



ACT
Government

Environment and Planning



Statement of Planning Intent 2015 for Minister Gentleman MLA Community engagement outcomes

2015





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Executive summary

Over six weeks in early 2015 more than 170 organisations and individuals participated in community and stakeholder engagement for a Statement of Planning Intent for the Minister for Planning, Mick Gentleman MLA. The Minister liaised with more than 120 stakeholders directly in a series of workshops to inform the government's planning priorities for our city for the next three to five years. The results from this comprehensive and deep conversation showed a wide range of consistent messages across the private, community and research sector that are summarised below.

Consistent messages on the planning priorities for the Statement of Planning included:

1. Support for the existing strategic planning framework

- The government's focus on urban renewal and intensification around major centres and transport corridors was supported, as were the implementation of a rapid public transport network, the priority for active travel (walking and cycling) and the recognition of climate change mitigation and adaptation in urban planning and design.
- While the vision and framework were supported, there was less confidence in planning delivery and implementation, in particular with many individual developments lacking design quality, sustainability, diversity and beneficial contributions to the wider precinct.

2. Roll-out of 'compact communities' and sustainable neighbourhoods across Canberra

- There was a strong desire to see the delivery of sustainable demonstration precincts that showcase innovation in mixed-use development for active and healthy living, transport choice, housing diversity and affordability, green and social infrastructure, and with great placemaking for a diverse community.
- Compact communities should be rolled out across the city, particularly in the 'middle suburbs' that are located between centres and the edge of the city, showcasing housing choice, high-quality public spaces and good access to services.
- Urban renewal should take a precinct approach that focuses on design excellence, sustainability and the spaces between buildings.
- Convenient public transport and safe active travel infrastructure should play a vital role in creating more active, healthy, sustainable and affordable neighbourhoods.
- A finer grain, more diverse development mix was suggested, which would offer housing choice and affordability with more medium-density infill, more European-style 'green' housing and a good mix of other uses.

3. Design excellence and innovation through collaboration

- A lack of quality design outcomes on the ground remained a key concern for many stakeholders; collaborative models and incentives were suggested to overcome current impediments and achieve innovation.



- Better communication and use of plain English language were suggested to better understand the planning vision and desired outcomes of the planning system and to educate the community.
- Early and on-going involvement of the community in planning is seen as important to increase trust in the planning system and reduce third party appeals.
- Collaboration across government and jurisdictions is seen as critical, in particular to reinforce design excellence and innovation.

4. A flexible and simplified planning system

- A change of the economic environment and reliance on revenue from greenfields land release would foster a more compact city.
- The consideration of urban growth boundaries with higher targets for infill development would work in favour of urban infill.
- The Territory Plan should be simplified and move from rules and regulation to performance outcomes, with a good balance between mandated environmental performance and flexibility to achieve innovation in new developments.

The engagement process revealed a real sense of excitement about the future of Canberra and the opportunity to contribute to the setting of planning priorities. Stakeholders and the community demonstrated a high level of understanding about the importance of planning in creating healthy, prosperous and sustainable cities. Generally, there was significant overlap in the views of the stakeholders and interest groups, particularly groups who are frequently believed to have conflicting points of view.



Introduction

Minister for Planning, Mick Gentleman MLA, has released his first Statement of Planning Intent, which was informed by a range of community engagement activities undertaken between 25 February and 8 April 2015.

Under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the responsible Minister for Planning may set out in a written statement the main principles that are to govern planning and land development in the ACT. The Statement of Planning Intent (the Statement) establishes key planning priorities for the ACT Government over the next five years. The Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) must take the Statement into consideration when performing its functions.

While there is no formal requirement for community engagement, Minister Gentleman was keen to invite the wider community and key stakeholders to help shape his Statement. Over six weeks, more than 170 stakeholders and community members attended workshops, filled in feedback forms or provided their individual feedback on their desired planning priorities for the Statement.

The Statement will build on current ACT Government policies and strategies, while recognising key challenges for our city and responding to key messages heard from the community and stakeholders. This community engagement outcomes report documents and analyses the outcomes from the various consultation activities. All information related to the Statement of Planning Intent is available at www.act.gov.au/planningintent.





Community engagement approach

Community engagement on Minister Gentleman's Statement aimed to inform, consult and involve key stakeholders and the community on contemporary planning issues for our growing city and how short-term planning priorities should respond to these challenges.

A 'conversation starter' paper, launched at the start of the process, outlined the unique socio-economic and physical characteristics of the ACT and provided some important local context and focus questions to help the discussion with the community and stakeholders.

Stakeholders and the broader community could be involved in the community engagement in a number of ways:

- The public could access information and submit feedback online via the Directorate's project webpage www.act.gov.au/planningintent and the ACT Government's Time to Talk webpage www.timetotalk.act.gov.au.
- The public was invited to run kitchen table conversations along three focus questions outlined in the conversation starter paper and submit feedback from the conversations. A web link to a toolkit for running kitchen table conversations was also provided.
- On 4 and 5 March 2015, Minister Gentleman attended four workshops with key stakeholders from peak industry groups, community organisations, research and academic groups, and government agencies. These workshops provided sector-specific views on planning priorities for Canberra over the next five years.
- The Minister also met with age-specific groups of the community to fully understand their views and preferences for future planning. On 13 March 2015 the Minister listened to the views of older Canberrans. On 8 April 2015 the Minister met with a younger age group (Generation Y) to hear about their priorities for our city.

All consultation activities undertaken reflect the ACT Government's policies and guidelines on community engagement. Please refer to www.timetotalk.act.gov.au/guide-to-engagement.



Community engagement objectives

The following objectives guided the community engagement activities on the Statement:

- While there is no formal requirement for public engagement on the Statement, it will provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about the planning challenges and opportunities for our city and to promote government planning policy with key interest groups and stakeholders.
- Engagement with key stakeholders and the broader community can capture ideas and suggestions early in the process to inform the development of the Statement. This will ensure the community's aspirations and needs are understood and can be reflected in planning priorities, directions and decisions for the future of our city.
- Key stakeholders and the community will be provided with a conversation starter paper outlining the planning background and strategic context of the Statement and key challenges and opportunities for our growing city.
- Interactive workshops will be held with key stakeholder groups to understand each group's priorities and needs for planning of the city into the future.
- Outreach strategies to the broader public will focus on online engagement via timetotalk.act.gov.au, social media, media announcements, online surveys and kitchen table conversations.
- All engagement activities will be documented, analysed and the outcomes reported back to participants and the public.





Community engagement activities

Community input and ideas were sought through various engagement avenues and feedback channels. Figure 1 provides an overview of all community engagement activities.

Figure 1 – Overview of community engagement activities on the Statement of Planning Intent



Internet and social media

The internet and social media were used throughout the community engagement to notify the public and provide information about the engagement process on the Statement. Information on the ACT Government's Time to Talk website included links to all materials and the online feedback forms.

The EPD website had a dedicated page where the public could access the consultation materials, including the conversation starter paper, a feedback form and a guide how to run a kitchen table conversation and submit ideas and feedback.

Links to relevant internet pages and social media included:

- Time to Talk – www.timetotalk.act.gov.au
- Statement of Planning Intent website page – www.act.gov.au/planningintent
- Facebook – facebook.com/actgovepd
- Twitter - @EPD_Comms
- Project email – EPDPlanningIntent@act.gov.au



Conversation starter paper

At the Minister's launch of community engagement on 25 February 2015, a conversation starter paper was made publicly available on the Time to Talk and EPD websites to assist the conversation with the community and stakeholders. The paper highlights some of the challenges and opportunities for a growing Canberra and poses three focus questions:

1. How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?
2. How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?
3. What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3–5 years?

The discussions with stakeholders and the community in workshops, kitchen table conversations and feedback forms were based on these three focus questions.

Participation numbers

During the six week community engagement from 25 February to 8 April 2015, more than 120 Canberra stakeholders and residents attended meetings with Minister Gentleman. In addition, 52 individuals and organisations submitted their comments via feedback forms, outcomes from kitchen table conversations or written submissions. Table 1 outlines the participation numbers that were achieved during each engagement activity.

Table 1 – Participation numbers of various engagement activities

Engagement activity	Number
Workshop with peak industry groups, 4 March 2015	16
Workshop with community groups, 4 March 2015	17
Workshop with research and academic groups, 5 March 2015	9
Workshop with senior government officials, 5 March 2015	20
Workshop with older people, 13 March 2015	13
Workshop with Generation Y people, 8 April 2015	46
Feedback forms	34
Individual submissions and kitchen table conversation outcomes	18
Overall number of people/organisations involved	173



Community engagement outcomes

The community engagement outcomes are summarised below for each activity undertaken:

- Stakeholder workshops with Minister Gentleman
 - Workshop with peak industry groups
 - Workshop with community groups
 - Workshop with research and academia
 - Workshop with government agencies
 - Workshop with older people
 - Workshop with Generation Y
- Feedback form responses
- Individual submissions, including outcomes from kitchen table conversations.

Some issues raised during community engagement were conflicting. Consensus on all issues was not always achieved. This report aims to integrate all ideas presented as best as possible.

Stakeholder workshops

Minister Gentleman attended six workshops with various stakeholder groups to listen to their specific perspectives and views on future planning for the ACT. Over 120 Canberrans accepted the Minister's invitation to participate in a workshop. Participants contributed to facilitated group discussions using the focus questions from the conversation starter paper.

Participating institutions and key messages are outlined below for each of the six workshops. Detailed notes for each workshop are available at www.act.gov.au/planningintent.

Workshop with peak industry groups

Sixteen representatives from ten peak industry groups, as outlined in Table 2, accepted Minister Gentleman's invitation to discuss planning priorities for his Statement.

Table 2 – Participating organisations in the workshop with peak industry groups

Organisations attending the workshop with peak industry groups on 4 March 2015	
Australian Institute of Architects (ACT)	Canberra CBD Limited
Property Council of Australia	Housing Industry Association
ActewAGL	Real Estate Institute of the ACT
Actew Water (now ICON)	Consult Australia
ACT Heritage Council	TONE5 Young Planners



Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages from the peak industry groups:

- Focus on sustainable design innovation and demonstration precincts for urban renewal that articulate the government's vision, strategies and policies.
- Collaborate with the private sector to achieve innovation and develop mature partnerships and trust with the private and community sectors.
- Pursue performance-based planning that incentivises good design and innovation rather than mandating compliance with minimum standards.
- Review the third party appeals system as an impediment to innovation; avoid the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) by collaborating with industry and community.
- Review leasing and simplify the Territory Plan as it is too prescriptive; the policy framework is set, free up planning.
- Explore new delivery and maintenance models for the public realm, including private sector contributions that go directly to relevant development.
- Limit urban expansion and consider urban growth boundaries.
- Review whether the 50:50 target for urban infill and greenfield development is sufficient or should be higher.





Workshop with community groups

Seventeen representatives from various community organisations, as highlighted in Table 3, attended the workshop with the Minister to discuss their views on planning priorities for the Statement.

Table 3 – Participating organisations in the workshop with community groups

Organisations attending the workshop with community groups on 4 March 2015	
Belconnen Community Council	Griffith Narrabundah Community Assoc.
Gungahlin Community Council	Ministerial Advisory Council on the Ageing
Inner South Community Council	People with a Disability
Woden Valley Community Council	Belconnen Community Service
Tuggeranong Community Council	SEE-Change
Weston Creek Community Council	COTA
Heart Foundation	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
ACT Youth Coalition	ACT Light Rail

Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages from the community groups:

- Showcase more active and compact precincts across the city, town, group and local centres; deliver 'compact communities' across Canberra that are more active, walkable, with better public transport, better services and more housing choice.
- Create diversity in housing and development; one size does not fit all.
- Plan for light rail and buses that are frequent and affordable for customers.
- Create social and physical connections, including integrated transport that connects places and people.





- Make placemaking for people an objective of every development, including higher quality design and amenity of public spaces and more green spaces.
- Get the balance right with more innovation and less compliance in the planning system.
- Communicate a clear planning vision and showcase transparent planning, including improved communication of the planning process and decision making.
- Bring in community and industry earlier and educate them on planning innovations.

Workshop with research and academia

Nine representatives from research and academic institutions, as outlined in Table 4, participated in the discussions with Minister Gentleman on planning priorities for the Statement.

Table 4 – Participating organisations in the workshop with research and academia

Organisations attending the workshop with research and academia on 5 March 2015	
University of Canberra Young Planners	University of Canberra, Health
University of Canberra, Landscape Architecture	CSIRO, Ecosystem Science
Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF)	CSIRO, Liveable, Sustainable and Resilient Cities
ACT Climate Change Council	ANU Climate Change Institute
Planning Institute of Australia (ACT)	

Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages from research and academia:

- Create a better understanding of open spaces and their role in a city-wide perspective, in particular in relation to a hotter and drier climate and more severe weather events as a result of climate change.





- Protect our city of landscapes and explore new models for open space delivery and management to encourage more 'green' infrastructure with key connections for people and wildlife.
- Create 'green' precincts with better access to open space and more active and healthy lifestyles; diverse development patterns should be rolled out across the city, in particular in 'middle suburbs' that are located between centres and the edge of the city.
- Reward innovation and design excellence in housing choice, density and sustainability, including emerging technologies and energy such as co-generation.
- Address ageing infrastructure and factor in costs for upgrading in urban renewal.
- Demonstrate a clear planning vision, a performance-based planning approach and apply a 'city as a system' view to planning that is more integrated with other policy areas.
- Foster partnerships with research and industry to achieve innovation and take a case study approach to collaborate on individual research projects.

Workshop with government agencies

Twenty senior officials from government agency groups, identified in Table 5, participated in the discussions with Minister Gentleman on planning priorities for the Statement.

Table 5 – Participating organisations in the workshop with government agencies

Organisations attending the workshop with government agencies on 5 March 2015	
National Capital Authority – Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive	Environment and Planning Directorate – Director-General and Deputy Director-General
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate – Director-General Economic Development	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate - Strategic Policy and Cabinet
Territory and Municipal Services Directorate – Director-General	Justice and Community Safety Directorate – Director-General
Education and Training Directorate – Deputy Director-General	Cultural Facilities Corporation
Health Directorate – Deputy Director-General	Health Directorate – Office of the Chief Health Officer
Community Services Directorate – Service Strategy	Community Services Directorate – Community Participation Group
Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
Goulburn Mulwaree Regional Council	NSW Department of Planning



Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages from senior officials of government agencies:

- Target specific precincts to demonstrate the innovation government is looking for (e.g. Braddon).
- Continue to deliver transformation projects that play an important role for innovation and Canberra as a city of ideas and innovation (e.g. Northbourne Avenue).
- Allocate appropriate funding for municipal functions, such as urban services and maintenance of the public realm.
- Integrate cultural facilities and public art into planning.
- Consider urban growth boundaries and limits to cross-border development.
- Deliver more amenity in higher density areas; new delivery and maintenance models are required.
- Provide incentives to the private sector to deliver on the vision and innovation, e.g. lease variation charge used recently to encourage innovation.
- Simplify the planning system with shorter codes and involve the community from the beginning to help build trust.

Workshop with older people

Thirteen delegates from the Older Persons Assembly met with Minister Gentleman to discuss the short- to medium-term planning priorities for Canberra from their age-specific view.

Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages from older people:

- Ensure planning meets the diverse needs of the community.
- Implement age-friendly city concepts and everything will be more useable/friendly for everyone.
- Ageing in place should mean people being within their community so they can continue to live near services, friends, social networks and transport.
- Consider shifting attitudes in older people towards more compact housing preferences to create targeted housing choice (e.g. apartments with lifts).
- An outcome of urban renewal is that people with fewer resources and public housing tenants are being pushed out; housing affordability in urban renewal needs to be addressed by government.



- Revitalise local centres that play an important role for housing choice and service provision.
- Deliver infill that is attractive to retirees with liveable, green open space and amenity.
- Foster the transition from a car-dependent city to convenient public transport.
- Consider developments and transport options that are pet-friendly as pets are often important to older people.
- Start building from the city centre outwards, retain growth within communities and put limits/boundary around the city to limit the spread of development.

Workshop with Generation Y

Forty-six people under 30 years of age (Generation Y) attended a workshop with the Minister, which was designed as an interactive 'speed debating' exercise around four themes:

- LIVE - How and where would you like to live in Canberra now and in the future? What housing types, location and design qualities are you after?
- WORK – If you were to stay in Canberra, what is your preferred employment location and what would your work space look like?
- PLAY – How would you like to socialise, entertain and be active in this city? What are the qualities of public spaces, recreation and sports facilities you would like to see?
- MOVE – How would you prefer to get around in the city? What are important transport choices for you?





The thoughts of the younger generation were captured by using themed placemaking images and post-it notes for individual comments that could be pinned to poster walls. Finally, everyone voted their 'likes' using sticky dots against images and comments.

Key messages

The following provides a summary of the key messages from Generation Y:

- Apply a transport hierarchy that puts active travel first, including a safer cycling and pedestrian environment, followed by convenient public transport networks and a roll-out of light rail across the city.
- Create better streets and placemaking, including more active laneways, vibrant spaces and better connections to, and activation of, the lakes and water ways.
- Provide more incubator spaces for business start-ups and creative events in unused shopfronts, laneways and open spaces.
- Offer more medium-density housing forms for urban infill that include alternative energy and European-style green housing options.
- Ensure work locations are near transport, open space and a good mix of activities as young people want to be able to get to work without needing to drive and prefer active locations.





Feedback forms

Thirty-four individuals and organisations returned their feedback forms, responding to the questions in the conversation starter paper. Comments have been categorised under common themes. The ten themes that achieved the highest number of comments are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6 – Themes with most number of comments in feedback form responses

Feedback form responses related to various themes	
1. Public spaces and streets	51 comments
2. High quality built form and innovative design	37 comments
3. Active travel (walking and cycling)	33 comments
4. Urban renewal	33 comments
5. Public transport	32 comments
6. Better planning controls and refined policies	31 comments
7. Traffic management and parking	18 comments
8. Diverse housing and lifestyles	13 comments
9. Landscape and bush character	13 comments
10. A clear planning vision	10 comments

Key messages

The following provides a summary of key messages in the feedback form responses.

Public spaces and streets

Generally, green infrastructure in urban areas is perceived as critically important for quality of life in a compact city. Existing neighbourhood parks and urban green spaces should be retained and modernised to make them usable all year round. Innovations in climate change adaptation measures in the public domain such as pervious surfaces, shade trees, seating and awnings are seen as important to regulate the microclimate and protect people and wildlife from a hotter and drier climate. People would also like to see more community gardens and urban farms, and more active and vibrant streets with active shop fronts. The quality of the urban places in the city are a concern to many and generally it is felt that our streets should be reclaimed to provide more space for shade trees, better landscaping, more social life and pedestrian activity.

High quality built form and innovative design

Demonstrating high environmental standards in new developments and innovative design for urban infill should be norm for both private and public spaces. It was suggested that employing visionary planners, designers and developers would assist to achieve design excellence and world class standards. New financial models and incentives are also seen as important to trigger innovation in this field.



Active travel – walking and cycling

Most of the comments under this theme encouraged planning for safer cycling infrastructure and off-road lanes or bicycle-only lanes. Another focus of comments was on creating more pedestrian-friendly environments with attractive and safe path systems, landscape amenity and traffic calming for an active street life and healthier lifestyles.

Urban renewal

All new development and redevelopment should incorporate solar orientation, strict environmental standards and climate change adaptation measures such as awnings, shade, trees and landscaping. Generally, respondents endorsed urban growth and higher-density development in the city centre, along transport corridors and around centres to create activity hubs and a livelier city. The City to the Lake project is seen as an important initiative to improve the city centre and connections to the lake.

Public transport

Respondents gave the green light for enhancing the rapid public transport network as a convenient transport choice to major destinations. Light rail achieved major support with many suggesting the roll-out of light rail across Canberra be fast-tracked. Many suggested more affordable public transport options and smarter incentives for commuters to switch from car travel to more sustainable travel choices. Another important aspect highlighted in the responses was the need for better feeder services and smaller public transport vehicles to interchanges.

Better planning controls and refined policies

Government policies and plans would need a clearer vision and more binding directions for consequent planning, design and development stages to better guide implementation and achieve better development outcomes on a precinct or neighbourhood level. There was support for reducing red tape for developers, however clear goals and strong mandatory performance standards should be applied with a degree of design flexibility on how to achieve them. More compulsory landscape and vegetation outcomes for developments in different zones were suggested to avoid new buildings taking up the entire block. It was also seen as important to contain urban sprawl and introduce an urban containment boundary.

Traffic management and parking

Many of the respondents would like to see a road user hierarchy applied that puts active travel first, followed by public transport and then the car. Comments emphasised the importance of better public transport and active travel connections to major destinations such as schools, hospitals and employment nodes. While some would like to see cars only at the edges of precincts and reduced surface car parking in centres to better utilise the space, others argued for more parking at the centres.



Diverse housing and lifestyles

Respondents would like to see housing better integrated with ancillary services such as transport, health, recreation and retail uses to create active lifestyles and connectivity. In particular, family-friendly development with adjacent amenities for children and young families was highlighted. Generally, respondents asked for more medium-density housing forms of different sizes and styles in various locations to improve housing choice and affordability. A mix of block sizes, heights, designs and services on a neighbourhood scale was proposed to achieve a development mix that represents the needs of the broader community.

Landscape and bush character

Retaining the bush character of our city through its green open spaces and wildlife corridors was highlighted as important when transitioning to a more compact city. Better linkages of Canberra's nature reserves and water courses were suggested as well as expanding urban wetlands, which are highly valued by the community for recreational purposes.

A clear planning vision

Respondents articulated that they would like to see the government better communicate a coherent, citizen-supported, long-term vision for planning, followed by short- to medium-term plans to implement the vision. Government leadership was also sought in implementing legal, regulatory and governance systems that deliver the shared vision and create investor confidence.

Individual submissions

Eighteen submissions were received from individuals and organisations and included outcomes from the kitchen table conversations. The full submissions are available in Appendix 1 of this document.

