

Ainslie Football Club 5 Angas Street child care centre delayed by residents group



By [Miriam Webber](#)

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Ainslie group CEO Simon Patterson said he is baffled about the objection to 'a very uncontroversial' development. Picture: James Croucher

The chief executive of Ainslie Group has lashed out at residents who have delayed the football club's child care development, dismissing their concerns as "academic obstructionism".

Ainslie Football Club's development application for an 100-place child care centre at 5 Angas Street was approved by the ACT government in June.

The centre is part of the club's master plan to develop retirement living residences, relocate the social club and improve sporting facilities to reduce reliance on gaming revenue as the government cracks down on pokies.

Ainslie Group chief executive Simon Patterson said he did not know why the North Canberra Community Council were challenging "a very uncontroversial" development.

It follows a move by ACT Planning Minister Mick Gentleman last month to use call-in powers to green-light a second attempt to build housing for vulnerable women in Ainslie.

The 10 units for women fleeing domestic violence and older women experiencing poverty were delayed when some locals appealed the development application in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The use of call-in powers means residents cannot appeal to the tribunal to overturn the approval for a second time.



A render of the exterior of Ainslie Group's child care centre. Picture: Supplied

"I'm simply perplexed and confused as to why, again, the NCCC is seeking to challenge this," Mr Patterson said.

"It just seems like this is another example of a community group - that purports to represent the community - seeking to obstruct good use and good community projects when they've been approved by the statutory body."

"They seek to poke holes in technical issues around the approval, and they don't look to the greater good that these projects may achieve." The North Canberra Community Council said it does not oppose development, but wanted to protect green spaces for sports and recreation.

They have already appealed another application to prepare the site for the child care centre - by installing a verge crossing, subdividing the site and varying the lease - citing "concerns with ... issues including those relating to safety, traffic and the status of the land as a sport and recreation reserve".

The tribunal is still considering their arguments.

"The childcare centre raises similar issues [to the first development application] and we are still reading through the tribunal documents for the childcare centre and determining what has been approved and we will provide further comment in due course."

The tribunal hearing will take place on Friday afternoon.

In a press release, Mr Patterson called the residents' objections "academic obstructionism to embarrass the ACT Government and its approving authorities".

He also said the group had waited until "the eleventh hour" to challenge the decision at the tribunal rather than working with the club.

"We're calling on them to 'fess up and tell us what the issue is, and come to the table and work with the club."

The north Canberra residents group said they had been contacted by concerned Ainslie locals for the first time about the club's plans,

expressing concern about the accuracy of traffic analysis as well as other issues.

"For those who are new to DA proceedings or find the process challenging, the NCCC provides a platform for putting these arguments forward for consideration, noting ACAT will ultimately be the final arbiter," their statement said.

Mr Patterson said the club is planning to scale back reliance on gaming revenue but it was "too early to set targets" around reducing gaming machines given the appeals, which he said has set development back by 12-14 months.

The club's gaming revenue in 2021 was \$3,508,085.



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