



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Rebecca Vassarotti MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Housing and Homelessness

Reference: Housing

Hearing: 30 July 2026

In relation to: Payment of architects

Question received: 30 July 2026

Answer Due: 14 August 2026

- 1) The ACT engages architects to design public housing properties. The architects can be selected from the Architects Design Panel.
 - a. Does the government believe the current fee scales for Architectural Practices on the Architects Design Panel reflects the amount of work required to deliver quality housing to the public and community housing sectors?
 - b. How do the fees compare to other jurisdictions (states and territories) and markets?
 - c. Is the ACT Government aware that there are local Architectural Practices that consciously exclude themselves from tendering due to the fees being perceived as insufficient for it to be economically viable for such practices?
 - d. How does the Territory ensure 'value for money' when procuring its housing projects?
 - e. Is the Territory consulting with industry (eg. Australian Institute of Architects or the Property Council) re these matters?

Suzanne Orr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- a) The Architects and Designers Panel was established following significant consultation with industry stakeholders in 2019–2020 and includes an agreed pricing schedule for architectural and design services. The Panel Deeds include a mechanism through which consultants may request a review of pricing provisions, on an annual basis.

However, noting the time that has elapsed and the varying scale of projects to be delivered under the Panel arrangement, some projects will be invariable more/less economical to deliver under the fixed pricing structure. This will also be varied across providers, based on organisation size, structure, and the associated fixed operating costs.

Acknowledging this, the ACT Government is considering the most appropriate mechanism moving forward to ensure that all contractors and consultants undertaking design work on behalf of the Territory are compensated fairly for their time and expertise.

- b) Architectural fee structures vary significantly across jurisdictions, procurement models and project types. As such, it is difficult to benchmark the costs associated with provision of service in one jurisdiction against another, without the comparison being skewed by the different market, terms of engagement, product type, and project variables.
- c) Participation on the Panel is voluntary, and there is no obligation for firms to tender for, or accept, work offered through the Panel. When tendering architectural work to the Panel, there is consistent uptake and response from its members.
- d) The ACT Government's procurement framework requires housing projects to be delivered through transparent and competitive processes that achieve value for money, considering factors beyond price such as quality, capability, risk, delivery timeframes and broader community benefits. The use of pre-qualified panels, competitive procurement and active contract management helps balance quality outcomes, project delivery objectives and the responsible use of public funds.
- e) The Government maintains engagement with a broad range of industry stakeholders and professional bodies on matters relating to the built environment, procurement and housing delivery.

In relation to this matter specifically, Infrastructure Canberra has recently been in contact with the ACT chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Signature:

By the Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Suzanne Orr MLA

Date: 13/08/26