Various comments in each submission have been categorised under common themes. The ten themes that achieved the highest number of comments in the submissions are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 – Themes with most number of comments in submissions

Feedback form responses related to various themes	
1. Performance-based planning for innovation	24 comments
2. Environment, climate change and energy efficiency	21 comments
3. Urban renewal	14 comments
4. Active travel (walking and cycling)	13 comments
5. High quality built form and innovative design	10 comments
6. Public spaces and streets	8 comments
7. Community engagement and public support	8 comments
8. Public transport	7 comments
9. Diverse housing and lifestyles	7 comments
10. Foster private sector investment	5 comments



Key messages

The following outlines a summary of key messages provided in the written submissions.

Performance-based planning for innovation

It was suggested that design standards and prescriptive Territory Plan rules be reviewed to encourage higher quality design outcomes and more innovative and creative planning approaches. The use of performance-based planning instruments was encouraged to improve guidance around terms such as ‘vibrancy’, ‘high-quality’ or ‘liveable’. Generally, respondents asked for a simpler, easier to use Territory Plan and suggested a review of government processes to better define and agree on the acceptable levels of risk in urban planning to support innovative design.

Environment, climate change and energy efficiency

Many of the comments asked for planning and development to promote environmental sustainability at all levels. It was particularly emphasised that climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as reliable energy infrastructure and energy efficiency, needs to be prioritised in planning. Furthermore, areas of conservation value and green open spaces/reserves would need to be identified, protected and enhanced, in particular linkages between wildlife habitats, wetlands and support for disaster and emergency management.

Urban renewal

Respondents endorsed the government’s strategic direction to focus urban intensification in the city centre, town and group centres and along transit corridors. However, retaining open space along with the garden city and ‘bush capital’ character was seen as key to reducing heat island effects, improving water permeability and retaining amenity and liveability. Density increases in suburbs should focus on medium density such as townhouses, terraces and dual or triple occupancy housing.

Active travel

Respondents wanted to see active travel prioritised in planning strategies and fully integrated with public transport and urban infill. An important aspect of the feedback was the improved safety for walking and cycling through improved amenity of the path systems and public spaces, including better street lighting, reduced traffic speed and dedicated lanes. This could be achieved with infrastructure investment to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, including along parks, playgrounds and lakes, to ensure better connections.

High-quality built form and innovative design

Many respondents asked for higher quality building design and layout as an outcome of the planning system, in particular relating to energy efficiency, a mix of housing types and retrofitting existing buildings. Delivering dynamic, high-quality built form and sustainable neighbourhoods was seen as important, and in particular, to improve public amenity and the quality of the public realm and open spaces.



Public spaces and streets

People asked for more investment in public infrastructure and maintenance to improve and maintain the open spaces and streets. Improving the public places and streets would support more active and vibrant urban spaces with a diversity of retail, restaurants and cafes and recreation opportunities. The regeneration and celebration of places, such as the local shops, was seen as important.

Community engagement and public support

It was recommended the community be engaged early through consultation that is meaningful, transparent and effective. This should be followed through from strategic planning to delivery. The voice of Indigenous Australians should be better captured in community engagement. It was felt that governance structures such as development committees or advisory panels with joint representation of industry, government and community could improve trust and collaboration and ensure public ownership and support for planning policies.

Public transport

There was support for fast and efficient public transport systems, including expanding bus coverage in suburbs and providing for a diversity of travel choices for a range of age groups. It was suggested that more housing be located closer to public transport, schools and employment.

Diverse housing and lifestyles

Housing affordability and a wider housing choice was highlighted as a planning priority that government would need to address. It was also noted that the adaptive reuse of existing buildings should be considered.

Foster private sector investment

A review of revenue collection was suggested to reduce financial constraints on private sector investment and innovation, such as lease variation charge, property taxes, rates and stamp duty. Innovative approaches were encouraged to finance the delivery and maintenance of urban planning projects and infrastructure, including private sector finance and public-private partnerships.





Summary of consistent messages

The following summary highlights consistent messages across various community engagement activities and stakeholder groups on what the ACT planning priorities should be for the next five years.

1. Support for the existing strategic planning framework

Overall, a majority of stakeholders and community members agreed to the following key strategic planning directions for Canberra:

- Focus on urban renewal and intensification around the city centre, major town and group centres, along transit corridors and other areas with good access to transport.
- Implement rapid public transport networks as a convenient and affordable transport choice to major destinations.
- Make active travel a priority, fully integrating it with public transport and individual developments.
- Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation in urban planning and design.

While it was recognised that metropolitan strategic planning sets the right vision and framework for planning, it was noted that planning delivery and implementation still have a long way to go to achieve the planning vision. In particular, many individual developments lack design quality, sustainability, diversity and beneficial contributions to the wider precinct.

2. Roll-out of ‘compact communities’ and sustainable neighbourhoods across Canberra

Participants highlighted the desire to complement traditional low-density suburbs with sustainable, mixed-use and active neighbourhoods that would create ‘compact communities’:

- Create *sustainable demonstration precincts* showcasing innovation in:
 - mixed use for active and healthy living
 - accessibility, connectivity and transport choice
 - housing diversity and affordability with a mix of sizes, heights and designs
 - green and social infrastructure with great placemaking for diverse demographics.
- *Compact communities* should not only be delivered in major infill areas and transit corridors, but be rolled out across Canberra and the middle suburbs:
 - Develop a better understanding of growth patterns, roll out and sequencing of ‘compact communities’ across the city.
 - Continue to develop transport corridors to concentrate high-density living and activity hubs for a more lively city.
 - Decentralise the compact city idea and rejuvenate existing areas, including local centres, and retain growth within communities.
 - Integrate and provide community, cultural and commercial facilities and employment opportunities as a main contributor to vibrancy.



- Take a *precinct approach* to urban renewal that values and focuses on design excellence and the 'spaces in between' buildings:
 - Showcase urban renewal initiatives that deliver high quality design with improved environmental standards for buildings and more active places and streets with greater amenity.
 - Balance the compact city with open spaces, streetscapes and recreation facilities for active living.
 - Facilitate more connections to lakes and water courses like 'City to the Lake'.
 - Replace ageing infrastructure in a smart and integrated way and prioritise renewable energy infrastructure and water sensitive urban design.
 - Generally improve green infrastructure with key connectors for people and wildlife ('biocity', city in the landscape).
 - Incorporate climate change adaptation measures in the public realm (e.g. pervious surfaces, shade trees, landscaping, awnings, seating and water fountains) to regulate microclimate and protect pedestrians and cyclists from a hotter and drier climate and seasonal weather.
 - Create more main streets and urban laneways that facilitate active use and street shopping where people are at the centre of the design.
 - Retain some underutilised spaces as affordable incubation opportunities for creative business start-ups, pop-up shops, art and music events.
- *Convenient public transport and safe active travel infrastructure* play a major role for more active, healthy and affordable neighbourhoods:
 - Apply a transport hierarchy to all precinct planning and design that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists, followed by public transport and then private vehicles.
 - Implement safe bicycle and pedestrian networks with separated lanes that is supported by co-located recreational, community and commercial uses for vibrant and dynamic spaces.
 - Develop a fast and efficient public transport system, including better weekend coverage and services to schools, as an affordable transport option.
 - Create incentives for commuters to choose active travel options and public transport over the car (e.g. end of trip facilities, pricing incentives).
- *Achieve a finer grain and more diverse development mix* offering housing choices and affordability:
 - Deliver more medium-density infill with various housing sizes and designs such as row houses, townhouse and terraces with shared spaces.
 - Showcase more European-style 'green' housing with alternative sources of power, passive solar design, insulation and green roofs.
 - Ensure a good mix of land uses with safe bicycle and pedestrian paths, trees, landscaping and green open spaces.



3. Design excellence and innovation through collaboration

A lack of quality design outcomes on the ground remained a key concern for many stakeholders and participants. Collaborative models and incentives were suggested to overcome current impediments and achieve innovation as follows:

- Develop mature ‘partnerships’ and trust between public and private sector:
 - As a government, clearly communicate the vision, design principles and desired outcomes to the industry and be confident to reject poor development proposals.
 - Hold roundtables on innovative design with planners, industry and the community.
 - Focus on innovation precincts that demonstrate integrated outcomes and more cost-effective and long-term beneficial investment.
 - Explore new delivery and maintenance models for quality public realm and open space management.
 - Consider private sector contribution schemes that go directly to relevant development precincts to reduce government spending and maintenance.
 - Inform and educate the building and construction industry as well as the community on desired development and planning outcomes.
- Transparency of planning decisions and dialogue with the community:
 - improve language and communication to enable the community to better understand the planning vision and planning system;
 - educate the community on planning requirements and strategies;
 - be transparent and accountable on planning decisions;
 - foster an increased understanding and provide a clear articulation of what people can influence; and
 - involve the community early to increase trust and potentially reduce third party appeals.





- Collaborate across jurisdictions, in particular with regional councils and the National Capital Authority (NCA):
 - Reinforce design excellence and innovation in collaboration with the NCA and its Board.
 - Collaborate with the Land Development Agency and coordinate planning with their Statement and land release program.
 - Explore how to better promote cross-border issues and regional strategies.

4. A flexible and simplified planning system

- Government should push the planning envelope:
 - Change the economics and reliance on revenue from greenfield land release, which works against the Government priority for urban infill.
 - Consider urban growth boundaries and review whether the 50:50 target for urban infill versus greenfield development is sufficient or should be higher.
 - Review asset acceptance standards as a barrier to innovation.
- Simplify the Territory Plan:
 - Move from rules and regulations to performance-based outcomes supported by principles.
 - Establish strong mandatory environmental standards and performance for new developments with flexibility on how to achieve this.
 - Provide incentives for innovation and good design rather than mandate compliance with minimum standards.
 - Focus on the development of whole precincts as a long-term public good, rather than as individual sites.
- Incentivise innovations:
 - Investigate remissions to lease variation charge to encourage urban development in strategic growth location near centres and transport corridors.
 - Investigate stamp duty incentives when down-sizing or changing home location closer to work or activity nodes.



Conclusion

Over six weeks in early 2015, more than 170 organisations and individuals participated in community and stakeholder engagement on the Minister for Planning's Statement of Planning Intent. Minister Gentleman liaised with more than 120 stakeholders directly in a series of workshops to inform the government's planning priorities for our city for the next five years. The results from this comprehensive and deep conversation were a wide range of consistent messages across the private, community and public sector, summarised above.

These key messages, along with detailed comments and suggestions, helped Minister Gentleman develop his Statement of Planning Intent including immediate, short- and medium-term planning priorities for the ACT. The document is available at www.act.gov.au/planningintent.

The engagement process revealed a real sense of excitement about the future of Canberra and the opportunity to contribute to the setting of planning priorities. Inputs provided by stakeholders and the community were very thoughtful and there was a high level of understanding about the importance of planning in creating healthy, prosperous and sustainable cities. Generally, there was significant overlap in the views of the stakeholders and interest groups, particularly groups who are frequently believed to have conflicting points of view. Thank you to everyone involved for your time, insight and inspiration.



Appendix 1

Individual submissions for the Statement of Planning Intent

The following section includes all submissions received during community engagement for the Statement of Planning Intent. Please note that personal details have been removed from these submissions and any images or attachments included with the submission have been left out of this report.

1. Letter from Commissioner for Children and Young People, summarising young people's ideas (ages between 5 and 11 years) - 17 February 2015

Recreation
"I think we should make some types of Floriade, or some Monster High lunch boxes and make some more fun parks. Thanks"
"I would like some markets in Canberra & more playgrounds"
"More parks, more tyre swings"
"More activities like playgrounds"
"I would like more woodwork & craft clubs like welding clubs. I would like the age limit of these clubs to be 11.5"
"I think we should have another science museum like Questacon because some people might want to go to a science museum & they have to drive a long way. I also think we should have another place like Big Splash because it is so much fun"
"Can we please have more zoos"
"I would like to see a beach"
"1. Is to build another water park! 2. To have a kids section in the museum"
"Build more pools"
"Build more water parks"
"I would like to make bigger playgrounds for children because I love playgrounds! I like slides & monkey bars & poles to slide down"
"More playing outside, more circus', adventure playground, more zoos"
"More places to hang out with friends"
"Play more games with friends"
"I would like a chance to make biscuits. I would make them & decorate them in the shape of a unicorn, pink & purple"
"1. You should make an entertaining water park. 2. Rollercoaster park. 3. You should put some squirrels in the park. 4. I think you should make an awesome park with a huge, cool playground. 5. I think you should make a origami time (it's when you go somewhere & make origami & you display it)"
"Can you please make more parks for people to play like building near the lake & more museums & bridges & make a monument in Canberra & a dam"
"I think we should have an indoor skate park"
"I think we need to improve on the quality of our soccer fields"



"More flowers, I love my Mum"
"More video games at school, more TV channels, more swimming pools"
"Make more parks, have more swimming pools"
"More bike tracks & more bush places to explore in Canberra"
"More swimming pools & swimming lessons for younger kids"
"Maybe we could have a few more parks"
"I wish there was more beaches"
"I wish there was more beaches"
"Make more parks"
"Pool party"
"More obstacle courses"
"More fireworks & fun fairs"
"More parks closer to the shops, an aquarium"
"More riding tracks in big communities & more pools/water parks to play at for all ages"
"I think there should be a little place for arts & craft in the city"
"A challenge field for kids"
"Paint ball field for kids"
"A movie theatre"
"The park"
Education
"More maths & less different schools"
"I would give everyone an iPad when they are 5"
"Give children an iPad when they are in year 3"
"More people coming to more schools having more fun"
"I would like a swimming pool in the school"
"I would like playgrounds in the school to be bigger & better, in the sense of more fun! And also less strict teachers! (If that's possible)"
"More swimming pools in schools to teach kids to swim"
"More schools"
"Build new schools"
"Can you please do another reading challenge"
Environment
"Get kids to have a go at gardening to help the environment"
"1. Think of simpler things because the simpler the better. 2. Save the environment, keep wetlands, reduce buildings & suburbs & keep green in mind"
"End wars, put prices on toys lower, free spas, find a new thing to make paper out of, free Monster High dolls, stop killing animals"
"Make less motor vehicles"



Finance
"If you could try & change the medical bills (etc) to a lower cost because we are constantly visiting my Mother who is in hospital at this moment of time & we may have big bills once she's healthy so if you could try & if I hear you do once I reach the legal voting age you will surely have my vote"
"Please make bills cheaper"
"Build more hotels & lower the price"
"I would like to have a cheaper airport"
"Listen to people's words & don't interrupt. A cheaper price at shops. Make people happy & don't upset them. Be appreciative for your looks"
"My mum had an accident on her bike you might have heard so I would like you to lower the hospital bills just in the ACT"
Other responses
"Have more fun!"
"Everyone should be happy forever"
"Have fun"
"More care to the people who live & come to Canberra"
"Let kids have more rights, because children have a little less rights than grownups"
"More EB Games"
"Waterproof car"
"We have more fun, even parents are having fun"
"I would like flying tow cars that can shrink stuff"
"Paint a rainbow"
"I am sharing the ball"
"A How to Train Your Dragon"
"Is the boss of Canberra better than Father Christmas?"
"There are lots of children in the world to look after and it's really hard. And it's ok if people get blisters like this on the monkey bars"
"My favourite things are pools & toys"
"I went to the park to do feeding of the ducks"
"This is a picture of the Prime Minister giving me a lollypop"
"The Chief Minister is the boss of Canberra. The Chief Minister is speaking in the microphone"
"I like sitting at home & watching Daddy paint. He's an artist & he puts things in the gallery"
"I like playing with aeroplanes & sit inside of them"
"I like to go to the zoo, I like the monkeys & fish & the pandas & dolphins"
"Make more toys"
"More EB Games"



2. Submission from workshop participant – 13 March 2015

This paper provides additional comment to my views made at the Planning Intent workshop chaired by Tony Carmichael at the North Building, Canberra, on the 13 March 2015 which was that financial encouragement is an imperative and the top priority to ensure the achievement of any future strategy that supports the vision for innovation and growth in Canberra. Furthermore, strategies need to focus on making Canberra less dependent on the public sector and a public service but a smart-city based on scientific research and Centres of Excellence as well as an aged friendly city. All of these initiatives including the establishment of manufacturing and sustainment business activities would create employment opportunities which will provide the dynamics needed to sustain continued growth and prosperity.

It must be said that the clichés, critical and unsubstantiated comments from a number of contributors at the workshop concerning existing transport services, the proposed tram service, support to retain the once-useful 1950 apartment blocks and dwellings along the city's main arterial road to the north, the behaviour by some when addressing others and the aging population at the Planning Intent workshop on 13 March compels me to raise the question shown in the paragraph heading below. While the comments would have reflected the individual's view of their preferences, they also reflected an attitude favouring the status quo, resistant to change and in opposition to the Minister's message contained in conversation starter paper and Statement of Planning Intent dated February 2015.

Is Canberra ready to achieve, encourage and plan for the future?

If Canberra is to move forward: to achieve, encourage and plan for the future, stakeholders and the community would need to understand, accept and support the pre-requisite. The delivery of sustainable urban infrastructure and the encouragement of innovation require having the built-in ability, and the internal dynamics, to develop and deliver upon a vision based on long term growth and economic success. To achieve these elements requires planners, stakeholders and the community to not only remain resilient but to adapt to an ever changing world.

Canberra like most cities, will always be faced with historic urban fabric decay: infrastructure obsolescence. This means that there will be a continuous demands retrofitting, replacement and adaption as well as new capital development. To meet these demands, requires financial and material resources which are and will continue to be increasingly scarce. Globally mobile financial capital is likely to become increasingly competitive, and material costs are rising across all sectors. This means that planning authorities must develop strategies to optimize investments to achieve the greatest returns for lowest cost. Long gone are the days when the ACT Government makes investments that are sub-optimal, directed to the wrong priorities, poorly sequenced and not integrated with complementary strategies.

To deliver sustainable urban infrastructure, and to attract the necessary investment, the ACT Government will need a vision, a citizen supported coherent narrative, and an investment ready legal and regulatory framework to attract positive minded citizens and investors: domestic, and international. The evidence has shown that cities, intent on creating their own future and capturing opportunities to grow and prosper, are underpinned by support from its citizens, and robust, legal and governance frameworks. These essential elements establish the city's credibility to attract much needed investment as well as foster lasting relationships with potential funding sources. The evidence has shown time and again that it is through effective utilization of this capability that ensures integrated urban strategies yield potentially spectacular results.



While it is essential that these elements are in place, financiers are also asking funding (rather than financing) related questions as they seek clarity on the source and timing of repayments as a consequence of government default in repayment and assurances, poorly developed planning projects and the resistance of citizens to support the vision and strategies fostered by governments and planning authorities.

I would suggest that new funding and financing approaches need to be considered not just in the context of the specific project under consideration for development, but with reference to the wider legal governance and regulatory environment that exists in Australia. The citizens of Canberra and city leaders need to be realistic around the options that are under their control and recognize the interrelationships with other stakeholders including its citizens which will be created by new approaches. In particular the success and timing of implementation of these new approaches will depend on the perceptions of residents as well as other public and private sector stakeholders. These perceptions need to be supportive of the planning vision and strategies. Therefore, Canberra's ability to achieve, encourage and plan for the future to maintain and deliver the necessary urban infrastructure for sustainable and effective growth is intrinsically linked to its ability to attract and retain capital, both in terms of human resources and talent as well as financial capital. At a time of intense competition between Australian cities, the ability to attract capital will define its success as its dependence on Federal funding and a bountiful supply of public service jobs is not viable.

The need for Canberra to create and deliver infrastructure value

Canberra is the nation's capital and envisioned to be a growing city albeit not growing as fast as the capital cities of other Australian states. Not unlike all progressive cities, Canberra has been changing since it was established in April 1910 when the Seat of Government (Administration) Act was passed. At this point in time, Canberra and its surrounding suburbs have been constantly changing and evolving faster than at any point in its history.

The Seat of Government Act provided a legal framework for the administration of the 'Territory for the Seat of Government'. The Act also authorized the continued use of New South Wales law as well as ordinances approved by the Governor-General and Parliament. The actual boundary (borders) of the Federal Capital Territory and the City of Canberra (as defined by Scrivener) was also formalized by the Act as 909 square miles of the Federal Capital Territory. On 12 March 1913, Canberra's foundation ceremony was held on Capital Hill. The Governor-General Lord Denman, Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, and Minister for Home Affairs King O'Malley laid the foundation stones for a Commencement Column. The ceremony was marked by Lady Denman announcing the name chosen for the city as Canberra.

The City's history has clearly shown that managing evolving change to move forward has always been a given. While setting such objectives are simple enough, achieving them can be hugely complex and challenging tasks. Past and present 'administrators' have faced a wealth of often elusive challenges. The administrators are expected to manage and control the change to allow the not only the Act community to have a standard of 'living' that meets modern day expectations but the expectations of the nation and the global community because it has a special role as the Nation's capital city.

In Australia today, the challenges facing our cities can vary. Many of the cities are experiencing unprecedented rates of urbanization and population growth, whilst others particularly the larger country towns in the regional areas, are experiencing a shrinking population. Many of the challenges, however, are omnipresent: people are living longer leading to increased demands on health care; the climate appears to be changing that could be contributing to extreme and often unusual weather events; and industrialization causing large scale pollution in many highly populated places.



Regardless of how a city is being affected by these changes, one thing remains constant: the need to provide critical urban infrastructure and deliver municipal services as efficient and cost effective as possible. The 'mature' cities are experiencing the need to upgrade their failing and ageing infrastructure, and developing cities seek to establish new infrastructure and smart city systems that will enable transition, and position them as global leaders and next generation city metropolises.

Cities today are motivated by their need to drive economic growth, increased investment and job creation, allowing for better standards of living, and the financial capability to manage the city infrastructure that serves the wider urban environment. In response to this, city competitiveness is a subtlety that is emerging across the world – how to attract financial investment and human capital, and how to deliver services more efficiently.

