

Planning (Statement of Planning Priorities) 2025

Notifiable instrument NI2025–598

made under the

Planning Act 2023, s 42 (Statement of planning priorities)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Planning (Statement of Planning Priorities) 2025*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Statement of Planning Priorities

I make the Statement of Planning Priorities in schedule 1 to this instrument.

Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

29 October 2025



Statement of Planning Priorities 2025-2028

Chris Steel MLA
ACT Minister for Planning
and Sustainable Development





Planning Minister's Message

Canberra is one of the nation's fastest-growing cities, expected to reach a population of almost 700,000 by 2050.

Planning to meet the challenges of this change will be vital to maintaining and building on the quality of life we currently enjoy. The government's first planning priority is ensuring that the housing supply meets the needs of a growing population.

A home provides foundation for so many aspects of a person's life – for health, education, work, family and so much in between. The government believes there is a moral and economic imperative to supply more homes and ensure that all Canberrans can afford housing in our city, whether it is to buy or rent.

The ACT has agreed to the National Housing target to build 1.2 million new well-located homes over five years, from 1 July 2024. The ACT's share of the national target is around 21,000 homes by 2028-29, which forms part of our commitment to enable 30,000 new homes by the end of 2030.

Meeting this goal isn't just about providing more housing, it's about supporting more housing choice where people want to live. Access to secure and sustainable housing, and well-located homes close to shops, employment, services and transport, help to foster a strong connection to community and is fundamental to the directions of the ACT Planning Strategy.

These Planning Priorities will secure the supply of housing, to ensure that as we grow, we create vibrant, sustainable communities that better places for people, where current and future residents are supported by quality infrastructure and community facilities.

The ACT has only a limited amount of land available for new suburbs, which means we cannot rely on new suburban developments and release of government land alone to meet the demands of our growing population.

We need to make better use of our existing suburbs and leased land to plan for a more compact, efficient and sustainable Canberra. In addition to land release, the balance of 30,000 new homes will be achieved through a combination of land-release, planning reform and directly funding new social and affordable homes.

Delivering on this commitment whilst promoting diversity in housing mix and meeting the community's needs requires a range of strategies and action by all parts of government and the building and construction sector.

As both the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development and the Minister for Transport, I am focused on the integration of land use planning and transport planning to achieve these outcomes

The priorities identified in this Statement will inform the new City and Environment Directorate as the government undertakes further planning reforms, which will be focused on enabling more housing that is well built and designed, sustainable and affordable.

These specific priorities are intended to be undertaken over the term to 2028, and should be taken as complementary to the Planning Strategy, District Strategies and other planning policies.



Sincerely

Chris Steel MLA

Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development



Planning Priorities

Priority 1: Plan for more housing near high frequency public transport stops

Building higher density housing near high frequency public transport stops is an opportunity to provide more convenient and affordable access to transport for a larger portion of the Canberra population, helping reduce congestion on our road network and promoting more sustainable, walkable communities.

More people living near transport hubs provides the opportunity to expand public transport services and active travel with improvements to public spaces, benefiting new and existing residents.

The [Planning Strategy \(2018\)](#) established that the majority of Canberra's future urban growth will occur within our existing urban footprint, with a focus on shopping centres and along transport corridors.

The ACT Government has also agreed in the [National Housing Accord](#) to prioritise planning control amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas, including promoting medium- and high-density housing in well located areas close to existing public transport infrastructure connections, amenities and employment.

Key to achieving these housing and transport goals is the integration of transport and land-use planning approach, known as transit or transit-oriented development (TOD).

The district strategies identified change areas with good access to rapid public transport where urban change will occur. Planning for these areas will also be progressed to support the development of high-quality transport-oriented development on rapid public transport corridors and the light rail line, including the extension to Woden.

The delivery of light rail to Woden will present opportunities for mixed-use development integrated with public transport. The ACT Government will consider the declaration of the Light Rail corridor between the City and Woden Valley, including the Woden Town Centre, as a designated 'urban renewal' precinct to promote the delivery of design-led, people-focused urban renewal, and encourage social and environmental sustainability.

