. To be effective, these measures require a whole of government approach, and close cooperation with the retail industry.

The following positive measures to prevent closure, or minimise the social impacts of retail changes, follow from an analysis of the factors which appear to contribute to success or vulnerability of local centres:

- Improve relative accessibility of local centres
- Increase population in catchment area
- Facilitate broadening of services and mix of uses (eg. through lease purpose clauses)
- Programs to strengthen management and marketing skills
- Improve design ie. safety and appearance
- Discourage continued vacancies (eg. by temporary uses)
- Ensure fair market practices through regulation and Government policy.

Community consultation addressed the possibility of restricting growth of larger centres, and participants could see no value in increasing floor space there. However, members of the small business community strongly supported restrictions on the further growth of town centres.

Additional measures to ameliorate the social impacts of closure could include:

- facilitating mixed use in suburbs without local centres (eg. 'corner shop' attached to residence)
- facilitating transport, home delivery and support services.

Members of the business community suggested that possible measures to facilitate redevelopment of closed local centres would, in addition to the above, help to minimise the impacts on local property owners. These impacts are acknowledged to have significant flow-on social impacts. These suggested measures include:

- consideration to waiving of betterment for redevelopment which meets certain objectives (eg. retains local convenience retail function/community meeting place)
- facilitation of lease variations for change of use
- more flexible lease purpose clauses to simplify changes in use.

Before preparing an overarching strategy to incorporate some or all of these measures it is strongly recommended that further consultations with the community be undertaken. These consultations should be based on a holistic approach to planning for the future of individual suburbs and the diverse needs of communities within those suburbs.

7.2 Social Impact Assessment Criteria

Based on the analysis of the consultations and the findings of the local centre analysis, a set of four social impact assessment criteria was developed, which appear to encompass the full range of issues recorded. These criteria should form the basis for assessing the social impacts of retail change in the ACT.

The social impact assessment criteria are summarised in Table 5.1 in Section 5.3.

The criteria provide a basis for measuring the social impacts of the following effects, identified as issues during the consultation process:

- access effects
- cultural effects
- transportation effects
- economic effects.

Based on these criteria, a series of possible measures is proposed to enable quantification in the course of conducting a social impact assessment of proposed retail change. These measures are outlined in Section 5.4.

Cultural effects are the most difficult to quantify in a meaningful way and may be more amenable to assessment through consultation.

7.3 Social Impact Assessment Methodology

This study reviewed a number of possible approaches to the social impact assessment of retail change in the ACT. Two approaches were selected as most appropriate and tested using case studies. The approaches tested were multi-criteria analysis and impact display tables. Testing demonstrated that both techniques could be applied to an assessment of retail change in the ACT, with the multi-criteria analysis providing a comprehensive assessment of the social impacts of major changes to retail provision.

Multi-criteria analysis, although having relatively high data and cost/time frame requirements, offers a useful technique for assessing different criteria against various objectives. The impact display table, by contrast, has relatively low data and time frame requirements, but allows benefits and losses of a proposed change to be compared. It is recommended that multi-criteria analysis be applied to proposals involving a major expansion in town centres or group centres¹¹, with consequent likely major impacts on existing retail provision. A major proposal is considered to be one where the economic impacts may result in significant changes to the retail hierarchy. It is further recommended that the impact display table technique be applied to proposals involving changes likely to have impacts only in the local area. The criteria and measures outlined in Section 5.4 of this report should be used as the basis for assessing the social impacts of retail change.

The relative importance of the criteria and the measures by which they may be assessed cannot be determined without information derived from two important sources:

- shopper and household surveys to determine where people shop now, and why, and who relies on local centres, and what for; and
- community consultations to confirm measures and to elicit community weighted values in relation to the criteria and measures developed.

These surveys and consultations should be carried out when a major proposal for retail change is being considered. Definition of significant change should be identified during development of the integrated retail strategy, to provide a trigger for such assessment.

¹¹ What constitutes a major increase will need to be quantified in order to provide a trigger for social impact assessment.

APPENDIX 1A

Summary of Relevant Issues Raised in Submissions to Retail Trading Hours Review

APPENDIX 1A

Summary of Retail Trading Hours Review Submissions Relating to Social Impacts of Retail Change

centre characteristics	physical effects	population affected	social effects on population	benefits	importance of local centre
location in centre of suburb most vulnerable to competition from GC	closure of centre	aged, parents at home with children	too far to walk to GC; dangerous to walk across large carparks with shopping trolleys	location next to school/preschool incorporate drop off with shopping	newsagent often social centre especially in relation to children & older people without cars
		ultimately all the population, when reduced competition leads to inevitable reduction in quality of service	difficulty in carrying home shopping		service station provides local workshop & repair facilities and sometimes driveway service
	increased reliance on major centres for all goods and services		process of shopping and paying bills will become a very time consuming business which will exacerbate problems of alienation, marginalisation experienced by people with special needs		small business/corner store focus of community interaction
	increased traffic around town centres	all	congestion, pollution adding stress and health risks to shopping expedition		

closure of tenancies	vandalism	other tenants	morale		as residents become less attached to local community travelling out of suburb to schools, church etc local centres may have critical role in promoting local identity & neighbourly caring
closure of school	viability of shops				beyond convenience shopping: local information exchange; safe destination for children; place to be known & know others
extended hours in major centres	extended hours in local centres	small business operator and their families	unable to provide care & attention to families, lost R&R, financial futures outside their control	convenient access to a wide range of goods & services	close to community, actively involved in supporting & fostering local community needs in sports, culture & welfare as well as neighbourliness
	24 hour access to goods	shift workers, carers for disabled, one car families, single parents, emergency services, tourists	increased convenience		strong local centres reduce travel to major centres saving time, money, services & infrastructure costs
		retail workers outside normal hours, with child care needs	disruption to family		
critical activities: supermarket, newsagent, chemist, service station	viable centre	children, aged & infirm, mothers with children within walking distance			

shopping mall trading Sundays	recreational use of centres	community as a whole	loss of traditional social gatherings such as picnics, BBQs, sports, all of which help to create family and community cohesion		
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APPENDIX 2A

Selected Groups and Agencies Surveyed

APPENDIX 2A

Selected Groups and Agencies Contacted

Ms	Helen	McAuley	ACROD - ACT
Mr	Gary	Dellar	ACT Consumer Advisory Council
Mr	Rod	McDonald	ACT Council of Social Service
Mr	Jim	Purcell	ACT Council on the Ageing
Ms	Sandra	Renew	ACT Dept of Education & Training - Youth Affairs Section
Mr	Ian	Trewhella	ACT Disability Services Advisory Committee
Ms	Margo	Mitchell	Belconnen Community Service
Ms	Barbara	Ramsay	Chief Minister's Dept - ATSI Affairs Unit
Mr	Nick	Manikis	Chief Minister's Dept - Office of Ethnic & Multicultural Affairs
Ms	Patti	Kendall	Chief Minister's Dept - Women's Unit
Ms	Pam	Marsh	Community & Information Referral Service
Ms	Lynn	Walsh	DUS - City Services Group
Mr	Mark	Tirakinian	Ethnic Communities Council of the ACT
Ms	Sheena	Dadge	Home Help Service ACT
Ms	Jillian	Grant	Northside Community Service
Mr	David	Matthews	Pathways
Ms	Desiree	Campbell	Planning the ACT Together
Ms	Vicki	Moseley	Southside Community Service
Ms	Julie	Quaass	Tuggeranong Community Service
Ms	Robin	Vote	Weston Creek Community Service
Ms	Betsy	Gallagher	Woden Community Service

APPENDIX 2B

Summary of Survey of Selected Groups and Agencies

Role and importance of local centres

- very important to particular groups and individuals who may depend upon the retail, service, and social roles
- role depends to some degree upon mix of uses
- convenience/quick trip shopping function to majority of residents
- essential basic shopping function to minority groups
- social/community focus
- informal public meeting place
- source of community identity and sense of belonging
- social transactions with shopkeepers - personal relationships
- support for continued independence of older people
- support for reintegration of marginal groups into the community
- monitoring role for older people and chronically ill
- place where children can safely be sent for small purchases
- place for fundraising
- information distribution point for local area
- enables residents to reduce their dependence on private or public transport
- public transport hub
- destination point for pedestrians, cyclists

Specific groups who may be adversely affected by recent changes

- small business owners, their families and employees
- local centre property owners
- older people
- frail aged people
- people who can't carry large loads
- people with disabilities (mobility, psychiatric, intellectual, vision- and hearing-impaired)
- carers
- people who don't own a car
- low income groups
- public housing tenants
- unemployed people
- women who are not working and are without a car during the day
- non-participants in the paid workforce
- parents at home with young children
- single parents
- younger people
- university/TAFE students
- young children (ages 8-12)
- youth, ages 13-18
- local office workers
- local medical practitioners

- migrants (overseas, interstate)
- new residents
- people of non-English speaking background
- aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- people with budgeting difficulties
- surrounding property owners
- people who need to get something quickly
- people with strong preferences for unpackaged goods
- people with strong preferences for personal contact with shopkeeper
- pedestrians
- cyclists

