



14/26 Barry Drive, ACTON, ACT, 2601. GPO Box 544 Canberra City, ACT, 2601.

Submission

Introduction

The current ACT Planning Review arises from the ACT Labor and the ACT Greens 'Parliamentary and Governing Agreement' (PAGA). The Agreement notes that ACT planning will be reviewed to deliver a planning system that is clear, easy to use and provides improved spatial and built outcomes across the Territory with the following objectives;

- i. Simplification of the planning system
- ii. Facilitation of residential development and housing supply while ensuring Canberra remains sustainable, liveable and attractive
- iii. Improving community confidence through system clarity
- iv. Incorporation of character, context and design as key elements of the system
- v. Enabling greater flexibility in the assessment of varying development types
- vi. Provision of a pathway to achieve net zero emissions.

Issues

ACT Planning needs to better reflect changed conditions due to adverse climate change now and into the future. The current draft Planning Act's treatment of ii (sustainability) could be improved and there is no provision for ensuring that developments do not jeopardise implementing PAGA vi (achieving net zero emissions). In the Consultation Draft 'net-zero' is mentioned once but only as an important matter. This is inadequate. However we welcome the introduction of the principle of 'ecologically sustainable development' in place of the previous 'sustainable development' – but see proposal 7 below.

In short, the current draft is not fully consistent with the PAGA and does not sufficiently assist meeting National and International standards for addressing green house gas emissions from the built environment, from loss of land sink due to urbanisation, and from transport based emissions.

There is insufficient linkage between Planning Decision mechanisms and other relevant ACT policies on urban forest, active travel, 'Cooling the City', and with likely severe weather changes and general climate change requirements as set out in 'ACT Climate Change Strategy'.

ACT Planning decisions need to be informed with emissions data based on National Greenhouse Accounting Standards as part of the Development Application process for proposed developments to ensure consistency with ACT and national policies of reducing net emissions from 1990 by;

- 50–60% by 2025
- 65–75% by 2030
- 90–95% by 2040
- 100% by 2045

Such data from development applications is needed for the ACT to properly report on Scope 3 emissions. The necessary accounting tool or reporting methodology can be specified in new regulations.

Spreading urban infrastructure over-runs natural habitats and landscapes thereby contributing to climate change that impacts on native animals and native plants. This damages biodiversity and increases the risk of species extinction. We welcome the inclusion of biodiversity as part of achieving the Object of the Act and of ‘natural environment conservation principles’.

ACT building owners need to have their access to solar energy protected and planning guidelines need to ensure that northern aspects are not captured by inappropriate placement of subsequent constructions.

Proposal 1

The Consultation Draft’s object is:

Object of Act

- (1) The object of this Act is to support and enhance the Territory’s liveability and prosperity, and promote the well-being of residents by creating an effective, efficient, accessible and enabling planning system that—
 - (a) is outcomes-focussed; and
 - (b) promotes and facilitates ecologically sustainable development that is consistent with planning strategies and policies; and
 - (c) provides a scheme for community participation.

However the current citing of net-zero as an ‘important matter’ needs to be moved up as an Object of the Act or cited specifically as contained within the meaning of ‘ecologically sustainable development’ – but see proposal 7.

Proposal 2

The Current Consultation draft Object contains the wording “promotes and facilitates”. This needs to be amended to state: “ensures”. Net-zero emissions is a requirement for the future, not a preference that can be traded off for other benefits.

Proposal 3

Provisions for reviews of decisions need to be amended in light of the above to ensure that ACAT guidelines ensure that ACT decisions on development applications are consistent with ACT Climate Change Strategy and the provision of a pathway to net-zero as agreed in PAGE para. vi.

Proposal 4

That new suburbs be planned with a priority on guaranteed solar rights and ensuring new buildings include provision for north facing solar infrastructure.

Proposal 5

The 'Provision of a pathway to achieve net zero emissions' noted in the PAGE needs to be included in the new Planning Act by a specific link to current ACT emissions timelines for 2025, 2030, 2040 and 2045.

Proposal 6

Development Application decision makers need to ensure that developments do not increase greenhouse emissions from the ACT (scope 1) or caused elsewhere by ACT developments (scope 2 and 3). In this context, Development Applications over \$1 million cost need to use an appropriate reporting tool to catalogue scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. This can be provided for in a new Regulation.

Proposal 7

The definition of 'achievement of sustainable development' in current sub clause (2) [Chap. 2 Pt. 2.1, Sect. 8] complicates Section 8. We propose that this be reworded to state:

"subject to meeting net-zero targets, **achievement of economic development** includes achieving a diverse, efficient, resilient and strong Territory economy that allows communities to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs".

Other

This submission is an interim submission and we would like an opportunity to make further submissions based on comments from other parties as they become available. We request an opportunity to make a further contribution when a subsequent Draft is produced.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission.

Chris Warren
for Climate Action Canberra Executive

ooOoo