

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, PUBLIC
WORKS AND TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

**Inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4 Residential
Redevelopment Policies – Inner North Canberra**

FEBRUARY 2011

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Resolution of Appointment

On 9 December 2008, the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed by resolution to establish general purpose standing committees to inquire into and report on matters referred to it by the Assembly or considered by the committee to be of concern to the community, including:

- (e) a Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services to examine matters related to planning, land management, proposed capital works projects in the public sector, including works undertaken by territory owned corporations, municipal transport services, heritage and sport and recreation.

The Assembly agreed that each standing committee can consider and make use of the evidence and records of the relevant standing committee appointed during the previous Assembly.¹

¹ Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings No. 2*, 9 December 2008, pp14–18, <<http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/downloads/minutes-of-proceedings/08MoP02.pdf>>

Terms of Reference

1.1 On 25 June 2009 the Assembly resolved:

“That the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services undertake an inquiry to evaluate the RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment policies applying in north Canberra along the major transport corridor of Northbourne Avenue, with particular attention being given to the following:

(1) the merits of maintaining:

(a) the policies applying to the RZ4 areas north of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues which limit development to a maximum two storey building height limit and a maximum plot ratio of 0.65 until 23.5 hectares of the 25.9 hectares of residential blocks in the RZ4 areas south of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues and north of Cooyong Street and Donaldson Street have been developed for multi-dwelling housing; and

(b) the moratorium on redevelopment in Turner Section 47 and Part 63;

(2) whether similar redevelopment policies should be extended to other areas surrounding Northbourne Avenue in north Canberra and, if so, where and at what density;

(3) the Committee’s view on higher density development along major transport corridors;

(4) the inquiry should consider factors such as the demand for higher density development, the infrastructure capacity of transport and hydraulic networks to absorb additional development, the implications for housing affordability, the extent to which redevelopment policies reduce overall travel, the potential impacts of the policies on the amenity enjoyed by residents of the areas affected and how such impacts could be ameliorated; and

(5) any other relevant matter.”²

² Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings No.26*, 25 June 2009, p280.

DEFINITIONS

Amenity	Those qualities or conditions associated with a site or locality that are conducive to its better enjoyment for any permitted use ³
Moratorium	A temporary cessation of activity ⁴
Plot Ratio	The gross floor area in a building divided by the area of the site ⁵
Residential redevelopment	means development that involves: a) substantial or total demolition of an existing dwelling on land previously used for residential purposes and replacement with one or more new dwellings; b) establishment of one or more new dwellings on land previously used for residential purposes in addition to an existing dwelling; or c) substantial alterations to an existing dwelling that would result in a significant change to the scale and/ or character of the dwelling⁶
Transport corridor	A transport corridor is a linear tract of land dedicated to at least one main line for transport. Transport corridors can be road, rail, or canal and are generally high capacity routes. Transport corridors typically connect two major ‘anchor’ destinations, with many destinations in between ⁷
Site density	Site density is the preferred definition for density comparisons between projects. Site density represents the ratio of dwellings to the area of the site they occupy. It can be applied to: • Individual houses on their own block; • Multi-dwelling developments on their development site. For example, Block Area = 500m ² , Site Density = 1 dwelling on 0.05 (hectare) = Site density of 20 dwellings per hectare
Net residential density	Net residential density is the ratio of the number of dwellings to the area of land they occupy including internal public streets plus half the width of adjoining roads that provide vehicular access to dwellings. ⁸
Gross or neighbourhood residential density	Gross or neighbourhood residential density is the ratio of the number of dwellings to the area of land they occupy including associated neighbourhood or local facilities. The area includes internal public streets, all areas of public open space, local or neighbourhood shops, primary or secondary schools, local community services, local employment areas and half the width of adjoining arterial roads. ⁹

³ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan*, Incorporated Amendments, September 2009, Appendices, p127.

⁴ Macquarie Dictionary, Third Edition.

⁵ Territory Plan, Part 13, *Definitions*, p35.

⁶ Territory Plan, Part 13, *Definitions*, p35.

⁷ City of Sydney Council, *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, ‘The Vision’, 2008, p214.

⁸ AMCORD, PNP 6, p2.

⁹ AMCORD, PNP 6, p2.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

2.22 The Committee recommends that Rule 21, restricting development in RZ4 zones north of Macarthur Avenue and Wakefield Avenue, be removed from the *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code*.

RECOMMENDATION 2

3.15 The Committee recommends that Rule 44, restricting use on Blocks 12-21, Section 63 Turner should be removed from the *Inner North Precinct Code*.

RECOMMENDATION 3

3.38 The Committee recommends that Rule 44, restricting use on Section 47 Turner should be removed from the *Inner North Precinct Code*.