Possible adverse impacts

- loss of income by small businesses and property owners
- loss of livelihood for small business owners
- unemployment of small business owners and employees
- family breakdown of small business owners
- reduced employment opportunities for young unskilled labour
- reduced viability of other local retailers and medical practitioners
- reduced consumer choice
- reduced convenience
- price increases at local centres
- increased travel distances
- increased travel times
- increased reliance on public transport
- increased reliance on private transport
- increased cost of transport
- increased hardship for vulnerable groups
- loss of personal contact with certain shopkeepers
- reduced opportunities for social contact with local residents
- reduced community focus
- reduced community identity
- reduced attraction of local meeting place
- reduced local amenity
- reduced surrounding property values
- increased vandalism
- reduced community safety
- reduced frequency of shopping trips
- increased size of shopping loads
- reduced quality of life
- increased reliance on support services
- increased social isolation
- reduced capacity to function within the community
- reduced health through lack of exercise, fresh food
- increased health risk through lack of readily available medication
- increased greenhouse gas emissions
- increased pollution

Effects upon access to goods and services

- reduced convenience
- reduced range and price-value at local level
- reduced consumer choice
- reduced access for transport-poor and less mobile
- increased travel hardship for vulnerable groups
- increased walking distance for some groups
- increased cost of transport
- increased travel time
- increased demand for limited supply of disabled parking places
- increased one-stop shopping
- reduced impulse shopping
- reduced frequency of shopping trips
- increased size of shopping loads
- increased reliance upon support services for shopping assistance
- reduced familiarity with goods and services available
- reduced personal customer service
- reduced willingness of shops in larger centres to extend line of credit
- increased opportunities for confusion/disorientation of older people
- increased risk of some people "doing without" food and medication
- possible risk of losing bus stop at some local centres

Most significant impacts

- loss of family businesses and small businesses
- stress suffered by families of small business owners
- unemployment/loss of savings of small business owners
- reduced consumer choice
- increased prices at local centres
- loss of personal contacts and familiarity
- loss of regular social opportunities
- loss of amenity at local area level
- deterioration of social fabric at neighbourhood level
- increased social isolation
- increased dependency
- increased alienation from community life

Possible impacts of closure of vulnerable local centres

- acceleration of impacts of recent changes
- increased disadvantage for vulnerable groups who depend most on local centres
- reduced health for older people for whom walking is main form of exercise
- increased isolation for those people who are unable to use public transport and don't drive
- increased dependency upon support services
- increased demand for home delivery services
- increased travel times, distances, costs, hardships
- increased demand for and reliance upon public transport
- increased use of cars
- reduced viability for nearby businesses (eg. medical practitioners, service stations)
- loss of community focus

- loss of community identity
- loss of local meeting place
- loss of local amenity
- relocation of some residents to other areas with consequent loss of social networks
- increased antisocial behaviour as youth are forced to travel farther to larger centres with less supervision
- improved surrounding [residential] property values following redevelopment

APPENDIX 2C

List of Focus Group Invitees

APPENDIX 2C

List of Focus Group Invitees

ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Canberra Property Owners' Association
Canberra Small Business Council
Commercial and Retail Traders Association
Shop Distributive & Allied Employees Association

ACT Council of Social Service
Northside Community Service
Southside Community Service
Woden Community Service
Weston Creek Community Service
Belconnen Community Service
Tuggeranong Community Service

Community & Information Referral Service
ACT Dept of Education & Training - Youth Affairs Section
Pathways
Streetlink Northside
Streetlink Southside
Majura Drop-in Centre
Thomas Cahill Cottage
Civic Youth Centre
Woden Youth Centre
Weston Creek Youth Centre
Belconnen Youth Centre
Tuggeranong Youth Centre
Koori Youth Program
Ethnic Communities Council
ACTCOSS
YWCA
Canberra Community Housing for Young People
ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
Youth Affairs Network of the ACT

ACROD ACT
FOCUS ACT
Disabled Persons International (ACT)
Mental Health Foundation
SHOUT

DARE
Canberra Blind Society
Royal Blind Society
Koomarri Association
Arthritis Foundation of the ACT
ACT Society for Physically Handicapped
Deafness Forum
Independent Living Centre
ACT Disability Services Advisory Committee
ACT Disability Aged & Carer Advisory Service

Respite Care ACT
FABRIC - Family Based Respite Care
Carers Association of the ACT
ACT Council on the Ageing
Community Options
Woden Senior Citizens Club
Belconnen Senior Citizens Club
Turner Senior Citizens Club
Meals on Wheels
Handyhelp ACT
Home Help Service ACT
Dickson Seniors Network
Dickson Health Centre
Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association
War Widows Guild of Australia
Country Women's Association
HACC Advisory Committee
c/- ACT Health & Community Care

Belconnen Health Centre
Canberra Women's Health Centre
City Health Centre
Community Centre for Injecting Drug Users
Gilmore Clinic
Health & Counselling Service
University of Canberra
Kippax Health Centre
Melba Community Health Centre

Narrabundah Health Centre
 Phillip Community Health Centre
 Tuggeranong Health Centre
 Women's Health Service
 Community Nursing Service
 ACT Health & Community Care

 Chief Ministers Dept - Womens Unit
 Women's Information & Referral Centre
 Women's Consultative Council
 c/- Community Relations Branch
 National Council of Women of Australia
 Older Women's Network Action
 Majura Women's Group
 Children's Day Care
 Children's Youth & Family Services Bureau
 Canberra One Parent Family Support
 Havelock Housing Association

 Ethnic Communities Council of the ACT
 Chief Minister's Dept - Office of Ethnic &
 Multicultural Affairs
 Multicultural Consultative Council
 c/- Community Relations Branch

 Chief Minister's Dept - ATSI Affairs Unit
 ATSI Consultative Council
 c/- Community Relations Branch
 Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health
 Service
 Bogong Community Corporation
 Streetlink
 Ngunawal ACT & District Aboriginal
 Council of Elders
 Ngunawal ACT & District Indigenous
 Peoples Association
 ACT Ngunnawal Elders Council Inc

 Migrant Resource Centre
 Tuggeranong Link Welfare Service
 Tuggeranong Link Welfare Service
 Vietnamese Social Welfare Office
 Croatian Welfare Centre

 Client & Community Relations Section
 ACT Housing Trust
 CARE credit & debt counselling
 Centacare

Anglican Care Force
 Salvation Army Community Services
 St Vincent de Paul
 Smith Family, Woden

 Bureau of Consumer Affairs
 Canberra Consumers Inc
 ACT Consumer Advisory Council
 Tenants' Union

 Reid Residents' Association
 Narrabundah Residents Group
 Yarralumla Residents Association
 Local Area Planning Advisory Committee 1
 Local Area Planning Advisory Committee 2
 Local Area Planning Advisory Committee 3
 Association of Community Councils
 North Canberra Community Council
 Weston Creek Community Council
 Belconnen Community Council
 Gungahlin Community Council
 Tuggeranong Community Council

 Royal Australian Planning Institute
 DUS - City Services Group
 Community Development Network of the
 ACT
 ACT Community Safety Committee
 Ngunnawaal Neighbourhood Centre
 65 Government Primary Schools
 14 private individuals

APPENDIX 2D

List of Focus Group Participants

APPENDIX 2D

List of Focus Group Participants

	DATE	TIME	VENUE
1	Mon 27 November	9.30am-1.00 pm	Majura Community Centre
2	Tues 28 November	9.30am-1.00 pm	Belconnen Community Centre
3	Thurs 30 November	9.30am-1.00pm	Tuggeranong Community Centre
4	Friday 1 December	9.30am-1.00pm	Woden Town Centre Library

	Organisation				Position
1	Narrabundah Health Centre	Ms	Debbie	Cameron	
1	Yarralumla Residents Association	Ms	Sue	Clarke	President
1	Narrabundah Residents Group	Ms	Sue	Scheerlink	Member
2	Belconnen Community Council	Mr	Graeme	Evans	President
2	Canberra Small Business Council	Mr	Norman	Henry	
2		Mr	Geoff	Quayle	
2	Belconnen Health Centre	Mr	Robert	Beaumont	Nurse Practitioner
2	Belconnen Community Service	Ms	Helen	Saha	Aged Care worker
2	ACT Council on the Ageing	Ms	Ann	Wentworth	Member
2		Ms	Heather	Filmalter	
2		Ms	Norma	Flint	
2		Ms	Val	Lianos	
3	Richardson Primary School	Ms	Elizabeth	Cox	Principal
3	Kambah Foodtown	Mr	Rick	Scheeren	Foodtown Chairman
3	Women's Consultative Council	Ms	Paula	Calcino	
3	Tuggeranong Health Centre	Ms	Leslie	Calvert	Nurse Practitioner
4	Weston Creek Community Council and Weston Creek Community Service	Mr	Bob	Sutherland	Chair
4	Phillip Community Health Centre	Ms	Jenelle	Reading	Manager
4	HACC Advisory Committee	Mr	Paul	Free	Chair
4	Handyhelp ACT	Ms	Helen	Holgate	Executive Officer
4		Mr	George	Bulbrook	

APPENDIX 2E

Retail Change Options

APPENDIX 2E

Retail Change Options

Introduction

The three retail change options selected represent different responses to market forces and are motivated by different rationales. It may be possible to combine various elements of these options into a single retail strategy.

