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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Planning and the "Missing Middle" Housing Reforms - Response to Assembly Resolution of
5 February 2025**

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On 5 February 2025, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution regarding planning and the "Missing Middle" Housing Reforms.

The ACT's population is anticipated to grow to 700,000 by 2050, and there is a critical need to continue reform to ensure that there is a long-term supply of more homes and housing choice.

The Government is currently undertaking the next stages of planning reform to enable 30,000 new homes in the ACT by 2030.

The ACT Government is developing a draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide (MMHDG) as part of phase one of a series of planning reforms underway to support more missing middle housing.

The MMHDG will bolster design guidance specific to missing middle housing including multi-occupancy housing (e.g. dual and triple occupancy), townhouses and terraces. The MMHDG will guide best practice design, facilitate planning system reform and demonstrate to the community how a diverse range of housing may be built specific to RZ1 and RZ2 residential zones.

This will be accompanied by draft Major Plan Amendment to the Territory Plan, which is also under development, to remove barriers to missing middle

housing, whilst also promoting existing suburban character, landscape and amenity.

The Government has announced there will be broad community consultation on the draft missing-middle design guide around the middle of the year with a draft Major Plan Amendment.

However, these pieces of work are still in development and no final decision has been made on the draft planning policies by the Government at this time.

Engagement with industry has occurred through the establishment of a missing middle Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and a Pool of Practitioners (POP).

These groups are informing development of the MMHDG and proposed changes to the Territory Plan. Engagement with the groups has occurred in October and December 2024, with additional engagement in late-February 2025. This engagement with design and building professionals is assisting in finalising the proposed missing middle housing reform to inform Cabinet, ahead of broad community engagement on the draft MMHDG and proposed Territory Plan changes in mid-2025.

A range of issues have been raised in by the TAG and POP groups. These will be considered in the development of the draft MMHDG and draft MPA, and will

inform future Government decisions. The Government will consider the release of summaries of this feedback as part of consideration of the draft MMHDG and draft MPA.

To inform the development of the next stage planning reforms, yet to be considered by the Government, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate commenced a series of projects (supported through consultancies), aimed at enhancing housing diversity and supply through greater densification.

The documents referenced in the Assembly resolution related to these consultancies.

The work includes an investigation into areas which are potentially suitable for missing middle housing and the barriers that exist that reduce the uptake of this type of housing.

Purdon Planning was engaged to investigate scenarios for missing middle developments in RZ1 and RZ2 zones: under the previous and current planning system and where potential changes are tested. This work has investigated a developability index which is a multi-criteria tool that can help identify areas within existing residential areas that have greater developability potential. This

is supplemented with a small Case Study-based Financial Feasibility Framework that provides a snapshot of the financial feasibility of a range of housing types within a precinct.

SGS Economics and Planning was engaged to identify optimal locations for missing middle housing within the existing urban footprint. The study investigates areas which are potentially suitable for medium density housing using city-wide variables. This will provide a 'first round' at identifying potentially suitable areas for missing middle housing in the ACT including 'Situational Suitability Criteria' that may be used to assist policy makers to identify specific precincts suited for medium density housing including areas such as within the walkable catchment of a group centre or local centre, proximity to high quality open space, and redevelopment opportunities given the age and condition of the existing housing.

These pieces of work have been specifically commissioned for the purpose of informing future consideration and decisions of Government and are being used to assist the development of evidence-informed planning policy that will help to facilitate missing middle housing and broader medium density housing choices in Canberra.

To achieve these reforms, cabinet needs to make a series of considered decisions.

The confidentiality that applies to cabinet documents before they are considered is important, because it supports frank discussion and careful deliberation.

For information under executive privilege, the Government may consider the release of this information, following consideration of the documents to inform and make a decision on the relevant draft planning policies.

We are committed to releasing what we can when it is appropriate to do, noting some of these decisions have yet to be made.

We will release the Purdon report when we go out to consult with the community about the first stage of planning reform in relation to the missing middle, on the release of a draft missing middle design guide and proposed changes to the Territory Plan around the middle of the year.

The subsequent, SGS Economics and Planning, report relates to another stage of planning reform, and a separate set of future decisions by Government. Once those decisions have been made, and the documents informing them

have been considered by Cabinet, the Government will also make that information available.

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