



ACT
Government

HOUSING CHOICES COLLABORATION HUB INFORMATION KIT

APRIL 2018



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MINISTER'S FOREWORD



Welcome to the Housing Choices Collaboration Hub.

Canberra requires careful planning to manage growth and urban development. It requires innovative and participatory approaches to planning. This is particularly so as Canberra matures into a major city, whose residents are becoming more diverse and calling for a city that meets their differing needs.

Last November, I launched the Housing Choices consultation to invigorate conversation about housing supply in Canberra and to find out more about what kind of housing Canberrans may require in the future. To date the conversation has focused on the kind of city you would like to reside in and how current housing supply meets your needs.

It is now time to further refine what you, the community, has told us and to explore how we can plan for the future, for a growing population with different housing needs and demands, while maintaining the character and amenity which makes where we live so special.

There are no definitive answers to this problem. The right answer is one which responds to the diversity of the community and the community need now and in the future.

Over the next three months, during five in-depth sessions, you will be immersed in all aspects of planning and development in the ACT. You will have access to a range of experts from across industry and government. You will discuss and deliberate on ideas, issues and opportunities. At the end of this journey your report of recommendations will be vital input into the options the government takes forward.

This is a genuine opportunity to influence housing choices and future development in our city.

I appreciate your decision to give your time and to get involved in this unique and important process, and look forward to your recommendations. I hope you find the experience rewarding.

Mick Gentleman

Minister for Planning and Land Management

April 2018





THE KEY ISSUES

Like many cities across Australia, Canberra's community is growing and changing. People have their own and sometimes conflicting ideas about how they want to live, whether it be in a free-standing house or more compact living such as a townhouse or apartment. This all impacts on the planning of our city for the future.

As we mature as an economy, society and a nation, we are changing the ways in which we work, travel and live. More of us are living in smaller family units, with growing numbers of one- and two-person households. Our economy is booming but is also driving the prices of housing up, making it increasingly more difficult for young people to 'live the dream' of home-ownership, long a stalwart of Australian life.

The changing climate means we are more concerned with how we live. Our approach to energy consumption—while working, living and travelling—is also changing. Higher density housing offers advantages in affordability and economies of scale for energy use, and is often located closer to jobs and work.

However, our existing neighbourhoods have distinct attributes and charm that most of us want to retain and enhance. For Canberra, the seasonal colour changes of trees and gardens, wide boulevards and avenues and orderly, well planned suburbs have become iconic landmarks for the nation's capital.

How can we plan for the future, for a growing population with different housing needs and demands, while maintaining the character and amenity which makes where we live so special? How do we have a conversation which delivers equal representation of the views of those most likely to engage along with those most affected by the decision who are traditionally less likely to participate in offering any government feedback?



OUR CHALLENGE

The challenge is to get the balance right between meeting the demand for new dwellings and new dwelling types, while also providing for the right urban design outcomes to protect and enhance existing character and amenity in the established suburbs.

Thank you for taking part in the Housing Choices Collaboration Hub and participating in making the complex decisions for your community.

You have the opportunity to represent your family, friends, neighbours and the community in making a recommendation that will have an impact on how our city grows and changes both now and into the future.



CANBERRA IS CHANGING—
AND THERE ARE MANY
DIFFERENT WAYS OUR
HOUSING NEEDS CAN BE MET.
WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?



BACKGROUND

Governments normally hear conflicting opinions on important policy issues such as housing: we love our suburbs as they are, but we also want environmentally sustainable options, a good supply to keep prices reasonable and a range of housing types to choose from. As these conflict, our task is to strike a balance and learn where the community can find trade-offs and compromises, where the pressure points are and how would you like us to handle these.

Policy proposals to change the statutory planning framework often provoke debate in the community. While the Housing Choices policy is responding to community and industry concerns, it is unlikely there will be consensus on the pathway to reform. For this reason, a deliberative process, referred to as a 'Collaboration Hub' is proposed to tease out some of these issues as a way to start building trust between the community, industry, government and the public service. We all have important contributions to make in shaping our future Canberra.

WHY ARE WE TAKING A DIFFERENT APPROACH?

Housing choice and diversity requires considered thinking and balanced solutions.

This approach to include community members in decision making has been selected because it involves a broad section of the community in the process of decision-making. Having a Collaborative Hub approach demonstrates fellow citizens have reached a consensus around a decision, which is therefore more likely to be trusted and well-thought out.

WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY OF THE GROUP?

Members of the Collaboration Hub are being asked to make recommendations to government in response to the core question stated in the challenge above. In particular, focusing on what do we need to do and how might we be able to get more housing diversity across the ACT.

During the next 3 months the Collaboration Hub will work towards preparing a report to government outlining the recommendations. The unedited recommendations of the Collaboration Hub will be presented to the Minister in-person and the report will be made available to the public immediately.

A written response to the recommendations will be given by the Minister, with an initial response within approximately 6 weeks. The Directorate will consider the breadth of recommendations made by the Collaboration Hub to determine the most appropriate way to achieve the outcomes sought. A full response to the all recommendations will then be provided by the Minister over the following months to detail how each recommendation was considered and if it will be pursued.

For changes to planning controls and/or zoning, a variation to the Territory Plan will be required. This process will include preliminary consultation with the community regarding the changes that are proposed, providing them with the opportunity to comment on direction recommended by the Collaboration Hub.

Once the comments received have been considered, a draft variation to the Territory Plan is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. More detail regarding the process is included in the Territory Plan section below, but it essentially involves consideration by the community, the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal, the Minister for Planning and the Legislative Assembly.

ABOUT THE TEAM

STRAIGHT TALK

LUCY COLE-EDELSTEIN, DIRECTOR AND FACILITATOR

Lucy established Straight Talk in 2005 and is a recognised industry leader in the design and implementation of innovative community engagement. Lucy ran her first deliberative process in 1997 under the mentorship of Professor Lyn Carson of the University of Sydney, and has been designing and facilitating citizen juries, deliberative panels, deliberative forums and citizen panels ever since. Lucy is a highly skilled and nuanced facilitator with a flair for plain speaking, making engagement fun and interactive and maintaining focus on outcomes. Lucy delivers training and master classes in deliberative techniques and facilitation and works closely with newDemocracy Foundation and key government agencies providing strategic advice and design input and support.

MERRYN SPENCER, PROJECT MANAGER

Merryn's role in this project is supporting Lucy in the collaborative hubs. Merryn has ten years previous experience in the local government sector and is an organised and focused project manager with a passion for engagement.



newDEMOCRACY

newDemocracy is a not-for-profit research foundation that has been championing different ways of doing democracy through practical projects with governments at all levels. With bi-partisan backing from former premiers Nick Greiner and Geoff Gallop and a clear goal to 'do democracy better' they have been able to earn media and public trust. As a result, they have run many of the largest and most controversial engagement projects nationally.

IAIN WALKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Iain will lead the project on behalf of the Foundation. Iain has a Masters in Public Policy from the University of Sydney and has led the foundation since 2011, delivering 22 projects. The Foundation has a focus on the most difficult public engagement problems so brings to the project a tradition of challenging public conversations.

KYLE REDMAN, PROJECT MANAGER

Kyle has a strong academic and contextual design knowledge in the deliberative democratic field. Since joining the Foundation in 2016, his most significant achievements involve completing the random recruitment of 350 people for the Nuclear Fuel Cycle jury and detailed involvement in the Geelong Citizens Jury.

Iain and Kyle have worked together on: citizen panels for the City of Canada Bay on priority and level of services, the fair use of Council's facilities; a citizen juries for the City of Sydney on safe and vibrant nightlife and the South Australian Government on the nuclear fuel cycle.

THE ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE TEAM

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) promotes sustainable living and resource use, strengthens the Territory's response to climate change and provides an integrated planning and land use system that contributes to the sustainable development and future of the ACT.

The Directorate's aim is to lead the Territory in developing and implementing targeted policies and programs that plan for urban growth and change; promote liveability, prosperity, productivity and sustainability; and address environment protection. Areas of focus include climate change mitigation and adaptation, nature conservation and enhancement, heritage, efficient and reliable water and energy services, building safety, quality urban design, and sustainable and integrated transport and spatial planning, policy and delivery.

Fleur Flanery is the acting Executive Director for the Planning Policy Division and is responsible for the Housing Choices project.

Bruce Fitzgerald is the Executive Director for the Urban Renewal Division and is responsible for the delivery of Demonstration Housing Projects.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is your central point for background information and key details about this project. This document poses many questions to get you thinking through the key issues at the heart of this project. We ask that one of the first documents you read is the Housing Choices Discussion Paper.

You will find references to many other documents. It's great to come along with questions about these too, and to ask the EPSDD team for either the document or a summary. If you are looking at this online, many of the documents referred to are linked. You will certainly have questions from your reading; please bring them along to our sessions!

HOW WILL A DECISION BE MADE?

The Collaborative Hub approach works on a key principle. The premise is, if everyday citizens are given complete access to all the information, and if they study that information in comprehensive detail, hear from subject-matter experts and are given sufficient time, they can reach a group consensus that most of the community can live with.

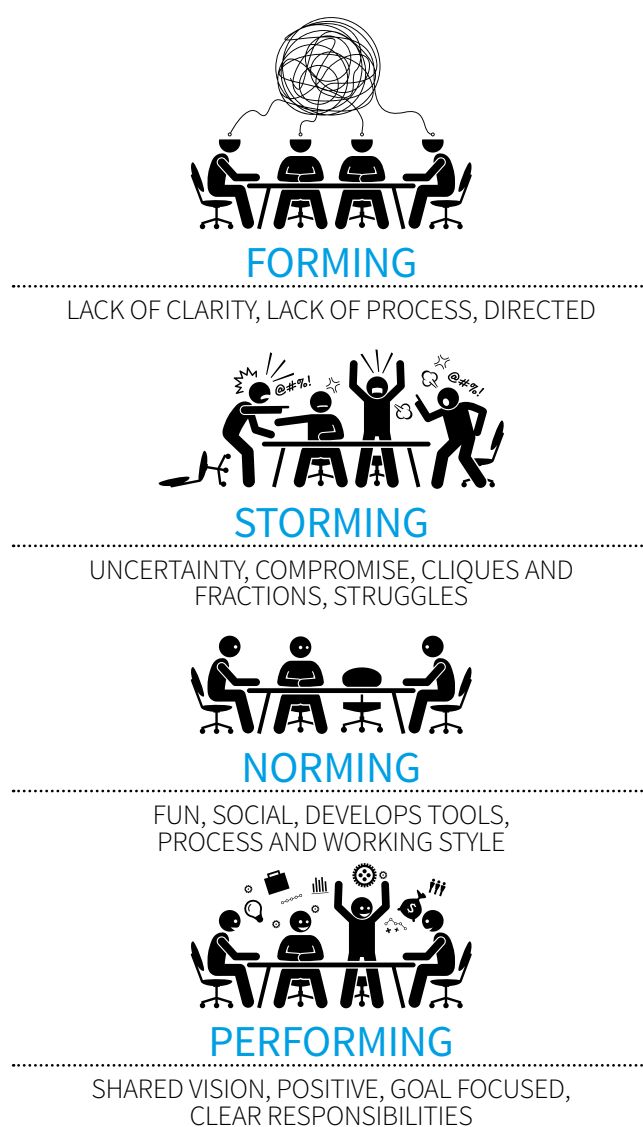
In order to convey a message of broad-based support for the recommendations, members will be required to reach an 80% majority for a recommendation to reach the final report. In practice, deliberative exercises tend to reach consensus (or group consent) positions, with minority voices included in any report; they rarely need to go to a vote. Decisions are frequently unanimous.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN OVER OUR FIVE DAYS TOGETHER?