Three further measures are also put forward which may be combined with any one of the three options. They represent different ways of meeting consumer demand in cases where local centres may not be viable, may not be provided, or may be inaccessible.

The potential social impacts of these options and measures will be tested in the workshops.

Option 1: Respond to market pressures

Objective: to respond to expressed consumer demand through minimal government intervention in market forces.

Rationale: that the market will best reflect the desires and needs of the general community.

Approach: permissive.

Likely outcomes:

- expansion of floor space in group and town centres
- continued loss of market share by local centres

Discussion:

Local centres which are presently vulnerable would continue to decline to a point at which property owners and the community would demand that the government permit a change of use from commercial to some other more viable use, for business and community safety reasons.

Group centres and town centres would continue to expand and compete with remaining local centres. In order to survive, some remaining local centres would be likely to adopt market niche strategies, targeting consumers with higher incomes through specialty goods. Local centres serving lower income groups would be likely to struggle on, but would remain vulnerable. In general, convenience shopping at local centres would be expected to diminish in terms of product range, and to reflect higher cost structures in higher relative prices.

Eventually, a new market equilibrium would be reached after a period of "shake-out", in which certain suburbs would regard the nearest group or town centre as their local centre, and remaining local centres would offer a different range of goods and services from that which is currently available.

Option 2: Restrict growth in group and town centres

Objective: to dampen consumer demand for larger centres in order to return the market to a previous state.

Rationale: that local centres should be protected from further competition.

Approach: to intervene through the application of disincentives to larger centres, eg. restricted trading hours, higher relative parking fees, higher levies for property owners, maximum floor space limits.

Likely outcomes:

- little or no growth of group and town centres
- regulation of trading hours in larger centres
- slower decline of local centres
- possible recovery of some local centres as market share is regained

Discussion:

Local centres which are presently vulnerable would be likely to continue to decline as they are unlikely to recapture market share automatically. Group and town centres can be expected to exert tremendous pressure to remove restrictions which they perceive as artificially limiting their competitiveness, and to seek other ways of maintaining their market share (eg. heavy discounting or greater advertising). The general community would be expected to object to the loss of a useful benefit, and to the imposition of what would be perceived as penalties for shopping in larger centres.

Option 3: Encourage revival of local centres

Objective: to preserve and increase consumer demand for local centres by improving their competitiveness.

Rationale:

- that local centres play a vital role in community life which should be supported
- that small businesses located in local centres have limited skills and resources to compete effectively
- that overall demand can be expanded to the benefit of the retail sector generally.

Approach: to intervene through active encouragement of initiatives which enhance the competitiveness of local centres, eg. physical upgrading, Main Street program funding, increased mix of uses, co-location of other attractors, designation of urban infill sites, provision for local employment, pedestrianisation etc.

Likely outcomes:

- slower expansion of floor space at group and town centres
- increased overall retail demand
- increased public expenditure
- resident opposition to infill development

Discussion:

Many local centres could be expected to reverse their decline through a range of initiatives, however decline of some local centres may be irreversible due to their proximity to group or town centres. These centres may warrant service reduction to a basic minimum level, or closure in the case of several local centres serving the same catchment.

APPENDIX 2F

Summary of Focus Group Results

APPENDIX 2F

Summary of Focus Group Results

SESSION 1

1. Role and Importance of Local Centres

Are local centres important to the community?

- YES (where local centres exist)
- suburbs without local centres suffer from lack thereof (eg. Oxley, Banks)
- some centres may not function as part of the community because of their poor location or accessibility
- quality of service varies

Why are local centres important?

- especially important for people without transport (eg. aged, disabled, people at home with children)
- example of Narrabundah: supermarket closure for 3 months required organising a special bus and the Salvation Army to get groceries to older people - Narrabundah residents would suffer greatly without a local centre
- expectations and behaviour shaped by experience as a young person - traditionally Canberra residents have been able to walk to their local shops and therefore less dependent on cars
- educational role - schools use local shops to teach about prices
- health and fitness role - older people walk to local shops, many people walk their dogs there
- social network/community building function - personal contact with shopkeepers plus informal contact with other residents on the way and at the shops
- social centre of suburb
- community focus especially important for people at home during the day
- social support network provided by the dual services of chemist and newsagent, enhanced by presence of local medical practitioners (noted that chemist may prefer to co-locate with medical practitioners)
- shopkeeper is a member of local community
- local centre helps to support family culture
- being able to walk saves expense of bus or car
- friendly customer service
- rapid access
- convenience shopping
- source of identity for the local community
- socialising role in developing a sense of responsibility and belonging for younger children
- contribution to character of Canberra
- participatory nature of local centre as opposed to visitor nature of larger centres
- nearby/convenient source of basic goods (newspaper, bread and milk) for general community

- nearby/convenient source of basic services (chemist, postal, health centre) for general community
- sole source of goods and services for some groups within the community
- source of essential items (pharmaceuticals, fresh food) for people without transport or who are sick
- source of fresh groceries for people who must shop in small quantities
- source of specialty goods (eg. quality breads and pastries)
- local chemist provides valuable community service: source of informed advice for parent with sick child
- suburban location reduces vehicular traffic flows
- suburban location helps to support primary schools
- place where there is an opportunity to meet other people in similar circumstances (eg. mothers at home with children)
- shopkeepers offer personal customer service (which may be unavailable at larger centres)
- shopkeepers offer additional services: free delivery within local area, transport in special cases
- safe place to send young children to do shopping
- source of employment for local youth
- place where it is easy to park
- site for small businesses
- role in keeping commercial rents manageable
- quick service

2. Profile of Local Centre Users

What are the characteristics of the community who use local centres?

- types of customers depend on mix of services (eg. chemist draws wide cross-section of community)
- aged persons (a growing population)
- frail aged persons
- people without transport
- people with disabilities
- people at home in the day with young children
- people not in the paid workforce
- young children
- young teenagers
- working couples with limited time
- people who run out of an essential item
- health centre patients and patients of other associated medical services
- commuters on their way home
- commuters travelling home to other suburbs if the centre is located on a main road (eg. Dickson)
- people with infrequent use of cars
- people with poor public transport
- families
- single parent families
- single income families
- unemployed people

- people receiving pensions and welfare assistance
- housebound people
- people recovering from illness or surgery
- people with special dietary needs
- people who require home delivery service
- low income groups
- renters
- people of non-English speaking background
- primary school teachers
- occupants of new households
- non-residents attracted to specialty shops (eg. bakery at Hughes)
- joggers
- cyclists
- people exercising their dogs
- residents of nearby medium-density housing
- other small business people
- carers and volunteer service providers

3. Access Issues

What do people need to access?

SERVICES

- chemist and newsagent - general community (chemist's customers are predominantly older people and households with children)
- postal service, takeaway, supermarket - general community
- convenient services - chemist, newsagent, hairdresser
- EFTPOS services and other banking services
- health facilities for the elderly
- medical services: chemist and doctor

FOOD

- fresh food
- convenient basic items - bread and milk
- deli - Italian community in case of Narrabundah
- restaurants and specialty shops - draw people from other areas
- sandwich shops/lunch places - local office workers (however other local shops do not appear to benefit significantly)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- bus stop

SOCIAL

- social contact
- aged persons need to access church and community hall in addition to the above

What are their access constraints?

- people without own transport need to be within walking distance

- people with mobility problems (aged, disabled, people with young children) need to be within walking distance
- people who are walking need footpaths in good condition
- walking limits the amount you can carry or push in a trolley so people need to shop more frequently
- people with mobility problems need level access/ramps/smooth pavements
- aged persons need somewhere to sit and rest after walking
- mobility problems including prams and young children may limit access to alternative mode of travel eg. bus
- time constraints vary within groups so not possible to generalise
- Narrabundah residents without cars must catch bus to Woden if local shops do not provide necessary goods or services
- people cannot carry large loads of shopping on a bus
- people cycling need somewhere to safely park their bicycle
- centre needs to be located on major commuting route for quick vehicular access
- people driving to shops after work are usually in a hurry
- parking needs to be easy to find and to get in and out of
- pedestrian system and local centre need to be accessible to wheelchairs and prams (avoid steps, provide ramps, wider footpaths and aisles, remove turnstiles)
- frail aged need places free from crowds, skateboarders
- frail aged may rely on carers or volunteers to do their shopping and these people need to shop quickly (time constraints)
- cost of bus or taxi may be too high for people with limited disposable income
- cyclists need place to park bicycles
- dog owners need place to tie dogs
- aged persons and children need doors which open easily
- people in a hurry need to be able to park easily

4. Features Which Influence Use of Local Centres

What makes a local centre attractive to the community?

