

# Govt move sparks job loss fears

By Naomi Fallon

TUGGERANONG community groups fear the potential loss of hundreds of public servants from the region would hurt the local economy.

Businesses and residents last week launched a petition to stop the possible relocation of Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs workers to Woden.

Earlier this month the government announced plans to consolidate more than 2700 staff onto a larger site when its lease at the Tuggeranong Office Park ended in 2016. The department will consider sites in Tuggeranong and Woden.

The Tuggeranong Hyperdome, Tuggeranong Community Council and not-for-profit Communities@Work will collect signatures pushing for the government to locate the required 42,000 square metres of office space in the Tuggeranong CBD.

Tuggeranong Community Council president Nick Tsoulias said retaining employment in Tuggeranong was very important for the future of the region.

"Any losses of population would obviously see some businesses relocate as well," he said.

"What we're trying to achieve here, is trying to take advantage of this opportunity to secure public service jobs in Tuggeranong.

"We understand it could be Tuggeranong, it could be Woden, but we don't have many industries going ... so public service jobs are very important."

Given the already declining population of Tuggeranong, Hyperdome



Tuggeranong Hyperdome centre manager Jodie Marques, Tuggeranong Community Council president Nick Tsoulias, Federal Member for Canberra Gai Brodtmann and council treasurer Frank Vrins are petitioning to stop public service jobs from leaving Tuggeranong.

Picture: Elesa Kurtz

centre manager Jodie Marques said the continued provision of employment was a big issue.

"My big focus is the protection and continued provision of employment in the Tuggeranong region. We don't

want to see any more jobs lost from the valley," she said.

"It's more about having that sustained growth. If it happened to be consolidated into Woden, what would that do to Tuggeranong?"

Federal Member for Canberra Gai Brodtmann supported the petition and planned to present it during the next sitting of Parliament.

"I want to see every part of Canberra grow and prosper - that's

Tuggeranong, Woden, every part of the electorate," she said.

"I'm keen to ensure we've got jobs on offer in Tuggeranong, that's why I'm keen to ensure this government agency stays down here."