Over the next three months, during five in-depth sessions, you will be immersed in all aspects of planning and development in the ACT. You will have access to a range of experts from across industry and government. You will discuss and deliberate on ideas, issues and opportunities.

Figure 1 shows how opinions will diverge before they converge, and why this is a good thing.

Figure 1: Team dynamics and the journey to high performance



BASED ON TUCKMAN'S STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT (1965).

WHAT DOES THE ACT POPULATION LOOK LIKE?

POPULATION

Canberra's population is growing and changing. This is a good thing for the city. In June 2017:



410,300 PEOPLE

were estimated to be living in the ACT (up from 403,468 as of 30 June 2016)



MORE THAN 75%

of the ACT's residents lived in one of four districts: Belconnen, Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and North Canberra.



1.7% GROWTH

per annum, compared to the national average of 1.6%.



50% GROWTH

in Gungahlin alone in the decade preceding 2016 (ACT's population grew by 73,532 people).



680,000 PEOPLE

by 2062 (projected).

DWELLINGS

The 2016 Census counted a total of 163,539 dwellings in the ACT. In 2016, the distribution of different dwelling types were:



65% LOW DENSITY DWELLINGS

comprising separate houses



18% MEDIUM DENSITY DWELLINGS

including semi-detached, row, terrace and town houses and flats or units attached to a house



17% HIGH DENSITY DWELLINGS

including flats, units and apartments in one or more storey buildings.

Since 2006, there has been an increase of 24% (31,950) dwellings in the ACT.

HOUSEHOLDS

Changes in household structure also create a need for greater diversity of housing in Canberra (**figure 2**).

Traditional family structures (i.e. a couple with children) have fallen from 45% to 32% as a share of total households since 1991. In comparison, the number of couples with no children and single persons living alone has dramatically increased. These changes create different requirements for the size and adaptability of our dwellings.

In 2016, one- and two-person households accounted for almost half (48%) of all households in the ACT. In 2016, the largest household types were:



32%

COUPLE WITH
CHILDREN



25%

COUPLE WITH
NO CHILDREN



23%

LONE PERSONS

Among the 35,417 people living in lone person households in the ACT in 2016, there was a distinct gender distribution, with more younger men and older women living alone.

OLDER PEOPLE

Canberra's population is one of fastest ageing of Australia's capital cities. By 2062, Canberra residents aged 65 and above are predicted to increase by 11.5% compared to numbers in 2012.

50% of Canberra residents have indicated they want to stay living in their communities in appropriate housing as they age, to remain close to friends and to continue to access familiar amenities¹.

Canberra residents expect a lack of housing options (e.g. lower maintenance town houses, terrace houses, units and apartments) will make it difficult to downsize their homes or remain in their community.

In 2016, 57,076 people (14%) were aged between 60–79 years (broad life-stages are lifestyle, retiree and aged) old and 11,989 (3%) were aged 80 years and over (broad life-stage seniors).

Over the past 25 years, the proportion of the ACT's population aged between 60–79 has increased from 8% in 1991 to 14% in 2016, and from 1% to 3% for the over 80s.

Weston Creek had the largest share of any district of people aged 60 years and more (26%).

The broad age profiles of the selected ACT districts in 2016 are shown in **figure 3**.

Among the 35,417 people living in lone person households in the ACT in 2016, there was a distinct gender distribution with more older women living alone and more younger men living alone.

In 2016, there were 691 grandparent families in the ACT, which included 383 couple families with grandchildren and 308 lone grandparent families. The largest numbers of both types of families were found in Tuggeranong, which had 241 grandparent families.

1 Housing Choices Community Survey, Winton Sustainable Research Strategies 2015

Figure 2: ACT Household structure

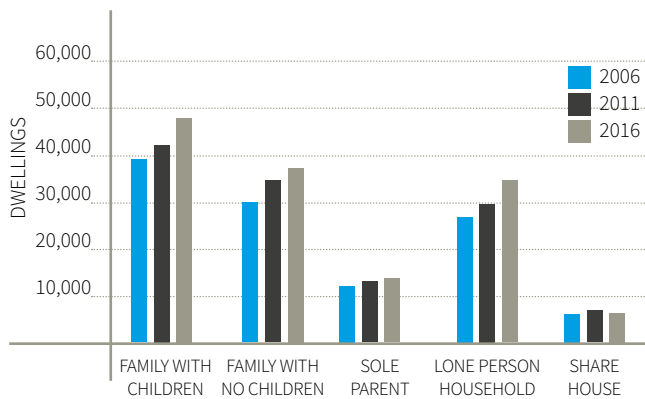
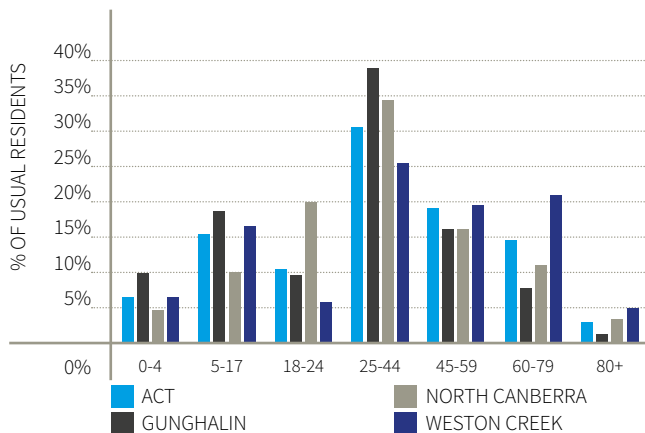


Figure 3: Age profiles by district



CHILDREN

In 2016, there were 87,163 children aged less than 18 years counted in the ACT (where the type of private dwelling they lived in was reported). Over 12% (or 10,867 children) lived in medium density dwellings and 4% (or 3,821 children) lived in high density dwellings.

Over the decade to 2016, there has been a large increase in the number of children living in high density dwellings in the ACT. In part, this is a result of increases in the number of high density dwellings, but it is also due to changing attitudes to living and having families in higher density homes.

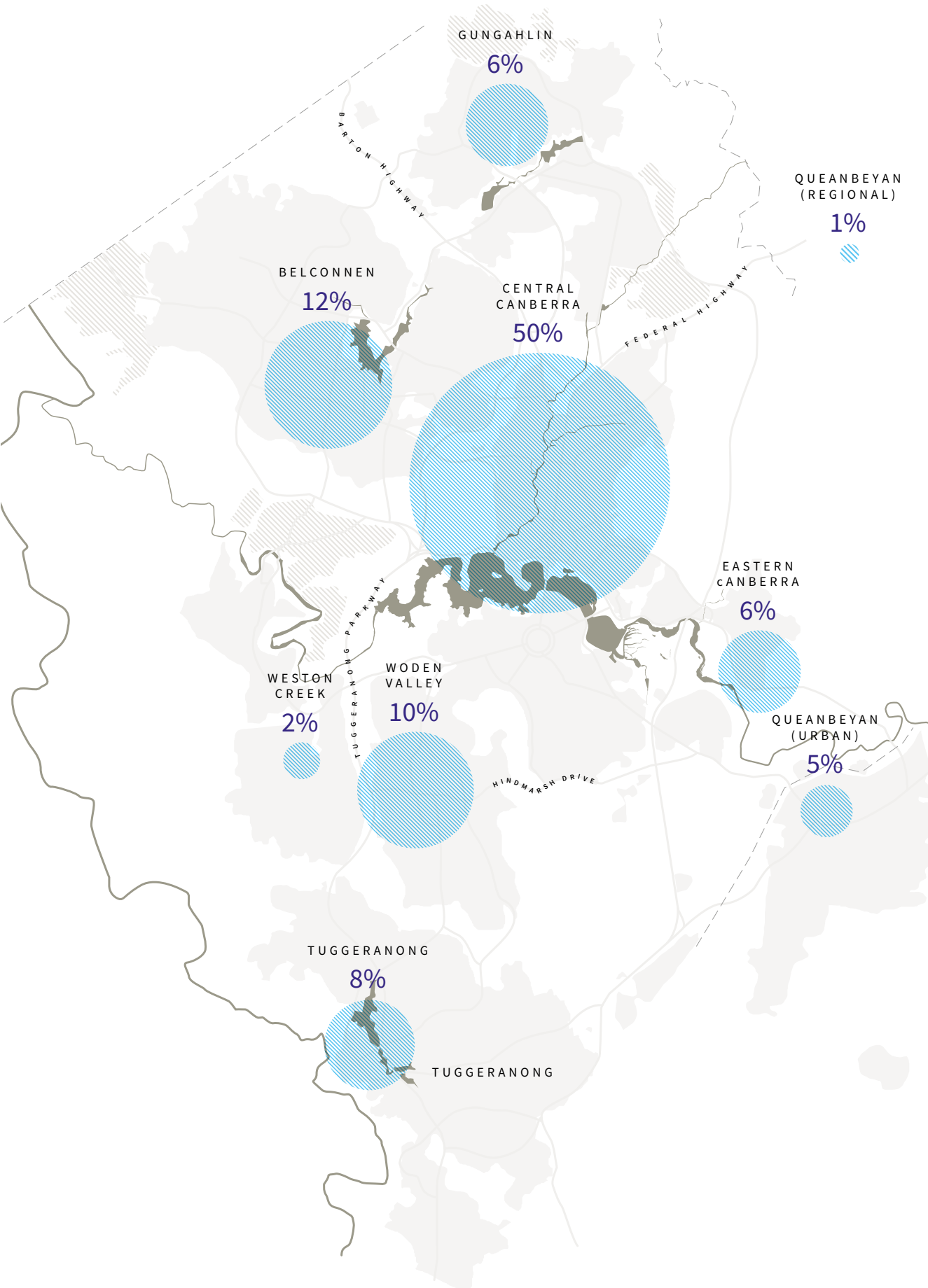
JOBS

In the 2016 census, 304,008 usual residents of the ACT aged 15 years or more reported their labour force status. Over two-thirds (68%) were employed, 3.3% were unemployed and 29% were not in the labour force.

Almost 30,000 people worked in the ACT but lived outside of the ACT.

245,000 persons had an ACT place of work in 2016. There is an ACT/NSW cross-border employment market for residents, with 285,000 jobs (full and part time). The Canberra Central District houses half of Canberra's employment. The ACT and cross-border employment distribution in 2016 is shown in **figure 4**.

Figure 4: ACT and cross-border 2016 Employment Distribution (district)



HOW IS HOUSING PLANNED IN THE ACT?