RECOMMENDATION 4

3.39 The Committee recommends that existing street trees in good condition and verge widths should be maintained.

RECOMMENDATION 5

5.17 The Committee recommends that, in the current reviews of the Spatial Plan and Territory Plan, ACT Planning and Land Authority includes an appraisal of all zone objectives and development codes in order to clarify the distinction between, and intent of each residential zone and the mixed use zone.

RECOMMENDATION 6

6.37 The Committee recommends that the ACT Planning and Land Authority review the development codes, particularly where they apply to multi-unit developments in RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment areas, and ensure that new developments are encouraged, where appropriate, to include a mix of one, two and three bedroom dwellings.

RECOMMENDATION 7

7.7 The Committee recommends that the ACT Planning and Land Authority investigate models of design and construction quality assessment in Australia and internationally, undertaken with a view to whether a similar body could be established in the ACT. The review should consider how such bodies operate without overstepping the bounds of individual taste and choice in building design.

RECOMMENDATION 8

7.26 The Committee recommends that multi-unit dwellings be designed to optimise energy efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION 9

7.35 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on the progress it has made in relation to its commitment to universal design principles and the relevant Australian Standards for Adaptable Housing.

RECOMMENDATION 10

7.45 The Committee recommends that existing public open space networks be retained to provide for the recreational needs of residents in higher density residential developments.

RECOMMENDATION 11

7.48 The Committee recommends that existing public open spaces be maintained and enhanced to provide safe green space which is useable for a wide variety of recreational and active pursuits.

RECOMMENDATION 12

8.6 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with developers to achieve the desired zoning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 13

8.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct in-depth consultation with the Canberra community regarding densification opportunities along transport corridors and along specific avenues and approach routes.

RECOMMENDATION 14

8.33 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish a plan for the provision of public transport in new suburbs that can be made available to residents.

RECOMMENDATION 15

8.55 The Committee recommends that the Heritage Council expedite the assessment of the Northbourne Housing Precinct and finalise a conservation management plan for the precinct.

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONDUCT OF INQUIRY

- 1.1 This inquiry was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 25 June 2009 for inquiry and report. It was proposed by the Minister for Planning, Mr Andrew Barr MLA, in order to consider whether current planning policies remain appropriate in light of issues such as climate change and population growth. The Minister for Planning, in his motion to refer the Inquiry of 25 June 2009 , said:
- Cities of the future have to be more sustainable. They need to have a smaller carbon footprint. They need fewer cars, more cyclists and more pedestrians. People will need to live closer together with more, or better, open spaces.¹⁰
- 1.2 An invitation for public submissions was advertised by the Committee in the Chronicle on 1 September 2009 and in the Canberra Times on 2 September 2009 and 7 October 2009. The Committee also invited key stakeholders to provide a written submission to the inquiry by 26 February 2010.
- 1.3 On 4 February 2010, the Committee released a Discussion Paper to provide information on the current residential redevelopment policies that apply in inner north Canberra, including an overview of how and why they were implemented. The Discussion Paper also provided some discussion of the key issues of interest surrounding high density development along public transport corridors. The Committee considered that such an approach would enhance and support the public submission and hearings phase of the inquiry.
- 1.4 Late submissions were accepted up to 6 October 2010. The Committee received 52 submissions, listed at Appendix A.
- 1.5 The Committee held two public hearings on 10 and 11 August 2010 and heard from the Minister for Planning, officers of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, officers from the ACT Heritage Council, the Australian

¹⁰ Legislative Assembly for the ACT, 25 June 2009 Week 8 Hansard, p 2934.

Institute of Architects (ACT), the Planning Institute of Australia (ACT), Mr Colin Stewart (architect) and a range of Dickson and Turner residents. A full list of witnesses is at Appendix A.

- 1.6 The Committee also sent invitations for submissions on 5 October 2010 directly to those residents in Turner Section 47 and Section 63 Blocks 12-21 who had not made a submission to the Committee, either individually or as part of a group.

Note

- 1.7 The Committee notes that, despite any changes that this Committee has recommended to the redevelopment policies and which may or may not be accepted by the Government, those policies do not specify or guarantee which blocks and sections of the affected areas developers and/or residents may wish to develop, or in what order. The policies do not determine which owners may wish to sell their properties for redevelopment. Some sections, streets and blocks may therefore not change for a long time regardless of any policy change the ACT Government may adopt.