Priority 2: Plan for more housing near commercial centres, reinvigorating shops

Mixed-use development including housing close to shopping centres create a better-connected, accessible, and sustainable city.

Shop-top and shop adjacent housing enable residents to live, work, and play within walking distance of jobs, services and places of community connection. Shopping centres are closely linked with public transport providing residents with access to the rest of the city.

The Planning Strategy (2018) established that the majority of Canberra's future urban growth will occur within our existing urban footprint, with a focus on shopping centres and along transport corridors.

Planning for well-connected mixed-use shopping centres, surrounded by walkable medium density neighbourhoods will supply more housing, which can act as a catalyst for private investment into these business centres.

This presents an opportunity to renew ageing community shopping hubs, improving centre utilisation and public spaces, and grow retail and other services that are enjoyed by the community.

The ACT Government will continue to work with the private sector to explore options to realise benefits for the Canberra community.

Priority 3: Enable diverse housing choices including ‘missing middle’ housing

The government is committed to planning and zoning changes designed to enable low-rise missing middle housing in existing urban areas, particularly in Canberra’s RZ1 and RZ2 zones. These reforms aim to facilitate the construction of medium-density housing options like townhouses, duplexes, and low-rise apartments, addressing housing affordability and supply challenges.

In 2025, the government consulted on the draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide and draft Major Plan Amendment to enable the development of well-designed, sustainable and affordable missing middle housing.

The government will seek to build on these reforms through rezoning in suitable ‘well located’ areas close to commercial centres, employment and amenities.

Priority 4: Support the delivery of social and affordable housing

The ACT Government has committed to delivering 5,000 additional public, community, and affordable dwellings by the end of 2030 including 1,000 new public homes.

The ACT Government is working closely with the community housing sector to support the development of social and affordable housing for Canberrans including through directly investing in building new public homes and investment with the Australian Government in community and affordable housing.

Each year, the ACT Government dedicates at least 15 per cent of suitable annual residential land releases to public, community and affordable housing.

However, with Government land becoming scarce, there is a need to examine further opportunities to encourage affordable and community housing on leased land through inclusionary zoning reform. As an example, the ACT Government will work with the private sector, including Westfield Belconnen, Westfield Woden and Southpoint Tuggeranong, to explore options for Build-to-Rent housing.

As these new social and affordable housing projects are built the Government does not want them held up by unfair third party appeals in ACAT, due to the significant community benefit of providing urgent shelter to the most vulnerable people in the community. The Government remains committed to the [National Housing Reform](#) Blueprint including reforms to social and affordable housing approval pathways.

Priority 5: Prepare the housing supply and land release pipeline

Land release has been the traditional lever that the ACT Government has used to support housing supply. However, as easily developable Territory-owned land becomes scarce, there will be a greater reliance on land held by the private sector in the existing urban footprint for the supply of new homes.

The Government will play an important role through the next stages of planning reform to enable opportunities on leased land, in addition to continuing to release Territory-held land and building a pipeline of public homes.

With remaining government land being of higher risk, further work is required to identify and prepare remaining Government land for release.

Priority 6: Plan Canberra’s future employment areas

The ACT’s diverse economy requires a steady supply of suitable commercial, industrial, transport related and other land to support businesses and jobs. The identification of suitable space for businesses in emerging industries is important to nurture start-ups and grow Canberra as a leading location for innovation.

At the same time, some land and activities need to be identified and protected, for environmental value, and also because potentially incompatible land uses may require sufficient space and separation from other activities, such as future waste facilities.

It is critical to plan for the future industrial, services and other land uses needed to support future employment and economic development in the Territory.

For these reasons a priority will be finalising key environmental and planning assessments in the ACT’s Eastern Broadacre to provide certainty about the future use of this large corridor of ACT and Commonwealth managed land.