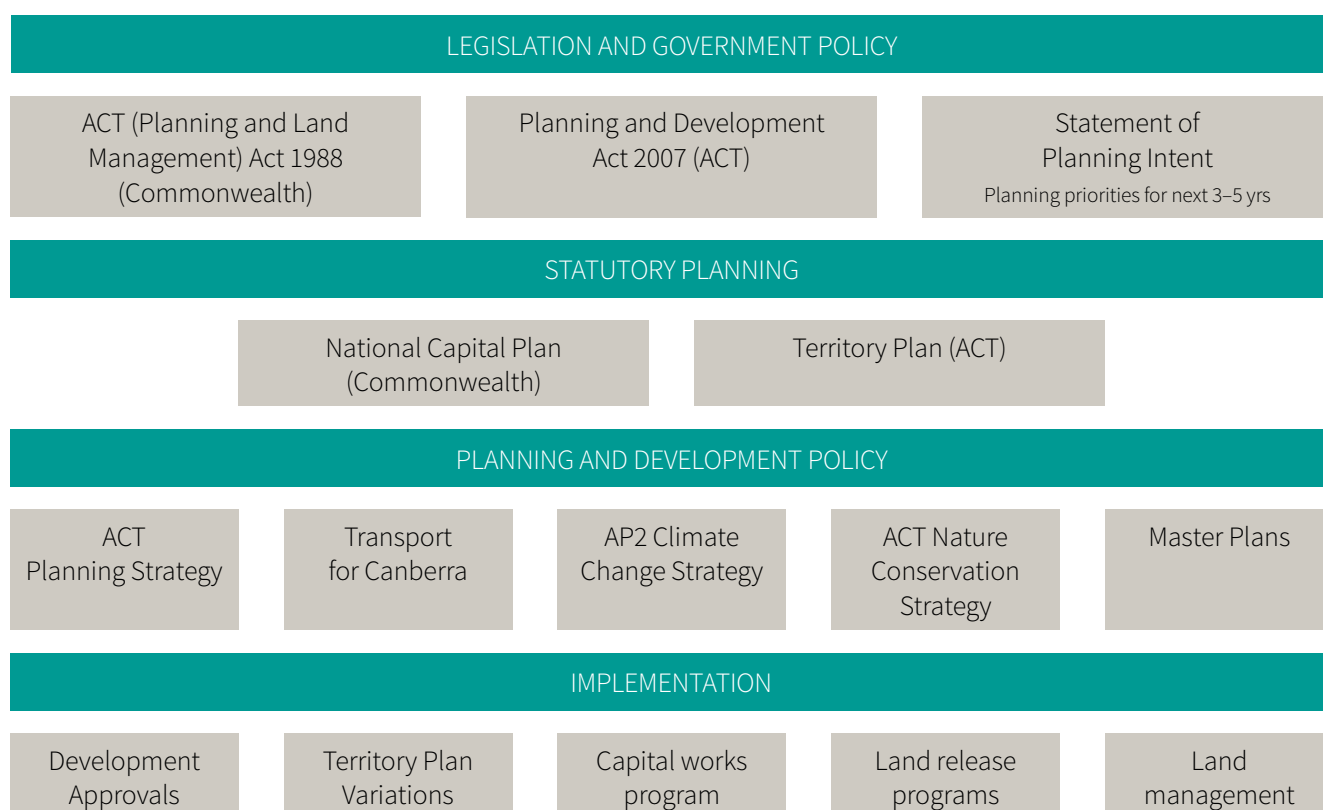
Planning helps communities undertake development and redevelopment that respects the past, makes for sustainable healthy communities and plans for a future in a way that our children and grandchildren will have a valuable and sustainable asset.

Planning and development in the ACT has to achieve a balance between the interests of the nation and the interests of the Canberra community and environment.

Key planning documents work together to shape our city. Some are guiding documents that provide a vision and framework for the city to grow. Others are legislative and statutory documents that set out the rules and parameters for development. In addition, other documents focus on the implementation of these plans.

A summary of the various planning documents in the ACT is provided in **figure 5**.

Figure 5: Planning documents in the ACT



STATEMENT OF PLANNING INTENT

Under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the Minister for Planning may set out the main principles that are to govern planning and land development in the ACT through a written statement, [the Statement of Planning Intent](#). The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate must perform its functions taking the Statement into consideration.

In developing his Statement in 2015, Minister Gentleman engaged with the community to hear their thoughts on planning priorities for the ACT. The statement sets out the key planning priorities for the ACT Government for the next three to five years.

The Statement establishes four key planning priorities, and associated actions, that reflect the key messages heard from the community and stakeholders:

- Creating sustainable, compact and liveable neighbourhoods with better transport choices
- Delivering high quality public spaces and streets through placemaking
- Delivering an outcome-focused planning system to reward design excellence and innovation
- Engaging with the community, business and research sectors to optimise planning outcomes

THE PLANNING STRATEGY

The government's [2012 Planning Strategy](#) is the key strategic framework for guiding planning and development in the ACT. The Planning Strategy provides long-term planning policy and goals to promote orderly and sustainable development, consistent with the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the people. A long-term planning strategy is required under the [Planning and Development Act 2007](#).

The Planning Strategy outlines where future growth and change is to occur, including where and when housing is to be developed. It commits to a target of 50% of new housing in infill and urban renewal areas and 50% in greenfield areas (future urban areas). Providing a balance of new housing in these areas to accommodate a growing population can ensure a range of housing options while reducing the impacts of urban sprawl.

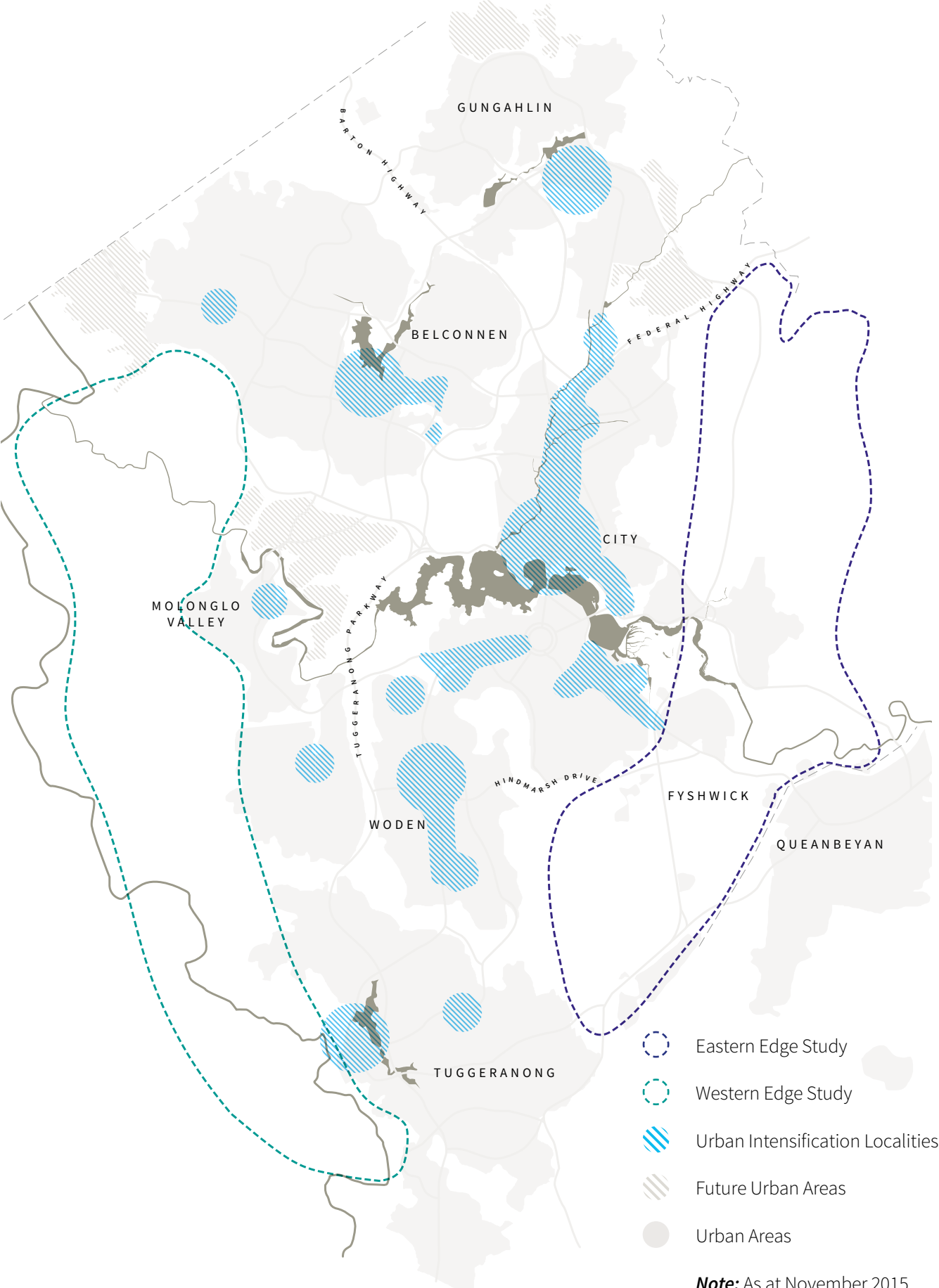
During 2018 the ACT Planning Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed to update the strategic planning directions for the ACT. Since 2012, major changes have occurred in the ACT, including government commitments to a carbon neutral future, the light rail network and urban renewal. A review will consider these changes and ensure that the Planning Strategy remains consistent with its main aim to promote the orderly and sustainable development of the ACT.

The Canberra community and industry will play an important role in helping to shape a refreshed Planning Strategy that will ultimately deliver to create a compact, competitive and sustainable city for the future. Relevant feedback received from the collaboration hub deliberations will also feed into this work.

As it is a strategic framework rather than a list of provisions that need to be complied with, the Planning Strategy has no statutory effect. This means that it is not part of the Territory Plan (which is the statutory planning document) and is not taken into consideration when applications for new developments are assessed. Rather, it is used to inform changes to the Territory Plan and possible amendments to the National Capital Plan. It is also used to inform significant infrastructure decisions and the release of land.

The ACT has a finite supply of land for development. Many areas able to accommodate urban development are constrained due to environmental values, topography and other challenges. The ACT Planning Strategy provided an indication of areas for focus for intensification and investigation as a way to address growth.

Map 1: ACT Planning Strategy



NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

The [National Capital Plan](#) (NCP) is prepared and administered by the National Capital Authority on behalf of the Australian Government.

The NCP is the strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory. It ensures that 'Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance'. The key matters of national significance include:

- the pre-eminence of the role of Canberra and the Territory as the centre of national capital functions, and as the symbol of Australian national life and values
- conservation and enhancement of the landscape features which give the national capital its character and setting, and which contribute to the integration of natural and urban environments
- respect for the key elements of the Griffins' formally adopted plan for Canberra
- creation, conservation and enhancement of fitting sites, approaches and backdrops for national institutions and ceremonies as well as national capital uses
- the development of a city which both respects environmental values and reflects national concerns with the sustainability of Australia's urban areas.

This recognises the value of the unique purpose, setting, character and symbolism of Australia's national capital.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (the PALM Act), the NCP sets out the broad planning principles and policies for Canberra and the Territory, and detailed conditions of planning, design and development for the 'Designated Areas'—those areas of particular importance to the special character of the national capital. [Works approval](#) for development within the Designated Areas is the responsibility of the National Capital Authority (NCA) and therefore the Territory Plan does not apply in these areas.

THE TERRITORY PLAN

The [Territory Plan](#) is the key statutory planning document in the ACT. Development in the ACT (except for Designated Areas) is required to comply with the plan, which manages land use change and development in a manner consistent with strategic directions set by the ACT Government, Legislative Assembly and the community.

In particular the Territory Plan is used:

- to manage development, in particular how land is used and what can be built
- in the process of assessing development applications
- to guide the development of new estate areas (future urban land) and manage public land.

The Territory Plan includes a statement of strategic directions; a map which sets out the zones and precincts in the ACT; objectives and development tables applying to each zone; and a series of precinct, development and general codes.

The statement of strategic directions recognises that the ACT must be planned as both the setting for the national capital and as a self-governing community in its own right. It contains planning principles covering areas of national, regional and Territory interest, including principles for sustainable development, as well as promoting the planning strategy. Any changes to the Territory Plan must be consistent with the strategic directions.

The statement of strategic directions:

- contains broad strategic principles to guide long term planning for the ACT
- guides the preparation and making of variations to the Territory Plan
- guides environmental impact statements, planning reports and strategic environmental assessments.

The statement includes the principles for sustainable development as well as the spatial planning and urban design principles that are intended to guide the more specific policy content of the Territory Plan.

