



Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries  
Minister for the Environment and Heritage  
Minister for Planning and Land Management  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Urban Renewal  
Manager of Government Business  
Member for Brindabella

20/11593

Mr Tom Anderson  
Chair  
Weston Creek Community Council  
[info@westoncreek.org.au](mailto:info@westoncreek.org.au)

Dear Mr Anderson

Thank you for your letter of 11 March 2020 about the Coombs shops. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

It is unfortunate to see that the Coombs shops are not yet fully tenanted and therefore not providing a convenient range of shops and services. This is a poor outcome for the community and I share your disappointment that the owner has been unable or unwilling to fully tenant the shops.

I do not believe that the Territory Plan's supermarket size restrictions influenced the situation at the Coombs shops. The supermarket size is the same as many local centres across Canberra, where small format supermarkets provide convenient shopping.

I can assure you that the ACT Government is actively planning for shops in Molonglo. The Koko Molonglo development was approved in March 2020 and included plans for a supermarket. In addition to this, the planning for the Molonglo Commercial Centre is underway. Land is expected to begin to be released from 2021-22 and will mean that shops will be available in Molonglo in the near future.

ACT Government inspectors reviewed the current leasing arrangements for the Coombs shops and conducted inspections of the site to determine whether regulatory action is available. However, the lease purpose clause does not require that the whole building must be used, as the only requirement is that the lease (or part of the lease) is used for the intended purpose. The ACT Government is not able to take regulatory action or buy back the lease from the lessee, as the lease is being used in accordance with its purpose clause.

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## ACT Legislative Assembly

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MickGentleman



I have also asked officials to investigate potential changes that would prevent a similar situation from occurring in the future, or that may allow the Government to take action as appropriate. Already, the situation with the Coombs shops prompted the ACT Government to review its processes for selling commercial land. Several changes have been introduced to ensure the purchaser is able to deliver developments appropriate for commercial tenants. While I appreciate that this does not fix the situation at Coombs, the Government has learned from the experience and is applying the lessons learned.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister for Planning and Land Management

*24/6/2020*