To do this, cities need to understand the fundamental concept of sustainable development to provide confidence to investors that the emerging challenges are understood and can be managed. To achieve these objectives, cities do now need to operate in a global connected marketplace, competing with, and depending on other cities, optimizing their greatest assets to best advantage whilst evolving to meet the needs of the digital generation.

Delivering effective, efficient and sustainable urban infrastructure is essential to provide the city backbone, from which economic success and prosperity can grow. In the case of Canberra, the critical infrastructure that is identified includes:

- a fast and efficient transport and mobility infrastructure with sufficient capacity to cater for a growing and changing population;
- a robust and reliable energy infrastructure providing 'power' to meet the most critical needs;
- a clean and plentiful water supply;
- a health and sanitation capability to deliver modern standards of health care and hygiene efficiently and sustainably; and
- a safe and secure environment in which people can live and work with confidence.

Dealing with these new challenges will certainly be challenging and complex. More challenging and complex is the new urban dynamic: to find the people with the vision and ability to stay ahead of emerging trends and the funds to deliver a holistic approach to urban management. To achieve this, the ACT Government needs to show strong leadership in developing and selling the city vision, to create a quality of life proposition which exceeds that of its closest competitors and to provide a tantalising offer that investors and prospective residents cannot ignore.

Vision and leadership

Delivering urban infrastructure swiftly and economically requires a clear, well formulated vision of city growth and economic prosperity, underpinned by a set of well- defined strategic objectives and initiatives. It must guide development across the necessary range of critical infrastructure according to clearly articulated priorities. This vision must be owned by key stakeholders, politicians, businesses and residents, and detractors must be otherwise convinced from a vision of continued growth and prosperity for all.

It is mandatory therefore that the ACT Government show strong leadership in developing and selling the City vision particularly as the most successful cities have long recognised that they operate in a globally connected marketplace, competing with, and yet also depending on, other cities.



The changing times also mean that the Minister's Planning team can no longer plan for what is known today. They also need to plan to meet the needs of future generations. The attractiveness and rate of growth are so great in some parts of the world that cities can no longer take 20 years to deliver single point interventions. Planning needs to be swift and cities need to be agile in response to changing circumstances and investors' needs.

Governance and financing

Cities are, however, complex, and the administrative environment in which they operate differs greatly. Political jurisdictions, overlapping administrative boundaries and joint working approaches across city-regions all provide opportunities and challenges. Cities need to master these to ensure progress is not hindered by bureaucratic hurdles. Engagement with federal or state bodies to address any underlying legal or regulatory barriers is also important.

Working in cities across the world to deliver critical infrastructure, it is evident that, particularly in uncertain economic times, city authorities above all else have limited public resources to fund the delivery of major infrastructure projects. Nevertheless some upfront public sector investment is often needed to create investor confidence in the commitment to an infrastructure development.

To achieve this, the ACT Government must be more and more innovative with how it raises finance: where domestic financial markets are insufficient, international finance needs to be found. Investment therefore comes not only from domestic banks, institutions and capital markets, but also from overseas sovereign wealth, pension funds, bilateral and multilateral institutions, equipment suppliers and through public-private partnerships. However, major investors are increasingly conservative in their decision-making and there is greater competition for finite resources.

There is no universal blueprint that can be applied to urban development and sustainment. Canberra has to plot its own path based on its individual circumstances, its geopolitical context and an analysis of its own particular strengths and weaknesses. What is clear though is that infrastructure delivery will not be achieved without being joined up at the critical points, without being intelligently phased and sequenced and without addressing the underlying governance, legal and financing requirements. This means that creating investor confidence, putting in place the institutional enablers and getting the investment basics right are mandatory.

For all investors, confidence in local legal systems and the economic and financial regimes within which they sit is critical. So is the need for stability and certainty of the associated tax and regulatory arrangements. This confidence translates into an expectation that the returns from investment can both be generated as well as captured for investors and repatriated to their stakeholders in other states or overseas.

If these conditions do not already exist, then the ACT Government will need to act swiftly and initiate the necessary reforms and new legislation if they are to gain investor confidence. Indeed, formal reassurance for investors from the Federal and possibly relevant State bodies (since the ACT is still a Territory) may be needed to reinforce the level of confidence needed in the investment community before finance is committed.



In the larger context of the financial systems, municipal finance traditionally comprises a mixture of cash transfers from national government, some grant funding and in some markets concessionary loans from bilateral and multilateral donor organisations in high growth markets. Increasingly, it is also supported by the devolved ability to raise local taxes and, where the credit rating is high enough, by recourse to debt and capital markets providing loan and bond based finance. This means that when investors consider a particular project, they and their rating agencies will obviously pay close attention to the ability of the city to make its projected contribution to the project after allowing for its other financial commitments.

Investment Needs

Nearly all cities have limited access to funds and ways of financing their plans, and Canberra is no exception. Canberra however is better than some as it has access to legal and institutional frameworks to facilitate access to finance from the capital markets to make the city attractive to investors and to enable the financing and delivery of the critical urban infrastructure needed for it to become a Smart City of the Future.

In its present situation, the main sources of revenue to the ACT Government comes from rates and taxes from residents predominated by the high level of public servants, and the public funds and grants from the Federal government which are limited and getting less. This revenue only meets some of the total needs for infrastructure and services. This means that Canberra has to operate differently and change its approach to address these issues. It has to be conscious that it is now more reliant than ever before on private sector support to scope, finance and deliver projects. The need to use private sector finance help to cover the cost of delivery with long term management contracts for maintenance and operation to secure the investment and provide confidence to the public sector in sustained delivery is now a 'given' with an abundance of evidence to show that public-private sector collaboration is the most effective approaches to major infrastructure delivery today.

The team of the ACT Planning Minister therefore has to demonstrate visibly how infrastructure will deliver value to both users and investors. The Planning team would therefore work harder to understand the private sector approach to doing business. Foremost being that certainty in policy and legal regulation and long term planning are essential to attracting investment and creating joint working approaches.

The Way Forward

It is obviously important for ACT Government to invest time in anticipating investors' demands and, where necessary, initiating the reforms needed to create the right local conditions for investment readiness. Specific investors will look to the credit-worthiness of the city, the finance of the project and any guarantors backing the city. Risk identification and management is of vital importance to investors – as is investment profit protection and the ability to exit an investment should the need arise.

Until there is a proven track record that shows public-private sector collaboration, the ACT Government will need to act to establish examples of successful public sector investment to create confidence that the city authority is capable of delivering. If its actions relate to early stages of the project to be financial so much the better, but this would need to be done incrementally and without inhibiting scope for innovative financial solutions at a later date.

The ability of Canberra to successfully to implement a particular delivery, funding or finance option will often correlate directly to the extent to which appropriate legal and regulatory structures have been adopted and established. Indeed, certain options such as bond finance will simply not be viable in markets which still have some way to go in terms of adopting the legal frameworks and principles that investors need.



Some key factors to be addressed include:

- ensuring that the appropriate legislative, regulatory and licensing regime is in place to inspire investor confidence in project feasibility and viability;
- formulating a city vision, the strategic objectives, the priorities and programmes for achieving the vision and developing an overall budget strategy for delivering the vision;
- putting in place objective, robust city governance procedures and vehicles to act as a focal point for investors and deliver the vision;
- securing support from stakeholders for the vision, priorities and programme; and
- identifying the mechanisms for contracting for successful delivery of the project at each stage in its lifetime.

In relation to the project itself, it will be far better for the project case to be stress tested and reinforced before approaching investors, than for investors to reject a proposal for lack of prior preparation as this would erode confidence and embarrass the Government. Some key steps to consider would include:

- fully investigating the need for the project and the options for meeting that need;
- clearly defining the project, its scope, delivery programme and likely budget requirements;
- considering the feasibility and commercial viability of the project, possible funding options and review of applicable laws and deliverability within them;
- Identifying the consents necessary for project delivery (especially regulatory permits and land rights) and being able to provide evidence that each will be forthcoming; and
- preparing a fully worked through package that can be presented to prospective investors

Land use and investment

As a starting point, the ACT Government should consider maximising its ability to use land as a tool, both to deliver infrastructure and to facilitate the subsequent infrastructure benefits. Some city authorities in Australia and overseas have used land as a payment in kind in return for infrastructure construction or as an equity contribution towards a joint venture with a developer. In these cases, the authority might enter into a partnership with private investors, putting property assets into the pot to be matched in cash from the private sector partner.

The partnership then uses these joint assets as collateral to raise finance for sustainment, regeneration or infrastructure projects.

Evidence continues to show that land has traditionally been an important element in many infrastructure projects. This means that cities would always be wise to ensure that the system of land ownership transmission of land rights meets modern legal expectations namely:

- powers to acquire, lease, charge and dispose of land, and interests, through a combination of voluntary and compulsory acquisition;
- the ability to 'clean' title deeds of land acquired to facilitate infrastructure development;
- a system for fixing values and compensation independently to compensate those whose land is acquired at an amount recognized by the city population as fair and equitable;
- transparent operation of powers in such a way that international standards of legality, probity, fairness and good governance are observed;
- the ability to enter into joint ownership arrangements with development and infrastructure providers and those providing finance; and
- the ability to ensure that the benefits of property can be given to a time-limited service provider only for as long as the service is contracted to be provided.



While some of the legal requirements are already established, there are some that need to be addressed by the ACT Government if infrastructure investments are to benefit the full range of stakeholders and landowners in this city, from the smallest to the largest. In doing so, good faith is shown including the willingness to contribute and establish the right atmosphere in which to implement user charges or land value capture schemes as contributors toward infrastructure costs. In the latter case, the earlier the legal frameworks and structures are put in place to capture the incremental benefits of infrastructure investments, the faster the returns to the citizens of Canberra.

Adopting this approach will assist Canberra to maintain and afford its overall investment programme as well as providing reassurance to investors that any proposed wider programme can be delivered and can increase investment values.

Similarly, where a funding structure requires a contribution from revenues raised locally by the Planning authority, investors will expect certainty with respect to the ability of the ACT Government to meet its contractual duties. If doubts exist, investors will look to receive third party guarantees, for example from a national bank, or through the passing of suitable legislation by the Federal Government. This course of action should be avoided as it inevitably increases the complexity of the process. Any third party reluctance to commit may undermine confidence and will certainly reduce any appetite to invest. It is therefore important for the ACT Government to prepare the ground for wholehearted support from parties whose backing is likely to be needed.

Financing & funding of infrastructure

Securing the necessary resources to deliver infrastructure is a near-universal challenge for city planning authorities and my observations suggest that Canberra is no different. In many countries as well as Australia, budget allocations from central governments to cities are under pressure. Some cities fortunately have the ability to generate some of the revenue directly by the collection of municipal income taxes, property taxes and business rates. However, these revenues are not immune from economic slowdowns and government cut-backs. In addition, locally held liabilities such as salary pension fund obligations can grow faster than locally held assets. So regardless of the degree of centralisation, there is never enough money to go around and always a need to prioritise “to govern is to choose”.

I would suggest that Canberra faced with diminishing revenue and increasing demand has to spend a great deal of attention on prioritising infrastructure investments based on expected societal expectations, outcomes or economic benefits and in identifying new ways of making these investments happen. This means that much effort has to be centred on marketing individual financial projects like the Light Rail/Tram Project rather than undertaking a broader evaluation of the city’s financial options in the context of its overall funding framework which is briefly discussed.

To Fund or to Finance Projects

Although the terms funding and financing are often used interchangeably, each term means very different things to the investment community. Understanding this difference is an important part of analysing the situation, communicating the financial challenges faced to the stakeholders and then developing options to address them in a way that attracts investors.

Financing represents the time shifting of costs incurred. Say the ACT Government borrows to construct an infrastructure project and doesn’t start to repay the loan for 5 years. In this case, the cost of the project has been time-shifted into the future through financing. However, financing does not set out how the funds to repay the loan will be earned.



In contrast, funding is the means by which the project's costs are repaid, regardless of the period to which these costs are time-shifted. For infrastructure, this generally means identifying the long-term revenue stream necessary to pay back the funds initially invested. Some typical funding and financing sources include:

Funding:

- Property taxes
- Business rates
- Municipal income tax
- Tolls and user charges
- Asset disposals
- Budget allocations received
- Grants received

Financing:

- Public sector banks
- Commercial banks
- Municipal or project bonds
- Pension fund private placement bonds
- Development banks/ multilaterals
- Equity investment and infrastructure fund managers
- Leasing and vendor finance

This paper has focused on my views that Canberra needs to provide financial encouragement to attract investors and people in order to ensure the achievement of any future strategy that supports the vision for innovation and growth in Canberra. The paper provides some strategies and the means to achieve them.

The paper also reinforces the global view that the delivery of sustainable urban infrastructure and encouraging innovations to take place are about the ACT Government having the built-in ability, and the internal dynamics, to develop and deliver upon a vision for long term growth and economic success, and to remain resilient in an ever changing world. To do otherwise would fail the expectations of the citizens of Canberra.

3. Submission from Pedal Power ACT - 27 March 2015

Pedal Power ACT supports the following planning principles in relation to cycling and walking (active travel):

- Cycling should be recognised and promoted as the most efficient form of urban transport (bar none) over distances of up to five kilometres. This specific radius from major urban activity centres (i.e. town and group centres in the Canberra context) should be regarded as the planning yardstick for intensive development of safe, attractive cycling facilities across the ACT.
- A formal planning hierarchy of walking first, cycling second, public transport third and driving private vehicles last should be adopted throughout the ACT, in particular within five kilometres of town and group centres. This will start to redress the planning concepts of the past in which the priority was for convenience of motor vehicle traffic, with all its hidden costs.



- It should be mandatory for all urban estate and other significant planning and development projects (without exception) to include provision of relevant active travel facilities (e.g. access, pathways, bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities) from first principles at the outset, in a way which integrates them seamlessly with wider ACT active travel plans. This will mitigate the need for households to own multiple motor vehicles, and will avoid costly remediation and retrofitting. Where a cycling route is disrupted by urban development, an equivalent replacement facility must be provided; any temporary traffic measures must meet the required standard and be fit for purpose. Property developers should be required to contribute substantially to the cost of all active travel facilities relating to the project.
- Cycling should be recognised as an essential component of ACT transport solutions, whether for travel to work, shops, recreational venues or other public or private facilities. The Government should continue to advocate for the legitimate role of cycling in the transport system.
- Cycling infrastructure should be safe, attractive, quick, convenient and maintained to the same standard as roads. It should offer a choice of facility appropriate to the needs and abilities of different riders. In order to encourage participation in active travel by people of both genders from primary school age to senior citizens, the primary focus in the future should be on establishing a high-quality network of continuous family-friendly cycleways that are physically separated from interaction with parked and moving vehicles in areas of moderate or higher traffic flow at speeds greater than 40 km/h. The 40 km/h speed limit applied in town centres and school zones should be used more extensively (in conjunction with other traffic calming measures) to facilitate active travel to and within other areas where people walking and riding may be at risk from motor vehicles. A planning consideration should be that where off-road facilities are not provided, people could perceive traffic speeds higher than 40 km/h as a significant deterrent to active travel.
- The next generation of trunk cycleways should reflect complete separation from vehicles in the arterial road corridor, with grade-separated crossings of high-speed arterials where appropriate.
- In suitable streets within town and group centres and similar precincts, the potential for shared space concepts should be considered, with appropriate nonlinear design features and traffic speeds no higher than 20 km/h.
- In areas of high active travel density, cycling and walking facilities should be separated from each other to minimise conflict between users and provide a low stress travel environment for all.
- Appropriate parts of the city (such as the inner north and the Bruce precinct) should be designated as priority Active Travel Zones, where dense networks of quality cycle and walking routes should be quickly implemented to encourage active travel. Candidates for this approach will be areas from the Territory Plan that are NOT low-density residential (RZ1) or industrial. The Zones would therefore include all medium and high density residential areas, all commercial shopping and office areas, and all public institutions such as schools, colleges and universities.
- Active travel should be fully integrated with public transport, as these two modalities support each other. This means carriage of bikes on all public transport vehicles (with the sole exception of certain ACTION minibuses); bike parking and storage at transport stops as appropriate; and priority for upgrading of active travel access pathways within a five kilometre radius of public transport arteries, thereby extending public transport catchment areas and patronage.
- Mixed land use principles should be used to maximise employment, retail and recreational opportunities within a five kilometre radius of residential areas, to harness all the potential benefits of active travel.
- Vehicle parking should be flexibly priced for the purpose of managing demand. Free long-stay parking should be removed from areas of moderate or higher demand.
- Data collection should be improved to achieve better active travel planning outcomes. Examples include accident rates and locations, bicycle and foot traffic volumes and participation rates, and desire lines.



- Active travel planning, delivery and promotion should be coordinated by an active travel unit identified within the ACT Government for this purpose. This unit should manage active travel goals and budgets, drive progress to meeting them, advocate for active travel within the community and manage liaison with stakeholders. Its director would be at senior level and have access to Ministers.
- The quality and effectiveness of active travel facilities should be assessed not only against Australian standards, but also against international best practice.
- Future ACT transport planning should be undertaken with the aim of making Canberra the first Australian city to be included in the copenhagenize.com index of the world's top 20 bicycle-friendly cities.

4. Submission from Friends of Grasslands - 2 April 2015

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) is a community group dedicated to the conservation of natural temperate grassy ecosystems in south-eastern Australia. FOG advocates, educates and advises on matters to do with the conservation of grassy ecosystems, and carries out surveys and other on-ground work. FOG is based in Canberra and its members include professional scientists, landowners, land managers and interested members of the public.

FOG's major concern in relation to future planning priorities for Canberra is how they might impact upon our endangered grassy ecosystems and dependent species, which are a significant component of the ACT's natural heritage. FOG sees the following as important components of any Canberra planning priorities:

1. Consult with community and ensure there is a balance achieved between environmental, social, economic, cultural and other values;
2. Apply a strategic environmental (and social and economic) assessment to every area, and identify and protect areas of conservation value (site specific and landscape values such as connectivity and resilience) prior to development;
3. Ensure every district has identified areas to be retained as open space/reserve;
4. Ensure street and open space plantings are appropriate, in particular that they do not introduce new weeds into nearby reserves and conservation areas;
5. Ensure new suburbs are cat-contained and move towards enforcing cat-containment in existing suburbs, prioritising those adjacent to reserves and other conservation areas;
6. Provide adequate open space to be used for recreation, dog walking etc. to limit pressures and impacts on conservation areas;
7. Ensure opportunities for locals to participate in conservation management;
8. Provide well researched signage to educate locals, especially about the interface between conservation areas and residential areas, including district and other parks. Signage and other information about conservation, appropriate species in residential gardens etc. should start before any builder digs foundations – i.e. at the time of house/land purchase – so residents receive appropriate information from the initial purchase decision;
9. Ensure that all buffer zones for bushfire management or similar are contained within development footprints rather than in areas of conservation value; and
10. Route linking roads and other infrastructure around rather than through areas of conservation value.

5. Submission from SEE-Change - 2 April 2015

SEE-Change (Society, the Environment and the Economy) is a community, not-for-profit group focused on local grass roots action in Canberra. We inspire, inform and support action to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint, improve the resilience of the ecosystem and enhance the wellbeing of all individuals.



1. 'Enquiry by Design' processes should be undertaken to engage the community and garner their ideas before projects or planning commence (including to answer the issues noted above).

- Enquiry by Design processes are a transparent, objective, collaborative, and intensely integrative design-based approach that unleashes the power of reason, quite consistently and quickly to inspire a 'culture shift' among stakeholders toward a broadly supported outcome that works for almost everyone.
- The community will gain a greater understanding of good urban design principles and a greater appreciation of the challenges involved with whatever solution is finally delivered.
- The community will be engaged in a practical, tangible process that identifies specific solutions appropriate for different locations, and they are therefore more likely to support the final solutions delivered. The key component of Enquiry by Design that is so effective is that it focuses people to actually locate in maps and in physical forms the different solutions, rather than just talking about how a generic solution could operate in theory.
- Through this process the different issues that need to be considered will be identified. This would require a number of different approaches to be used, including having people from different parts of Canberra being brought together to discuss the overarching planning issues in small groups at a high level at the same time as having groups discussing issues at a specific low level. In sharing the discussions at the end of the session, people will get to appreciate the different considerations for both levels and across different topic areas. Other sessions more specific to each area could then be undertaken and engage people in solutions for their local areas, noting that in many cases issues are only identified when the detail is examined.
- These processes would tap into the collective knowledge of the community and provide a more robust and comprehensive brief for consultants to progress from.
- These processes would tap into the collective knowledge of the community and provide a more robust and comprehensive brief for consultants to progress from.

2. Additional detail should be added to the rules and criteria in Territory Plans, and Precinct Codes strengthened, to ensure developments deliver appropriately for the community, for the environment and economically, and achieve ACT sustainability targets.

- It is essential that requirements at the very early stages of any development process are strengthened, as this is when decisions are being made that impact on the rest of the project and the community.
- Items that should be addressed includes, but is not limited to:

A. Sustainability Master Planning

Developments should be required to undertake sustainability master planning. This includes, but is not limited to:

- establishing minimum sustainable goals, objectives and performance targets for the development as part of the Master Plan at the outset of the development process; and
- identifying how the development and rezoning connects with other facilities in the area, including open space and local shops.

B. Transport

Developments should be required to comprehensively support a range of transport modes, with a particular focus on prioritising active transport options, like walking and cycling. This includes, but is not limited to:

- prioritising pedestrian traffic;
- making strong connections to public transport;
- providing for car share parking spaces and electric vehicle charging points; and
- encouraging bicycle use through the inclusion of good paths and weatherproof bicycle lock-up areas.



C. Site planning and social amenity

Developments should be required to provide quality communal and outdoor spaces, support greater social amenity, connect to existing communities in the area and strengthen the establishment of new communities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- having a public open space ratio, a building plot ratio and height requirements that all work together. This would ensure quality public open space areas are provided that are not just the 'left-over' areas, buildings could be provided at a human-scale height where they bound public open space areas and trade-offs could be made with a higher building height when it is set back from public open space areas and a greater amount of quality public open space area is provided –this is potentially going to be more economical for the developer as well;
- providing public access through the site at minimum distances;
- providing public access to social areas that support community connections;
- providing a community garden;
- providing a diversity of building types and aesthetics; and
- having safety oriented features for pedestrian and bike paths.