SERVICE

- friendly customer service
- good range of services - consumers value the convenience of combining a number of tasks so may travel to another centre if one key service is lacking (eg. chemist)
- free delivery of goods within local area
- availability of credit
- financial services (EFTPOS outlet, automatic teller, bill-paying agency)

PRICE

- prices - higher price may be acceptable for small loads but if the bill is over a certain amount people who are mobile prefer to go to a large supermarket
- competitive prices
- proximity to where people live and small scale both contribute to social role of local centre

CONVENIENCE

- convenience of shopping in a small place which you can get to quickly and park at easily
- good pedestrian access (safe, uninterrupted by road crossings, attractive approach, well maintained footpaths)
- good wheelchair access
- good vehicular access - accessible location, sufficient parking
- location on frequently travelled route and on bus route
- free parking
- quick shopping

APPEARANCE

- good maintenance
- good design and layout
- good presentation
- good landscaping
- cleanliness
- outlook

COMFORT

- seating including outdoor seating
- shaded car parks
- state of footpaths
- wide footpaths
- weather proofing (awnings, shade trees, air conditioning)
- security/safety (perceived and actual)
- lighting

QUALITY

- competitive prices, quality and consistency of goods and services
- freshness of food
- availability of specialty goods (eg. non-allergy foods, specialty lines)
- presence of specialty shops (eg. good bakery)

SOCIAL AMENITY

- reason to linger (coffee shops, place to sit, place to meet)
- likelihood of meeting other people
- sense of community
- quality of experience as an outing

ASSOCIATED USES

- overlooking of play areas
- presence of additional services (eg. health centre, library outlet)
- public amenities (toilets, baby change facility, telephones, postbox, private postboxes, postal services, community noticeboard)
- attractive and useful adjoining land uses (eg. park, school, doctors' offices)

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- awareness of importance of local shops and the need to support them

- sense of shopkeeper as part of the community

What makes a local centre unattractive to the community?

- negative of the above
- evidence of decline (vacant shop(s), empty shelves, poor maintenance)
- takeover by a section of the community (youth, homeless, unemployed)
- evidence of vandalism (obvious security measures, graffiti, breakages)
- poor visibility of shops and/or parking from road
- proximity to alternative larger centre
- better public transport access to larger centres

SESSION 2 - EXAMINATION OF RETAIL CHANGE OPTIONS

1. Option 1: Responding to Market Pressures

Which elements of the community would be most affected by likely outcomes?

- people without transport
- people with poor public transport
- aged persons
- people with disabilities
- incapacitated people
- people with young children
- single parent families
- people not in the paid workforce
- unemployed people
- low income groups
- disadvantaged people
- primary school children
- primary school teachers
- young adults
- teenagers
- general community
- surrounding property owners (residential and commercial)
- renters living near local centres
- future generation of adults
- other traders and small businesses
- people of non-English speaking background
- people not comfortable driving in traffic
- community service providers

What effects would be felt by the community?

- closure of local centres could have drastic results for some older people
- severe effects on community structure
- reduced consumer choice
- reduced convenience
- increased walking distance to centres and bus stops
- rising prices at local centres would force many to make other shopping arrangements
- more people would depend on buses to take them to larger centres
- reduced social opportunities
- loss of sense of community
- increased isolation
- increased dependence on transport and community services
- loss of independence for aged staying in their own homes
- in longer term as the suburbs age the demand for local centres will return but sites may be unavailable
- loss of important part of economy
- loss of social cohesion
- loss of livelihoods
- diminution of Canberra's special character

- diminution of community control
- oligopoly in supermarkets resulting in less competition, higher prices, possibly reduced trading hours
- increased unemployment
- increased travel distance
- increased travel cost
- increased traffic flows and associated congestion
- increased community costs (eg. graffiti removal, maintenance of bus interchanges, road repairs and accidents)
- cost shift to public sector in long term (short term public to private shift)
- reduced viability for primary schools without local centres (reduced enrolments)
- school canteens would have to expand services
- loss of educational/socialisation role of local shops for young children
- significant loss in property values in affected suburbs
- formation of ghettos in some areas where people are unable to relocate
- creation of pockets of highly disadvantaged and isolated people possibly leading to depression, increased violence, increased drug dependency
- increased budget requirements for service providers
- increased incidence of health problems

2. Option 2 : Restricting Growth in Group and Town Centres

Which elements of the community would be most affected by likely outcomes?

- same groups as in option 1 but to a lesser degree
- general community if trading hours were restricted to those which applied previously (negatively affected)
- low income groups if parking charges were raised
- small retailers within larger centres (positively affected by restriction of floor space)
- property investors in the larger centres
- people who work disadvantaged
- shift workers disadvantaged
- people who prefer to shop outside normal hours
- teenagers who hang out at larger centres (reduced access)
- people employed specially to work outside normal hours
- local traders positively affected
- specialty stores and large department stores in town centres positively affected
- unions

What effects would be felt by the community?

- may not have much effect if nexus between growth of larger centres and decline of local centres is weak or nonexistent
- restricted trading hours would reduce convenience enjoyed by the general community
- restriction of Sunday trading hours would have wide impact on community
- restriction of late-night hours would benefit local centres
- group centres may play a greater role if growth of town centres were restricted
- group and local centres might cooperate rather than compete to improve services to the community
- increased safety for workers presently leaving work after dark

- increased viability of small specialty shops in larger centres
- specialty shops may prefer to locate in local centres because of lower rents
- increased local employment
- increased opportunities for social contact with other local residents
- greater equity if parking charges were consistent at larger centres
- unanticipated responses by larger centres to restrictions may be difficult to predict
- reduced consumer choice if hours restricted

3. Option 3: Encouraging Revival of Local Centres

Which elements of the community would be most affected by likely outcomes?

- benefits to community as a whole
- benefits to all groups listed in Option 1
- benefits to real estate agents (more properties, higher values)
- benefits to local wholesalers
- benefits to unemployed youth
- benefits to small businesses
- benefits to local centre property owners
- *nimbys* would be negatively affected
- possible disadvantage to group centre retailers
- disadvantage to traders at larger centres

What effects would be felt by the community?

- increased social cohesion
- regained/strengthened sense of community
- greater sense of belonging
- reduced disadvantage
- increased income and viability for small businesses
- improved customer service
- lower prices as capacity to compete effectively is improved
- possible lower rents as vacancy rates normalise
- possible increased rates due to higher public expenditure
- relocation of services from town centres to local centres
- specialty shops in larger centres may relocate to local centres due to lower rents
- cost of upgrading for public purse
- increased property values at local centres
- more "European" culture created
- possible opposition to change of use and redevelopment if community is not well-informed about the alternatives

4. Minimisation of Social Impacts

How could social impacts of some local centres closing be minimised?

- will vary by suburb - local area planning required to determine needs
- Measure A would mean subsidising local shop unless the business is viable
- Measure B preferred if the community is willing to support it
- Measure C may fail to capture all of those people in need, may conflict with sense of dignity and independence, and would benefit larger centres

- boost group centres
- increase service levels at group centres
- expand group centres carefully (could threaten remaining local centres otherwise)
- increase transport to group centres
- consider needs of property owners
- provide alternative community focus - recognise need for sense of belonging and find other ways to maintain it
- undertake consultation and surveys to identify special needs and how many affected
- facilitate change of lease purpose clauses
- offer taxi concessions to needy groups
- recognise diversity of community values
- develop joint planning strategy with the community
- consolidate LAPACs, precinct committees to avoid confusion
- allow corner shops to operate
- allow mobile grocery vendors (hawkers)
- allow mobile services
- encourage home delivery
- relocate aged persons to viable centres
- increase volunteer services
- concentrate schools, offices at larger centres
- improve road systems to cater for increased traffic
- increase provision of infrastructure
- require local area enrolments for primary schools
- target special need groups
- recognise changing demographics in planning
- improve public transport - provide mini-buses, community-based transport
- inform public about alternative options for goods and services

How could further closures be avoided?

- enforce lease purpose clauses to prevent vacant shops
- diversify services offered by individual retailers
- physical upgrading to improve appearance
- improve ease of parking
- improve maintenance
- improve safety
- provide safe pedestrian crossings/underpasses/overpasses
- improve footpaths - widen for prams, repair uneven and slippery surfaces
- break up large open areas to discourage skateboarding
- provide bus stop at local centre
- co-locate offices and sandwich shops
- co-locate health centres with shops
- co-locate library with shops
- co-locate doctors' surgeries with chemist and shops
- co-locate child care centres with convenience shops
- create "level playing field" - remove rent discounts and electricity discounts and inequities in penalty payments
- organise local markets at local centres to boost trade
- improve management and marketing skills of local traders

- embark on publicity campaign to restore confidence in local centres
- promote "shop local" strategy
- offer additional services at local centres (eg. courses for people at home, library outlets)
- control inappropriately high rents (and low rents for big supermarket chains at larger centres)
- regulate local markets through licensing to ensure that dollars spent are retained in ACT
- decentralise employment to local centres
- broaden the range of uses at local centres
- encourage restaurants, specialty shops and services, electronic communication users
- occupy vacant space with other uses
- locate significant attractors eg. community centres, child care centres
- form organisation of local centres to provide public transport, undertake marketing
- target special need groups
- allow redevelopment of local centre space for shops with residential above
- relocate university campuses
- offer incentives to lease out buildings
- provide local level transport service
- convert vacant space in local centres to group centre outlets

APPENDIX 2G

List of Business Survey Respondents and Meeting Attendees

APPENDIX 2G

List of Business Survey Respondents and Meeting Attendees

Business Contacts

Peak Body or Association

Contact Name

ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Builders Owners and Managers Association
Canberra Property Owners' Association
Canberra Small Business Council
Commercial and Retail Traders Association
Canberra Business Centre
Trade & Labour Council