The principles for sustainable development follow a ‘triple bottom line’ approach, with specific principles relating to environmental, economic and social sustainability. The spatial planning and urban design principles are divided into specific principles relating to urban areas, non-urban areas, and urban design.

The Territory Plan includes structure plans and concept plans for the development of future urban areas. Master plans and other planning studies are prepared to guide development and redevelopment of infill and urban renewal areas. When completed and endorsed, the planning requirements from master plans are incorporated into the Territory Plan through a variation to the relevant precinct codes and maps for the relevant areas.

Land in the ACT is divided into sections and blocks. The blocks are zoned and the zoning determines what kind of development is allowed on a block. In total there are 23 different zones under seven categories as outlined below.

RESIDENTIAL ZONES

- RZ1 Suburban Zone
- RZ2 Suburban Core Zone
- RZ3 Urban Residential Zone
- RZ4 Medium Density Residential Zone
- RZ5 High Density Residential Zone

COMMERCIAL ZONES

- CZ1 Core Zone
- CZ2 Business Zone
- CZ3 Services Zone
- CZ4 Local Centres Zone
- CZ5 Mixed Use Zone
- CZ6 Leisure and Accommodation Zone

INDUSTRIAL ZONES

- IZ1 General Industrial Zone
- IZ2 Mixed Use Industrial Zone

COMMUNITY FACILITY ZONES

- CFZ Community Facility Zone

PARKS AND RECREATION ZONES

- PRZ1 Urban Open Space Zone
- PRZ2 Restricted Access Recreation Zone

TRANSPORT AND SERVICES ZONES

- TSZ1 Transport Zone
- TSZ2 Services Zone






NON-URBAN ZONES

- NUZ1 Broadacre Zone
- NUZ2 Rural Zone
- NUZ3 Hills, Ridges and Buffer Zone
- NUZ4 River Corridor Zone
- NUZ5 Mountains and Bushland Zone

The Territory Plan map (Appendix 1) shows these zones as different colours. By looking at the map and finding your block, you can see what zoning applies for your land.

The Territory Plan sets out the residential zones in the ACT and their objectives. These are at the core of the discussion on housing choices. These residential zones include are outlined in **table 1**.

Table 1: Summary of residential zones in the ACT

RESIDENTIAL ZONE	AREA	DESCRIPTION
RZ1 SUBURBAN ZONE 	81%	Low rise and low density housing – mainly single residences.
RZ2 SUBURBAN CORE ZONE 	11.5%	Low rise and low density housing types (e.g. dual occupancy, town house and terrace housing). No apartments.
RZ3 URBAN RESIDENTIAL ZONE 	3.5%	Low rise developments, with slightly higher density than RZ2. Apartments permitted.
RZ4 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE 	2.5%	Medium rise and medium density to encourage housing diversity, contain urban expansion, and accommodate growth along major transport corridors.
RZ5 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE 	1.5%	High rise and high density development (mainly apartments) which aims to increase the population in existing areas.

Design and siting requirements for houses in the ACT are outlined in the Territory Plan's residential codes:

- The [Residential Zones Development Code](#) applies to all residential (RZ1–RZ5) zones, with additional planning, design and environmental controls to support the objectives of the relevant residential zone. As well as housing, this code includes the provisions that apply to other uses that are permitted in residential zones such as secondary residences, supportive housing, retirement villages, boarding houses, guest houses and community uses. The Residential Zone Development Code also contains rules regarding the subdivision and consolidation of residential blocks.
- The [Single Dwelling Housing Development Code](#) applies to single dwelling housing in all zones. This code contains the provisions regarding height and number of storeys permitted, plot ratio, building and solar envelopes, setbacks (to front, side and rear boundaries), courtyard walls, vehicle access and parking, private open space and environmental considerations such as water sensitive urban design (e.g. the requirement for rainwater tanks), erosion control and heritage and tree protection considerations.

→ The [Multi Unit Housing Development Code](#) applies to multi-unit housing in all zones and to development that another code states is subject to it. It contains similar provisions to those in the *Single Dwelling Housing Development Code* but also contains provisions for dual occupancies and apartments in different zones, residential densities (the number of dwellings permitted on a block), building design controls (wall articulation, entries, basements etc), minimum dwelling sizes and combination of dwelling types (studio, 1, 2, 3+ bedroom dwellings). The code also contains additional provisions for multi-unit housing with four or more storeys and/or in commercial zones.

[Development applications](#) for houses must be submitted for approval to the planning and land authority in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Some residential developments can be exempt from requiring development approval. New single dwellings, additions and alterations to existing houses, and some smaller projects like pergolas, carports and fences can be exempt as long as they meet the requirements specified in Schedule 1 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2008. These requirements include such things as maximum heights, maximum size (floor area), as well as (particularly for single dwelling houses and additions and alterations) full compliance with all the relevant rules in the Single Dwelling Housing Development Code.

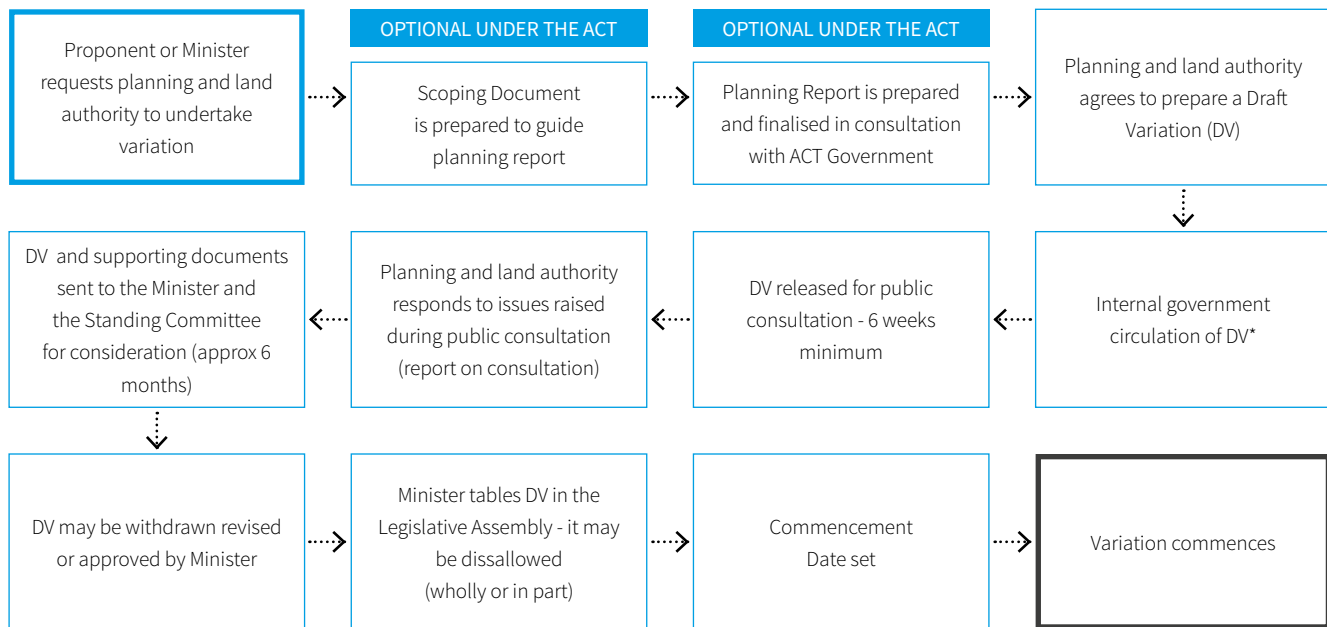
HOW CAN THE TERRITORY PLAN BE VARIED?

The *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act) sets out the process to review and vary the Territory Plan. The Territory Plan is regularly reviewed to reflect contemporary planning practices, ongoing development and the changing needs of the community. Changes and updates can be made to the Territory Plan through one of two mechanisms; Variations and Technical Amendments. Variations are used to make significant policy changes that are consistent with strategic planning policy, while technical amendments are used to make clerical, routine or operational changes to the Territory Plan.

Variations can vary the Territory Plan in the following ways: rezoning a specific site, introducing or amending planning provisions or allowing or prohibiting certain types of development. Variations can be requested by anyone, including a block owner, a Government agency or the Planning Minister. They can be initiated following a change to government policy, the completion of detailed planning work for an area (e.g. Master Plans) or to facilitate suitable development to occur on a site. If a variation is requested by the lessee of a block, a planning report is provided to outline the planning justification for the proposal.

The process for the ACT Government creating and implementing a Draft Variation to the Territory plan is described in **figure 7**.

Figure 7: Process for a typical variation to the Territory Plan



* The Act requires consultation with five mandatory agencies when considering a Draft Variation: the National Capital Authority; the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, the Environment Protection Agency; the Heritage Council; and the land custodian (if any) of all potentially affected unleased land or leased public land.

When a Draft Variation to the Territory Plan is prepared it has no effect on the provisions of the Territory Plan unless it specifically has interim effect. When a Variation is approved, it does not become part of the Territory Plan until it commences. Once this occurs the new provisions are introduced and can be applied to new and undetermined development applications, including concurrent development applications.

When a Variation is being prepared the Act allows interim effect to be applied to all or part of the Variation (for instance just to a particular provision or a specific site). If a Variation has interim effect it means that the proposed provisions of the Variation apply in addition to the Territory Plan. Both the Variation and the Territory Plan continue to apply for as long as the Variation has interim effect, or until it commences or is refused. Where a proposed provision of a Variation which has interim effect and a provision of the Territory Plan are inconsistent, the provision from the Variation will take precedence.

Depending on the wording of the interim effect, it can apply to all undetermined DAs (i.e. lodged DAs that have not yet been approved or refused) or to all DAs lodged on or after a set date. The differences between Technical Amendments (TA's) and Draft Variations (DV's) can be seen below.

VARIATIONS	TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS
Prepared and progressed under Part 5.3 of the Act	Prepared and progressed under Part 5.4 of the Act
No limitation on proposed changes to the Territory Plan	Limited to clerical, routine or operational changes
Mandatory public consultation of no less than 30 working days	Some Technical Amendments require public consultation of no less than 20 working days, but others do not
Public submissions received must be considered and a report on consultation must be prepared	Public submissions received must be considered
Prepared by ACT Government	Prepared by ACT Government
Determined by the Planning Minister	Determined by ACT Government
Require the agreement of at least half the Legislative Assembly and has a disallowance period	Not referred to the Legislative Assembly
Takes approximately 12–18 months to complete	Takes approximately 1–3 months to complete

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

Like many cities across Australia, Canberra's community is growing and changing. People have different ideas for how they want to live, whether it be in a free-standing house or more compact living such as a townhouse or in an apartment. These ideas impact on our city planning for the future.

The challenge is to get the balance right between enabling development to meet the demand for choice, while also providing for the right urban design outcomes to protect and enhance existing character and amenity in the established suburbs.

There are a range of trade-off decisions to consider to successfully navigate these challenges. Canberra's natural advantage is the years of careful city planning that have occurred over time. How we best achieve innovation is a key part of the planning. We feel this will be best done through this participatory process where you will work through a range of scenarios and trade-offs to assist with this planning.

How can we plan for the future, for a growing population with different housing needs and demands while maintaining the character and amenity which makes where we live so special?

DRIVERS FOR GREATER HOUSING CHOICE

The main drivers for greater housing choice in the ACT are:



POPULATION IS GROWING AND AGEING.



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND SIZE.



OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT IS ONE OF THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD.



AFFORDABILITY



WHAT DO YOU THINK
OF THE CURRENT
RANGE OF HOUSING
OPTIONS IN THE
LOWER DENSITY
SUBURBS?

