



A broader object and outcomes focus

(Draft Planning Bill - Chapter 2)

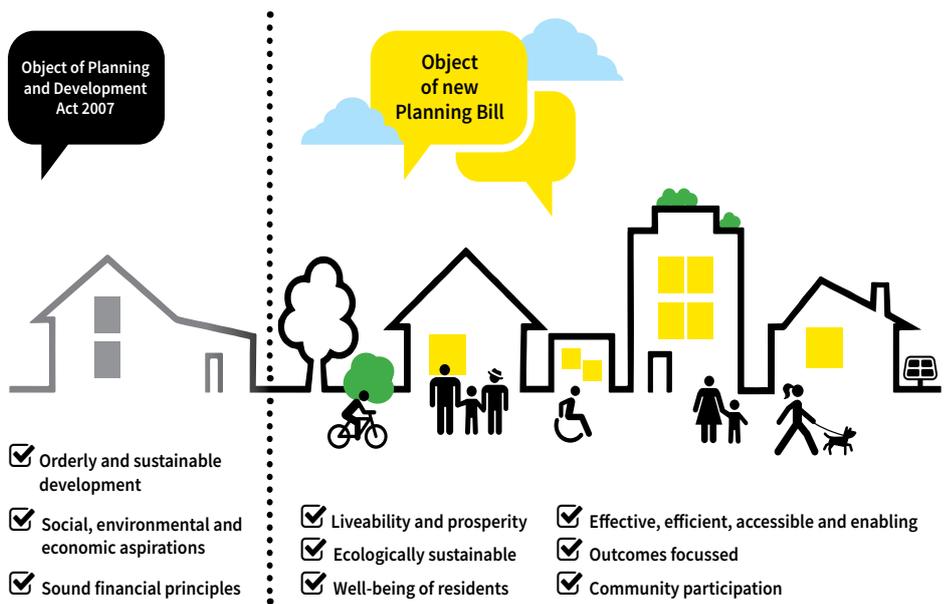
The 'object' of a bill describes its purpose and scope.

To support a reformed planning system in the ACT, we have broadened the object of the Planning Bill from the current Planning and Development Act 2007.

The broadened object provides a new starting point for thinking about planning in the Territory. It goes beyond the bricks and mortar focus to make sure the planning system delivers for the wide-ranging needs of all parts of the ACT community.

The new object shifts the focus of the planning system to how we can support and enhance the lives of people living in the Territory.

The reform process presents an opportunity to be more aspirational and consider the wider context of the planning system and its ability to deliver liveability, prosperity and the wellbeing of residents through good planning.



● For the first time, the Bill also recognises the importance to the planning system of the knowledge, culture, and traditions of the traditional custodians, the Ngunnawal people.



What is an outcomes-focussed planning system?

The new object says that our planning system will be 'outcomes-focussed'. An outcomes focus goes beyond the built form; it recognises the broader outcomes that can be achieved through the planning system, such as:

- Wellbeing
- Health
- Recreation
- Employment
- Housing
- Environment
- Transport

This means the planning system is centred on quality, results and performance rather than compliance with prescribed technical rules.

At various points in the planning system, community views will be important to help set the desired planning outcomes for areas. This includes community involvement in the development of strategic and spatial plans, as well as public comments on development outcomes in the development application process.





How will the new planning system be different?

In the reformed system, the Territory Planning Authority will be more descriptive of what good planning outcomes are, and what the desired outcomes are for an area. This will be informed by strategic and spatial planning policy; desired planning outcomes will be set by the strategic planning and given effect through the Territory Plan and controls.

For developments, the focus will be on how the development performs from a range of considerations rather than a limited focus on whether it meets individual prescriptive planning rules. Developments must perform well in their site context. This includes, amongst other things, consideration of built form, public spaces and interactions with surrounding blocks.

Example: Under our current system, buildings are often designed with a focus on complying with minimum rules to achieve development approval. Often, a design doesn't add to and connect with its context. This can lead to missed opportunities and not the best development or community outcomes.



Under the new system, rather than prescribing how things need to be done, we will instead outline what the result or outcome needs to be. This will allow flexibility in how the result or outcome may be achieved.



● Namarag Nature Reserve in Molonglo – a planning outcome built around Ngunnawal culture and guided by Ngunnawal people.

What does this mean for planning rules?

Many provisions of the new Territory Plan will be written with an outcomes focus, but this doesn't prevent mandatory limits from being included where they are necessary and where they deliver the desired planning outcomes. For example, mandatory requirements for maximum building heights, site coverage or setbacks in residential zones can limit impacts on neighbours and public spaces and control unsuitable development.

A new planning authority

With a fundamental shift from a rules-based system to an outcomes-focussed system, it is necessary to establish a new planning authority to distinguish between the old and new systems. The new Territory Planning Authority will:

- keep its role as an independent decision-maker
- be led by the Chief Planner
- have increased functions, in line with the object of the Act, including to promote high quality design and good planning outcomes.

In practice, there will be little change to the role of the authority. However, the authority will have an increased role in advising on desired future planning outcomes and seeking improved development outcomes through the development application process (see chapter 3 of the Bill).