Mark Baker
Ben Rayner
Tim Efkarpidis
Norman Henry
Chris Donoghue
Julian Webb
Jeremy Pynes

List of Attendees - Meeting of Independent Retailers

Name	Shop	Location
Ian Meldrum	Shop Ezy	Gordon/Narrabundah
Trish Simpson	Ace Supermarkets and Jacks Liquor Stores	refer list attached
John Krnc	Festival Supermarkets	Hawker/Lyneham
Tim Efkarpidis	Australian Independent Wholesalers Cannons	Fyshwick/Kambah
Terry Peppas	Shop Rite	Evatt
Theo Dimanhos	Festival	Yarralumla
Joe Delfino	Festival	Wanniassa
Peter Iliadis	Foodtown	Chapman
Manuel Xyrakis	Festival (Canberra Small Business Council)	-
Paul Tzotzis	Foodtown	Monash
John Lisdopoulos	Jacks	Rivett
Dominic Demarco	Festival	Charnwood

APPENDIX 2H

List of Vulnerable Local Centres

APPENDIX 2H

List of Vulnerable Local Centres¹ (as at mid-December 1995)

Most vulnerable	Supermarket already closed
Belconnen	Aranda
Belconnen	Emu Ridge
Belconnen	Kaleen Central
Belconnen	MacQuarie
Tuggeranong	Fadden
Tuggeranong	Kambah Boddington Crescent
Tuggeranong	Kambah Livingstone Ave
Tuggeranong	Kambah Marconi Crescent
Woden/Weston Creek	Chifley
Woden/Weston Creek	Farrer (1 closed)
Woden/Weston Creek	Fisher (1 closed)
Woden/Weston Creek	Rivett (1 closed)
Woden/Weston Creek	Weston
Most vulnerable	Supermarket likely to close in next 12 months
Belconnen	Fraser
Belconnen	Holt
Belconnen	Latham
Belconnen	Page
Belconnen	Weetangera
Tuggeranong	Kambah Hillview (Boddington Cr.)
Tuggeranong	Kambah Springbett St
Tuggeranong	Theodore
Tuggeranong	Wanniassa Sternberg Crescent
Woden/Weston Creek	Farrer (1)
Woden/Weston Creek	Fisher (1)
Woden/Weston Creek	Pearce
Woden/Weston Creek	Torrens
Woden/Weston Creek	Waramanga (1)
Most vulnerable	Supermarket may continue trading for longer period
Belconnen	Charnwood Tillyard Drive
Belconnen	Cook
Belconnen	Giralang
Belconnen	Higgins
Belconnen	Macgregor
Belconnen	McKellar

¹ This list was compiled in close consultation with business groups and should be reviewed at the time of preparing an integrated retail strategy.

Belconnen
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Tuggeranong
 Tuggeranong
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek

Less vulnerable local centres

Belconnen
 Belconnen
 Belconnen
 Belconnen
 Belconnen
 Belconnen
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Central
 Tuggeranong
 Tuggeranong
 Tuggeranong
 Tuggeranong
 Woden/Weston Creek
 Woden/Weston Creek

Melba
 Campbell
 Downer
 North Lyneham
 Gordon (if Conder opens)
 Kambah "A" Store Manheim Cres
 Chapman
 Holder
 Hughes
 Isaacs
 Lyons
 Rivett (1)
 Swinger Hill
 Waramanga (1)

Evatt
 Florey
 Hawker
 Kaleen south
 Scullin
 Spence
 Ainslie
 Braddon
 Deakin
 Hackett
 Griffith
 Lyneham
 Narrabundah
 O'Connor
 Red Hill
 Watson
 Yarralumla
 Gowrie
 Isabella Plains
 Monash
 Richardson
 Duffy
 Garran

APPENDIX 2I

Summary of Canberra Property Owners Association Survey of Shoppers

APPENDIX 2I

Summary of Canberra Property Owners Association Survey of Shoppers¹

Local Centres Surveyed:

Belconnen

- Cook
- Evatt
- Florey
- Giralang
- Kaleen (Festival - south Kaleen)
- Latham
- Page
- Spence

Central Canberra

- Ainslie
- Deakin
- Griffith
- Hackett
- Lyneham
- Narrabundah
- Red Hill
- Yarralumla

Woden/Weston Creek

- Duffy
- Garran
- Pearce
- Rivett
- Waramanga

Tuggeranong

- Kambah (Foodtown)
- Richardson

Catchment of local centres

Most of the local centres have a primary catchment area concentrated in the suburb in which the centre is located. 60% or more of respondents at 16 of the 23 centres came from the local suburb. 70% or more of respondents came from either the local suburb, or where a secondary catchment was identified in the survey results, one or two of the neighbouring suburbs. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p8).

¹ Purdon Associates Pty Ltd (11 December 1995), "Neighbourhood Retail Centres Survey - Canberra," Report to Canberra Property Owners Association

Local centres that attracted respondents from a wider catchment all had specialty shops or services in addition to the basic range of shops and services.

Characteristics of people who use the local centres

More women than men use local centres. In some Central Canberra centres two-thirds of respondents were women.

Respondents were classified into the age groups 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and over 64 years old. Children under 15 years old were not interviewed. Each age group was well represented in the survey, although the highest proportion of respondents were aged 35-44 (27%). 10% were over 64 years old. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p11)

Household structure of respondents was classified as single, single with dependent children, couple with dependent children and couple with no dependent children. 40% of respondents were from households with a couple with dependent children, but a significant proportion (29%) were from single households. 8% were from households with single parents with dependent children. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p11). Locational distribution of respondents in each category reflected the age structure of the suburb.

Frequency with which respondents use the centres

A consistent pattern of frequent use of local centres was derived from the results. Almost half (46%) of respondents visited the centre daily, and in total three quarters of respondents visited the centre several times a week. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p12)

Mode of transport to access centres

72% of respondents to the survey had come by car. 24% had walked. Car usage was lowest in Central Canberra centres, where 30% walked and 65% came by car. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p15).

Which shops and services are used by respondents

Each centre in the survey had at least one supermarket. Nearly 80% of respondents had used the supermarket during their visit to the centre. High usage rates were also recorded for chemists, newsagents, butchers and bakers. Where a post office was contained in the centre it was used by a high proportion of respondents. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p16)

How much respondents spend

Expenditure figures indicate that few respondents were doing major shopping. 55% of respondents spent between \$5 and \$20 on their visit to the centre. Only 6% spent more than \$50. Expenditure levels varied between centres, and tended to be higher in Central Canberra centres. (Purdon Associates December 1995, p17).

Specific attractions of the local centres

Respondents nominated good features of the centre as including:

- convenience of location (80% of respondents)
- friendly service (39% of respondents)
- availability of parking (24% of respondents)
- range of goods and services (21% of respondents)

Additional particular services were nominated for specific centres, including good restaurants and take-away food outlets, pleasing environment, quality of merchandise, quick service and specialty shops. (Purdon Associates December 1995, pp 17-18)

Possible improvements to local centres

Results to this question apparently frequently reflected the recent closure of a particular shop, and so these results are not enumerated here. However, additional services and other improvements are of interest.

Banking facilities were the most commonly suggested improvement in relation to additional services. Other improvements, although centre-specific, reflect the importance of these features to shoppers. These included: lower prices (from respondents at a number of specific centres), parking, landscaping and appearance. (Purdon Associates December 1995, pp 20-22)

Comparison of more and less vulnerable centres

The Purdon Associates report analysed the results of the survey in relation to the vulnerability of centres (refer Appendix 2B for a list of vulnerable centres). Few valid relationships can be drawn from this analysis, except in relation to the attractiveness of centres: whilst more vulnerable and less vulnerable centres ranked similarly with regard to convenience, the ~~less~~^{more} vulnerable centres did not perform as well with regard to the attractiveness of the following:

- goods and services
- environment
- parking
- hours of operation
- friendly service

(Purdon Associates December 1995, pp 31-32)

The results of the comparison were on the whole very centre-specific, and no overall clear picture can be drawn to explain performance levels of the centres.

APPENDIX 2J

Summary of Department of Urban Services' Survey

APPENDIX 2J

Summary of Department of Urban Services' Survey

What do you think are the best things about the shopping centre area?

Three best things	Narrabundah	Hughes	O'Connor
access	✓		
facilities - shops	✓	✓	
parking	✓	✓	
convenience		✓	✓
shops			✓
proximity			✓

What do you think are the worst things about the shopping centre area?