Priority 7: Support community needs across the ACT

An essential component of integrated transport and land-use planning is greater coordination for services and infrastructure. Canberra has diverse community which continues to grow, and their needs for health, education, recreational facilities, arts and cultural centres, community centres, transport and city services and affordable housing must be considered as part of all future planning for new greenfield areas and planning reforms to support more homes in well-located areas.

Civil infrastructure must keep pace with increasing demands for utilities and the movement of people and goods across the Territory.

To support and enable strong cultural, recreational, educational and social connections in the ACT, an immediate priority will be to plan and identify more community facility sites for release. Community needs assessments, as an important planning tool, will inform where and what community facilities are needed in future.

The ACT Government will also work with Scentre Group to consider opportunities for the provision of recreational facilities in Woden Town Centre, as part of broader precinct planning, and undertake scoping work with the Canberra Organic Growers Society to identify suitable sites for community gardens.

Priority 8: Protect the environment and enhance the city's landscape

As Canberra continues to grow, it is important that environmental values are protected and enhanced to achieve the vision of Canberra of a 'city in a landscape'.

The ACT's District Strategies have identified the importance of environmental and biodiversity connections and the blue green corridors, across our city, with further opportunities to embed living infrastructure into planning policy.

To support this the Government will take a landscape approach, including strategic spatial planning to proactively protect and restore key areas of environmental value for the future, both within the urban footprint and on the urban interface.

Investigations will continue for Canberra's Western Edge and the Eastern Broadacre areas which will provide greater understanding and certainty of areas of value and to inform decisions about where future development can sustainably occur.

How we use our limited land supply will be a priority in the next decade as we reach natural growth boundaries like waterways, mountains and reserves, and our state border with NSW. Formal steps are now required to ensure water resources and urban growth remains sustainable for the greater Canberra region.

Priority 9: Ensure design quality and productivity

The new planning system has greater focus on design, aligning with Canberrans' expectations for a well-designed and planned city with high-quality buildings and public spaces.

The Government's expectation is that developments are not only well designed, but are built to a high quality. Implementation of other property developer licencing and building quality reforms are crucial to ensuring consumer protection and community acceptance as more homes are built.

The ACT Government is progressing the *Construction Productivity Agenda for the ACT* that will consider reforms to encourage competition, reduce or remove regulatory barriers, and simplify planning and building regulations and processes to ensure that new homes can be built sooner; this also supports actions under the *National Competition Policy*. The Government will work with the Planning and Construction Industry Chief Executive Reference Group (PACICERG) in progressing the *Agenda*.

The Government has enacted machinery of government changes, to establish the City and Environment Directorate (CED) bringing Transport Canberra and City Services, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, Access Canberra and some related regulatory functions together to more closely align public service administration and resourcing with Government priorities including housing.

The ACT Government will leverage these changes and work with the construction sector to ensure that more, quality homes can be built sooner.

Development Solutions will be established in the City and Environment Directorate as a front door for engagement with Government on building and to manage a streamlined and coordinated process of entity referrals to ensure prompt and consistent advice. Club diversification will also continue to be supported through fast-tracking master-planning, approvals processes and deconcessionalisation steps to help local community clubs to build housing and other facilities.

This will be complemented through continued support of the National Capital Design Review Panel review building proposals over five storeys.

Pathways for design related applications under the *Urban Forest Act 2023* will be streamlined to support a more productive approvals system whilst supporting our urban forest targets.

Priority 10: Administration and delivery of priorities

Successful implementation of the new outcomes-based planning system will be important in achieving the priorities in this statement.

Integrity in decision making by the independent Territory Planning Authority in the assessment process critical to building trust in this new system. The system must be closely monitored and evaluated and improvements made as this system is embedded to ensure it achieves its intended outcomes.

The delivery of priorities in this statement will see the development Major Plan Amendments (MPAs) to the Territory Plan, either by the Territory Planning Authority or as Minister-initiated MPAs.

