

AFL: GWS Giants boss relocates to Canberra for \$800 million Manuka Green proposal

The Canberra Times March 8 2016 [Lee Gaskin](#)

The GWS Giants have signalled how serious they are about the \$800 million Manuka Green proposal, with the club's chief operating officer Richard Griffiths relocating to Canberra.

Griffiths will move to the national capital to oversee the next phases of the [ambitious redevelopment of Manuka Oval and surrounding precinct, which was announced on February 16](#).

He will work with Canberra-based Giants board members Peter Taylor and Michael Costello and Giants business development manager Jack Masters during the community consultation period.

The Giants have been backed by Australia's largest privately owned developer Grocon to make an unsolicited bid to the ACT Government to redevelop the prized land package – part of which would include upgrading the sports stadium to an international-standard facility.

The proposal would include a massive commercial and residential development on surrounding land, including a new hotel, serviced apartments, residential apartments, 140,000 square metres of retail and office space and 450 car parks.

The Giants decided at the club's most recent board meeting in February it was important for Griffiths to be based in Canberra during the process.

"The club's considered this for some time now and given the phase we're in relation to our proposal, we think it's important to have increased resources on the ground in Canberra," Griffiths said.

"The government will go through a process in terms of decision-making on our proposal, but at this point of time it's fair to say my tenure in Canberra will be ongoing until some sort of decision is made by Government.

"The fact it's an election year is another variable in the whole government process in the variety of decisions they need to make."

Submissions from the public close at the end of April.

The Giants held a meeting with the Telopea Park High School board on Monday night to discuss how the project would affect them.

"They were very interested and very appreciative of us consulting with them and they gave us some feedback that we'll take on board," Griffiths said.

"Traffic management is something they would like to see us address, especially during the construction phase, but also issues like traffic flow and parking.

"Broadly speaking they agree and understand the Manuka Oval upgrade and the precinct is a positive for Canberra.

"There is no impact on the school in terms of facilities or infrastructure."

Griffiths has overseen several major projects since joining the Giants in October, 2011, including the construction of their training and administration facility at Sydney Olympic Park.

The Manuka Green project would include 4750 new permanent seats to replace temporary seating and standing areas at the Manuka Oval.

New roofing would cover 80 per cent of seating and the development would include new hospitality, media and change room facilities.

"Broadly speaking, it's been very positive, the feedback that we're getting is that people recognise Manuka Oval is in need of an upgrade," Griffiths said.

"We are meeting groups over the coming months to listen to what they have to say and try and incorporate their feedback into the final design."

In February, the Giants [pledged to support Canberra 'forever'](#).