D. Energy efficiency and conservation

Developments should be required to provide the greatest opportunity for buildings to be energy efficient and conservative of energy. This includes, but is not limited to:

- having a minimum requirement of the number of dwellings that must have north facing living areas to maximise solar passive design;
- having a 7 star minimum NatHERS rating for Class 1 and 2 dwellings;
- encouraging the use of best practice design –such as the Green Building Council Australia 'Green Star – Communities' Code;
- having a minimum kWh for renewable energy generated on the site;
- encouraging 100% renewable energy consumed over the year;
- having a zero carbon emissions target for the development over a year;
- having a minimum star rating for all appliances and equipment;
- having motion sensor lighting provided to all walkways, communal areas and underground car parks; and
- having a minimum recycling requirement for any demolition process.

E. Construction and Sustainability Committee

Developments should be required to engage collaboratively with the community through the establishment of a Construction and Sustainability Committee early in the project, with relevant representation and expertise. The key aim of this Committee includes, but is not limited to:

- Bringing the community, developer and key stakeholders together to collaborate and agree on the indicators, principles and targets for the project that are measurable. For example, the % of energy and water savings intended to be achieved by the project and the % of public open space that is to be provided.
- Conducting regular meetings between the community, developer and key stakeholders before the main decisions are made on design and layout, and throughout the development and construction process, to ensure the project is delivering as agreed without delays.
- Providing opportunities for the community to engage in the project from the outset to create and contribute to greater public amenity, integration with existing neighbourhoods and most importantly to create greater social cohesion as soon as the construction is complete.



3. Planning processes should be reviewed and should consider how to most effectively integrate into these processes new findings, innovations and other Government consultation recommendations over time

- A Government consultation process was very recently undertaken to consider adaptation strategies and how these recommendations feed into this planning intent review process, and how any future consultation process feeds into future planning decisions, needs consideration. Often there are silos within Government, or findings or developments in other areas, which may not be reflected in the planning processes or requirements, and unless these links are made or structures and processes created to facilitate the integration of these, the planning processes can become a limiting factor for innovation and progress.
- Items that should be addressed regarding adaptation, that were provided by SEE-Change in our Adaptation Strategy submission, includes, but is not limited to:

i. Community health and well-being

We recommend:

- Encouraging greater community engagement and support to address health and well-being issues. This could be achieved by using suitable existing community centres to:
 - hold public information sessions about the potential health effects of climate change;
 - encourage more young people to become more involved; and
 - act as meeting places for the public to congregate during heat waves or other extreme weather events.
- Further expansion of planting, particularly drought-resistant and shady trees to keep the city cool and reduce heat stress in the population;
- Strengthening of a more resilient local food system through increased planting of food plants in public spaces and additional support of urban and local agriculture; and
- More bubblers in public spaces.

ii. Disaster and emergency management

We recommend:

- Changes to allow better access to information about looming climatic emergencies through multiple media channels;
- Actively helping people with preparedness for climate-related emergencies, e.g., each year have neighbourhood meetings to discuss emergency preparedness in the community. Pilot projects could be conducted in partnership with Southside Community Services; and
- Assigning public places in each suburb that can be used as assembly points in case of a climate-related emergency.

iii. Settlements and infrastructure

We recommend:

- Expansions of the street tree program –this is needed for rejuvenation of the urban forest in the Inner South.
- Better planning regulations to:
 - allow room for deep-rooted trees in private space;
 - ensure new developments are well designed;
 - encourage retrofitting of older houses;
 - audit/enforce energy efficiency of dwellings 'as built' rather than just 'as designed';
 - provide more sheltered bus stops;



- place a levy on developers for the provision and ongoing maintenance of existing and newly created public green space within or adjacent to the development or densification project;
- provide a mix of housing types, including an allocated percentage to public housing;
- require high EER ratings;
- require the design of public and private buildings to allow for optimal thermal control and airflow; and
- site houses so as to encourage walkability to shops and work.

iv. Water

We recommend:

- Putting more effort into keeping the lake clean;
- Encouraging use of urban water tanks;
- Separate water metering in multi-unit developments;
- Applying water sensitive urban design to new developments and to urban forest renewal;
- More efficient use of water, including ground water, e.g., re-using water on site, including grey water; and
- Better storm water management using water sensitive urban design, such as including a requirement for permeable surfaces.

v. Natural resources and ecosystems

We recommend:

- Linking of wildlife habitats;
- Ensuring appropriate continuity of food and water supplies and shelter, including ensuring a more resilient local food system; and
- Educating people how to make better use of urban gardens to grow food.

vi. Agriculture

We recommend:

- Making more space available for community gardens;
- Bus access to farmers markets and other fresh food markets; and
- Sharing of food grown in private gardens.

vii. Transport

Some issues related to transport have been identified in several of the priority areas above. However, there are broader transport considerations that have not been addressed. We recommend:

- Development of an integrated transport plan for Canberra that accommodates adaption to a changing climate; and
- The implementation of a diverse transport system that supports active transport modes, such as walking and cycling, alongside a range of other transport modes, such as public transport, car share, car pool etc.

6. Submission from Property Council of Australia - 2 April 2015

Making Canberra Healthy and Smart

The property industry makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Canberrans. Buildings are more than 'shelter from the storm'. They also nurture families, bring people together to create community, enhance individual and community wellbeing, and support wealth-generation through industry and commercial activity.



Dynamic, high quality built form attracts ‘smart’ industries and knowledge-workers, enhancing the ACT’s capacity to innovate and remain competitive in the 21st century economy.

However, Canberra will only be a ‘smart’ city with a knowledge-based economy if the city is an attractive place for entrepreneurs to live, and for ‘start ups’ to grow. We must, first, keep our university graduates here and second, ensure we out-compete the competition to attract new enterprises.

Housing costs are a major consideration for anyone thinking of relocating to another city. Canberra has the capacity to provide better housing at more affordable prices than much of our competition; this potential will be best realised with the involvement of the private sector. While apartment living is an increasingly attractive option for many, it must be remembered that many people have three children and a dog, and don’t want to live in an apartment in the inner city. We need to capitalise on our capacity to deliver a 50/50 infill and greenfield residential development balance and build quality sustainable suburbs, as well as leading edge infill projects.

The capacity of the property industry to deliver residential land has been thwarted in recent years, following the introduction of policies which have prevented private sector involvement in residential land development. The government monopoly on land supply and development, exacerbated by protracted planning processes, has led to exorbitant increases in land prices as a simple consequence of supply falling behind demand. High and unaffordable housing costs are a key factor in rising levels of household and family debt and stress, which has long term implications for the quality of life of Canberra citizens and total health costs incurred by the community. Housing costs are a health as well as an economic issue.

The exponential increase in ageing Canberrans requiring suitable accommodation to ‘age in place’ is also an issue for our city’s capacity to support health and wellbeing. Roughly one in ten Canberrans are now 65 years and over – and this is expected to double by 2025. An ageing population presents many challenges, including pressure on the health and aged care budgets. We must embrace new policies that help people downsize to more appropriate accommodation in existing suburbs, which supports urban renewal and the long-term viability of local and group centres, schools and suburbs.

The latest *Intergenerational Report* argues that Australians will need to work for longer to fund their retirement. Notwithstanding the latest cuts to the public service, the federal government remains one of the nation’s largest employers. Canberra offers ideal employment opportunities for knowledge workers who want to extend their careers. It is imperative that we provide retirement living options – particularly through embracing adaptive reuse of existing buildings – in our CBD and town centres, and near other places of employment and services. Building our capacity to cater to older Australians will provide a long-term win/win for the Canberra community and for the federal government.

Key suggested focus for the statement of intent:

- Recognise the value of affordable housing to family and community life and health.
- Capitalise on our capacity to deliver a 50/50 infill and greenfield residential development balance and build quality sustainable suburbs as well as leading edge infill projects
- Revise the planning process such that it encourages innovative approaches to housing affordability and built form, active commercial building design, and rewards rather than penalises intellectual capital.
- Move away from proscriptive planning and design criteria to adopt sustainable thinking that provides best outcomes.



- Recognise Canberra's ageing population as a reality and an opportunity for our city – and even a future value generator, given our health system, universities, lifestyle benefits and affordability.

Growing the Economy

The property industry currently contributes 55 per cent of total ACT Government tax revenue, or around \$600 million a year. This is a far greater proportion than any other jurisdiction in Australia and imposes a very heavy tax burden on one sector of the ACT economy. The property industry is a key economic driver, contributing \$2.6 billion to the economy – just under 10 per cent of the Territory's total wealth – and a further \$3.0 billion in flow on demand for goods and services, bringing the total contribution to \$5.6 billion. It is the third largest employer in the ACT, generating almost 25,000 jobs.

Imposts in the form of taxes and charges, regulatory and process delays, and limitations on land supply, lead directly to a drag on the Territory economy and threaten local jobs.

Property investment is a 'footloose' activity. Investment capital, both financial and intellectual, will readily go elsewhere if financial returns are better or the ease of doing business is more favourable. Many other Australian (and overseas) cities currently offer better returns (because of lower taxes and charges) and more favourable regulatory environments than Canberra for both residential and commercial property investment.

The ACT property taxation and regulatory regime needs to be re-aligned to beat the competition. Because of the weight of this sector in the local economy this must be done in measured steps. As economic activity grows and prospers over time there will be a transfer of the revenue burden from a property to an economic activity base.

Key suggested focus for the statement of intent:

- Recognise the need for a balanced approach to Territory revenue and the imperative of moving the revenue burden from the current over-emphasis on a property tax base to one focused on broader economic activity.
- Re-align, over time, property taxes and charges, the regulatory regime, and the supply of land so that the ACT property industry is on an equal or better footing to attract financial investment when compared to other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas.
- Harness Canberra's aging population as an engine of growth, and position Canberra as an ideal retirement lifestyle choice.
- Remove some risk from planning by making the third-party appeals ACAT system subject to costs being awarded where an objector loses the case.

Enhancing Liveability and Opportunity

Canberra is increasingly recognised as a model, liveable city. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's *Regional Well-Being Report 2014*, for instance, found the ACT enjoys the highest level of wellbeing not only in Australia, but in the 362 regions across the 34 OECD member countries. Only one place in the entire OECD that scores 9 out of 10 or more for each benchmark – and that is the ACT.

Property Council members believe it would be appropriate for the statement of planning intent to acknowledge some of the key factors that contribute to the liveability of the city, to ensure they are preserved and enhanced. These factors may include: the structure of the city with a hierarchy of town centres as employment hubs; the amenity of existing RZ1 suburban areas; the urban open space and



Canberra nature park areas; and the highly-efficient, arterial road network that facilitates convenient private and public transport.

The ACT Government has adopted a 50/50 policy for residential development whereby 50 per cent of new residential development is intended to be 'infill', balanced by 50 per cent in greenfield areas. While the Property Council supports this policy, in reality, it has never been achieved due to planning and financial constraints.

The 50/50 policy recognises both the existing demographic trend that favours inner city lifestyles while also recognising that the suburban lifestyle is still the major goal for many Australian households. A key factor for Canberra is that, due to its relatively small size and relatively efficient infrastructure, we are able to deliver greenfield development as an environmentally-sustainable housing option. Our 'urban fringe' estates are only 20-40 minutes from the CBD and only 10-15 minutes from our town centres. In contrast, the Sydney and Melbourne CBDs are up to two hours away, with (especially in the case of Sydney, our major competitor) grossly over-stretched infrastructure.

The Government, as the monopoly land developer, could highlight and build on this natural advantage. Promoting Canberra as the one major city in Australia where a genuinely sustainable suburban lifestyle is available. The key to achieving these outcomes is quality design, incorporating leading edge concepts and world class innovation. This in turn is only likely to be achieved with a variety of participants. Opening up greenfield land development to as wide a variety of players as possible, including from the private sector, will be essential.

Key suggested focus for the statement of intent:

- Recognise the comparative advantage that Canberra has in the delivery of environmentally sustainable suburban lifestyles.
- Ensure that this market advantage is maximised by fostering the creativity and innovation available in the private sector.
- Advocate for Commonwealth Government decisions that ensure Canberra's town centres remain significant employment nodes, recognising that changing the location of where people work has implications for public transport requirements.
- Focus on reinvigorating our town centres to reinforce their position in the Territory hierarchy as the main gateway for retail and commercial services.
- Reduce red tape, encourage adaptive reuse and bring more people into our CBD and town centres, and work with industry to remove C grade office buildings from the market to allow more appropriate and environmentally-efficient solutions.
- Encourage recycling of suburbs through the provision of new forms of housing for downsizers.

Investing in Urban Renewal

Urban renewal is vital to the future of Canberra's economic and social wellbeing.

Canberra's office market vacancy rate is now at the highest level ever recorded. The Property Council's latest *Office Market Report* (February 2015) finds that the office market vacancy rate is now 15.4 per cent. This is the second highest vacancy rate of any capital city, marginally behind Brisbane's CBD.



The Federal Government's proposed divestment of six Commonwealth properties – John Gorton and Treasury Buildings, East and West Block and Anzac Park East and West – within the Parliamentary Triangle, together with the ACT Government's sale of MacArthur House and the Canberra visitor's centre, has been welcomed by the Property Council, but has the potential to escalate vacancy rates.

Many of our obsolete office buildings could be converted into new apartments, student accommodation or hotels – but we need the incentives and the policy settings to make this happen. Other cities offer incentives that encourage building owners and developers to 're-life' ageing office stock. In Canberra, an upgrade program has the potential to drive economic, social and environmental outcomes – and to leave us with an outstanding legacy for Canberra.

However, Canberra is currently the only city in Australia that has a taxation regime that prejudices against urban renewal.

Urban renewal encourages the evolution of places and spaces in cities to accommodate economic and social change. The lease variation charge (LVC) is a tax on change.

When it was originally configured (in the 1920s), what we know today as the LVC, was a 'betterment charge' strictly linked to the leasehold system at a time when the ACT had a genuine leasehold system. The intent was to capture for the community a share of any value uplift that may accrue to land as a consequence of public policy decisions.

Over time, the leasehold system has evolved into the equivalent of a freehold system and the betterment charge has become a tax that is not based on actual value uplift because of limitations that have been imposed on the valuation methodology.

The LVC is a strong disincentive to redevelopment, firstly because it exists and is simply counted as an extra cost factor, and secondly because of its arbitrary nature which introduces uncertainty to any investment decision making process. No such tax exists in any competing jurisdiction in Australia. It clearly places Canberra at a competitive disadvantage as far as urban renewal is concerned, and is effectively a tax on intellectual innovation.

Reviewing the methodology for the purpose of LVC, and removing complications, is an essential step in our transformation of the Canberra city centre and town centres. Accordingly, we urge the ACT Government to:

- Create a remission category for new City developments where for the first 2 years LVC will be nil and subsequently the remission rate is 50 per cent
- Apply LVC at the end of the development pipeline
- For codified variations – apply a 75 per cent tax remission (i.e. 25 per cent LVC)
- For non-codified variations – apply a 25 per cent tax remission and allow the full opportunity costs to be taken into account in assessing the before and after values (i.e. offsetting for existing improvements, demolition and onsite/offsite works).



The regulatory controls in Canberra city centre and the town and group centres in many cases date from the inception of the Territory Plan in 1993, which in turn imported material from the prior National Capital Development Commission policies. Key rules and regulations governing redevelopment in our centres are decades old, some dating from the 1960s. They come from an era when urban renewal was simply not on the agenda; they are now unable to meet the urban renewal goals of the government and the business community. They urgently need to be reviewed and renewed.

Key suggested focus for the statement of intent:

- Move to ensure that the “investment playing field” for urban renewal in Canberra is at least level with that in competing jurisdictions, and ideally is more favourable.
- Review and refresh dated planning controls in the Canberra city centre and the town and group centres and nearby inner areas so that they foster urban renewal.
- Increase the height of buildings in the city, increase the gross floor area or introduce a site ratio on core areas such as Garema Place and City Walk.
- Reward innovative approaches to design and use with reduced LVC changes, to inspire more development like NewActon in the city.
- Reduce the LVC for stock that is greater than 30 years of age.
- Revise residential planning policies across Canberra to encourage ‘dual occupancy or more’ on existing leases without cost penalty to support ‘ageing in place’ and address housing affordability.
- Incentivise adaptive reuse to breathe new life into our CBD and town centres, while reducing the amount of C grade office building stock in the market.

The local property industry is a huge contributor to Canberra’s prosperity and liveability, and is filled with people who are passionate about building a world-class capital city. Property Council members have enduring investment in making our city the best it can be. These people ‘put back’ every day. We are committed to maintaining collaborative relationships with the ACT Government, as cooperation is essential to Canberra’s long-term sustainability and economic prosperity.

We applaud the ACT Government’s focus on urban renewal, and celebrate the great work being done with community-building activities such as the Asian Cup, Enlighten, the Balloon Spectacular, World Cup Cricket, and regular AFL fixtures. We also give specific credit to the National Capital Authority, and encourage the ACT Government to enhance its collaboration with the NCA to promote our places and spaces.

But much more must be done to secure Canberra’s economic prosperity, liveability and sustainability, and we look forward to seeing a visionary statement of planning intent that supports growth, investment, innovation and helps the property industry building enduring places for people.

Attached with this submission a document entitled: “Transforming Canberra’s City Centre – Discussion Paper” dated March 2015 by the Property Council of Australia and Canberra CBD Ltd.

7. Submission from Eric Martin & Associates - 2 April 2015

1. How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?

A more compact city could be developed by fully developing the town centres of Woden and Civic both of which have many vacant buildings and underdeveloped capacity so enormous opportunities exist.



Better integrated planning principles that respect all aspects of our environment including heritage will create a unique and cohesive place within which these qualities can take hold.

2. How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?

Innovation will flow from solid planning principles that promote sustainability in its broadest context.

3. What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3-5 years?

The top priority should be National Heritage listing of Canberra. This will ensure heritage and environmental sustainability are respected and form the foundation for the continuation of Canberra's unique position in Australia.

Attention to development in the town centres, especially in Civic and Woden, will help them work better. Reduced competitive planning which fragment outcomes such as City Centre vs City to Lake will enable more integrated development.

8. Submission from MCF (Mobile Carriers Forum) - 8 April 2015

The Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF) is an industry group representing the three mobile phone carriers deploying networks in Australia, namely Telstra, Optus and Vodafone Hutchison Australia Pty Limited. The MCF is aware that the Minister for Planning, Mick Gentleman, is intending to prepare a Statement of Planning Intent, which will set out the key planning priorities for the ACT Government for the next three to five years and is consulting the community and stakeholder groups with a view to better understanding their needs and ideas and the priorities for action.

The increasing use of electronic forms of communication by business and the general community requires MCF members to increase the coverage, speed and reliability of their networks to meet consumer demands. The ability of our members to deliver and maintain quality mobile telecommunications infrastructure, which includes broadband capability, will be a significant contributor to the success of any intentions by the Minister to achieve a both a diversified and resilient ACT economy and to meet community expectations for access to state of the art mobile telecommunications technologies.

The effectiveness of our members in delivering and maintaining the quality mobile telecommunications infrastructure that is demanded by businesses and the community in the ACT is dependent on their ability to deploy new telecommunications infrastructure in a timely fashion and in suitable locations and to be able to upgrade established infrastructure as technologies evolve and consumer demand grows. In particular, mobile network infrastructure must be located close to the areas where the service is demanded.

As a result the MCF has a major interest in the operation of planning legislation in the ACT and has a particular interest in ensuring that the planning system in the ACT facilitates an efficient and streamlined regulatory pathway for the consideration of telecommunication proposals. This submission specifically relates to the focus question below, which is posed in the Conversation Starter Paper, namely:

How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?



The MCF believes that the ACT planning system needs to deliver a regulatory environment in which our members can provide mobile telecommunications infrastructure in a cost effective and timely manner and in locations that are environmentally sustainable and best placed to meet consumer demands throughout Canberra.

In this regard, the single greatest limitation on achieving these objectives is created by the restrictive land use zoning limitations that prohibit the installation of new infrastructure in many localities within the ACT.

Currently, telecommunication facilities are only permissible in 12 of the 23 land use classification zones operative in the ACT. This means that the ACT Land and Planning Authority (ACTPLA) cannot accept development applications for telecommunication facilities in locations which, if able to be considered on a merit basis, could prove suitable for, and in some cases superior than, the closest available (suitably zoned) locations.

An additional feature of the current system is that in some zones where telecommunication facilities are prohibited, minor works and activities are permissible. This includes the installation of shelter and antenna activities and allows the swap out of existing structures, such as light poles for larger structures that can accommodate antenna infrastructure. However, what constitutes minor works is not clear and in practice it has been found that an application is only accepted if the swap out results in minor to moderate increase in the height of the existing light pole (say from 8-12 metres to 15-20 metres). It is unlikely that swapping out an 8-12 metre light pole for a new pole with a height of 30 metres would be considered a minor activity, thus zones that permit minor works for telecommunication facilities are very limited in what they may allow and opportunities are largely restricted to existing light pole locations only.

Due to the increasing demand for voice and internet data that is provided by the telecommunication carriers' mobile phone networks, carriers increasingly need to be provide "infill" sites for additional capacity and they are increasingly needing to deploy lower powered "macro" base station sites often located only 2-3 kilometres from each other. These are often designed to service residential areas, to which they must be located in close vicinity to provide the necessary service, but the current restrictive zoning system severely limits locational opportunities to the extent that the only available options to locate base station infrastructure to service residential areas are in peripheral areas such as within open space or transport zones. It is for this reason that the majority of newly established sites in developing areas are located in the middle of roundabouts or adjoining the road reserves.