Three worst things	Narrabundah	Hughes	O'Connor
parking	✓		✓
paving	✓		
unattractive	✓	✓	✓*
cleaning		✓	✓*
landscaping		✓	
toilets			✓

* these were grouped together in the results

APPENDIX 4A

Summary Table of Key Features of Maps

APPENDIX 4A

Summary Table of Key Features Depicted on Maps

	Kaleen	Giralang	O'Connor	Palmerston	Holt	Richardson	Score
Roads	12	1	1	2	15	6	37
Primary school	9	1	0	0	15	6	31
Local centre	9	1	1	2	8	6	27
Oval	7	1	0	1	8	6	23
Trees	8	0	1	0	10	2	21
Park	3	1	1	2	10	3	20
Own house	11	1	1	2	3	0	18
Car parking	4	1	0	1	5	6	17
Paths	6	0	1	0	3	3	13
Playground	0	0	1	1	5	6	13
Group centre	1	0	0	0	7	0	8
Preschool	0	1	0	0	3	4	8
Friends' houses	5	0	0	0	2	0	7
Doctors' surgery	0	1	0	0	1	4	6
Church	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
Service station	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
High school	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
Rollerblade bowl	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
Vacant land	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Health centre	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Bus stop	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
Scout Hall	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Basketball court	1	0	0	0	3	0	4
Pedestrian crossing	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
Dirt track	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Library	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Paddocks	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
Pizza Hut	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Child care centre	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Playing field	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Reserve	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Swimming pool	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Townhouses	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Cricket pitch	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Under/overpass	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other school	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Drainage canal	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

	Kaleen	Giralang	O'Connor	Palmerston	Holt	Richardson	Score
Health clinic	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Forest	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lake	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Creek	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ridge	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Swim centre	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sport centre	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Community Hall	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Community Centre	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
McDonalds	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Units	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Aged persons units	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Golf course	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Naval Radio Tower	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

APPENDIX 5A

Overview of Approaches to Social Impact Assessment and Review of Techniques

APPENDIX 5A

Overview of Approaches to Social Impact Assessment and Review of Techniques

This appendix provides a brief overview of approaches to social impact assessments undertaken in New South Wales and Victoria and documents the current process in the ACT. Derived from this, an appropriate methodology is suggested to assess the social impacts of retail change in the ACT.

1. Review of SIA methodologies in other parts of Australia

SIA in New South Wales

NSW Office on Social Policy, Social Policy Directorate (February 1994) Techniques for Effective Social Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide (Best Practice Paper 8)

This report on best practices gives a comprehensive review of suitable analytical approaches to assessing social impacts and change and should be regarded as a guide to social impact assessment methodologies.

Key points raised in the report are:

- SIA may be regarded as a 3 part process of public problem solving, comprising:
 - public participation and involvement
 - the formal social impact assessment
 - after care, including an on-going monitoring, review and audit program (p15)
- The SIA and management process has nine stages (p16):

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Screening
 - deciding whether the project requires a SIA
2. Scoping
 - identify the issues and variables to be described or measured
 - delineate the study boundaries and likely areas of impact
 - involve affected individuals, groups or communities in the process
3. Profiling
 - analyse the current social context and summarise historical trends
 - prepare a social profile
4. Formulating alternatives
 - examine and compare development options or proposals for change, including the no-go option
5. Projecting and estimating effects
 - examine in detail the impacts of the options against the decision criteria
 - assess long term and short term impacts
 - take into account any cumulative impacts associated with similar types of development in the locality

THE DECISION

6. Deciding

- choose a course of action amongst the available alternatives in the light of a total environmental impact assessment
- if the no-go option is selected, the process ends here; otherwise, the next stage is entered - impact management

7. Impact management planning

- adjust planning objectives, operating procedures and design specifications
- devise an impact management plan. This can include strategies to minimise or avoid costs or losses (mitigation) and strategies to maximise the benefits

8. Monitoring and mitigating

- collect information about the actual effects
- apply this information to mitigate or avoid negative effects, to maximise positive effects, and to manage changes overall
- involve the various participants in the mitigation and monitoring process

9. Evaluating

- retrospectively review the social effects of the change being managed
- evaluate the effectiveness of the social assessment and management process that was used.

- Frameworks for measuring and weighing-up social impacts comprise:

- monetary (based on shadow prices or opportunity costs)
- indicators (using weights where possible)
- descriptive only (p19)

- Important principles for measuring social impacts identified as:

- quality of life
- social values and human needs
- environmental values and sustainability (ESD)
- existence values
- seeing the whole economy
- third party costs or externalities
- public goods and social goods
- welfare economic (willingness-to-pay or willingness-to-accept)

- OECD list of 'social concerns' of factors central to people's quality of life includes:

- a healthy life
- employment and quality of working life
- personal economic security
- individual development through education
- shelter and housing security
- personal safety and protection from crime
- social opportunity and participation
- pursuit of cultural and leisure activities
- a satisfactory living environment (p114)

- Cumulative impacts must be recognised (p18), including:
 - impacts resulting from minor developments, but resulting in significant social impacts over a period of time
 - impacts resulting from the interaction of the proposed project with other significant projects in the same area
 - significant population change
 - a range of individual effects which, when considered together, compound other social impacts
- Types of developments that may have cumulative impacts include (p19):
 - loss of residential use to commercial offices
 - declining strip shopping centres in suburban and rural areas

*NSW Office on Social Policy and Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW
(February 1995) Social Impact Assessment for Local Government: A handbook for
Councillors, Town Planners and Social Planners*

This report was developed as a handbook for Councils undertaking SIA. The following are key points made in the report:

- An adapted process for SIA for Local Government is proposed, comprising the following steps (p23):
 1. Screening
 - does the development proposal require a social impact assessment?
 2. Scoping
 - identifying issues and affected groups
 - notification and consultation with all relevant stakeholders and the community
 - negotiation with the proponent
 3. Profiling
 - data collection, identifying historical trends, assessing current social context to establish base line information
 - social profiles, social plans, safety audits and cultural plans can all be used to determine what impact a project may have on the social well-being of people in the community
 4. Predicting
 - using base line data identify future possible impacts (ie who, what, how)
 - address scenarios of the future social environment **with** and **without** the development
 5. Assessing
 - analysis of the impacts
 - assessing by categorising impacts against different criteria (eg magnitude, weighting, duration, current and future conditions, local policy goals) and separating significant impacts from less significant ones
 6. Evaluating
 - evaluate social impacts and develop mitigation measures for managing impacts (eg conditions of consent, section 94 plans)
 7. Recommending
 - whether the development should be approved and what mitigating measures should be adopted
 8. Deciding
 - the council either approves the development, with or without conditions, or it refuses the application
 - all relevant stakeholders should be informed
 9. Monitoring
 - monitoring both conditions of consent and the social impacts of the development
- The purpose of social impact tools are to (p31):
 - gathering data
 - listing types of social impacts
 - measuring or weighing up the significance of the impacts
 - including public input

- recommendations for a range of techniques suitable for local government on the basis that the techniques should be:
 - simple and not require complex procedures, extensive preparation or a large time commitment
 - not reliant on an extensive data base
 - bring new insight and information into the SIA and not simply repackage information or opinion available from other sources

Summary of techniques to measure social impacts

- Seven techniques to measure social impacts are examined in detail, these are:

Technique 1: cost-benefit analysis

Technique 2: cost-effectiveness analysis

Technique 3: social indicators

Technique 4: social auditing

Technique 5: multi-criteria analysis

Technique 6: impact display table

Technique 7: participatory computer modelling

A number of these techniques are not well-developed technically and advice on their application may be scant (p103).

The strengths and weaknesses of each of the techniques for SIA are set below:

1. Cost-benefit analysis

STRENGTHS

- the basic concept of cost-benefit ratio is easy to understand
- common monetary base is simple to interpret
- ease of comparison between alternatives
- no-go case is always considered
- useful for public sector projects with widespread community benefits
- appropriate for evaluating government programs or services with a social objective

WEAKNESSES

- it is difficult to identify and price all costs and benefits
- it can imply that non-quantifiable impacts are not significant
- there is no opportunity for the assignment of weights to various costs and benefits
- there is limited scope for public participation in the analysis
- benefit-cost ratios and net present value measures are easily misinterpreted and often simplistically used
- internal project costs and benefits are usually given more emphasis than external impacts
- obscures value judgements in the analysis and can imply that the process is rational and non-subjective, however, different people and groups will value impacts differently
- often used to justify projects rather than assess the magnitude of their impacts
- distributional and equity issues are easy to leave out of the analysis
- social and environmental impacts are often neglected
- the selection of the discount rate can make a large difference to the outcome
- the use of net present value criteria with higher discount rates biases the analysis against future generations

2. Cost-effectiveness analysis

- a technique broadly based on cost-benefit analysis principles but does not attempt to measure the benefits or losses from a project or program but identify the most cost-effective alternative to achieving some pre-defined outcome, policy goal or beneficial impact or way of avoiding a loss or negative impact

STRENGTHS

- provides basic comparative information for alternative approaches to a particular problem
- useful when most of the benefits of a project or program cannot be measured in monetary terms
- can be used when cost data is readily available and programs have single well-defined objectives
- in certain cases, it can be used for projects with multiple objectives
- if a policy decision has already been made, cost-effectiveness analysis can be useful in establishing the most efficient allocation of resources
- can identify the least cost combination of projects
- appropriate for evaluating government programs and services with a social objective (eg health)

WEAKNESSES

- is fairly limited in terms of the kind of projects or programs it can be used for
- may require more sophisticated forms of analysis to be undertaken as well in order to derive meaningful results
- does not help determine which impacts are the most important
- the technique cannot rank potential impacts

3. Social indicators

STRENGTHS

- provides a quick and easy to comprehend summary of a project's performance or of the social impacts of a development
- the periodic update of the indicators does not rely on subjective judgements by analysts
- indicators can be easy to update if they are based on existing data sources
- can be cost-effective way to monitor the impacts of several developments or projects, provided the indicators are shown to be sensitive to the projects or developments being monitored
- in association with other techniques, social indicators can be used for evaluating government programs or services with a social objective