DO YOU THINK WE HAVE
THE RIGHT BALANCE
OF RESIDENTIAL ZONES
TO SUPPORT GREATER
HOUSING CHOICE?



Maintaining the amenity of Canberra's neighbourhoods, while meeting a demand for a greater range of housing choice in our suburbs, requires policies that encourage diverse and quality developments in existing residential areas. This is fundamental to maintaining Canberra's reputation as a garden city.

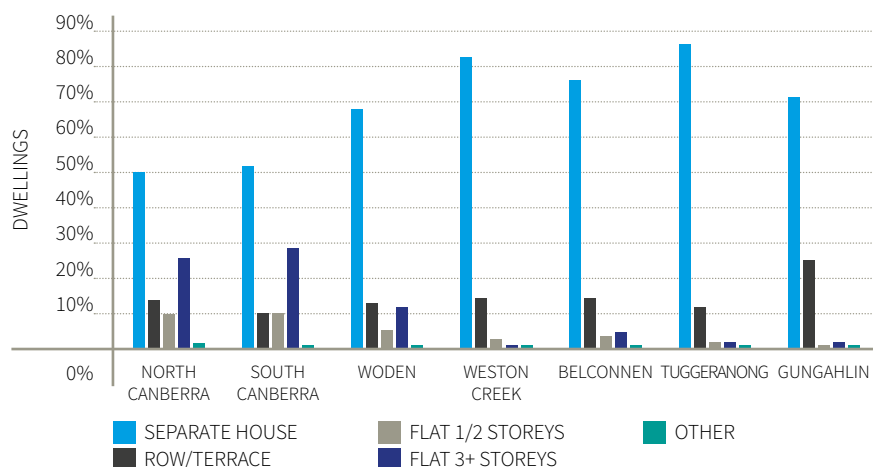
The Housing Choices Discussion Paper supports the aims of the Minister for Planning's 2015 [Statement of Planning Intent](#), which sets out the key planning priorities for the ACT Government for the next three to five years. The statement reinforces the desire for the community to be involved in creating sustainable, compact and liveable neighbourhoods that are appealing to live, visit and play in. It focuses on promoting urban renewal by encouraging coordinated redevelopment of existing urban areas.



There are a range of available dwellings in Canberra:

- Detached houses are the most common dwelling available in Canberra.
- The greatest proportion of detached houses are located in Canberra's outer districts, such as Tuggeranong.
- Dwelling proportions by district in the ACT are shown in **figure 8**.

Figure 8: Dwelling values by district and dwelling proportions by district







HOW HAS THE ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONDED SO FAR TO THIS CHANGE?

Growth is being rebalanced:

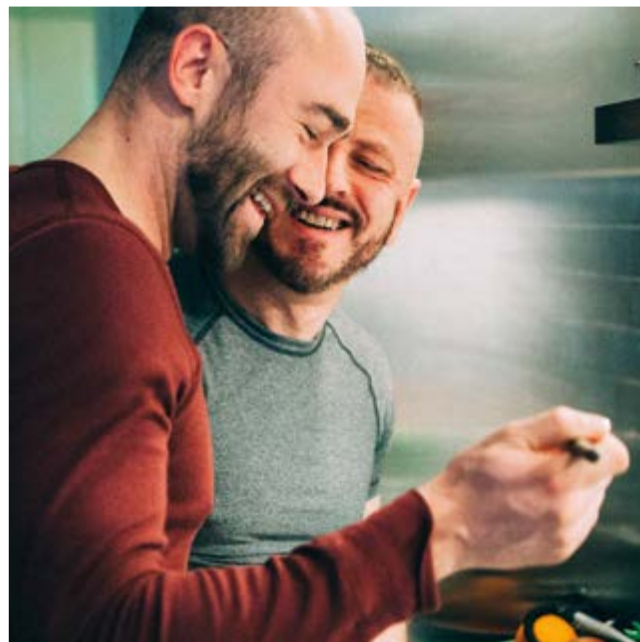
- Fringe development has high economic and environmental costs.
- Land release has moved to a 50/50 split between greenfield and infill development.

Mix of housing types are changing:

- 81% of the housing stock is single residential, but on the decline.

The delivery of housing types has been mixed:

- Approvals for apartments over three storeys dominate
- Low rise multi-unit development is less prevalent



CHANGING HOUSING PREFERENCES AND MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

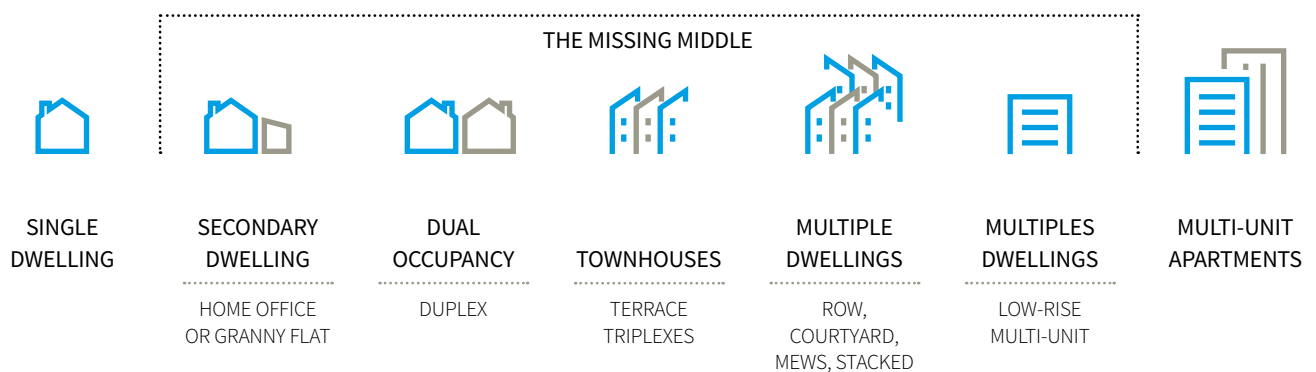
These changes create different requirements for the size and adaptability of our dwellings. Increased housing diversity supports enhanced liveability and social inclusion by making it easier for all sectors of the community to find homes that suit their needs and budgets in residential areas. It will particularly assist social inclusion by enabling older residents to downsize and age in place. People want to be able to stay in homes that meet their needs and lifestyles. The lack of housing options (e.g. lower maintenance town houses, units and apartments) makes it difficult for those who want to downsize to stay in their suburb and community, and for those who do not want, or need, to live in a ‘typical’ family home on a block.

We are hearing from the community that not everyone aspires to a large suburban block with a large house and garden, or an apartment in a highrise building. We are hearing that people want different forms of housing in residential areas such as low-rise, medium density and medium sized homes, known as the missing middle. They also want to ensure we retain our quality built form and neighborhood character.

If there is the view that there is a lack of terrace houses, dual occupancies and town houses in our residential areas, we need to ask “Why?”. The residential zones are intended to allow an increasing level of multi-unit development as you progress from the RZ1 Suburban Zone to the RZ5 High Density Residential Zone, yet this is not happening to the level that it could. Are the current planning rules restricting this type of development to such an extent they are unpopular or unfeasible to build?

While the demand for increased housing options is being driven to some extent by the younger generation, it is also being sought by older residents. Older residents often do not want to leave the suburb and community they may have lived in for many years. They often no longer want—or are able—to live in a big home but find that there are few options available to move to while staying close to the communities they are a part of (figure 9).

Figure 9: The missing middle





HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The availability of appropriate housing is an important factor for people looking for a new home. By increasing the diversity of housing, Canberrans would have more choice about how and where they live. Enabling a range of housing options has the potential to boost supply across the board and help government deliver more affordable homes to those on lower incomes.

Increased housing diversity supports enhanced liveability and social inclusion by making it easier for everyone to find a home that suit their needs and budgets in residential areas. Diversity opens up more options for households to move to either a more appropriate or more affordable home that better reflects their needs.



COULD THERE BE CHANGES TO THE RZ1 ZONE? IF SO, WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU SUPPORT?

WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU SUPPORT TO HELP INCREASE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING CHOICES IN THE RZ2 ZONE?

WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU SUPPORT TO THE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONES TO IMPROVE HOUSING CHOICE?



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

While the Planning Strategy and Land Release Program focus on the ‘where and when’ of growth, land and housing, the Housing Choices project focuses on exploring how we might be able to get more housing diversity. This includes exploring how we can get the missing middle of innovative, sustainable and affordable medium density housing in Canberra.

The Canberra community has always shown considerable interest and involvement in the planning system and planning processes. Housing policy, which is integral to good planning, is a complex issue involving interconnected problems and many interests from different stakeholders and groups. There is considerable community interest in housing policy, with housing choice and housing affordability mentioned in media articles, correspondence and talk-back radio with ACT ministers.

Through these forums, some members of the community have indicated a desire for increased housing choices in their neighbourhoods. Requests include that dual occupancies (which permit separate unit titles) be allowed in the Territory Plan’s residential RZ1 Suburban Zone and that the level of multi-unit development permitted in the RZ2 Suburban Core Zone be increased. Conversely, other members of the community want the provisions regarding multi-unit development to be rolled back, thereby further restricting (or even prohibiting) multi-unit development in the RZ1 and RZ2 zones.

Other requests include retaining and protecting green spaces in residential areas (both in public green spaces and on private blocks) and that greater protection measures be introduced in precinct codes for suburban areas, particularly to protect existing character.

The question is, are these requests at odds with those wanting increased housing choices and/or residential densities or can these goals work hand in hand to enhance the quality of our residential areas?

To address these issues, the government is currently working on its housing policies through the [Housing Choices project](#), [Demonstration Housing project](#) and a [new Housing Strategy](#).

The government released the [Housing Choices Discussion Paper](#) in November 2017. The paper puts forward a series of questions to facilitate a conversation about increased housing options. Consultation on the discussion paper ran from 13 November 2017 to 9 March 2018.

The discussion paper was prepared to: inform the policy on housing in the ACT by raising awareness and understanding about the need for increased housing choice as part of the government’s urban renewal priority; and to seek community views on how to achieve greater housing choice while maintaining Canberra’s residential amenity and garden city values.

To date, and consistent with the Planning Strategy, housing choices policy has focused on encouraging a more compact city by focusing a balance of urban infill and city expansion, urban intensification in town centres, around group centres and along the major public transport routes. Based on recent community feedback, research and a survey, it is recognised there also needs to be greater choice in existing residential areas that are close to existing services, facilities, workplaces, educational institutions and alternative transport options.

HOW DO WE IMPROVE HOUSING CHOICE?

The Territory Plan and particularly the Residential Zones Development Code and the Multi Unit Housing Development Code contain provisions against which multi-unit development is assessed. This includes dual occupancy and multi-unit developments, as well as apartments. The provisions that control the scale of development on a block (such as the number of dwellings and size of buildings) is summarised in **table 2**.

Table 2: Comparison of residential zones in the ACT

	RZ1 SUBURBAN	RZ2 SUBURBAN CORE ZONE	RZ3 URBAN RESIDENTIAL ZONE	RZ4 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE	RZ5 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE
Plot ratio for dual occupancy and multi unit	Formula up to 32.5% (up to 16.25% rear dwelling)	Up to 50% (35% if rear dwelling and 17.5% for rear dwelling)	65%	80%	n/a
Plot ratio single dwellings	50%	50%	not stated	not stated	not stated
Number of storeys	2 storey (1 storey rear dwelling)	2 storey	generally 2 storey*	generally 3 storey*	generally up to 6 storeys*
Maximum height	8.5m	8.5m	9.5m	12.5m	21.5m
Attics and basements	permitted but not in addition to 2 storeys	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted
Dual occupancy	min block size 800m ²	min block size 700m ²	permitted	permitted	permitted
Multi unit (more than 2)	other than single dwelling block only	block density control with 1050m ² min block area required	permitted	permitted	permitted
Apartments	not permitted	not permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted
Unit titling subdivision	not permitted for single dwelling blocks except where dwelling pre-existed V200 (2003)	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted
Consolidation	not permitted for single dwelling blocks except for supportive housing	permitted provided there is a continuous street frontage	permitted	permitted	permitted

* if specified criteria is met, additional storeys are possible, provided overall height limit is not exceeded.