A recent example of the difficulties created by, and the counter-productive nature of, the restrictive land use zone prohibitions in the ACT is provided below:

Watson

Telstra sought to establish a mobile phone base station comprising a new monopole to service the Canberra Technology Park in Watson. The zoning of the Technology Park (Community Facilities Zone – CFZ) prohibits establishment of such a facility, as only minor works are permissible. As a result Telstra were compelled to swap out an existing light pole from 11m to 25m in a car park close to residential areas when the preferred solution was to establish the monopole in the middle of the campus, behind the main building, which is considerably more remote from residential areas and where the visual impact would be reduced from these residential areas.



This example at Watson illustrates that better planning solutions are possible if telecommunication facilities were permissible in all zones with consent. This would allow carriers greater scope to identify technically and environmentally suitable locations for telecommunications infrastructure. It would also provide scope for the ACT Planning Authority to assess such proposals on a merit basis. The current system is deficient in that it forces both proponents and consent authorities to confine and consider proposals in the limited locational context provided by a restricted range of land use zones. It also inhibits the development and consideration of a wider range of potential design solutions.

It is worth noting that the NSW Government introduced State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) in 2007 (ISEPP), which made telecommunication facilities permissible with consent in all land use zones. These were supplemented by the NSW Telecommunications Facilities Guideline Including Broadband which specifies a series of principles relating to issues such as visual impact, heritage, colocation, health standards and construction principles that need to be taken into account by carriers when formulating proposals and by consent authorities when assessing proposals. This has provided for the effective merit based assessment of development applications for new base station proposals in all land use zones.

In conclusion the MCF believes that making telecommunication facilities permissible in all zones will:

- Directly contribute to increased innovation and flexibility in the ACT planning system and also within the telecommunications industry, in terms of both the formulation of development proposals by carriers and their consideration by ACTPLA, and
- If these were also supplemented by appropriate design and other environmental planning principles to be taken into account by carriers and ACTPLA, the combination of the two would greatly assist in establishing and maintaining greater certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground. This would result in consequent benefits to both the telecommunication industry, businesses and the general community of the ACT in terms of facilitating the more timely deployment of environmentally acceptable new telecommunication facilities that are aimed at providing a more reliable service and incorporating the latest technological upgrades.

9. Submission from a resident - 8 April 2015

I am pleased that the discussion paper recognises that planning is not merely an end in itself, but is also an important determinant of people's travel choices, and hence of greenhouse emissions from transport. I offer the following suggestions:

Firstly, if a Statement of Intent is to be more than empty words, it will need to flow through into implementation. To this end, it would be worthwhile for the Statement to set a target for the proportion of properties that comply with planning laws. Given that less than two thirds of Canberra properties currently comply, you might consider setting a target of two thirds of properties compliant by 2020. Please refer to Attachment 1 (below) for more information.

Secondly, the Statement should spell out by when, and by how much, planning will contribute to the achievement of the transport components of the *Weathering the Change* climate strategy through achievement of journey to work mode share targets of :

- 10.5% by public transport in 2016 and 16% by 2026 (2012 election commitment);
- 6.5% by walking in 2016 and 7% in 2026 (*Transport For Canberra*), and
- 6% by cycling in 2016 and 7% in 2026 (*Transport For Canberra*).



Thirdly, the Statement should include a target date (and funding commitment) for every Canberra street (other than lanes and Woonerfs) to have basic transport infrastructure in the form of a path on which children can walk or cycle to school, and on which everyone can walk or cycle to bus or tram stops, shops, services, recreation and other everyday destinations. This will complement recent changes to planning laws, that require paths on all such streets in new suburbs.

Fourthly, the Statement should recognise an approach to congestion that focuses on reducing road traffic demand by encouraging more people to travel in fewer cars or by public transport (e.g. transit lanes), by locating more people closer to schools or employment (e.g. by converting low value car parking areas near Town Centre car to high value residential areas), and by managing car travel demand by ensuring that car parking spaces are charged for at full commercial rates.

Attachment 1: Non-compliance with Planning Laws

Less than three out of four properties comply with ACT planning laws.

This level of noncompliance is attributable to a range of factors including:

1. Failure of the Environment and Planning Directorate to detect planning law violations

This failure affects at least 8% of dwellings in relation to nature strips alone.

I recently identified more than 100 noncompliant developments in Campbell, of a total of about 1,250 dwellings surveyed, that obstructed nature strips or footpaths. At right is one example that discourages walking and child cycling by creating a blind corner and simultaneously forcing people onto the road as they approach the blind corner.

2. Failure of private assessors to identify planning law violations in Development Applications and Building Applications

On 17 September 2013 I met with Aaron Oshyer, Senior Manager Merit Assessment and Sean Moysey, Senior Manager Utilities, Land and Lease Regulation – both of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESDD – now the Environment and Planning Directorate).

They advised me that ESDD aimed to audit 10% of the nearly 4,000 building approvals that happen each year, and usually slightly exceeded this target. Almost 500 Building Approvals were audited each year – an average of about 40 per month.

Each month, on a rotating basis, ESDD focused on a particular aspect such as roofing.

Every monthly audit of about 40 approvals identified at least one noncompliant application that has been approved.

On the basis that each monthly audit addresses only one twelfth of the aspects of compliance and finds an error rate of at least 2.5%, a complete monthly audit, covering all twelve aspects of compliance, would be expected to find an error rate twelve times that – i.e. at least 30%.

3. Failure of the Environment and Planning Directorate to identify planning law violations in Development Applications and Building Applications that have been approved by private assessors

If the ESDD auditors fail to identify errors at the same rate (30%) as do private assessors, then the true error rate among private assessors is 51% [30% plus (30% of 70%)].



4. Failure of the Environment and Planning Directorate to check whether buildings have been erected in accordance with Building Approvals

On 17 September 2013 staff of ESDD advised me that their audit was a 'paper' audit of the documentation, rather than a 'physical' audit that included a site visit to inspect the completed building.

5. Environment and Planning Directorate failure to act against planning law violations

Braddon Block 5 Section 30 is zoned CZ3: Services Zone. The CZ3 Services Zone Objectives and Development Table (pdf) (24KB) specifies that no developments may be assessed under the Code Track. Criterion C22 of the Braddon Precinct Map and Code (pdf) (2.6MB), which applies to Merit Track and Impact Track assessment, specifies that in CZ3 areas “Car parking, other than for display purposes, provided on blocks is not visible from the street.”

The Environment and Planning Directorate was advised that Braddon Block 5 Section 30 has 219 car parking spaces that are visible from the street, but refused to take action against this planning law violation.

These 219 car parking spaces undermine the Government's 2012 public transport election commitments, the Transport For Canberra targets and the Weathering the Change strategy, because they increase the supply of car parking for Civic, thus creating market pressure that reduces parking prices and encourages additional driving that adds to congestion. They also reduce incentives to commute into Civic by walking, cycling or public transport.

6. Government violations of planning laws.

Block 8 Section 25 Turner is zoned PRZ1: Urban Open Space. The PRZ1 Urban Open Space Zone Objectives and Development Tables (pdf) (25KB) states that “car park” is a prohibited development. Yet for many years the ACT Government has used this site as a public car park.

10. Submission from Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc - 8 April 2015

We would like to point out that because planning involves a whole range of issues, the actions we are recommending represent only some of the things that need to be done to improve the planning system.

1. How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?

(a) How can we increase our city's density at strategic locations to reduce Canberra's urban footprint?

We cannot see how the area of Canberra's urban footprint can be reduced. It is unrealistic to think that the current urban footprint will revert to Nature Parks or agricultural land. Consequently, if the population continues to grow the population density must be increased.

We agree with the government's current policy of increasing the intensity of dwellings and businesses at Town and Group Centres, but we contend that increasing density along transit ways as is being planned along Northbourne Avenue is likely to lead to more undesirable congestion and undesirable urban sprawl.



One of the major features of the transport system in Canberra is the effectiveness of the system of main road between Town Centres. For example, the main roads between Woden and the City and Belconnen and the City provide excellent transit ways. It is only along streets like Northbourne Avenue, where development has taken place at either side of the transit way that the system breaks down because of the plethora of cross streets with their inevitable traffic lights.

We cannot see how the proposed light rail together with plans to intensify along a two kilometre –wide corridor will improve the situation in this part of Canberra. It is likely that we will finish up with a situation like Parramatta Road in Sydney.

Recommendation 1: Intensification must be focused on the Town and Group Centres, rather than along transit ways.

(b) How can we create active streets and great public spaces to better connect people to services, transport and amenity?

- Increased connectivity cannot be achieved in perpetuity because demographic profiles change over time. Older people will prefer different transport modes and spaces to young families with children.
- We need to invest more to maintain our current facilities. In the older suburbs, particularly, the pavements are cracked; the street lighting is poor; the transport systems are in-adequate; some of the shopping centres are dilapidated and several of our parks and open spaces, which are the lungs of the city, appear to be neglected.
- In the future all major developments must be fully integrated with the transport facilities. For example, in the Yarralumla brickworks development the traffic modelling appears to cover only the local area. There should be regional assessments because the additional population proposed will impact in all the surrounding suburbs and all the way into the City along Adelaide Avenue.
- Car parking provisions in multi-unit developments must be increased so that there is adequate off street parking for residents and visitors. For example only 9 visitor par parks are provided on site for the 131 apartment AMAYA development in Austin Street. The PVA Code requires the provision of 33 visitor parking spaces. The end result is likely to be streets full of parked cars. This is not the scene we should be aiming for in the future.

Recommendation 2: We need to invest more to maintain our current facilities, so we can be proud of our streets, shops, offices and parks.

Recommendation 3: All major developments must be fully integrated with transport facilities.

Recommendation 4: Car parking provisions must be reviewed and more underground parking provided so that our streets are not full of parked vehicles.

(c) How can we manage traffic and parking by providing rapid public transport, including light rail, and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists?

Canberra is so spread out we are going to need cars for a very long time. We should encourage the use of electric vehicles to reduce pollution levels and the use of fossil fuels. There will also be a need for parking facilities at the groups and town centres. These must be factored into all large scale developments.



The backbone of the public transport system should be a network of rapid buses between the town and group centres and a secondary network of buses providing access from the suburbs to the group and town centres. Buses are not restricted to fixed tracks and can operate anywhere there is a road.

We do not believe that the cost to install and operate light rail, as presented so far, will realise the necessary benefits and will not provide rapid public transport.

Regarding pedestrians and cyclists; we need to cater for more cyclists and consequently we need to install wider pavements for shared paths. At present most of the cycle paths are too narrow, when they are used by both cyclists and pedestrians and this poses a serious hazard to both cyclists and pedestrians. The routes should be similar to those used for buses.

Recommendation 5: The use of electric cars should be encouraged.

Recommendation 6: Adequate parking must be provided at Group and Town Centres.

Recommendation 7: Buses should be the main public transport vehicle for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 8: Shared paths used by cyclists and pedestrians should be wider to reduce the hazard of collisions.

(d) How does the design and built form of our city need to change to better adapt to a hotter and drier climate?

This is a huge issue and there is not the time or the space to make more than a few recommendations.

Recommendation 9: We need to retain and maintain the garden city characteristics of the suburbs so that there is always space to plant appropriate shade trees. The plot ratio rules must be changed to enforce this policy. Precinct Codes which cover the whole suburb must be developed.

Recommendation 10: The street-tree planting program should be reviewed so that all residential streets can enjoy the benefits of proper shade trees.

Recommendation 11: The solar access provisions in Variation 306 must not be reduced.

2. How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?

The Territory Plan must be simpler, easier to use and internally consistent. It must be designed to meet the ACT's sustainability goals, transport systems and incorporate better compliance factors. The aim must be for all the rules and regulations to be specified in an easily manageable form whenever one identifies a Block and Section Number in the Territory Plan.



At present everything is more complex than it need be and does not result in satisfactory outcomes. Here are two examples:

- In the Multi-Unit Development Code there are rules to follow as well as criteria. Some of the rules are mandatory and some are not. If the rule is not mandatory, then the criteria have precedence. For example in RZ5 the rules state that a maximum of 6 storeys is allowed, but the criteria allow unlimited height provided there is consistency with the desired character and reasonable solar access to dwellings on adjacent residential blocks and their associated private open space. Unfortunately desired character is not defined in the Territory Plan. Therefore an undefined concept has precedence of a well-defined rule. This situation does not contribute to certainty in planning outcomes. The criteria should be deleted and the replaced with quantified rules.
- Plot Ratio rules were devised to limit the built form in residential areas, so that the block is not covered by buildings and some permeable areas are retained. Plot ratios are calculated by using an arbitrary formula, involving the area of the block and the gross floor area of the proposed building.

We recommend that what is required is a rule that specifies how much of the block is comprised of permeable areas. It is not crucial what the gross floor area is or how the plot ratio is calculated. What is crucial is how much of the block remains permeable; so that rain can penetrate the soil and that the regolith beneath the block does not dry out and cause subsidence and cracking.

Recommendation 12: the Territory Plan must be simpler, easier to use and internally consistent. It must be designed to meet the ACT's sustainability goals, transport systems and incorporate better compliance factors.

We have found that there are better outcomes for all large projects or re-zoning proposals when there is early and effective consultation with the community and regional stakeholders (not just for ticking boxes in a Development Application). Too often we see proposals where the maximising the return on the sale of land leads to poor quality design and too many dwellings on a block. We need quality development rather than short term financial benefits to the government. Effective consultation is an important factor to make this happen.

Recommendation 13: Early and effective consultation with the community and regional stakeholders should be mandatory for all large projects or re-zoning proposals.

3. What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT?

We contend that improvements to the planning system do not require a top focus. There needs to be changes on several fronts – and some of these have been identified above.

We identify three key issues:

- The Territory Plan must be simpler, easier to use and internally consistent. It must be designed to meet the ACT's sustainability goals and integrated with transport facilities.
- For all large projects or re-zoning proposals there must be early and effective consultation with the community and regional stakeholders (not just for ticking boxes in a development Application).
- A better compliance regime to improve building standards.
- Urban open spaces and trees must be preserved and maintained.



11. Submission from Canberra CBD Limited - 8 April 2015

We have not responded by answering the questions provided in the *Conversation Starter Paper* because our recommendations are specifically for the CBD.

Government is encouraged to seriously respond to the discussion paper titled *Transforming Canberra's City Centre* released in late March 2015 by Canberra CBD Limited in partnership with the Property Council of Australia.

We are all reminded that to a visitor, tourist and investor, the condition of the CBD is a thermometer of the overall state of Canberra's economy and culture.

Desirable is a CBD with restaurants and bars, pubs and music sites that draw people in at night; a self-sustaining combination of traditional retail with boutique, attention seeking and street level shops; a broad range of residential types suiting people living above shops, restaurants, offices and carparks; a series of linked well-designed and cared-for public places that are uniquely Canberran within its urban forest; and a variety of options for moving about the CBD and connecting to it, including car parking.

These are in the heart of the CBD followed by development at the lake edge in West Basin and alongside the designated boulevards of Constitution Avenue and Northbourne Avenue.

Currently, the CBD's older heart or what we call *the mid-city-precinct* is a poor reflection on the health and well-being of the Canberra community.

Overall, we ask you to rewrite the *City to the Lake* project so that it encompasses all land - both leased and unleased; not just predominately undeveloped public land between the City and West Basin. We also ask you to focus your priorities on the CBD and control the planning frontiers along Northbourne Avenue to EPIC, along Constitution Avenue to Russell and the multitudes of planned and potential land release sites in Woden, University of Canberra, Belconnen, Tuggeranong, the Airport and more. We ask that you look at planning holistically rather than just the land that government directly controls. We ask you to look at revenue over time using the Melbourne Postcode 3000 project as inspiration. We ask you to justify the impact on the CBD when deciding to release/redevelop land in Canberra and at its edges. We ask you to plan for the growth of the CBD as the preeminent mixed-use centre in Canberra and the surrounding region.

Specifically for the growth of the CBD, we recommend that in the next three to five years government:

- Resolves the range of technical challenges for the reuse of existing buildings including heritage requirements, building code requirements and planning requirements. In the next three to five years some of the issues are:
 - the long term health of the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, their consolidation and connectivity to one another and to the surrounding roads;
 - the use of existing car parking spaces such as the availability of the underused and utilised spaces in existing commercial buildings and the creation of dedicated multistorey carpark/s with commercial and retail at street level;
 - the success of the shared-way in Bunda Street being applicable to other parts of the CBD;
 - the value of the colonnades to the economic health of the streetscape; and
 - the consolidation and role of lane ways and solar setbacks of mid-city precinct buildings.



- Takes a longer view at revenue collection such as LVC, rates and stamp duty and remove the complications inherent with the current financial constraints that directly affect the private sectors' ability to revitalise the CBD.
- Imbed targeted uses that might not generate the highest land sale value into the existing and extended CBD. Examples include retirement living, student accommodation, affordable housing, places of worship and town-hall gathering and car parking.
- Refine procurement options, funding models, site investigations, governance models, design and prepare documentation ready to go to market for the major attractions identified in the City Plan – the stadium, the Australian Forum, the aquatic centre, the cultural centre/theatre precinct. In particular, we ask you to act on the report “Australia Forum, and its potential economic benefits” by EY in the context of a detailed Canberra CBD economic development plan, investor prospectus and infrastructure priority plan.
- Identify and consequently plan for the high-speed-rail station and its connectivity with light-rail radiating from the CBD. We ask you to be clear in stating that light rail links Canberra’s international airport to the CBD and the airport’s high speed rail link is for freight only. We ask you to boldly locate the national capital’s high-speed train station beneath/within the piazza connecting the Sydney and Melbourne buildings.
- Commence the implementation of the CBD specific recommendations from the current City and Northbourne Urban Design Framework study (CaNUDF) from Haig Park to Lake Burley Griffin.
- Manage the potential bureaucratic and structural impediments to transforming the CBD via an urban renewal commission/corporation/ statutory authority which also has responsibility for the CBD’s economic and marketing plans and delivering day-to-day operations, activations and events. It is here that a public champion uses their profile and passion to drive CBD improvements and growth.
- Financially assist Canberra CBD Limited activate the CBD with the establishment of a:
 - Renewal Australia initiative that uses empty shops and commercial space;
 - *Events in the City* curated program that works with existing business, community and cultural organisations to grow the CBD as a venue and destination; and
 - Curator for the CBD’s digital big screen/s.
- Invest in prioritised CBD public infrastructure that first, “fixes-up” the mid-city-precinct which is the nucleus of the CBD including the piazza between the Sydney and Melbourne buildings and the Boulevard of Northbourne Avenue from Haig Park to Vernon Circle and second, “sets-up” the growth away from the nucleus such as Parkes Way, the lake wall and associated infrastructure.
- Responsibly and timely sell parcels of residential land with street-level cafe, mini mart, and other small operators so that they do not dilute the vitality of the CBD and visitor experience.
- Focus on building the CBD including Braddon population to say 15,000 residents to coincide with the initial operation of light rail.
- Invest in Braddon’s infrastructure, pocket parks and cleaning as a CBD city village.
- Plan for and invest in Floriade extending into the CBD from the lakeside parklands.

Broadly, we too share the Chief Minister’s *confidence and optimism of our community for the future – we know our city is truly coming into its own. Together, we’ll renew our city and strengthen our economy.* These tactical recommendations will help us collectively reach this ambition voiced at the recent “State of the Territory” address. For more than four years, our income has steadily declined coinciding with declining unimproved values. For everyone’s future, we ask you to lead the necessary changes to delay and prevent urban blight in Canberra’s CBD and inject the right mix of interventions and investment that will enable the private sector to strengthen the economic and cultural heart of Canberra.



12. Submission from a resident - undated

The key concern for me is to make a more sustainable and liveable city. This is compatible with what the discussion paper suggests are key priorities of the community (which I have bolded), but I think we need to go further as I suggest below, i.e.:

- ***housing choice and affordability addressed.*** We need a commitment to reduce homelessness and reduce the planning barriers to affordable housing. This includes barriers to smaller dwellings and higher density developments in appropriate areas.
- ***the quality of urban design improved.*** 100% agree.
- ***sustainability in new developments showcased.*** We need sustainability in ALL of Canberra not just new.
- ***traffic congestion controlled.*** Our transport system needs to do much more than this. If this is all it does then it will just encourage car use with the resulting pollution, cost, car parking etc issues.
- ***public transport improved.*** It needs to be more accessible to an aging population that still wants and needs to go out but who is increasingly becoming less able to drive. It needs to become a major mainstream method of going places. This will of course reduce traffic congestion. A key place to start would be a long term plan for the tram to cover Canberra's peak routes and a commitment to at the very least maintain public transport provision in the areas the tram goes thru. At present it appears that bus service will be withdrawn so that public transport provision will decrease. It appears that the planning for the tram assumes we will walk up to 1km to it. What are those people who can't walk that far do?
- ***friendly urban environments for people to walk, cycle and socialise.*** Yes 100%. But also for people to just sit and be.

In addition we should consider:

- Resources used per person. Canberra is way above world average and this cannot be sustainable in the long run.
- Adapting to climate change. It is happening. In particular I am concerned about Canberra's street trees. Will they survive the coming drought? We need to change our street design to direct runoff to street trees and other productive uses as well as encourage grey water use.
- Reducing ACT's greenhouse gas emissions in line with our legislated commitments – or better.
- Socially inclusive and safe city – this is an ingredient of the friendly environment.
- Lively, vibrant, exciting city - this is an ingredient of the friendly environment.
- Creative, innovative city – Essential if we are to continue to prosper and to keep our young people.
- Protecting and enhancing the 'bush capital' and green areas in and around our city. This could include regulating to ensure that at least some of a suburban block remains biologically active permeable space. This is important with climate change to reduce the 'heat island' effect.

Your website asked:

- ***How can we increase our city's density at strategic locations to reduce Canberra's urban footprint?***

This is an important question and ACT's planning policies in many ways work against that. I live in Downer. The proposed tram goes along the Northbourne Avenue edge of Downer. That is zoned RZ1. However the old school site – 1km away from the tram – is being rezoned to RZ5. This does not make sense. Surely we should be rezoning the areas close to public transport and shops? It appears the rezoning is based on the fact the government owns the old school site. I and the Downer Community Association have asked about this issue and we have been told the government has no plans for change.