WEAKNESSES

- indicators can be too broad brush to provide useful information to policy makers
- indicators need to be thoroughly tested for local sensitivities
- use of some indicators may mask local differences
- the causes of changes in aggregated indices may be obscured if the components of the index are not fully revealed
- some projects may require repeated costly data collection exercises if existing data sources are unavailable

4. Social Auditing

STRENGTHS

- it is an extremely thorough process
- most useful in broadening out a standard evaluation
- useful for a variety of community enterprises where a financial balance sheet does not tell the whole story of an organisation's achievements
- the values of the stakeholders are made explicit
- looks at community impacts that may be overlooked in standard appraisal models
- the social accounts can explicitly report on equity effects
- focuses on the values on which organisations or programs are based
- especially useful where community aspects of an organisation or program are a high priority
- appropriate for evaluating government programs or services with a social objective

WEAKNESSES

- no standard method of conducting social audit
- may be difficult to involve all the important stakeholders
- lengthy process
- may not achieve results if external auditors are not used
- as the methodology is not yet well-defined, the effectiveness of the technique is highly dependent on the skills, experience and approach of the auditor

5. Multi-criteria Analysis

STRENGTHS

- provides structure for decision making while still allowing flexibility
- particularly useful for complex problems with a great deal of information to manage and assess
- follows naturally from the way people tend to approach problems with multiple objectives
- flexible data requirements - methods are available for qualitative data, quantitative data, or a mixture of both
- allows different points of view to be dealt with explicitly through the use of weights
- allows information that is agreed upon by all parties to be distinguished from areas of contention (indicated by different weights)
- amenable to sensitivity analysis to determine how robust the final results are to changes in the underlying assumptions and methods
- does not require assignment of a monetary value to all quantities
- can identify where additional data would be useful and where additional data would have little impact on the final decision
- applicable for government programs and services with a social objective

WEAKNESSES

- does not overcome fundamental problems associated with comparing quantities that some would argue are not comparable, but does provide more flexibility than is available with, say, cost-benefit analysis
- variety of evaluation methods available without clear indication that one is better than another
- since many of the methods are complex and remain a 'black box' to the decision maker, they can lead to either mistrust or excessive faith in the results

- concentration on the definition of explicit weights can provide a false sense of objectivity about the remainder of the analysis - there are opportunities for introducing implicit weights at all stages of the analysis and these may remain undetected
- considerable effort is needed to obtain the information for the impact table and the weights
- methods for incorporating uncertainty explicitly into the analysis are not yet well developed

6. Impact Display Table

STRENGTHS

- easy to use and understand
- most useful when significant existence values make other techniques inappropriate
- clearly displays critical dilemmas to decision makers
- can view all the major losses and benefits at once
- useful in comparing a few options
- may be employed when resources to conduct fuller valuations are limited
- can be used for evaluating government programs or services with a social objective where time and resources are limited

WEAKNESSES

- no attempt is made to weigh impacts or rank alternatives
- it can mislead, if statements are not sufficiently backed by justifications
- difficult to assess a large number of options

7. Participatory Computer Modelling

STRENGTHS

- provides a forum in which people from different roles and different organisations can interact
- allows dialogue between various different and possibly conflicting perspectives on a problem or issue
- the approach is holistic not piecemeal
- emphasises as its goal the greater understanding of complex, dynamic systems
- the simulation models produced through workshops can be used to test for sensitivity to key variables, impacts or policy/project alternatives
- the approach aims for consensus and the highlighting of critical knowledge gaps

WEAKNESSES

- proficient facilitation is essential in order to prevent experts from having too much emphasis on the process
 - participants need to reflect a balance between competing interests and outlooks, there is potential for inadvertent stacking
 - computerised systems can appear to determine outcomes and not assist or inform them.
- Selecting the most appropriate technique for a SIA can be a difficult task, with inevitable constraints on available time, funds, data and expertise (p103).

Technique	Ease of use	Data requirements	Cost and time frame	Methodological weaknesses	Technical development
1. cost-benefit analysis	medium	high	high	high	high
2. cost-effectiveness analysis	high	medium	medium	low	medium
3. social indicators	high	medium	medium	low	medium
4. social auditing	medium	medium	high	low	low
5. multi-criteria analysis	medium	high	high	medium	medium
6. impact display table	high	low	low	low	medium
7. participatory computer modelling	low	high	high	medium	low

A comparison of the techniques shows the relatively high ease of use and low methodological weaknesses of three techniques. These are cost-effectiveness analysis, social indicators and impact display table. Multi-criteria analysis, although having relatively high data and cost/time frame requirements, does offer the technique for assessing different criteria against various objectives. The specific weaknesses of the cost-effectiveness analysis and the social indicator approaches make them inappropriate for use in the assessment of the social impacts of retail change in the ACT.

2. SIA in Victoria

Robin Saunders (June 1995) Conflict resolution through environmental impact assessment, International Association of Impact Assessment Conference Durban

• Procedures for EIA in Victoria are set as follows:

1. **Screening** - to determine whether an EIA is required, using ANZECC, 1991 factors of
 - the character of the receiving environment
 - the potential impacts of the proposal
 - resilience of the environment to cope with change
 - confidence of prediction of impacts
 - presence of planning or policy framework or other procedures which provide mechanisms for managing potential environmental impacts
 - other statutory decision-making processes which may provide a forum to address the relevant issues of concern

- the degree of public interest

2. Scoping and alternatives

3. Gathering information, analysis of impacts, mitigation measures, monitoring programs and environmental management plans - preparation of EES

4. Review - by Government prior to public exhibition

5. Post approval impact management

- Consultative committee process has the objective to guide the preparation of the EES by the proponent so that the EES addresses the key issues and provides a fair treatment of these issues

- EES Consultative Committees are low-key, consultative groups which give representatives of the main parties (or stakeholders) a chance to put their views and have input into the information provided to the public and to decision makers. Typically membership would be representatives of the proponent, the planning authority, community, environmental and user groups, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the EPA, and other relevant agencies of state and local governments

- becoming an integral part of the EIA and dispute resolution process.

3. SIA in the ACT

Report prepared by Wendy Bell Planning Consultant for the ACTPA Social Planning Section (May 1993)

- The broad process for undertaking SIA in the ACT, as set out in Part IV of the Land Act, is:

- policy planning/context

- proposal

- triggers

- scoping

- notice

- Preliminary Assessment (prescribed classes in Territory Plan Appendix II or as directed by the Minister, Schedule 3 of the Land Act for content requirements)

- evaluation

- Public Environment Report

- Environmental Impact Statement

- evaluation

- A set of criteria for evaluating an SIA has been developed which comprise a matters such as compliance with objectives and underlying principles for SIA, compliance with scoping requirements and technical adequacy/accuracy.

4. SIA for Retail Change in the ACT

Matters that a methodology for an assessment of social impacts of retail change needs to cover:

- triggers
 - scoping
 - matters to be addressed in a SIA in a PA, PER and EIS
 - ways to assess the social impacts (eg multi-criteria analysis, impact display table)
 - community involvement
 - criteria for government to conduct an evaluation of a SIA
 - monitoring and evaluation
-
- adopt a range of methodologies/techniques for assessing social impacts necessary to address different issues, impacts and scale
 - tailor assessment techniques to suit data already collected and available, likely resources and expertise available, easy to apply techniques with limited technicality
 - two broad approaches numerical or participatory.

APPENDIX 5B

Case Studies Testing Suggested Techniques

APPENDIX 5B

Methodology Test through Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: Proposed expansion of a Town Centre - Multi-Criteria Analysis

This case study assesses the impacts of a hypothetical proposal for major extension to "X" Town Centre, comprising one large supermarket and a range of specialty shops.

Specifying alternative options

1. "X" Town Centre proposed extension of a supermarket and a range of specialty shops
2. Extension to Town Centre of only the specialty shops
3. No change, no extension

The case study is based on a number of assumptions, which provide an indication of what the possible impacts of alternatives might be. These assumptions are outlined below.

Assumptions relevant to social impact assessment (to be confirmed by separate economic analyses):

Alternative 1

- all most vulnerable local centres would close
- less vulnerable local centres would also be affected by reduced trade, leading to possible vacancies and degradation in quality of appearance and service

9 of the most vulnerable local centres in this district would close under this alternative.

In 5 additional local centres the services would reduce and supermarkets may close.

Alternative 2

- most vulnerable centres would continue to decline, with those likely to close within 12 months probably doing so unless other measures were put in place
- 4 of the most vulnerable local centres would close under this alternative
- 4 additional local centres may close under this alternative:

Alternative 3

- most vulnerable centres where supermarket is still open might capture some of specialty shop market with relocation ie they may survive longer
- 4 of the most vulnerable centres would still close under this alternative

Specifying criteria

Criteria have been developed with reference to the results of the consultations and are listed in Section 5.3. Measures relevant to these criteria were developed with reference to an analysis

of available data. The list of specific measures are given in Section 5.4. Table 5B.1 below presents the criteria in relation to relevant measures and the alternatives.

Standardising and weighting the measures

A consultation exercise should be undertaken to develop weights for those measures that can be weighted.