Section 4 of the Housing Choices Discussion Paper describes mechanisms available to government to encourage a greater range of housing choices, including legislative, regulatory and policy change. In regards to potential changes to the Territory Plan, some conversation starters below.

RZ1 SUBURBAN ZONE

Should dwelling densities be increased in the RZ1 zone?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Dual occupancies are only permitted on blocks over 800m² and cannot be separately titled.

Matters for consideration

- Mr Fluffy blocks are the exception where dual occupancies are permitted on blocks over 700m² and can be unit titled.
- There is a desire from the community to retain the suburban character of RZ1 areas.
- Would dual occupancies be unit titled on all blocks over 800m² or only those with certain characteristics e.g. corner blocks (or blocks of a certain length frontage), one per section?
- Should the 800m² block size threshold be adjusted? Up or down?
- Should other forms of lower density multi-unit development be considered (for instance developments that share facilities such as laundry, living spaces etc)?

Should plot ratio controls for dual occupancies be reviewed?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Formula says up to 32.5% plot ratio (up to 16.25% for rear dwelling).

Matters for consideration

- Plot ratio for single dwellings is 50%.
- Need to consider the role of green space in gardens.

Should subdivision (into two separate blocks), not unit titled be permitted?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Subdivision is only permitted on blocks with a dual occupancy approved before September 2003.

Matters for consideration

- How would this impact on the subdivision pattern of streets?
- If supported, would a certain block size be required and/or minimum size for the new blocks resulting from the subdivision?
- Should each subdivided block have a frontage to a street or open space?

RZ2 SUBURBAN CORE ZONE

Should the number of dwellings permitted on a block be amended?

Current Territory Plan controls

- For blocks over 700m² an additional dwelling is permitted for every 350m² and once over 2100m², an additional dwelling is allowed per 250m².
- The dwelling limit is increased if dwellings are adaptable.

Matters for consideration

- What is an appropriate level of development in RZ2 when the intent of the zone is to enable a level of multi-unit development that is still appropriate in the suburban context?
- The number of dwellings permitted could impact the viability of a development?
- Plot ratio, building height and private open space controls apply in addition to dwelling density rules.

Should plot ratio provisions be standardised in RZ2 zone?

Current Territory Plan controls

- 50% plot ratio applies where both dwellings front the street.
- 35% plot ratio applies if one dwelling is behind the other (rear dwelling has max 17.5% plot ratio).

Matters for consideration

- Depending on the orientation of a block, allowing a 50% plot ratio only where both dwellings face the street can conflict with solar access provisions and principles of solar passive design.
- Plot ratio for single dwellings is 50%.

Should the dwelling replacement rule be changed?

Current Territory Plan controls

- For every dwelling demolished for a multi-unit development, a unit of a similar number of bedrooms must be provided.

Matters for consideration

- This provision was introduced in response to concerns regarding redevelopment in the RZ3 and RZ4 zones in the Inner North not providing units of a size suitable for families. Is this rule required in RZ2 zone where single dwellings are readily available in the surrounding RZ1 zone?

Should apartments (one dwelling above another) be permitted in RZ2?

Current Territory Plan controls

- No apartments are permitted in RZ2.

Matters for consideration

- Community comments have included the desire for dwellings on one level.
- Plot ratio, building height and private open space controls continue to apply.
- Two 2-storey attached townhouses (or duplexes) would have a similar presence to the street as a 2-storey apartment building with two dwellings.

Should block consolidation provisions be reviewed?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Blocks must have a single continuous street frontage (i.e. can't consolidate a block with the block to the rear that faces a different street).

Matters for consideration

- What has been the impact on development outcomes since this rule was introduced in 2013?

How many dwellings should be allowed per building?

Current Territory Plan controls

- A building cannot contain more than four dwellings.

Matters for consideration

- What has been the impact on urban design outcomes since this rule was introduced in 2013?
- Can other provisions manage the scale of development (including aspects such as articulation of facades) in a more appropriate way?



RZ3 URBAN RESIDENTIAL ZONE AND RZ4 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE

Should the RZ3 and RZ4 zones be amalgamated into a single zone?

Current Territory Plan controls

- RZ3 and RZ4 zones are located in the Inner North, Gungahlin and new greenfield areas.

Matters for consideration

- A diversity of housing choices already exists in these areas.
- Is there sufficient distinction in built form outcomes with the current zone provisions?
- Should the provisions that apply to each zone be reviewed rather than combining the zones?

Should the plot ratio in these zones be amended?

Current Territory Plan controls

- RZ3 – 65% plot ratio
- RZ4 – 80% plot ratio

Matters for consideration

- What is an appropriate level of development in these zones – 80% in RZ3 and 100-130% in RZ4?
- Should plot ratio be a mandatory rule or have a criterion to enable flexibility (though increase uncertainty for neighbours)?

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

What other approaches to housing could be considered?

Current Territory Plan controls

- provisions relating to single dwelling and multi-unit housing, secondary residences, residential care accommodation and supportive housing.

Matters for consideration

- How should adaptable housing and/or universal design be considered (homes that remove barriers and enable use by those with specific needs)?
- What about small homes or tiny homes?
- How would dwellings with shared facilities (e.g. shared laundry, kitchen, workshop, garage, 'hobby' room, guest bedroom) meet the needs of residents and be appropriate in residential areas?
- What other types of housing should be considered?

Is plot ratio or site coverage a better provision to have to control the scale and size of development?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Plot ratio, private open space and site open space provisions currently apply.

Matters for consideration

- Does the scale (size) of a development need to be controlled?

Is the amount and/or location of blocks within each zone appropriate?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Zones are specified in Territory Plan map.

Matters for consideration

- Should zone boundaries be adjusted?
- Should this be considered through the Housing Choices project or the Planning Strategy review?
- Is there the right number of residential zones?
- How should the zone relate to location of nearby services and facilities, as well as open space areas?

Should there be provisions that specify a certain number of dwellings of certain sizes/ number of bedrooms within a development?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Minimum dwelling floor area provisions apply depending on the number of bedrooms.
- For developments over 40 dwellings a combination of dwelling types (i.e. number of bedrooms) is required.

Matters for consideration

- Should proportion of dwelling sizes be more specifically nominated
- Should different limits apply to different zones or different scales of development

What role do boarding houses play in providing housing options in residential areas?

Current Territory Plan controls

- Permitted in all residential zones but only one per section.

Matters for consideration

- Could there be a maximum number of rooms in a boarding house? And should this relate to the zone?

How should the character of areas be considered?

Current Territory Plan controls

no specific controls currently in Territory Plan

Matters for consideration

- Do residential areas have a specific character?
- If so, what are the characteristic features of street/ area/suburb? Do they relate to road width, verge width, street trees, block sizes, distance of the dwelling to the front boundary, scale, height and/or design of the dwelling, site coverage, materials used or vegetation type or amount?
- Should the existing character of an area be retained or can it change over time?



DEMONSTRATION HOUSING

Parallel to the Housing Choices engagement is the Demonstration Housing project. The timing of these two projects presents a valuable opportunity for them to interact in a way that informs and complements both.

Housing choices explores the policy and the type of houses we can have in different areas across Canberra. The Demonstration Housing project starts to explore the delivery method, form and design of housing.

The Collaboration Hub will play an important role in the assessment and selection of proposals that demonstrate innovative housing types by contributing to the development of criteria for the selection and assessment of future demonstration housing proposals.

Equally, the Demonstration Housing project will be able to inform the Collaboration Hub providing a clear example of the potential changes the collaboration hub may like to see in Canberra, while at the same time testing their viability.



WHAT IS THE DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT?

Demonstration housing projects show the community how innovation in residential planning, design and delivery can lead to more sustainable, compact and liveable neighbourhoods with better transport choices. They enable the development industry and independent proponents to trial alternative models for financing and managing the delivery of housing projects.

The project will include a physical on-ground representation of the missing middle—the market for medium density housing that is not currently being met in the ACT and Housing Choices policy framework. It is expected that facilitating innovative delivery models and encouraging design quality will have significant positive impacts on housing affordability, environmental outcomes, community health, social values and economic prosperity.

DEMONSTRATION HOUSING RESOLUTION

Demonstration housing projects are identified in the Minister for Planning's Statement of Planning Intent. On 7 June 2017 the ACT Legislative Assembly passed the Demonstration Housing Precincts resolution calling on the government to develop a plan for the delivery of a housing demonstration project by November 2017.

The resolution called on the government to engage with the community and industry stakeholders on how best to deliver a housing demonstration project that promotes best practice environmental performance, including excellence in construction and design quality, carbon neutral buildings, medium density infill, innovative planning and engagement approaches, innovative products and typologies, close partnership with industry bodies, and options for public and affordable housing.

EOI PROCESS – DEMONSTRATION HOUSING

EPSDD recently called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Demonstration Housing projects. The EOI process will be undertaken in two stages.

The first stage will assess the market interest, capability and experience of suitably qualified and experienced proponents to provide proposals for demonstration housing projects that meet some or all of the project objectives specified by the Legislative Assembly. The EOI has also asked proponents to identify existing constraints to them delivering their proposals. This information will be useful for the Collaboration Hub in considering possible changes to planning rules.

Interested proponents could include architects, designers, planners, developers, community and social housing providers, builders, community organisations and individuals.

After assessing proposals received from stage 1, EPSDD will refine the requirements for the next stage of the tender process as outlined in **figure 10**.

Figure 10: EOI Process

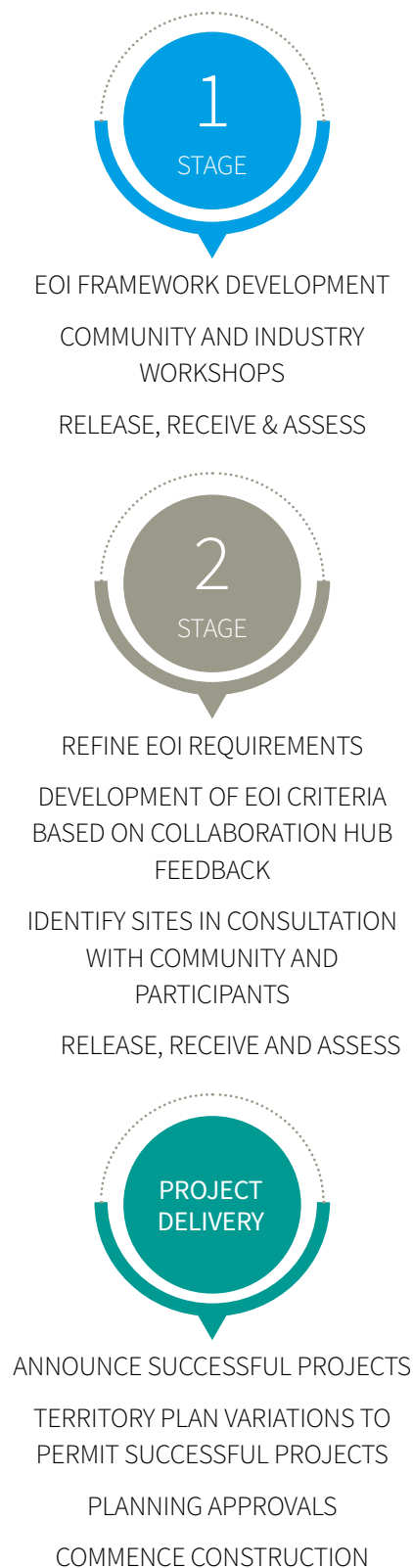



Figure 11: Demonstration housing opportunities





DESIGN AND QUALITY

‘Good design’ is often considered to be individual taste and can be difficult to universally define. What some people may think is good design may not appeal to others and vice versa. Some of the most celebrated buildings in the world are not universally considered to be ‘good design’. However, key themes that should be addressed when thinking about good design include:

- minimising adverse environmental impact throughout the building’s lifecycle
- responding to the site and integrating the building with the surrounding area
- high-quality built form and associated infrastructure, such as landscaping and footpaths
- considering the building’s look and feel from the streetscape level/human scale and creating a positive relationship between the private and public domain
- provides good visual amenity that offers articulation and varying materiality in the built form and well considered landscaping
- achieving a high level of functionality
- providing good amenity for residents, such as access to sunlight, natural ventilation, appropriate room dimensions and sufficient outdoor space
- achieving universal design principles so that people of all ages and abilities are able to live comfortably within the building and also age in place.