Under the *Planning Act 2023*, the Planning Strategy must also be reviewed every five years with the current strategy requiring review by 2028. This presents an opportunity to embed the integrated transport and land-use planning approach and broaden stakeholder engagement. Membership of the Environment and Planning Forum (EPF) will be also broadened to include transport stakeholders in a new Environment Transport and Planning Forum (ETPF).

Finalising implementation of the eDevelopment Replacement Program will be a critical enabler of this integrated approach. The program is currently in its implementation phase, with configuration of the new system underway and delivery on track for completion by mid-2026. The new platform will replace the legacy eDevelopment system with a modern, cloud-hosted solution that supports the full lifecycle of development and building activities, including Development Applications, Building Approvals, leasing, surveying, and inspections. It will streamline processes, improve compliance with legislative requirements, and enhance user experience through automation, integration, and a responsive digital interface. Importantly, the program is underpinned by a robust stakeholder engagement strategy, including open showcases and targeted outreach to industry, community, and referral entities, ensuring the system is co-designed with those who use it most.

Planning priorities in 2025-28



Plan for more housing near high frequency public transport stops



Plan for more housing near commercial centres, reinvigorating shops'



Enable diverse housing choices including 'missing middle' housing



Support the delivery of social and affordable housing



Prepare the housing supply and land release pipeline



Plan Canberra's future employment areas



Support community needs across the ACT



Protect the environment and enhance the city's landscape



Ensure design quality and productivity



Administration and delivery of priorities



Priority 1

Plan for more housing near high frequency public transport stops

- > Implement planning changes in the City and Northern Gateway Design Framework in the Territory Plan to support residential densification near Light Rail Stage 1.
- > Develop a precinct-based Major Plan Amendment incorporating Thoroughbred Park and including residential and commercial development.
- > Develop the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework, to support transport-oriented land-use planning along the light rail line between the city to Woden, to Beasley St Torrens/Farrer.
- > Extend transport-oriented planning along the rapid transport corridor south to Tuggeranong and through to Lanyon.



Priority 2

Plan for more housing near commercial centres, reinvigorating shops

- > Review commercial zones and district policies in the Territory Plan to:
 - to encourage mixed-use developments and ‘shop-top’ housing and shop-adjacent housing at shopping centres;
 - improve economic activity and the viability of commercial centres including Richardson Shops; and
 - improve supermarket competition and land uses.
- > Require new mixed-use housing and commercial projects to make improvements to adjacent public areas.
- > Plan for and release underutilised land at shopping centres to support residential and commercial development, including unleased sites near Richardson Shops and land for a second supermarket in Mawson.
- > Plan for more medium density housing around shopping centres, commercial areas and other amenities.
- > Review the Leisure and Accommodation Zone, Commercial Zone 6 (CZ6), with consideration of permitting aged care or residential uses, as well as requirements to ensure no net loss of community or recreation facilities.
- > Implement measures to limit anti-competitive objections to development.
- > Enforce existing lease conditions at vacant and unused shopping centres and recreational facilities.
- > Investigate tougher measures for property owners who leave their shop spaces vacant or unused.



Priority 3

Enable diverse housing choices including 'missing middle' housing

- > Finalise and implement the Missing Middle Housing Reforms, including the *Missing Middle Housing Design Guide* and Major Plan Amendment.
- > plan for more missing middle housing close to shopping centres, commercial areas and other amenities.
- > Develop streamlined assessment and exemption pathways for lower-risk missing middle housing developments.
- > Develop a Canberra House Pattern Book of pre-approved designs for missing middle housing.



Priority 4

Support the delivery of social and affordable housing

- > Continue to develop pathways to streamline planning approvals for public and community housing as Territory Priority Projects.
- > Consider incentives for affordable and community housing including affordable housing density bonuses, (similar to NSW).
- > Review the Territory Plan District Policies for opportunities for inclusionary requirements in precinct scale development at key sites and change areas.
- > Facilitate changes to planning policy and regulation which supports emerging housing models such as build-to-rent developments.