The government appears to have an active policy of reducing density in suburban areas. In RZ1 you can build to a 50% plot ratio if you build a single dwelling. As our suburbs age this is what is happening, modest houses are being replaced by McMansions. If you put in 2 dwellings you can only build to 30% plot ratio and you cannot sell the dwellings separately.

The fact the government is planning spot rezoning of 'Mr Fluffy' blocks demonstrates the problems of the current approach.

I suggest: Changing RZ1, RZ2, RZ3 zoning to encourage increased people density and small scale urban consolidation. I would do this by changing the plot ratios to say 40% for RZ1 regardless of whether it is one or two dwellings. Or even better 30% for single and 40% for dual. Encouraging row and terrace houses. Encouraging block amalgamations so that there can be better layout of dwellings giving better use of scarce urban land. Encouraging smaller dwellings with higher plot ratios or reduced DA fees.

- *How can we create active streets and great public spaces to better connect people to services, transport and amenity?*
- *How can we manage traffic and parking by providing rapid public transport, including light rail, and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists?*

I think the answer is yes, do that. Of course cyclists and pedestrians don't just need better connections – we want better, safer riding and walking spaces. And more of them, and ones that go to destinations, not just scenic rides.

We need to find some way of getting the Commonwealth to consider Canberra in its employment decisions. The idea of moving 4,000 public servants out of Belconnen to the airport is a public transport and town planning nightmare.

- *How does the design and built form of our city need to change to better adapt to a hotter and drier climate?*

We need to start using building energy efficiency rating based on the climate of the future, not that of the past. This will pay more attention to the hot summer and less to the cold winters, as they are becoming less cold. We need to encourage retrofitting existing houses instead of knocking them down. From a life cycle point of view that is almost certainly a better idea.

We need to make better use of our scarce water resources and aim to use our road water runoff not just let it go down the drain. It could keep street trees and public places alive. We need to start using grey water and look at composting toilets to reduce water use and recycle nutrients.

And as I discussed above we need to stop constraining the density of our suburban areas. We need to encourage smaller units such as in Ursula college at ANU. We need to encourage adaptive reuse such as the Waldorf in Civic.

We need to encourage higher density where it makes sense. This includes near major employment areas such as the hospitals and near public transport hubs. We can make this more palatable to residents with honest and truthful consultation and good design.



13. Submission from a resident - 8 April 2015

The brief article on the Statement of Planning Intent on the “Time to Talk” website indicates that “The statement will outline key planning directions to guide Canberra’s growth into a major and sustainable city as it faces challenges common to most Australian and international cities. The statement will build on the strategic framework set out in the 2012 ACT Planning Strategy, Transport for Canberra and the ACT Government’s climate change strategy and action plan.”

The article went on to pose four questions:

“Some key issues for the Statement of Planning Intent are:

1. *How can we increase our city’s density at strategic locations to reduce Canberra’s urban footprint?*
2. *How can we create active streets and great public spaces to better connect people to services, transport and amenity?*
3. *How can we manage traffic and parking by providing rapid public transport, including light rail, and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists?*
4. *How does the design and built form of our city need to change to better adapt to a hotter and drier climate?”*

Note that the four questions were originally listed as dot points. I have replaced these by numbers for ease of reference.

However, at the Workshop to discuss the Statement of Planning Intent on 4 March 2015 participants were invited to consider the three questions below, which differ to some extent from those above. Note that I have renumbered these to continue the earlier numbering, again for ease of reference:

5. *How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?*
6. *How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?*
7. *What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3-5 years?*

I will comment on the questions in series, sometimes referring back to earlier comments when an issue raised by a latter question has been discussed before.

Question 1: How can we increase our city’s density at strategic locations to reduce Canberra’s urban footprint?

Issues with Densification

This question clearly overstates things. Any policies that had the effect of actually reducing Canberra’s footprint would be politically unacceptable under current circumstances and consequently we believe neither the Minister nor the Government would have any interest in pursuing such policies.

Instead the question can and should be restated in a more interesting form as follows:

What steps can be taken to slow and possibly halt the growth of Canberra’s footprint, and to what extent can increased population and dwelling density contribute to such efforts?



The most effective way to stop growth of Canberra's footprint would be to stop Canberra's population growth, but one suspects that this would be unacceptable to the Government, so it will not be explored further.

Another alternative would be to cease releasing new land for development. This could be expected to have a severe impact on the Territory's budget, so might not find much support in Government. It would also be ineffective, at least to some extent, as people moving to Canberra would merely buy residences in NSW. Canberra would miss out on rating revenue from such trans-border residents while still having to provide for roads within the ACT for their use, and supply water health and education services (although these latter are supposed to be recovered from the NSW Government. To the extent that such costs are recovered in full, and in a timely manner, is I understand a moot point.

The option preferred by the Government appears to be increasing the population density of the ACT, substituting stamp duty on the sale of units for the profits from land development and sales. While this financial proposition might make sense, other touted benefits from "densification", such as improved use of infrastructure, and greater "vibrancy" in the city, are not nearly so obvious.

The suggestion that densification leads to improved and more efficient use of infrastructure implies that earlier Canberra administrations employed incompetent engineers who overbuilt the roads, water, storm water sewerage and electrical distribution systems well beyond the foreseeable needs of the city. To some extent this may have been true in the 1930s, 40s and 50s as Canberra grew much more slowly than initially expected because of the Depression and the Second World War. However, following the rapid growth of Canberra in the 1960s and 70s Canberra grew well beyond its original design size and growth had to be redirected into satellite regional areas Woden/Weston, Belconnen and Tuggeranong. The roads of inner Canberra are now approaching or exceeding their initial design capacity and the narrow suburban feeder roads would clearly have difficulty in supporting further traffic. Much of the water supply, storm water drainage and sewage infrastructure is now approaching 80 to 100 years old and the Government hopefully has plans in hand for its eventual replacement. The frequent sight of water across roads following even minor rainfall events suggests that all is not well with the storm water system for instance.

Even if some increase in population/dwelling density were achieved in existing or greenfield areas of Canberra, it is not clear that this would do much to (1) Significantly improve Canberra's overall density; or (2) Provide the Government with substantial savings.

The program to improve Canberra through densification appears to have been adopted in imitation of such programs in Sydney and Melbourne, where it may be that in the circumstances of these very different cities this approach offers worthwhile benefits. However, both government and planners need to be very aware of Canberra's own unique circumstances, and to adjust their responses to the current planning orthodoxies accordingly.

Achieving significant changes to the average density of Canberra is likely to prove challenging. Let us assume that appropriate policy choices permit the increase in the average density of dwellings in Canberra by a factor of five, thereby increasing the population from its current approximately 400,000 to 2 million. It seems likely that an increase in density of this size would be quite difficult to achieve. Despite this increase however, the extremely large footprint of the city (the distance between Banks and Fraser; or Macgregor and Oakes Estate) and the very large reserves within the city's footprint (the intra city hills and mountains and Lake Burley Griffin and surrounding parklands) means the city would still have a relatively low population density for what would then be a city of about 2 million people.



The potential gains of extensive densification are also limited because of the proximity of the city to the NSW border. While denser living can be imposed on those who chose to live in Canberra, there will be those who persist in the desire to live a suburban life, and this need will continue to be catered for in nearby NSW towns. Think not only Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra, but Bugendore, Murrumbateman, and Yass, and also Gundaroo, Bywong, Womboin and Burra, and possibly other settlements which do not exist as yet. Inhabitants of these suburbs will still need to access Canberra for work, shopping and entertainment, and the ACT government will consequently find itself compelled to spend money on adequate roads to serve these needs.

Even with successful densification, Canberra's multi-centric (Belconnen, Gungahlin, Central Canberra, Woden/Weston, Tuggeranong) and long linear north south nature means much of the benefits of this increase in dwelling density will not be captured. The location of jobs in the subsidiary Town Centres as well as in Civic and the Parliamentary Triangle was supposed to allow workers to live close to their jobs, thereby improving their amenity. But it hasn't worked out like that. Even if a worker is lucky enough to have purchased a house in the region in which their job is located, frequent Departmental reconfigurations and relocations means that this situation can only be expected to last for the order of half a decade or so before the worker or the job relocates. The situation is made worse now that most women also work, meaning for the policy to be successful both members of a couple would have to work in the region in which they lived. I understand that the proportion of people who live in the same region as where they work was low (below 20%) in the 1960s when John Paterson surveyed the situation, and has fallen since.

This means that no matter how successful densification is within a region, most workers will have to move between regions to reach their jobs. Even filling in the gaps between regions will not help much, as jobs tend to be clustered in the various Town Centres. So densification will have little impact on the length of journeys to work. And similarly the runs for electricity, water, sewage (and now gas) etc to service the dispersed population will still be relatively long because of the strung out nature of Canberra's centres, so the scope for savings, other things being equal when compared with other cities, will be less.

Implications of Canberra's grandiose layout

Cars or their equivalents (small, independently targeted vehicles) will always comprise a greater proportion of passenger traffic than in some other cities. This is discussed in greater detail later on

Public transport runs (of whatever mode) will always be long per passengers carried when compared with cities of higher population density. This does not mean that the Light Rail can never be profitable, but it does mean that it will generally be less profitable, other things being equal, than other tram services of equal length.

The policy of focusing further development along major traffic thoroughways appears to be ill considered, and should be revised. One of the reasons Canberra still works despite being divided into five regions centred on the city centre, or Civic, and the regional or town centres of Belconnen, Gungahlin, Woden and Tuggeranong, is because of the excellent roads linking these centres. This keeps travel times down to a reasonable level and allows significant contact between the centres (much more, for example, than one would find between the northern beaches and Sutherland in Sydney, for example). If development is focused along these routes, traffic speeds will drop as flows are interrupted to allow the frequent access of new traffic. This policy offers a real risk of making Canberra unworkable if pursued with enthusiasm.



A more rational approach would be to focus urban redevelopment in Civic, town centres and “brown field/greenfield” redevelopments (e.g. Eastlake, Fyshwick) and possibly along the various tram (light rail) routes (provided these are identified correctly).

This analysis also suggests that the government should reduce or cease planning efforts to densify existing suburbs. These are time consuming for ACTPLA and induce strong and frequently successful opposition. It would be better for all concerned to direct developers’ efforts to areas where redevelopment can occur without loss of amenity to existing residents.

Redevelopment of existing suburbs should be, as was intended, by way of conversion of original suburbs into dual or triple occupancy town houses in the R22 planning zones. To encourage this, the Government should remove the discriminatory plot ratio rules for R22 to allow socially acceptable R22 dual or triple occupancy to occur. And it should abandon all efforts to covertly convert R22 zoning into effective R24, or R24 to R25.

Question 2: How can we create active streets and great public spaces to better connect people to services, transport and amenity?

Improving Amenity

“Active” streets and “great” public spaces are somewhat elusive concepts, and might be more easily address if better defined. How to better connect Canberra residents to services, transport and amenity is however an excellent question.

Much of the amenity of living in Canberra comes from its planned environment. Most suburbs still provide tree lined streets with free standing suburban houses, which despite decades of propaganda from developers, appears to be the default living style for Australian families if they can afford it. Fortunately for Canberrans, until relatively recently most have been able to afford to purchase their preferred style of accommodation.

Because of the relatively small size of the city, and a policy of reserving adequate space for roads before new town centres are developed has meant that the city has a generally adequate network of inter centre roads. This is another source of amenity in Canberra – the relatively short commute to work, and the ease of driving to retailers and entertainment activities of all kinds

This implies that one way to improve amenity would be to reduce the time it takes to move from residence to place of work to place of recreation. Reduced travel times can be achieved by reducing distance, and so increasing population density. Increased density has been discussed above. Another way to reduce transport times is to improve transport speeds, whether by private or public transport.

Any significant improvement in private transport (i.e. car) speeds seems unlikely in the short term, but driverless car technology may well offer improvements in average speeds in a 5 to 10 year timeframe. The Government could assist these changes by supporting such technological developments through legislation making it easier to allow humans to relinquish control of the vehicle in which they ride. As a first step the Government should act swiftly to remove barriers to technological companies like Uber which use the internet to circumvent taxi plate holders’ ability to restrict the number of taxis available for hire.

The introduction of a light rail network may not significantly reduce average travel times. An exception might be in inter town centre routes, where the light rail by necessity will not have the luxury of being able to meander like current ACTION bus routes. The light rail may therefore be significantly faster for inter centre trips than current ACTION buses.



Were ACTION able to introduce new buses and timetables with more direct routes and shorter travel times would be welcome, but appears unlikely. Again, the prospect of driverless vehicles opens up the possibility of the existing service provided by the current fleet of buses being replaced by more flexible bus services delivered through smaller but more numerous buses.

Walking and cycling to work will never achieve the significance they might in other, physically smaller cities. Much of the success of these modes in Europe, particularly in smaller cities comparable to Canberra in population, reflects the fact that until 150 years ago the only way around such cities was on foot, so they tend to be human scale and very walk able or cycle able. Canberra's grandiose layout denies local residents this option. Apart for a small number of dedicated fanatics, cycling to work will not become a realistic option. Most cycling trips to work will be restricted to that small proportion of the population lucky enough to live in the same region as they work.

Greater reliance on walking or cycling seems unlikely to reduce average travel times. Walking is relatively slow compared with motor transport. Cycling can be comparable in speed with a car, but cycling at such speeds is unlikely to ever become a habit for a significant proportion of the population. Consequently it seems likely that any Government support for such activities is presumably based on some other perceived benefit flowing from these activities, such as health.

Question 3: How can we manage traffic and parking by providing rapid public transport, including light rail, and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists?

It might seem obvious that the introduction of special high speed public transport, especially the introduction of light rail transit between town centres, must work to reduce traffic and demand for parking spaces. Every passenger carried on public transport is one not being carried in a car. However, the introduction of more rapid public transport, particularly light rail, may not necessarily reduce traffic flows, or the need for parking, below the current level to any significant extent.

We referred above to how Canberra's form and scale mean that achieving significant increases in overall density will be difficult, and that the increases that are achieved are unlikely to reduce traffic flows between the various town centres. Similarly Canberra's multicentric design and the fact that few employees can live in the region in which their job is located for more than a few years, means that cars will remain a necessity for many of the population until the introduction of a frequent, reliable, high speed inter town centre public transport network with journey times largely comparable to those using cars. In addition, many car trips now have multiple destinations (e.g. leave work for home; buy food for dinner; pick up kids from after school care) and it is difficult to combine these multiple activities using public transport. As a consequence car usage is likely to continue to be a major mode of transport, particularly for inter centre trips. Traffic flows will grow with the city's population, although some of the growth will be diverted into light rail usage.

Parking

With little prospect for a reduction in the number of cars the demand for parking at destination and at home will not diminish. The need for more parking in town centres could be met by the construction of more multi storey car parks, and the expansion of park and ride arrangements.

Steady or increased demand for parking at home, combined with continuing densification, can only be resolved by requiring that developers make a realistic provision for residents' and visitors' car parking at any new development. However, there are good reasons to believe that parking requirement figures used by ACTPLA systematically and seriously underestimate parking requirements. The numbers were originally developed by the NSW RTA in 2002.



At that time the number of cars owned per head in the ACT was higher than in NSW, and this difference has been maintained over the intervening years. At present car ownership is higher than it was in 2002. Using publicly available ABS statistics suggests that car usage in Canberra should be (other things being equal between Sydney and Canberra) about 26% greater in Canberra now than in Sydney in 2002. And of course other things are not equal. Sydney residents, for instance, are far more likely to use public transport than are Canberra residents.

It appears that at no stage has ACTPLA conducted any research to determine how appropriate it was to use the NSW RTA figures, or to estimate by what factor they needed to be adjusted to realistically reflect the conditions applicable in the ACT. As this would seem to be a relatively cheap exercise (probably less than a year's work for a PhD candidate at about \$25k pa) it seems very likely that ACTPLA does not wish to investigate this issue. The usual claim of lack of funds will not wash – this research would cost about as much as a day or two for ACTPLA at the ACAT defending one of its decisions. This apparent disinclination to examine the correctness of the assumptions it makes in developing planning policy is a matter of concern.

The type of parking provided at new developments needs to be considered. While at ground level parking might be cheaper, the need to pave such areas reduces the space available for trees, whose role in cooling the city is discussed below. Underground parking can also reduce the space for trees, but this can be reduced if underground parking space is restricted to beneath the above ground footprint of the development.

The lack of adequate provision for parking is one of the major sources of objections to densification proposals. The usual justification for restriction provision of parking is that this will encourage use of public transport. However, it appears that the response of many of those without a right to a car park is to buy a car in any case, thus significantly lowering the amenity of all the surrounding residents. This is due to increased on-street parking, often in narrow streets laid out before on-street parking was contemplated, or parked at local centres, reducing parking for shopping and restaurant patrons, and impeding local businesses.

It is by no means clear that the increase in amenity received by the developer in the form of his increased profit flowing from the lack of requirement to provide adequate parking exceeds to loss of utility by local residents and businesses. Thus the current policy may be lowering amenity at large. ACTPLA needs to spend more effort in analysing the gains and losses flowing from changes to planning rules rather than just assuming, as it appears to do at present, that any change advocated by developers will bring net gains in amenity.

Other Issues

Policies to increase the use of public transport need to recognize the social changes in work that have occurred since the 1940s, including the longer hours, so that return to home journeys now frequently take place in the post sunset twilight or dark, and the increased proportion of women in the workforce. Many women prefer to drive because of safety concerns, and the atrocious level of street lighting in Canberra does not help in this regard. Some serious attempt to improve street lighting must be made before the public could accept that Government pronouncement about the desirability of greater reliance on public transport can be taken seriously.

As discussed above, there is little scope for cycling to become a major transport mode. A possible exception to this is its possible use by that small proportion of the population lucky enough to work in the same region in which they live.



Again we have already touched on how the scale of Canberra makes it difficult for walking to ever become a major transport mode except perhaps for those that live within say three kilometres of where they work.

Question 4: How does the design and built form of our city need to change to better adapt to a hotter and drier climate?

Trees and architecture

The answer in short is trees, trees, trees. Densification largely removes this option.

Probably the simplest and most low tech, way to reduce the impact of a hotter and dryer climate would be to plant more trees. Trees lower temperatures by not only providing shade but by transpiring water. Studies show that the well treed inner suburbs of Canberra are several degrees Celsius cooler than the less treed newer and outer suburbs. This effect is well known both in Australia and overseas. However trees only grow well where there is access to water and their roots are not too cramped. Trees do not flourish in high density living spaces. Wide verges and large front and back yards not paved over provide good scope for the growth of large trees. Increased densification of the remaining garden city suburbs of Canberra reduces further the scope for climate improving large spreading trees.

Proper siting and orientation of new buildings, and the requirement that buildings include appropriate passive climate control methods such as cross ventilation, and thermally massive walls and floors can also help ameliorate the impact of climate change. Effective and widespread implementation of such design practices would require much more regulation and implementation through the approval process than ACTPLA appears willing to contemplate at present.

Question 5: How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?

What the government means by “inclusive”, “vibrant”, or “connected” is not clear, apart from these all being feel good words. Some definition might be of assistance in assessing the problem and potential solutions.

Affordable Housing

Home ownership was discussed earlier as a source of amenity for many Canberrans. A return to a world where housing was “affordable”, and anyone with a steady job could reasonably aspire to owning their own house, would be desirable. However, the pursuit of desirable housing should not be a race to the bottom with ever smaller dwellings on ever smaller blocks. There is a place for governments to mandate minimum standards.

The Government could with benefit consider to what extent its role as monopoly supplier (or at least releaser) of land in the ACT has added to upward pressure on land prices, and hence housing prices. What scope is available to reduce the cost of land as part of the price of housing? To what extent is the Government’s budget dependent on current high land prices? Will completing the switch from a stamp duty on land purchases to an annual tax on land reduce the Governments reliance on rising land prices?

Many of the reasons for the inexorable increase in Australian housing prices are clearly beyond the control of the ACT Government. However, there is no reason why the ACT Government should not add its voice to those urging removal of those elements of the current tax system, such as unlimited negative gearing, and the personal 50% capital gains tax concession, which add unnecessary upward pressure on house prices.



Question 6: How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?

Encouraging Innovation

One cannot mandate “innovation”. The desire to encourage innovation is recognition that there has generally been a lowering in the quality of the architectural designs offered by architects in Australia over the past 230 years or so. Why this has happened, whether it represents a long term change in the profession, or will be self-correcting, remain unclear. Perhaps the government could encourage architectural professional associations to consider why architecture in Australia appears so uninspired compared with say some parts of Europe.

Of course it may be that the problem lies not with architects, but with their clients. It is possible that clients today refuse innovative or attractive design in favour of the profit maximizing but intensely boring designs now permitted under the current planning rules. If this were the case then a solution is possible – ACTPLA could choose to impose an aesthetic standard. Buildings could be required to be consistent with the existing style of the suburb, or meet a minimum standard of quality. ACTPLA will of course protest that the imposition of such aesthetic standards is impossible, because the perception of beauty is an individual thing. This certainly appears to be the current fashion, but we all know that this is false. Almost everyone agrees that Paris is a beautiful city; few speak in such glowing terms about Dusseldorf. This suggests that there is a widely held aesthetic shared by most if not all humans.

Encouraging “Flexibility”

It is not clear as to what is meant by “flexibility” and consequently not clear why this property is regarded as desirable. Is this simply code for a desire to move toward an Ann Rand world of less regulation? If so this would appear to be sadly out of step with expressed public desires. While not being political ACTPLA needs to be aware of, and responsive to, the mood of the public. Australians are not Americans, and certainly not Texans. Over the past 225 years of Australian history Government regulation has generally played a significant role, and Australians appear to be quite happy with this in general terms. There is no evidence at all that the public at large wants the government to remove itself from planning, or regulation of building standards.