WHAT IS GOOD HOUSING DESIGN? WHAT
ELEMENTS MAKE A GOOD RESIDENTIAL
BUILDING OR DEVELOPMENT?

HOW CAN DESIGN OUTCOMES
FOR MEDIUM TO HIGHER DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BE
IMPROVED?



GOOD INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Strategy commits to a target of 50% infill for new dwellings. Small scale residential infill development typically involves creating a new development behind or in front of an existing house. The creation of new sites should not compromise the liveability of existing houses. Infill developments should maintain the same design standards as any new housing, including access to sunny private outdoor spaces linked to a living area, a good relationship to the street and direct and easy access to parking.

The location of boundaries and how they are treated needs to be considered to maintain privacy and allow good quality spaces to be created around the existing house. Boundaries and street access should be considered when adding dwellings to a site to ensure more driveways do not negatively impact the public domain interface.

Rear-lot development can create issues around houses overlooking each other, and the loss of private open space at the rear of the existing house. Rear-lot development should only be used where a comprehensive development or other outcome is not possible.

Important considerations:

- Orientation
- Ecology and habitats
- Deep soil zones
- Existing trees
- Public domain interface
- Communal and public open spaces
- Visual privacy
- Pedestrian access and entries
- Vehicle access
- Bicycle and car parking
- Internal networks



WHAT ARE THE EXAMPLES OF
WELL-DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD OR ELSEWHERE?

HOW IS RESIDENTIAL LAND DELIVERED IN THE ACT?

The Housing Choices project is currently not looking at the mechanisms of how residential land is delivered and available in the ACT. However, this information provides valuable context in understanding how land becomes available.

LAND RELEASE PROGRAM

The use of Territory land is planned through a long-term residential and commercial land release program, consistent with the land use policies of the Territory Plan. The government prepares a four-year [indicative land release program](#) that sets out the intended release of land for different uses, including residential development.

The land release program is designed to align and support the government's strategic priorities. It enables government to deliver on a range of policy initiatives including those related to land development, housing affordability, public housing renewal and suburban sustainability, as well as to seek and promote international investment opportunities in the land market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LAND RELEASE PROGRAM

Land release contributes to the financial, social and environmental objectives of the Territory by seeking to:

- stimulate urban renewal by activating key gateways to the city and commercial centres
- facilitate housing diversity and deliver affordable housing choices
- maintain an appropriate inventory of land in the planning and land development pipeline for future release
- meet the demand for land in the Territory across all sectors and support investment in the Territory economy
- support the operation of a competitive land development and construction industry
- achieve satisfactory returns to the government from the sale of unleased land and its surplus property assets.

Further information on the Indicative [Indicative Land Release Program](#).

LAND SALES AND THE SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY

Under Section 238 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the methods of land sale by the government are auction, tender, ballot and direct sale.

The government sells land through the Suburban Land Agency, a statutory authority established under the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017*. The agency is responsible for delivering the suburban development program, including urban renewal in established town centres and suburbs. This comprises releases for residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use and community purposes.

EPSDD is responsible for the planning and planning approvals for land and development delivered by the SLA.

The SLA has responsibility to encourage and promote urban renewal outside declared urban renewal precincts and to contribute to the growth and diversification of the Territory's economy and social and environment sustainability. In exercising its functions, the agency must operate effectively, in a way that delivers value for money, in accordance with sound risk management practices.

The SLA's functions are to:

- conduct all government land sales and strategic acquisitions
- undertake civil works for government estate developments while ensuring availability of a mixture of public and private housing in line with housing targets set by government
- serve as the vehicle through which the government will enter into joint venture or other commercial arrangements to deliver land development projects
- provide community information for operational elements of government development projects

conduct place-making activities and establish of new communities.

Further information about the [Suburban Land Agency](#).

CITY RENEWAL AUTHORITY

The City Renewal Authority (CRA) is established under the [City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017](#) which came into effect on 1 July 2017. The CRA is responsible for delivery of projects in the City Renewal Precinct (**map 3**), a 415h area defined in the aforementioned Act. The area can be changed or added to by government, and additional precincts can be created. The priorities for the precincts are:

- delivering mixed-use urban renewal that promotes a vibrant city
- promoting social and environmental sustainability in relation to urban renewal and urban infrastructure
- coordinating and integrating urban renewal, transport and infrastructure initiatives to support activation and facilitate community use of urban places
- providing opportunities to open and diversify the local economy including through private sector investment in urban renewal.

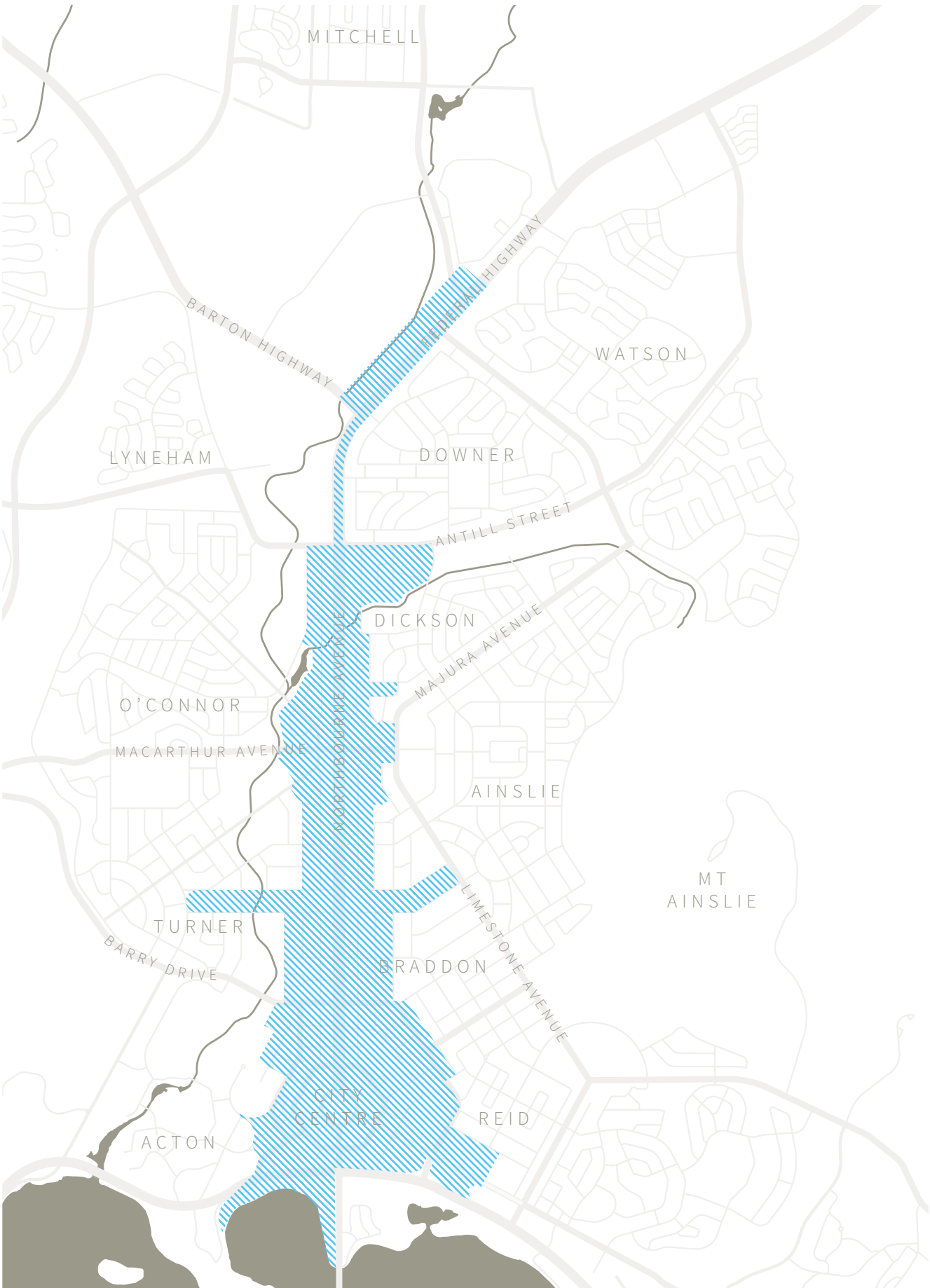
The CRA will also be involved in the sale of land in the City Renewal Precinct.

The EPSDD is responsible for the planning and planning approvals for land and development delivered by the CRA.

DIRECT SALES

In certain circumstances, the government may release land by 'direct sale', where a lease is offered for sale without going through a competitive process such as an auction. This method of land release may only be considered where an applicant and their proposed use of land meet statutory requirements, including relevant eligibility criteria, and can demonstrate a viable business case. Further information on the [direct sales process](#).

Map 3: City Renewal Authority area of responsibility



LEASE VARIATION CHARGE (LVC)

A lease that applies to a block of land can specify development provisions over and beyond those that apply through the Territory Plan. Examples include specifying the maximum or minimum gross floor area (GFA) that applies to a development on the block, specific uses that are permitted or prohibited or the total number of dwellings permitted on the site. Changes can be made to these requirements by submitting a development application to vary the lease.

When a variation to a lease is made, the charge that is applied by government is called the Lease Variation Charge (LVC). The amount of the LVC is determined by Section 276E and Section 277 of the Planning and Development Act. The LVC is sometimes referred to as a 'Betterment Tax' in other jurisdictions. A number of discounts on LVC are available depending on the type of development.

In 2016–17 the revenue for the LVC is \$19.9 million and the forecast for 2017–18 is \$22.9 million. This forms part of Territory Revenue and is not directly allocated to specific areas.

INDUSTRY

Real estate and property developers, often simply referred to as 'developers', play a crucial role in shaping our city and providing housing. Developers are individuals or businesses that coordinate and manage the process of purchasing, planning and building or renovating property for a monetary profit. However, developers sometimes only complete a part or parts of the process, such as purchase land and obtain planning approval for a development, and then on-sell the land and development approval for a profit. Developers typically take on a high amount of risk but reap the associated higher rewards.