Evaluating the alternatives

Evaluation of alternatives will depend on quality of data, particularly the level of quantifiable data. Where data can not be quantified, the evaluation will need to be based on qualitative assessments. Table 5B.1 presents indicative results of an evaluation of the 3 alternatives. Social impacts are clearly highest for Alternative 1 and lowest for Alternative 2. By presenting multi-criteria analyses in this format, it is possible to make informed decisions about the likely social costs to the community of a decision in favour of any of the three alternatives.

Presenting the results

In this case presenting the table would be the most suitable way of presenting the results.

Monitoring

Regular monitoring of social impacts is essential. Social indicators could be set up to measure the proportion of people with limited mobility in the community and their current level of access to a range of daily needs and services.

NOTE: ALL IMPACTS IN THESE TABLES ARE ASSUMED: A FULL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE ACTUAL IMPACTS

Table 5B.1 Multi-criteria Analysis

CRITERIA	INDICATORS	MEASURES	Alternative 1 Expansion of supermarket speciality shops	Alternative 2 Expansion of specialty shops only	Alternative 3 No expansion
ACCESS TO: goods, services, public transport, opportunities and supports, facilities	INDICATOR OF	ACCESS EFFECTS:			
	level of fast access to a range of goods, services etc normally available at the local level	1.1 population outside walking distance (500m) of local or group centre (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	likely increases in time and therefore less convenience, and possibly reduced access if time is a constraint	1.2 time taken to walk to alternative centres (quantifiable: to maximum walking distance of say 750m)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	likely increases in cost and therefore possibly reduced access if cost is a constraint	1.3 proportion of people outside walking distance who do not own a car (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	major roads to be crossed and so likely reduction in access where safety is a constraint	1.4 people within walking distance of a centre, but outside the suburb in which the centre is located consider location of pedestrian crossings and underpasses (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
SUM OF ACCESS EFFECTS	total change in access to goods and services		not quantifiably additive unless a weighted score is adopted		

NOTE: ALL IMPACTS IN THESE TABLES ARE ASSUMED: A FULL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE ACTUAL IMPACTS

CRITERIA	INDICATOR		MEASURES	Alternative 1 Expansion of supermarket speciality shops	Alternative 2 Expansion of speciality shops only	Alternative 3 No expansion
ACCESS FOR: people with reduced mobility, people who must walk, people who can walk or cycle, people who can use a bus	elderly people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.1	no. of aged outside walking distance (ie 400m) of nearest centre (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	people without cars who may be affected by reductions in access	2.2	no of households without cars outside walking distance of nearest centre (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	people with low incomes who may be affected by reductions in access	2.3	no. of low income households outside walking distance of nearest centre (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	young people who may be affected by reductions in access	2.4	no. of 5-12 year olds outside walking distance of nearest centre (quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
	people with disabilities who may be affected by reductions in access	2.5	no. of people with disabilities outside walking distance of nearest centre (may not be quantifiable: population affected)	significant increase	some increase	no change
SUM OF ACCESS EFFECTS	total change in access for groups in community			not quantifiably additive unless a weighted score is adopted		

NOTE: ALL IMPACTS IN THESE TABLES ARE ASSUMED: A FULL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE ACTUAL IMPACTS

				Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
CRITERIA	INDICATOR OF:		MEASURES	Expansion of supermarket speciality shops	Expansion of speciality shops only	No expansion
CULTURAL EFFECTS:			CULTURAL EFFECTS	THESE INDICATORS WOULD NEED TO BE TESTED THROUGH COMMUNITY CONSULTATION, AND ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY		
community structure, focus, identity, sense of belonging, health/cohesion, way of life	existing community focus and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.1	no. of alternative meeting places (which are a focus for activity, with a notice board facility) in areas losing local centre (quantitative and qualitative assessment)	significant increase in total suburbs without alternative meetings places of adequate quality	some increase in total suburbs without alternative meetings places of adequate quality	no change total suburbs without alternative meetings places of adequate quality
	health/cohesion of community and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.2	NOT DETERMINED (possibly crime rates in areas losing local centres)			
	low level of private space, thus increased reliance on external facilities for informal meeting places, and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.3	no. of flats in areas losing local centres (quantifiable)	significant increase	some increase	no increase
	existing community structure - the more the number of households without internal support the more vulnerable to reduced services	3.4	no. of households with single parent families or single person households in areas losing local centres (quantifiable)	significant increase	some increase	no increase
	existing community identity and therefore vulnerability to reduced services	3.5	no of community groups in area losing local centre eg P&C, residents groups, preschool parents groups, land care groups etc (quantifiable and qualitative assessment)	significant increase in suburbs without a range of strong community groups	some increase in suburbs without a range of strong community groups	no increase in suburbs without a range of strong community groups

NOTE: ALL IMPACTS IN THESE TABLES ARE ASSUMED: A FULL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE ACTUAL IMPACTS

				Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
CRITERIA	INDICATOR		MEASURES	Expansion of supermarket & speciality shops	Expansion of speciality shops only	No expansion
TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS:			TRANSPORTATION EFFECTS			
traffic flows, pollution, safety, energy use, public transport	added stresses for travellers through increased traffic and parking congestion	4.1	increase in traffic volumes and increased parking demand (quantifiable using traffic modelling)	significant increase, particularly at town centre	some increase, particularly at town centre	minor increase, particularly at town centre
	reduced quality of life, health	4.2	likely decrease in visibility levels (possibly quantifiable)	some increase	minor increase	negligible increase
	reduced quality of life, health	4.3	likely increase in accidents (may be quantifiable using prediction modelling)	increase	minor increase	negligible increase
	reduced quality of life	4.4	increased travel time (quantifiable)	significant increase	some increase	no increase
	increased cost to public and private purse, of additional bus routes, bus and taxi usage, consequent potential loss in other services	4.5	increased no. of bus routes/extra services including increased concessions and increased taxi vouchers (based on population currently accessing local centres that are likely to close: survey data required)	significant increased need for additional services	some increased need for additional services	some increased need for additional services

NOTE: ALL IMPACTS IN THESE TABLES ARE ASSUMED: A FULL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DETERMINE ACTUAL IMPACTS

CRITERIA	INDICATOR		MEASURES	Alternative 1 Expansion of supermarket & speciality shops	Alternative 2 Expansion of speciality shops only	Alternative 3 No expansion
ECONOMIC EFFECTS			ECONOMIC EFFECTS			
employment, small business opportunities, commercial property market, residential property market, viability of other centres, planned hierarchy of commercial centres	social effects on community	5.1	likely increase in unemployment of people employed in local centres (quantifiable if empirical evidence of the claimed 4 jobs lost at local level for every 1 gained at town centre level needed)	significant increase	some increase	minor increase
	possible downgrading of local area, in extreme cases resulting in ghettos, decrease in amenity of area	5.2	likely decrease in property values	significant decrease unless change of use allowed, minor decrease possible with change of use to non retail	some decrease (in suburbs where centres will close or downgrade)	no decrease
	effects on livelihood of a significant part of community	5.3	centres likely to close (empirical data on multiplier effects needed to quantify)	significant effects	some multiplier effect	minimal change to current trends
	effects on overall planning principles - requiring strategic overview of provision of services, location of housing, employment etc	5.4	likely change in distribution of centres long-term availability of sites for community and commercial purposes	significant effects to overall strategic planning approach for location of housing, employment, and services	some effects, but group centres and remaining local centres can be expected to remain, thus maintaining fundamental hierarchical service levels	no change in short term (but continued decline of local centres will result in change in the longer term unless other government measures are introduced)

CASE STUDY 2: Local centre changes from commercial to residential uses - Impact Display Table

This case study evaluates the predominantly localised impacts of a proposed change of use of the "Z" local centre from retailing to medium density housing with space for a restaurant and a corner store.

Options

1. "Z" local centre changes from commercial to medium density housing with provision for a restaurant and a corner store
2. No change

Prepare a list of benefits and losses for each option

The list should be prepared with reference to the criteria and measures developed to assess major retail change proposals. The measures should be used as a checklist to ensure all relevant impacts have been taken into account.

Consider equity issues of each option

- Quality of life and access to a range of daily needs and services for:
 - people with limited mobility
 - older people
 - children
- Maintain opportunities for existing (and future) small business owners/operators to continue at the centre

Prepare table

Table 5B.2 Impact Display Table

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- corner store maintains access to convenience items for people with limited mobility- new residents will provide an additional market for local store and restaurant- local business development- local employment generation- urban design - improved cohesion with rest of area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- retains local centre buildings for some future use- provides opportunity for future small businesses to set up in centre
Losses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- reduced access to full range of local centre activities for people with limited mobility- loss of local small business- loss of local employment- loss of local community focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- loss of potential increased market for maintaining a shop providing daily items in this suburb

Assessment

"Z" is one of the most vulnerable local centres in the ACT. It is unlikely that retailing in its past form would be viable in the future, so that alternative uses of the centre must be sought. Given this situation, both alternatives for the centre would lead to a decrease in possible access by people with limited mobility to a full range of daily needs and services. However, as the centre is already in decline, the proposal to include a small, convenience shop in the medium density housing complex to serve both local and surrounding residents' needs, may be the most effective way to maintain a level of access.