Maintaining Certainty in Planning

Maintaining certainty would be achievable through significant reform of the Territory Plan. At present the Territory Plan contains a number of Codes each of which has several tens of Rules, which generally impose constraints which it seems likely most would regard as appropriate for the relevant zoning to which they apply. However, except in a limited number of cases, these rules are not mandatory, but may be waived or modified in accordance with a number of Criteria (typically there are about four qualifying criteria for every Rule).

As ACTPLA does not appear to publish any summaries of how each of these Criteria have been applied, and the circumstances in which a development approval was held to conform or not conform with these criteria, it is not clear to outsiders just what the consequences of each of these criteria is, and the net result is uncertainty on the part of both developers and the public at large as to what is a compliant proposal. As it is not clear whether ACTPLA maintains some internal register of the various decisions on the applicability of the various criteria, it may well be that ACTPLA officers are themselves uncertain and confused as precisely what rules apply. Consequently there is a real possibility that the same application, if processed by different offices, might be assessed differently, being accepted by one, but rejected by the other. As an essential principal of good governance is that similar cases receive similar treatment, this is unacceptably bad practice and should be remedied as a matter of urgency.



The problems arising from ambiguity in the planning codes is amplified in the case of exempt developments. Under the exempt development arrangements, a certifier may decide that a proposal is exempt, and if he does so the plans are not made available to the public, nor it seems inspected by ACTPLA. Even assuming good will on all sides and a genuine desire to remain within the rules set out in the various codes, this system would be pushing the boundaries in relation to uniform interpretations of the codes. As there is no case law in relation to how and when any of the numerous criteria are to be applied, a certifier, even with the best will in the world, cannot be expected to always get it right. To assert that his project complies with the rules because although in conflict with the rule, a particular criterion can be applied, all that would be required is for the certifier to identify one example of where ACTPLA had allowed a development because of application of this criterion. Who could say that his decision was wrong (or right)? Taking into account the strong incentive a certifier naturally feels to give a result in line with his principals wishes, it would be a strange world where this system did not lead to very many doubtful decision.

The solution would be to restrict exempt developments to those cases where the development proposal clearly complied with each of the applicable rules, without appeal to any criteria. This is the situation in NSW, where if a development complies with a whole range of matters listed in the planning regulations, it is exempt. If however the development does not comply with single one of these matters then it must be considered by the relevant local government council planning unit.

The current system is usually defended as providing scope for creativity and architectural innovation. However the current system has been in place now for long enough for it to be apparent that this looked for innovation has not taken place. All governments must be prepared to subject their policies to evidence based assessment, and on this basis the current planning system must be regarded as a failure. If ACTPLA wishes to continue to maintain that the system promoted innovation, they must publish a definition of innovation, and produce figures to show that this “innovation” was lacking before the introduction of the current planning system, but can now be demonstrated through standard statistical tests to now be present. Failure to do this would suggest that ACTPLA cannot produce such evidence, most likely because it does not exist.

Implications

The Government could choose to improve and simplify the existing planning system by adopting any or several of the following suggestions:

- Restrict exempt development to those development proposals which comply with the rules without appeal to criteria.
- Restrict exempt developments to new suburbs.
- Abandon exempt development rules. Recover charges for planning approvals through appropriate fees. Full recovery would only form a tiny portion of the cost of a new house, so does not add to regulatory burden. This is most unlikely to lead to a significant reduction in building activity, as few behavioural changes are induced by changes of 1% or less. Planning would be improved if the Government learned to resist developer complaints and subject their claims to a more rigorous analysis.
- Revise the Territory Plan to remove criteria from the various Codes, or publish all decisions in relation to planning decisions which turn on the application of criteria rather than rules, with reasons for the decision so that case law can develop.
- Introduce due process in development of planning law. Cease defending ACTPLA decisions at ACAT, as ACTPLA’s role is not to male planning law, but merely to implement the law as it stands. So it should simply await the outcome of any appeal to ACAT and act in accordance with this decision.



- This policy would lead to significant financial savings. Take note of ACAT findings in subsequent development approvals. If ACAT interpretations differ from the clear planning intent, introduce variations to the Territory Plan to clarify the issue.

Question 7: What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3-5 years?

The following points, in no particular order, are some of the issues that the Government could usefully address:

- Rectify the most egregious flaws in the current planning system.
- Focus efforts to increase the density of Canberra to those areas where such increases in density will deliver actual savings in public transport costs.
- Demonstrate that the light rail is not going to be an expensive white elephant, and develop reasonable expansion proposals that will deliver its benefits across the whole of the city.
- Resolve the tensions involved in the ACT Government being the monopoly supplier of land for development within the ACT as well as being the responsible Planning Authority.
- Find alternative sources of revenue so that the Government becomes less reliant of funding through stamp duty on property sales.
- Successfully manage the Mr Fluffy acquisition and subsequent release arrangements so that this is seen as a benevolent solution to a difficult problem rather than a cynical land acquisition arrangement exploiting vulnerable people.

14. Email from workshop participant (Redboxdesigngroup) - 9 April 2015

The key point I wanted to make last night was the need to open up the dialogue between government departments as there are so many different departments within the ACT government (LDA, ACTPLA, TaMS, EDD, ESA etc) all off in their own direction with no uniform approach or cooperation to achieve a good final outcome which represents the best for the Canberra Community. Noting that the outcomes of the discussions and co-operative approach need to filter down to all the lower levels of the government departments where approval processes etc. are carried out.

Like last night we use benchmarks as exemplars of how we would like our city to look/feel however with our Canberra Central design standards or in fact the Urban infrastructural design standards we have over time limited the scope of materials and diversity within Canberra's urban environment. Using the exemplar that you mentioned last night of New Acton we are unable to recreate this style of unique precinct design diversity because this is a private development with the precinct owned by the one developer with a vision and without the restrictions of the TaMS standards/planning limitations, where a variety of materials and textures add to the complexity of the urban environment and is maintained to a high standard. There is also acknowledgement within that precinct items of design that haven't worked e.g. the community garden is warped, however when designing with nature we cannot predict how things will turn out and a level of acceptable risk needs to be allowed in design/approval/asset handover to allow for unique precinct designs to revitalize the urban fabric, and create diverse spaces people can relate to and take ownership of.

Last night it was great to hear that other people were discussing the perceived risk aversion of the ACT government and the need to allow a reasonable level of risk within our city and future urban design. There seems to be no guidelines or strategy on assessing risk and one person who comes to a Tams Operational acceptance/final handover may find that there is a risk in an a development (an approved design through asset acceptance).



However there is no discussion of an acceptable level of risk, it seems to be if one person deems there may be a risk however small that it needs to be removed, even if they cannot provide any precedent incidents to back up that opinion. This happens at the expense of the developer/government department who gave all plans to the appropriate authorities and all elements were built to the approved drawing and by not allowing any risk we are limited to what we can safely achieve for the paying developers or government departments hoping to provide amenity for the community and end users.

Being a young designer who has decided to stay in Canberra I am excited by the future potential that Canberra has to offer as it grows and matures and I appreciate EPD's efforts in approaching the future users and designers of Canberra for their suggestions and contributions to a city that we are all proud to live in and that we want to continue to develop and become the vibrant city that we all know it has the potential to be.

15. Submission from Belconnen Community Council dated April 2015:

On Tuesday, 7 April the Belconnen Community Council held a kitchen table conversation with interested community members on the Statement of Planning Intent. Petra Oswald from the Environment and Planning Directorate assisted the BCC with facilitation at the event.

Around 20 community members attended, including BCC committee members Tara Cheyne (Chair), Chris Gingell (Secretary), Damien Haas, Paul Jackson and Timothy Bogie (committee members). Attendees were split into two groups which held discussions on the three main questions outlined in the discussion paper. Tara and Petra scribed for each group.

The following is a record of the feedback presented at this event.

How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?

Group 1

- For developers it is difficult to find out how to best achieve good development outcomes - the information is not easily accessible
- Lots of developments don't relate to boundary, street or surrounding environments - no amenity for pedestrians and neighbours, lack of surrounding infrastructure
- While there is a lot of open space there is a lack of quality and amenity
 - Quality of parks varies - depends where park is located and how well they are maintained
 - Weetangera has good quality parks
 - There is lots of green spaces but no toilets, paths, water fountains etc
- Jane Jacobs with her New York work that talks about dead open spaces with blank walls - her approach is 'eye on to street'
- Planning policy is needed for vibrant and active open spaces and streets
- Narrow down Master Plans or precinct plans to street level planning that improves space
- Planning to spell out how it can improve surrounding area and how it is sympathetic to the area
- Maybe it could relate to pre-developed era
- Much more flexibility in RZ1 - e.g. granny flats - to get more people into same area
- Greenfield is easier and cheaper than Brownfield -> distorts prices (e.g. Molonglo is easier than Kingston development) - flick assumption -> moratorium on all land sales unless good case and focus on infill -> can provide a better business case for public transport and services



- Not everyone wants quarter acre blocks but greater flexibility in plot sizes - however quality is paramount
- We like the idea of terraces, more compact
- Maintenance is an issue; Government doesn't look after space; we need better community ownership
- Would like to use public transport, but for families with kids a car is needed for school drop offs - work and home is often far away from school
- Transport flexibility is important - car, cycling, public transport
- Density to reduce car dependency - groups of townhouses near bus stops - that is the idea of transit-oriented development; part of it exists already in Belconnen
- Reaching out the transport services more into the suburbs where there is medium density (could be across suburb, not just local centre)

Group 2

- Attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play include:
 - green spaces (mountains, nature reserves, ovals)
 - the split between the Town Centres and the suburbs, with Town Centres being more densely populated than suburbs
 - a great network of pathways, enabling healthier lifestyles at all ages (e.g. children walking to school)
- These attributes need to be valued: preserved, cared for, maintained and enhanced. In particular, it is important to preserve a ratio of green space to development.
- Achieving a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible includes:
 - need for housing affordability
 - funding the regeneration of local shops, and celebrating them
 - community decision-making and ownership
 - having a say that's listened to and enforced
 - proactively making decisions rather than reacting to others' decisions
 - better shelters, lighting, shade
 - better, holistic, frequent public transport (both buses and taxis, among others) --> makes things feel closer
 - enabling diversity of use of public spaces (street basketball, futsal, outdoor gyms)
 - engaging better with Lake Ginninderra (planning regulations mean it's difficult to make creative use of it)
 - o development which is sympathetic to the context/what's around it
 - o more variety in the suburbs – but without negatively impacting amenity of existing residents
 - o continuing to have a bush capital environment which values the lakes and preserves green space around it; no building on surrounding mountains

How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?

Group 1

- Different clusters of various densities with good service provision
- Mix zoning and co-locate with good transport services
- Maintain green spaces despite higher density; I'm all for higher density but green spaces and pedestrian access important



- For elderly there are mobility issues (e.g. going up stairs etc)
- Walkable city, wide enough streets that accommodate different modes of transport
- In particular, cycle lanes and footpaths should be widened
- Pathways need to be maintained better
- Street-level planning with anchor blocks, make covenant on it that access to path and community contribution / open space etc need to be made
- No integration between commercial and rest of land uses - need to be improved
- No integration between commercial and rest of land uses - need to be improved - this may drive some innovation
- Designated mixed use and explicit qualities and contributions to community - needs to be feasible for developer - reducing red-tape, lowering stamp duty and lease variation costs
- Why does developer need to pay if they want to make use of land use?
- It's not only costs to developers but also private owners who want to develop --> impediment
- Maintain quality in open space is key - otherwise we end in slums
- There should be quality guidelines Government could put forward
- Some of standards and rules (e.g. car park requirements) are not useful and deliver worse outcomes - e.g. you could trade off car parking requirement
- All cars in high-residential development should be self-contained - however they are impediments to innovation (maybe shared car spaces?)
- It is not always possible to live near work - jobs are changing --> transport options are important --> this is why people need to live close to public transport
- Proximity - principle (mixed use and services, live, work etc)
- It's good that Canberra has so many Town Centres --> well distributed services
- Have a set of standard house plans for a particular block of land already approved and affordable (one person noted this sounds scary; everyone wants individual design)

Group 2

- A planning system needs to be innovative, flexible and provide certainty
- Flexibility in the planning system needs to be tempered by community consultation
- More time and more notice about developments (not limited to development applications) will increase awareness - this includes electronic notices and letter drops, as well as a more public process to review information (like Riverview and City to the Lake proposals/drop-in sessions, where everything that's proposed is obvious)
- Planning regulations need to be clearer/simpler - decipherable
- The Territory Plan is problematic and results in random, piecemeal changes
- Community perception that the Government decides and then consults - this needs to be reversed
- There is some inefficiency within planning organisations which needs to be addressed
- Self-certifying is problematic and needs to be addressed
- There is not a high level of confidence in certifiers signing off on exempt developments – requires more compliance checking
- The consultation process appears to sometimes to be deliberately subversive

What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3–5 years?



Group 1

- Lowering red tape
- Maintain quality - form-based planning codes
- Access Canberra should reduce red tape
- Seek out new levers to push in planning space e.g. where there are inefficiencies in market, Governments makes push and it changes planning space, moratorium on greenfields
- City to the Lake, Town Centre Master Plans, Kingston Foreshore - seems to be no focus on infill, scattered approach --> not necessarily good focus
- Divide up Canberra into Councils with independent funding? (No, creates more bureaucracy)
- Individuality and flexibility of different Town Centres, but all should be well serviced (transport, community) and Government is responsible for it
- Flexibility and different types of housing needed - in particular 3BR medium density close to Town Centres - attract more families to higher-density areas, provide more services for families
- More parks with play equipment near Town Centre that are more accessible
- Better landscape design
- Noise issues with higher density - challenging for families with kids
- Better building standards (insulation, solar orientation, noise reducing features, accessibility to services), sustainable design features
- More focus on design of open spaces (parking, street trees, paths etc; rain gardens etc) that make open space more enjoyable
- Make sure our community parks are not facing back fences but look onto developments and streets; passive surveillance
- Control of litter + more attractive bins
- Hire more landscape architects to design spaces
- Making lovely streetscapes for people to care for

Group 2

- 'Proper' consultative process - one that is innovative, engaging, raises awareness, and clearly articulates 'what does it mean for you'
 - o Remove the layers of planning
 - o Needs to be decipherable
 - o Needs to be transparent
 - o Planning documents should stand alone and not need to be read with multiple other documents; if the former can't be achieved, the planning documents should easily 'talk' to one another and it should be clear how they link together
- Consideration of how to make people enjoy their cities
- More people will bring critical mass - good thing
- Our green spaces need to be valued - not just preserved but enhanced (e.g. Mulligan's Flat)
- Destination making - creative use of available space
- Key consideration and involvement in the light rail master plan

16. Submission from Green Building Council of Australia - April 2015

The GBCA believes that an integrated approach to planning for buildings, infrastructure, transport networks and communities is essential if the ACT is to continue to demonstrate leadership in the development of a productive, liveable, resilient and sustainable city and region.



The GBCA encourages the Minister for Planning and the ACT Government to consider how the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be used to inform the Statement of Planning Intent so that it can assist in delivering the vision for the ACT’s planning system.

About the GBCA

The GBCA is the nation’s authority on sustainable buildings, communities and cities. Our mission is to accelerate the transformation of Australia’s built environment into one that is healthy, liveable, productive, resilient and sustainable. We work together with industry and government to encourage policies and programs that support our mission. We educate thousands of people each year on how to design and deliver sustainable outcomes for our buildings, communities and cities. We operate Australia’s only national voluntary and holistic rating system for sustainable buildings and communities – Green Star.

The Green Star rating system

The first Green Star rating tool was released in 2003 in response to market demand for a rating tool that would evaluate the sustainable design and construction of buildings as well as establish a common language for buildings. Green Star rating tools can be applied to almost all building types. Over 840 projects have now achieved Green Star certification across Australia, with a further 330 projects registered. There are currently over 50 Green Star-certified projects within the ACT.

The Green Star rating system is designed to take an holistic approach within each class and building sector, addressing nine categories in total; Management, Indoor Environment Quality (IEQ), Energy, Water, Materials, Land Use and Ecology, Emissions, Transport and Innovation and defining ‘best practice’ in each.

Green Star – Communities

In 2009, the GBCA commenced work, in consultation with industry and all levels of government, on the development of a rating tool for sustainable development projects on a community scale; examining issues of economic, social and environmental importance. All state and territory land organisations have been key supporters and sponsors of the Green Star – Communities rating tool, as well as sponsors from local government, the Australian Government and industry.

The first step in developing the Green Star – Communities rating tool was to develop a national framework consisting of five best practice principles:

- Liveability
- Economic Prosperity
- Environment
- Design
- Governance

Stage 2 of the project involved establishing best practice benchmarks and metrics for assessing and certifying sustainable communities. A set of 38 credits (now refined to 35 under PILOT version 0.1) was then developed and tested on a number of projects across Australia. The Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool was launched in June 2012 and there are now 4 projects certified and a further 25 projects registered across Australia, including several in the ACT and Capital region. Please find enclosed with this submission, a copy of the Green Star – Communities National Framework and a list of the categories and credits.



The GBCA believes that the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be a useful reference for the ACT Government in planning protocols and encouraging use of the rating tool for development projects within the city will help to ensure best practice benchmarks are met. The document released by the Environment and Planning Directorate to kick-start the community planning conversation highlights several areas of focus to help Canberra to grow into a more compact, liveable and vibrant city. These include creating active streets and great public spaces, managing traffic and transport and adapting to a changing climate.

The 35 Green Star – Communities credits could be referenced or adopted as guidelines, benchmarks or community indicators against which projects and/or development across the city can be measured. We also encourage the ACT Government to commit to achieving Green Star certification for specific precinct/community development projects over which they have control. Several examples of how the credits relate to the directions and priorities of the ACT Government are outlined below:

Liv-1 Access to Amenities aims to encourage and recognise projects that provide a high level of access to amenities and can contribute to better placemaking. Having a diversity of amenities close to where people live and work contributes to convenience, walkability and wellbeing. This credit establishes a benchmark for the distance between residential uses, workplaces and/or educational facilities in the community to frequently-used amenities.

Liv-3 Healthy and Active Living aims to encourage and recognise projects that promote healthy and active living. Effective planning, urban design and landscape architecture that support physical activity and social engagement contribute towards healthy and active living in the community. This credit encourages the delivery of tangible elements which lead to health benefits and promote an active lifestyle through more active streets and public spaces, such as paths for walking and bicycle riding, or recreation facilities for exercising.

Econ-5 Affordability aims to encourage and recognise projects that promote housing and living affordability. The ACT Government has identified that a growing and more urbanised Canberra can offer greater housing choice and this credit looks at a range of issues such as access to amenities, access to education and employment opportunities. Housing affordability strategies recognised under this credit include:

- Providing a range of lot sizes to support housing diversity, and a mix of densities with increased density near activity centres
- Providing a proportion of housing lots and dwellings to the market at an affordable price purchase for low-to moderate-income households
- Provision of key worker housing
- Provision of a program for guaranteeing the supply of shared equity and/or social housing within the development
- Establishing partnerships between organisations to ensure allocation and delivery of affordable housing stock.

Env-11 Transport encourages projects that reduce the environmental impact of transportation. The ACT Government is already focused on improving and integrating Canberra's transport options and this aim for both the ACT as a whole and for precinct and community development within it by the *Env-11* credit. This credit requires an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) to be developed which sets out how various forms of transport outcomes, particularly the existing and future public transport network and planning and provisions for active transport will be planned.



Gov-6 Adaptation and Resilience aims to encourage projects that are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and natural disasters. The ACT Government is already taking decisive action to ensure the resilience of the ACT against extreme weather events and natural disasters. The Gov-6 credit encourages the development of two plans - a Climate Adaptation Plan, and a Community Resilience Plan which are intended to identify the climate risks and potential mitigation actions, but to also ensure that the community understands what to do in extreme events.

Env-3 Heat Island Effect aims to encourage and recognise projects that reduce heat island effect. 'Heat island effect' is a term used to describe the impact of local air temperatures around cities, as a result of excessive absorption of solar energy by dark surfaces, and subsequent retention of such energy in the mass of the built environment. Radiating heat from built structures throughout the day and night can result in higher average temperatures in urban locations, when compared to rural areas within a smaller geographic location.

Env-5 Greenhouse Gas Intensity aims to encourage and recognise projects that minimise the greenhouse gas intensity of energy supplied to the community, and in particular to infrastructure. Points are awarded where the greenhouse gas intensity of energy supply in the community is less than the greenhouse gas intensity of the energy available in a business as usual baseline. The GBCA commends the ACT Government on its recent achievement of the first legislated emissions reduction target of peaking per person emissions and achieving an 8 per cent fall in emissions between 2011 and 2014.

Env-6 Sustainable Buildings aims to encourage and recognise projects that deliver 'green' buildings and energy efficient homes designed and constructed to meet the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime. Points are awarded within this credit if eligible buildings within achieve a certified rating with Green Star or another compliant environmental rating tool.

The ACT Government has already demonstrated strong leadership with its commitment to achieve Green Star ratings for all new schools, but there are many opportunities to commit to more sustainable and adaptable buildings across the ACT. A number of precincts and urban renewal sites around Australia have made commitments to achieving Green Star certification for the buildings within them. These include:

- Barangaroo in NSW, where Lend Lease has delivered 6 Star Green Star certification for all buildings at South Barangaroo.
- Bowden Village in SA, where the Urban Renewal Authority has mandated Green Star certification for all buildings within Bowden Urban Village.
- Elizabeth Quay in WA, where the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has mandated all buildings within this project achieve 5 Star Green Star certification.
- Parramatta Square in NSW, where Parramatta City Council has specified Green Star certification for all buildings within this site.
- Docklands in Vic, where VicUrban developed the Melbourne Dockland's Environmentally Sustainable Design Guide to set a minimum level of sustainable design requirements for development on the site.



Green Star – Communities Guide for Local Government

The Green Star – Communities Guide for Local Government is a resource for local governments which further outlines how the Green Star – Communities framework and rating tool can be used to inform policy and strategy as well as encouraging development projects in their local government areas that will enhance liveability, contribute to local economic prosperity and deliver sustainable outcomes. Please find a copy of the guide enclosed with this submission and on our website at www.gbca.org.au.