Developers may work with construction and planning professions during the process, such as architects, town planners, builders, certifiers, surveyors, lawyers, real estate agents etc. There are also common financial considerations:

- **Minimum pre-sale conditions** - Dwellings are often sold by the developer to build a deposit before finance is approved by a bank. The most popular form of pre-sale is known as 'off the plan' purchase. As a guide, banks will fund up to 75% of total project cost.
- **Mezzanine finance** - Mezzanine financing is a hybrid of debt and equity financing that gives the lender the rights to convert to an ownership or equity interest in the company in case of default. A typical interest rate for mezzanine financing is 12–20%.
- **Holding costs** - A number of pre-development costs contribute to a higher cost for the purchaser of the resulting dwelling. Preparing documentation for the development application can take considerable time that results in extra costs such as land rates, loan interest, construction fencing costs etc. Development that is contested through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal can take more than six months, resulting in further holding costs. Developers pass on these holding costs, or the risks of these costs being incurred, to the end consumer.

A NEW HOUSING STRATEGY FOR THE ACT

The ACT Government is working closely with the community, building and development sectors in developing a new Housing Strategy to be released in 2018.

The ACT Government has had a long-term commitment to improving housing affordability for all households. While the Government has invested over the last ten years in public housing and assistance for people experiencing homelessness, supported the community housing sector to grow, reformed planning and taxation laws, accelerated land release and provided dedicated affordable home purchase products, recent reviews have identified that households on low incomes and people experiencing homelessness are still falling through the gaps.

As well as the need to focus housing assistance on those who need it most—those who are experiencing homelessness or low income households experiencing housing stress — the Government has identified the need for a more comprehensive Strategy that covers all aspects of the housing continuum in an integrated and coordinated way. A new Housing Strategy will bring together policies and programs across Government relating to planning reforms, housing choice, building design, land release and infrastructure, to make sure we are providing the housing people need at every life stage and that is fit for diverse household types and individual needs.

The strategy will consider and provide actions to address five broad goals:

1. An equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT Community
2. Reducing homelessness
3. Strengthening social housing assistance
4. Increasing affordable rental housing
5. Increasing affordable home ownership

After a comprehensive community engagement program in 2017, the government has developed a consultation summary called [‘What we heard: Developing a New Housing Strategy’](#), that describes the feedback received during the engagement program and from ‘Our Canberra, Our Home—the ACT Housing and Homelessness Summit’ held on 17 October 2017.

SOME EARLY ACTIONS

Ahead of the development of the new Housing Strategy, the government announced new annual targets for public, community and affordable home purchase to apply to select land releases. For the affordable home purchases, the government also announced a number of concurrent reforms to eligibility, purchase price thresholds and the establishment of a home purchase registration database.

PUBLIC, COMMUNITY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGET

The ACT Government's new annual Public, Community and Affordable Housing Target identifies the target number of dwellings set aside that year for public, community and affordable home purchase. The targets will be published annually alongside each year's Indicative Land Release Program and published online.

AFFORDABLE HOME PURCHASE AND ELIGIBILITY

To help make sure affordable homes go to the people who need them most, applicants must meet new eligibility criteria and register their interest on the Affordable Home Purchase Database. To be eligible for Affordable Home Purchase, applicants must register their interest in the [Affordable Home Purchase Database](#) and meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be an Australian resident.
- Have a total gross income of all applicants (including domestic partners) less than \$100,000 for households of up to two children, increasing by \$16,000 per child up to a capped \$148,000 for five or more children.
- Do not own, or have not owned in the last two years, any property (including other homes, land or commercial properties, such as a shop).
- At least one applicant who will own the property must live in the home continuously for 12 months.

The database lists the type and location of affordable homes. Applicants can register their interest against one or more of the available options. The data collected will help match eligible applicants with affordable homes as they become available.

PRICE THRESHOLDS

Price thresholds apply to affordable homes based on the net living area. The 2017–18 price thresholds for affordable homes can be seen in **table 3**.

Table 3: Price thresholds

DWELLING SIZE	MAXIMUM PRICE
Up to 80m ²	\$323 000
Between 81 and 105m ²	\$374 000
Greater than 105m ²	\$425 000

INNOVATION FUND

The Affordable Housing Innovation Fund supports projects that aim to increase the supply of affordable housing for low income households.

The government has developed guidance to assess applications for three projects so far. These are:

- an Affordable Rental Real Estate Management Model (like HomeGround)
- a home sharing model (like HomeShare)
- a co-housing model (like Nightingale Housing).

These ideas are being assessed via an expression of interest to participate in a grants program. The government will consider what models and methods for delivery will be the most effective. Additionally, the government welcomes other innovative ideas that would increase the supply of affordable housing for low income households.

LINKS TO INFORMATION

- ACT Affordable Housing homepage: https://www.planning.act.gov.au/topics/affordable_housing
- “Yoursay” on developing a new Strategy: <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/affordablehousing>
- Current Affordable, Public and Community Housing Targets: <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2018-75/default.asp>
- Indicative Land Release program: <http://www.planning.act.gov.au/topics/land-release>

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

ACT CLIMATE STRATEGY TO NET ZERO EMISSIONS

The ACT's next climate strategy will set a path to achieving a prosperous and highly liveable zero emissions city that remains one of the best places to live, work and play now and into the future.

The government aims to mainstream climate change into all Territory activities, including the way we plan, build and run our city. As such, the new climate strategy will take into account the planning and transport strategies, as none of the strategies can be developed in isolation. Planning and transport go hand in hand, and also need to focus on sustainability.

The ACT produces emissions from three main areas: energy (electricity and gas), transport (petrol and diesel fuel) and waste (methane in landfill). Some emissions come from agriculture. Land use can release carbon dioxide or be a 'sink' (taking in carbon dioxide) depending on how we use it. These areas, or sectors as they are referred to, are the focus of the climate work.

The new climate change strategy will build on the existing, successful Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (AP2), which set the scene for the ACT to have 100% renewable electricity by 2020. It's time to set our sights higher and take into account the latest research and thinking.

The actions we take today will determine how easily we can reach our target. For example, buildings, energy and transport systems we construct now will still be here in 20–30 years.

To help prevent, and best protect ourselves from, dangerous climate change, we should make efforts to achieve net zero emissions well before 2050, particularly where this makes good economic sense and leads to other benefits for the community.

To find out more about the [ACT Climate Change Strategy](#).

SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-WISE DESIGN

Sustainable and climate-wise design means buildings are fit-for-purpose in the climate of the present and for the anticipated lifespan of the development. This includes being resilient to and providing protection from climate change impacts such as extreme events, particularly heatwaves, droughts (including dust storms and water restrictions), storms (including violent winds, heavy rain and flash flooding) and bushfires. Climate-wise buildings mitigate against the impacts of the urban heat island effect and avoid maladaptation or perverse outcomes that make the building and its occupants vulnerable under projected climate change.

Leading practice to create climate-wise buildings involves good design that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, maximises passive heating and cooling (so mechanical air conditioning systems are only required for thermal comfort during seasonal extremes). Good design will trend towards a zero carbon future where energy efficiencies in both construction and building operation will be maximised to reduce energy use.

Ways to achieve this include not using fossil fuels (natural gas), promotion of active travel and low carbon transport options (pedestrians and cyclists first), installation of renewable electricity generation capacitors, building in contingencies for future solar PV panel installation, battery storage and on-site electric vehicle charging and incorporating solar passive design and orientation.

Living infrastructure benefits can be included in a development by using drought resistant and fire-retardant plantings and green roofs/walls to create microclimates that reduce urban heat island effect and provide a heat oasis. Good design will also capture and reuse rainfall runoff on-site to irrigate living infrastructure.

Sustainable waste collection and storage system design and operation will minimise waste to landfill and maximise reuse, recycling and resource recovery (e.g. capture and use of organics, increasing recycled content of materials). Captured rainfall run-off will also contribute to lower mains-fed grey-water consumption.

Sustainable and climate-wise design will often involve new and innovative solutions that will complement other objectives and result in outcomes that add value to other outcomes.

Information on designing a sustainable home can be found at www.yourhome.gov.au, a website maintained by the Australian Government and developed in partnership with the building and design industry. It contains a guide to building environmentally sustainable homes.

Information on the House Energy Rating Scheme (EER) in the ACT can be found at www.planning.act.gov.au/topics/design_build/design-and-siting/energy_ratings

The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) can be found at <http://www.nathers.gov.au>

GLOSSARY

City centre is characterised by an established commercial core with a full range of services, taller buildings and a network of retail and commercial streets with active frontages. It serves as the primary centre for local government, commerce and entertainment, while providing opportunities for office development and residential intensification.

Town centres provide the main commercial and community focus for the district populations of Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Woden/Weston Creek. Town centres offer a wide range of services, facilities and employment which provide opportunities for higher density residential development.

Group centres provide larger shopping centres that service groups of nearby suburbs and provide easy access to major services such as food retailing and non-retail commercial uses such as banks. Group centres strive to be relatively relaxed and low-key centres that promote an efficient urban structure.

Local centres are smaller shopping centres that provide convenience retailing and community and business services that meet the daily needs of the local population. Local centres act as a social focus for the local residents and surrounding community and will vary in size according to the demand of that community.

Transit corridors are generally linear in form and are designed for mass transport. Transit corridors offer one or more modes of transport, such as car lanes, cycle lanes, bus lanes, light-rail and footpaths. Development often occurs along transit corridors due to the ease of transport. Northbourne Avenue is an example of a transit corridor.

Plot ratio as defined in the Territory Plan, means the *gross floor area* in a building divided by the area of the site.

‘Missing middle housing’ can be defined in many ways, primarily referring to low rise medium density housing types that fall in-between smaller apartments and larger freestanding homes. Missing middle housing includes duplexes (two attached or semi-attached dwellings), townhouses (dwellings in a multi-unit complex), terrace houses (dwellings built in a continuous row), dual occupancies (two dwellings on one block of land), and manor homes (comprise 3-4 small low-rise dwellings).

Adaptable housing means housing that complies with Australian Standard *AS4299 Class C Adaptable Housing*, and is designed to cater for people of all ages and abilities. Adaptable housing provides greater housing choices and means it is easier for people to ‘age in place’ where they feel comfortable, for example a home that is wheelchair accessible.

Suburbs are small residential communities located on the periphery of a city centre. Suburbs close to the city centre typically consist of medium to high density dwellings, with suburbs on the outskirts of the city typically consisting of medium to low density dwellings. Suburbs are usually serviced by a local or group centre.

Single dwelling housing: the use of land for residential purposes for a single dwelling only.

Secondary dwelling: a second dwelling on a block that is small scale. Commonly referred to as a ‘Granny Flat’. The Secondary Dwelling is not able to be sold separately to the primary residence but can be rented out.

Dual occupancy: the use of land that was originally used for a single dwelling but is converted to two dwellings. The two dwellings can be attached with a shared wall or fully detached from one another. The two dwellings may be able to be sold separately if the land is zoned RZ2, however cannot be sold separately if zoned RZ1.

Multi-unit housing: the use of land for more than one dwelling and includes dual occupancy housing, townhouses and apartments.

Supportive housing: the use of land for residential accommodation for persons in need of support, which is managed by a Territory approved organisation that provides a range of support services such as counselling, domestic assistance and personal care for residents as required.

Cooperative housing: Cooperative housing (co-housing) is an alternate form of ownership of homes and property, in which the property is owned by an organization and then sold as shares to the residents of the community. Cooperative housing splits costs on shared housing amenities and is frequently used as a part of an intentional community initiative. Some co-housing models also seek to separately title units once the development is complete, and to retain some areas as common property or shared facilities. Shared amenities may include gardens, tool sheds, communal kitchens, laundries, guest suites, 'home' office facilities and transport assets.

Small-scale infill: refers to the development of parcels of land within previously built areas that is small in nature and compliments existing urban scale. These areas are already served by public infrastructure such as transportation, water, wastewater and other utilities.

Townhouse terrace: A medium-density type of dwelling that shares side walls, is often multiple floors on a small footprint and has a courtyard. Townhouse Terraces can be separately titled or form a body corporate if there are communal areas.

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