



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: CED

Hearing: 12 November 2025

In relation to: ACT Sustainable Building Pathways

Question received: 20 November 2025

Answer Due: 27 November 2025

Under the ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway initial action plan the Government committed to developing a number of policies and guidelines in that document.

What progress has been made on the Sustainable Design and Building Policy, which is an evidence-informed sustainable building policy tailored to ACT conditions?

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The development of evidence-informed sustainable design and building policy tailored to ACT conditions is being delivered across a range of projects including:

- Increasing the minimum energy performance of commercial buildings to near net zero through the National Construction Code 2025. The ACT's support for the stringency option with the highest net present value was taken forward, resulting in a practical and cost effective nationally consistent outcome.
- Research on the value of higher standards of energy performance in homes will be made available to the public on the Climate Choices website to increase industry and community awareness of sustainable designs and choices. Modelling has uncovered that investing in further small increases to appliance energy efficiency is cost effective in standalone housing, moving us closer to net zero while lowering home energy bills.
- Release of the draft Missing Middle Housing Design Guide (MMHDG) for consultation. The MMHDG includes a Sustainability and Environment chapter which provides detailed guidance on building design performance, embodied carbon,

electrification, resource efficiency, and climate change resilience, amongst other topics.

- A government-funded initiative to provide tailored feasibility studies for the electrification of ACT apartment buildings, along with a collaborative project with the National Australian Built Environment Rating System have been undertaken. These provide valuable insights into building performance and practical pathways for strata buildings to electrify and have led to the national Apartment rating tool being updated to include centralised gas hot water profiles in future Energy Ratings.
- As part of our Housing and Construction Productivity Agenda, Government is actively considering simpler and more cost-effective pathways to demonstrate energy efficiency compliance with the Building Act for both new and existing homes.
- Opportunities to use prefabrication and modular construction solutions are being undertaken, for example by the Suburban Land Agency. This is complemented by work being undertaken on reducing barriers to the uptake of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) through National Competition Policy (NCP) reforms. This includes work to develop a national MMC definition to reference in the National Construction Code (NCC), establishing a national voluntary manufacturer certification scheme to verify compliance with the NCC, and taking steps to ensure regulatory neutrality between modern and conventional methods of construction in planning and building legislation.
- ACT contributions to a number of national forums has led to priorities outlined in the ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway being reflected in national strategies such as the Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings (a national strategy for Commonwealth, State and Territory action across all buildings) and the Built Environment Sector Plan (one of 6 sector plans under the Australian Government's Net Zero Plan and charts the built environment sector's pathway to net zero by 2050). These have led to important national initiatives such as the expansion and acceleration of national energy performance disclosure programs, which provide information to owners, buyers and investors to encourage them to improve the efficiency of their buildings.
- Research and modelling work to support future policies on embodied carbon have also been undertaken and are covered in the answer to the below question.

In this term of Government to date, work on the sustainable use of materials in construction has focussed in the areas of embodied carbon, improving the energy efficiency of residential buildings (including the use of energy efficient building materials) and supporting updates to the National Construction Code (including improving the energy efficiency of commercial buildings). This work is detailed above and in the answer to QON 34 – ACT Sustainable Building Pathways.

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Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature: 

Date: 25/11/25

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Planning, Chris Steel MLA