Attached with this submission are three documents entitled:

- Green Star Communities – Guide for Local Government (Developed by the Green Building Council of Australia in Association with AECOM)
- Pages 45-46 (Credit Summary Table) from the Green Star – Communities PILOT submission Guideline Version 0.1 / Date Issued: May 2014. (Published by Green Building Council Australia)
- Green Star Community – National Framework (by Green Building Council Australia and Greenstar).

17. Submission from Planning Institute of Australia Limited (ACT Division) - 15 April 2015

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is the national association representing professional town planners throughout Australia. The Institute has a total membership of about 5,000 people. The ACT Division of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA ACT) is led by a committee of members who volunteer to help advance the planning profession in the ACT.

As Canberra enters its second century, development patterns are changing. In the past, planning in the ACT meant ensuring the orderly development of new districts; however development today is set to feature much more in-fill and re-development of existing areas. We believe that as Canberra grows, it is worth considering how the planning system may improve to better deliver on community goals. Good planning practice is critical for achieving shared goals, and the foundation of good planning is an open, well-supported and effective planning system. This submission mainly deals with ideas to improve the Territory's planning system to deliver desired outcomes for all parties in the planning process.

This submission is informed by PIA's current policy base (refer to attached), our previous submissions, ongoing conversations among members, and knowledge amassed by the division committee through many combined years working with planning policy and systems in the ACT and region.

The press release and *Time to Talk* announcement for submissions to inform the Statement of Planning Intent invite community members to submit their thoughts on priorities for planning in the ACT in the intermediate term. Many worthwhile planning goals are featured by the consultation materials such as increasing density, increasing use of active travel, and resilience in the face of climate change.

As part of the peak professional body for planning practitioners, PIA ACT is less concerned with advocating what goals come out of the planning system than how these goals are formed, how they influence planning decisions, and how they are realised through implementation in the built environment. PIA ACT is concerned with how well the planning system works.

PIA ACT believes good planning practice is critical for achieving community goals. And that the foundation of good planning is an open, well-supported and effective planning system. Good planning aims to deliver open and fair deliberation, consistency and certainty in decisions, and outcomes in-line with goals and requirements held by all participants. Good planning seeks to fulfil the goals and aspirations of community members, politicians, practitioners, developers and land owners. Without good planning, trust in planning is



lost, and the system will not deliver on anyone's goals. PIA ACT believes that as Canberra becomes a larger and more prominent city, it is worth considering how the planning system may be improved to better deliver on shared community goals.

This consultation poses three focus questions concerning planning in the ACT. The first question deals with meeting established community goals:

How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible whilst maintaining the attributes that make Canberra a great place to live, work and play?

A general framework for good planning is described in the attached PIA National policy paper: *What is Good Planning?* Good planning is guided by community values, driven at all levels of government, and delivered through the experience of the planning profession through the investment of the private sector and government. Good planning is high quality, transparent and efficient planning practices and systems achieving outcomes that advance the public interest.

This submission uses the 8 core elements of good planning identified by the PIA policy paper to address the focus questions proposed to inform the ministerial statement:

1. Opportunities for the community and key stakeholders to actively contribute to the planning process in a manner that is effective, inclusive, respectful of community values and genuine;

PIA ACT believes that meaningful, honest and appropriate levels of community participation need to be embedded in all strategic planning, zoning, and approvals processes. PIA has adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values as the principles that underpin our public participation policy. The overarching principle is that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

Planning practitioners are aware that public participation is more than a democratic ideal. In fact it is vital to the planning process. When residents are consulted early and openly, are allowed to contribute to deliberations, and informed honestly of competing interests and considerations; better goal setting, simpler compliance, easier approvals, and often, better development are the result. Public participation is vital to good planning to improve certainty for all participants in the planning process. The *Hawke Report* on the ACT Public Service highlighted research by the Grattan Institute which found that effective public participation programs made it easier for cities to make and then implement difficult decisions.

PIA ACT supports the ACT Government's commitment to the principles of open government, which is explained in the ACT Community Engagement Manual as: transparency in process and information, participation by citizens in the governing process, and public collaboration in finding solutions to problems and participation in the improved well-being of the community.

PIA ACT believes that the ACT Government has the necessary policies, culture and experience to deliver better-practice public participation programs. We suggest that efforts and emphasis may be increased to collaborate with both community and industry to establish deeply and broadly supported community goals for our built environment.



To do this public engagement should be open and transparent, and begin early continue throughout the life of planning efforts. Further, we suggest a formal feedback process be inaugurated continue planning conversations and determine lessons learned after plans and approvals have been decided and built. This could help clarify contentious issues, demystify planning practice, identify gaps in knowledge, and test expectations and processes against what is delivered. We also remind that when the government has already made a decision, information dissemination opportunities may be appropriate and should be presented as such.

2. Strong leadership from both the industry and elected members that values and respects the need and benefits of effective planning;

While we advocate strengthened community engagement, PIA ACT understands that government usually takes a longer and broader look at the issues, and must act in interest of the larger community, and therefore decision making power properly rests in the hands of politicians. However, government has other responsibilities to deliver good planning to any community. Government should:

- design open and effective planning systems which deliver on the promise of planning goals
- provide leadership and support for the policy, process, and people involved in the planning system
- encourage consistent process and outcomes by seeking to depoliticise planning (this is particularly important for maintaining the integrity of planning systems through changes in government).

Government can also exercise leadership by coordinating public, private sector, university and community involvement to enhance the liveability of our city. Developments such as New Acton show how the private sector can contribute to the liveability of our city. Efficient use of government resources can also be enhanced by harnessing capital, recurrent, and in-kind contributions from other sectors.

Industry must also show leadership to work toward good outcomes in the built environment--not just planners, but practitioners in allied disciplines, developers and landowners as well. Government can help by providing opportunities to catalyse communication among participants in the planning process.

3. A planning profession and workplace culture that delivers and embraces the value of planning;

Since 2013, PIA has been researching the contribution that good planning makes to communities. The evidence shows that planning matters and planners make a difference. Planners enhance decision-making and help balance private, government and community interests for a better future. Working with community, proponents and professionals from allied disciplines, planners help manage change in the built and natural environment.

Planners are highly qualified professionals who have completed at least a 4 year undergraduate degree and/or a post-graduate qualification (typically Masters). PIA accredits 55 university Urban and Regional Planning courses at 23 universities across the country, including at the University of Canberra. To qualify as a professional member of the Planning Institute the professional must also agree to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct and complete continuing professional development annually.

PIA ACT believes that planning in the ACT should be done by planners, and most planning should be done by the Territory's Planning and Land Authority. Planning takes education, training, experience and skill, and it is too important to hand-off to other professions, or leave with para-professionals. Public planning responsibilities should not be devolved to (public or private) proponents, or disinterested third parties. Good planning requires that the primary locus of planning skill and knowledge lay within the public planning authority.



4. Legislation and governance structures that facilitate integration of national, state, regional and local policies in a clear hierarchy, including spatial plans at both regional and local scales;

PIA ACT considers that there is a demonstrated need for a hierarchy of interdependent and coordinated strategic spatial plans for our region and the ACT as a whole down to the local level. Strategic planning is needed at the regional level with cross-border neighbours in New South Wales. PIA ACT believes the government should be a leader in engaging with the state of New South Wales and councils in our region.

Spatial planning is needed at the Territory level which shows the context and potential relationships of districts, undeveloped areas, major centres, and natural features. Below this geography, district plans are needed to provide greater detail to guide the spatial relationships of land uses, attractions, existing centres, new development and services. Currently there are no district-wide plans to guide change at this level.

Master plans have been completed or are underway for all town centres, several smaller centres and some growth areas. Without plans for larger geographies, these master plans are effectively islands with little relationship to future conditions beyond their study boundaries.

The government has begun to investigate spatial relationships in larger areas, the City and Northbourne Avenue Urban Design Framework in the Inner North and Light Rail Master Plan for the Territory, are two examples. Similar efforts should be conducted for other urban systems and other districts to set the stage for reasoned and consistent advice in smaller geographies. As an example, district plans for the Inner South and Woden areas could provide context for the development and assessment of the Yarralumla brickworks project. Place management and other services may also be improved if they were delivered in the context of a hierarchy of strategic and local planning processes.

5. Evidence-based strategic planning at all levels of government, and a demonstrated commitment to implement plans aligned with infrastructure funding and delivery;

Strong leadership is marked by the confidence of decision makers to recognise the limits of internal agency knowledge and to openly seek opportunities to engage with external professional and community expertise. PIA ACT commends the ACT Government for its efforts to ground planning and policy with evidence and research. Canberra—a university city with a large number of national professional body headquarters, retired public servants, academics and professionals able to contribute to conversations about the future and lessons learned from the past—is ideally placed to provide local advice and expertise. Established relationships with universities, renowned practitioners and other experts should be continued.

We also remind that evidence based research is not a substitute for good planning and that research and analysis are most valuable early in the problem-solving process. We do not support evidence gathering and research to support pre-determined conclusions.

All governments need to balance how resources will be used and trade-offs of different expenditure priorities. Forward looking capital plans should be prepared in concert with the strategic area plans mentioned in core planning element 4, above. Government expenditure on infrastructure and facilities also needs to take into account the recurrent expenditure needed to maintain public assets. For example, expenditure on the maintenance of public spaces needs to be supported if these spaces are to contribute effectively to the liveability of the city.



6. Planning instruments that are performance-based, responsive, equitable, legible and provide certainty around planned outcomes and milestones;

This PIA core element of good planning is directly responsive to the second focus question outlined in the conversation starter:

How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground?

PIA ACT is concerned that terms like 'vibrancy,' 'high-quality,' 'harmonious' and 'liveable' proliferate in plans and instruments without any guidance regarding whether and how they will be assessed. The current approval process needs to improve guidance and control over how the city will look aesthetically rather than just its physical form.

Vague appellations, jargon and buzzwords, are in effect meaningless without offering any definition or reference from which designers and planners can move forward confident of what is both acceptable and expected. Appalling design outcomes further erode the integrity of the planning system.

The current approach prescribes objective measures for characteristics like building massing and height, yet offers little guidance on subjective value propositions. This leaves planners unable to advise designers regarding new development integrating with the existing environment and with quality designs and material expectations as to 'quality outcomes', rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

This argument can be better framed by considering a planning and approvals system that addresses 'how the city will look' rather than 'what the city becomes'. Current approvals focuses on the 'what' rather than 'how'. Thinking about 'how' is an aesthetic challenge of interpretation that the current codes do not meet. The purpose of codes needs to adapt to this aspect of planning interpretation in order to empower the planning officers to assess and legally defend what is a quality outcome and what constitutes for any given suburb its distinctive 'character'.

PIA ACT believes that expanded design guides, design codes which specify both objective and subjective indicators of quality, and increased levels of design review, should be considered. Implementation could be targeted toward priority locations such as City, town centres, and other prominent locations, however we believe that upgrading the quality of development outcomes is needed throughout the Territory.

Concerning improving certainty: we support innovative and flexible arrangements for planning approval and implementation as long as they align with good planning values. Streamlined approval processes should be based on expanded public participation at strategic planning stages and should still allow for community voices to be heard. All reforms should be considered within the context of a strengthened and well-supported planning system. PIA ACT believes that good planning principles are the best guarantor of certainty and fast approvals for communities and planning proponents. PIA ACT members have considered that full implementation of good planning elements may preclude further discussion of fast-track arrangements and streamlined approvals, and may even reduce use of ministerial call-in powers.



7. Advice and support from a range of disciplines such as urban design, engineering, transport planning, social planning, ecology, and/or a range of others, that inform and add value to the planning efforts; and PIA ACT understands that allied disciplines offer important contributions to planning. We caution that planning maintains a favoured position, not *over* other disciplines, but that it is acknowledged for its role as the one discipline which creates and manages the connections between the many disciplines working in land use, design and development. PIA ACT wishes to stress that planning not be seen as an additional discipline or requirement, but rather as a facilitator to ensure desirable development outcomes.

One example of the need for an integrated response is the need for improved transport planning, which should consider active travel and public transport usage at every stage in the planning process, i.e. from strategic modelling, and spatial planning through to approvals and implementation. Another important example of collaboration between disciplines is disaster risk management. It is imperative that planning be integrated with emergency management and mitigation, particularly for the threats posed by climate change. These are two examples, but ideally the spatial and inter-disciplinary view utilised in planning would be leveraged to extend to all social, environmental and economic undertakings in the Territory.

8. Planning rules and approval conditions that deliver positive environmental and social outcomes.

PIA ACT believes that good planning should support urban design and environmental objectives, and medium and longer term economic objectives.

The importance of desirable neighbourhood attributes, improved social outcomes and environmental conservation should guide planning and infrastructure provision. Medium and long term economic and environmental impacts should be considered, not just economic impacts that show up in the current budget and forward estimates. Medium and longer term objectives include employment and business growth and diversification, and building on the skills and capabilities of the ACT population. Our city also needs to be planned to attract and retain creative and innovative people, intellectuals, scientists, thinkers and opinion leaders.

We also advocate for a more just planning system which strives to improve social conditions for all community members. The principles of good planning should be applied to social planning as well. The voice of traditionally under-represented groups in the planning process should especially be sought out. Additional consideration should be given to increasing the voice of Indigenous Australians, possibly as part of the entity referral process.

The final question of the conversation starter asks:

What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next 3–5 years?

PIA ACT Division acknowledges the value of the planning goals (including compact development, great places, active travel and social inclusion) featured in the consultation for the Statement of Planning Intent. As the peak professional body for planning practitioners, we feel it is our responsibility to advocate the position that improvements in our planning system are needed to both maintain its effectiveness and improve our ability to realise whatever goals are expressed and agreed in the process.

We feel the top focus should be on improving the core elements described in *What is Good Planning?* and explored in this submission. Because of the integrated nature of planning and the importance of maintaining credibility of the system, all of the elements are import to good planning. Elements we consider particularly critical for attention within the ACT include:



1. Opportunities for the community and key stakeholders to actively contribute to the planning process in a manner that is effective, inclusive, respectful of community values and genuine;
2. Strong leadership from both the industry and elected members that values and respects the need and benefits of effective planning;
4. Legislation and governance structures that facilitate integration of ... policies in a clear hierarchy, including spatial plans at both regional and local scales;
6. Planning instruments that are performance-based, responsive, equitable, legible and provide certainty around planned outcomes and milestones.

In making these recommendations, PIA ACT wishes to stress that we are not generally advocating more planning, but we are advocating better planning which aligns with the shared values, goals and objectives guiding the system.

Attached with this submission is a document entitled: "What is good planning? – PIA Policy Position Statement"

18. Submission from a resident - 6 April 2015

By way of comment, a prospect never addressed in studies such as these is that of no *growth* in Canberra in coming decades that the ramifications and repercussions of peak energy and climate change prevent population targets being reached. Maybe we should plan for this eventuality also, although I have no idea how.

Things can change of course, but just at the moment the world economy is clearly not growing, otherwise the oversupply of crude oil would have been quickly taken up, the world is raising debt at twice the rate that the underlying economy can pay it back, the Middle East is becoming more unstable by the week, and swords are being unsheathed in eastern Europe. None of this bodes well.

Who knows, Canberra might become a city of refugees. One rather hopes not.

Adapt to a changing climate

This submission focuses on two issues, climate change and the inextricably-linked one of peak (cheap) energy, which unite in concerns about food security. The ACT needs to anticipate and deal with these in its town and country planning.

These issues and many others were discussed at the Food Security Ministerial Roundtable hosted by Shane Rattenbury on 22/5/2014. I support the goals and aspirations of his subsequent Ministerial Statement of 17/2/2015.

Resultant Planning Issue: Food Security

The majority scientific view is that climate change is a reality and we need to prepare for it. In 2011 the ACT had one of the largest ecological footprints in the world; I don't know if the ACT's planned reduction of 15% by 2015 is on track or not.

On average the world consumes 10 calories of fossil fuel energy to produce 1 calorie of food energy. The world is in a dilemma: we will dangerously damage the environment if we keep burning fossil fuels, but we will dangerously reduce agricultural output if we don't.



The FAO last December warned that at present rates of soil loss and degradation the world has 60 years of farming left.

A succession of federal governments has consistently failed to maintain the 90-day stockpile of transport fuels as we are obliged to do by our membership of the International Energy Agency. We have 71 days of reserves which translates into only 3 days of fuel for motorists.

Crude oil prices continue to drop but no-one knows how long this will continue. Sooner or later fuel prices are highly likely to return to and exceed their former levels. If fuel substitutes become available, they will not necessarily be any cheaper. We should plan for the worst case.

Obviously most of these trends are beyond the power of the ACT to deal with, but we are well able to deploy a significant adaptive strategy: localise our food economy to the greatest possible extent.

Planning Strategy: Promote community gardens, city farms and urban agriculture in the ACT

Planning for enhanced food security

Something like 90% of Canberra's food supply comes from outside the ACT and almost all of arrives by road.

Every litre of fuel not used on transport reduces greenhouse gas emissions and our reliance on fuel imports.

The sooner fresh foodstuffs reach their markets, the better the quality of the food. It is best to keep supply lines as short as possible to reduce transport fuel usage, costs and time in transit. It is wasteful and illogical to sell regionally-produced foodstuffs in and near the ACT after first sending them to the Sydney or other remote markets.

In Western planning and practice community gardens and urban agriculture are becoming an acceptable land use again after being excluded from urban areas for decades. In countries like Uganda the process is well under way.

Urban agriculture is not a temporary activity: all cities have idle land which can be cultivated. Examples of urban agriculture in various parts of the world demonstrate that it can provide a significant proportion of a city's overall fresh food needs.

Health Benefits

Urban agriculture if based on organic farming methods minimises or dispenses with the use of fungicides, herbicides, artificial fertilisers, and so on, and is environmentally benign. It can also contribute significantly to waste management and recycling.

Gardening offers recognised health benefits, mental, physical and nutritional. A trend is developing among medical doctors to prescribe gardening time for a variety of conditions including depression, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.

Planning Issues in Food Security

The traditional planning and regulation tools need to be supplemented by economic development mechanisms and community engagement.



Community gardening is a normal human activity worldwide. In Australia we have traditionally supported it by the provision of large house blocks. However the trends to increasing site coverage and higher population densities means that other ways have to be adopted to support food production.

Best lands for community gardens in particular, and urban agriculture in general, need to be identified in the Territory Plan and retained for the long term. Community gardens and urban agriculture should not be viewed as temporary land uses waiting for something "higher and better" to come along.

Long-term land ownership tenure—a long-term licence or a lease—is essential to encourage agricultural land holders to undertake long-term planning and land management, with no fear of their work and effort being destroyed by suburban growth.

Specific zonings or permissible uses for urban agriculture and community gardens in the Territory Plan will secure the position of urban agriculture. A community land use zone may suffice provided its permissible uses include community gardens and/or urban agriculture. The present CFZ and PRZ1 zones do not permit agriculture. NUZ11 NUZ2 and NUZ3 permit agriculture but are not urban.

In the long term, urban agriculture does not necessarily pre-empt more intensive land uses and higher population densities, as has been demonstrated in a number of cities. Urban agriculture can use land unused or unsuitable for other purposes, thus returning extra land rents.

Policies need to be developed relating to edge effects between urban and rural lands, to establish equity in the rates paid and services provided to residents of the two areas. Rates should not be at a level which make community gardens and urban agriculture unprofitable and defeat their purpose.

Necessary infrastructure includes access to water (willingness to reticulate), sunlight (no overshadowing by buildings), and road access. Water is the biggest single expense for community gardens, and it could be helpful if a rate lower than full market price could be set.

If organic growing methods are used, cultivated lands need protection from chemical spraying and similar operations that may damage gardens and fields.

Economics and Finance

The goal is to enhance food security. Organic (regenerative) agriculture is as productive as conventional, if not more so.

Urban agriculture is in many parts of the world a major urban economic sector. It generates income and jobs, and provides a place for entrepreneurs and associated support industries.

I have heard from a number of regional poultry and livestock producers who support reopening an abattoir in the ACT. Ours is an ideal geographical location for both large and small species. Poultry currently goes to Wagga or Bega (requiring an overnight stay) for processing, pigs to Picton. The abattoir in Young for cattle reopened recently but is for export only. Local meat production is growing in volume, and a local abattoir would greatly reduce travel time and expense, and create jobs.

In the ACT economic development initiatives for most forms of agriculture will be important in the early stages of the strategy. Even for small community gardens, establishment costs are comparatively high, especially fencing, and the provision of financial assistance can be an important success factor.



Rates and taxes should not become unaffordably high over time as agricultural land becomes desirable for non-agricultural use.

Other economic development incentives include farmers' markets for the public and direct to restaurateurs and the creation of ACT brands or trademarks to generate a sense of locality and loyalty. Wine and food festivals are useful adjuncts here.

It will be important to liaise with the surrounding region of NSW which supplies a large part of the ACT's food supply. It is obvious that complete local self-sufficiency is not possible. There will always be the need for food imports.

Education and Training

Community engagement is crucial. An example of the lack of community engagement comes from the abattoir in Picton which is threatened with closure following complaints by residents in new residential subdivisions which apparently have been permitted too close to it.

The public need to be educated in the importance of farming and agriculture of various kinds, what constitutes good food and how it can be prepared. This is already happening via the Stephanie Alexander school gardens scheme. The general public over the past 10 years or so seem have come to regard gardening and urban agriculture as normal land uses in the city.

Growing and preparing food provides very large range of learning opportunities. Many career paths can develop as a result.

Organisations such as the Canberra Organic Growers Society and the Canberra City Farm offer a source of gardening knowledge and expertise. They are able to assist the community by teaching and tutoring how to select and grow food plants. As one example, the University of Canberra will this year run a pilot project at the Kaleen High School to educate students in healthy foods and, it is hoped, to improve the contents of their lunchboxes. A number of gardeners in the Kaleen garden of the Canberra Organic Growers Society have volunteered to mentor the high school students as part of the project.