Priority 5

Prepare the housing supply and land release pipeline

- > Develop the annual *Housing Supply and Land Release Program* bringing together the actions that ACT Government is taking to release government land, plan for more housing on unleased land, and invest directly in housing including affordable, community and public housing with the Australian Government.
- > Facilitate the release of land in the existing urban footprint in 'key sites' and 'change areas' identified in each urban district through the nine District Strategies.
- > Prepare greenfield sites for development for the remaining land in the Molonglo Valley, Belconnen and Gungahlin districts including planning for community facilities, transport connections and services.
- > Undertake a stocktake of government land to identify surplus land suitable for release for housing and community facilities.
- > Investigate further measures to compel land development within agreed timeframes as part of land sales.

- > Work cooperatively with the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) and City Renewal Authority (CRA) on preparing land for release and explore opportunities to assemble land for development.
- > Work with the Australian Government agencies including the National Capital Authority on opportunities, in their planning jurisdiction, for the Australian Government to contribute to the outcomes of the National Housing Accord and National Planning Reform Blueprint in the ACT.



Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel—also accessible at www.legislation.act.gov.au



Priority 6

Plan Canberra's future employment areas

- > Consult on and finalise the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment.
- > Review industrial zones to:
 - strategically plan and identify future employment land, including rezoning of existing land; and
 - consider opportunities for additional permissible uses of land in industrial zones (while maintaining a planning hierarchy and supporting industrial business needs).





Priority 7

Support community needs across the ACT

- > Undertake community needs assessments and community consultation to inform planning to meet the needs of the community.
- > Identify, plan and release further community facility sites, which will provide the opportunity for non-government schools, community centres, places of religious worship, and not for profit early childhood education and care centres.
- > Provide advice on infrastructure projects that are critical to delivering significant community benefits for consideration as Territory Priority Projects.



Priority 8

Protect the environment and enhance the city's landscape

- > Progress investigations for future urban and other uses in the Western Edge and Eastern Broadacre areas to inform decisions on how the environmental values of these areas can be recognised, managed and protected.
- > Consider additional environmental protections for Coombs Peninsula, Block 402 Stromlo and the Ainslie Volcanics sites.
- > Contribute to the development of a landscape plan for the ACT by the ACT Chief Landscape Architect.
- > Develop an urban growth boundary for greater Canberra in consultation with the NSW Government and regional local governments.





Priority 9

Ensure design quality and productivity

- > Consider opportunities to expand exempt-development pathways for lower risk housing development.
- > Consider whether to de-couple lease variation applications from the development applications process.
- > Continue to progress reforms to the Territory Priority Projects process to ensure that housing and infrastructure that has a significant community benefit is not put at risk.

Construction quality

As the Government progresses planning reforms to enable the construction of more homes, it is critical to ensure these new homes are well-designed and well-built. Reforms to improve housing productivity will be complemented by building quality reforms being progressed through the City and Environment Directorate.

- > Implement property developer licencing in the ACT.
- > Establish a team of public building certifiers.
- > Extend occupational licencing to high-risk trades.
- > Implement reform following a review of residential building work insurance, including considering the introduction of decennial liability insurance requirements.



Priority 10

Administration and delivery of priorities

- > Develop a refreshed *Planning Strategy* which combines the Transport Strategy into one new integrated strategy.
- > Work with the Coordinator-General for Housing to monitor and report on planning initiatives that support housing supply and the achievement of targets under the National Housing Accord.
- > Evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation and operation of the planning system, through the ACT Planning Evaluation Framework from July 2024 to June 2029.
- > Implement robust and efficient development assessment processes and review the integrity framework for decision making under the new planning system to support the delivery of high-quality development.
- > Prepare advice on amendments to policies and/or regulations to ensure the new planning system is delivering its intended outcomes.



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