2 STAGED DEVELOPMENT

Rule 21 – Multi Unit Housing Development Code

- 2.1 Rule 21 of the *Residential Zones Multi Unit Housing Development Code* states that:

Development of land in the RZ4 zones of O'Connor, Dickson and Lyneham, north of Macarthur Avenue and Wakefield Avenue, is restricted in height to 2 storeys and a maximum plot ratio of 65%, until 23.5 hectares of residential blocks in the RZ4 zones of O'Connor, Turner and Braddon north of Cooyong Street and Donaldson Streets has been developed for multi-unit housing.¹¹

- 2.2 This rule was implemented around 1997 as the Government of the day wanted to encourage redevelopment closer to Canberra City, given the employment and other opportunities in that area¹², before expanding into the inner north suburbs further north.

Relevant Considerations

Development Goals

- 2.3 The Committee was advised in a number of submissions that Rule 21 should be removed as it is a significant inhibitor of development.¹³ They noted that the aim of the restriction does not appear to have significantly achieved its goal to increase density closer to Canberra City before expanding north, particularly as the benchmark for development south of Wakefield and Macarthur Avenues is set at an 'unreasonably high level'.¹⁴
- 2.4 The Committee was also advised that land owners in the relevant RZ4 zones are being disadvantaged as they face uncertainty over the arbitrary restrictions¹⁵ which may remain in place for an unknown, potentially long, timeframe.¹⁶

¹¹ Territory Plan, Part 3.3, *Residential Zones Multi Unit Housing Development Code*, p15.

¹² Advice provided by ACTPLA to the Committee Secretary, 17 December 2009.

¹³ Submission 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 19, 21, 25, 30, 31, 39, 46.

¹⁴ Submission 10, 19.

¹⁵ Submission 11, 21; Turner Residents Association (TRA), *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p17; Australian Institute of Architects ACT (AIA), *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21.

¹⁶ Submission 21.

Land Banking and ‘Mothballing’

- 2.5 The Committee notes that a few submissions highlighted increasing levels of ‘mothballing’ or neglect in housing maintenance within RZ4 areas north of Wakefield Avenue, with many owners apparently investing very little in the existing properties.¹⁷
- 2.6 Submissions noted that the land is not yet attractive for developers because of the low height and plot ratio limits imposed by Rule 21, nor is it attractive for potential owner occupiers as they are aware it is unlikely to be a long-term single dwelling home when developers do start showing an interest.¹⁸ The Committee was advised that current owners are therefore more likely to reduce maintenance to minimum levels, knowing that their land is what potential buyers (most likely developers) are really interested in - but the current lower development potential results in lower returns to residents.¹⁹ In turn, residents currently have less capacity to buy an equivalent property in a comparable location.²⁰
- 2.7 The Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter (AIA) and the Planning Institute of Australia ACT (PIA) also acknowledged that Rule 21 creates land banking with investors likely ‘to buy and hold land for future development with no incentive to maintain property’.²¹ In some cases land is being left empty and overgrown, waiting for more lucrative redevelopment opportunities.²²

Sub-optimal development

- 2.8 The Committee was also advised that developers are continuing to build new two-storey developments on some of the RZ4 blocks north of Wakefield and MacArthur Avenues, which is sub-optimal use of land considering it is ideal for higher density living.²³ This practice may also lead to wastage of resources if the

¹⁷ Submission 2, 30.

¹⁸ Submission 2, 4, 21, 25.

¹⁹ Submission 2, 25, 30.

²⁰ Submission 25.

²¹ Submission 25; Planning Institute of Australia ACT (PIA), *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p10.

²² Submission 2b.

²³ Submission 4, 21, 30.

new developments are demolished and re-built to higher densities in the short to medium term.²⁴

- 2.9 The AIA advised that Rule 21 ‘promoted development at a less than highest value use, potentially compromising the opportunity to develop at a higher density into the future...’²⁵ particularly where two storey developments are built.²⁶
- 2.10 Two submissions noted that the limits of Rule 21 contradict the objective of increasing density closer to the city in order to be more compact and efficient and that density will be, and is being, ‘achieved by market mechanisms’²⁷ so Rule 21 is not necessary.

Location

- 2.11 The Committee was advised that the areas north of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues are well located to take advantages of local employment, public transport, open space, trunk cycle paths and access to mix of retail, community services, sporting facilities and educational institutions.²⁸ These features would also support a mix of dwelling types and a sense of community.²⁹
- 2.12 The Turner Resident’s Association also advised the Committee that Rule 21 has ‘placed undue pressure on Turner and Braddon which have contributed the largest share of multi-unit development in the Inner North’.³⁰ They believe that a substantial scope for development exists beyond Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues.³¹

²⁴ Submission 25.

²⁵ Submission 25.

²⁶ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21.

²⁷ Submission 19, 21.

²⁸ Submission 25.

²⁹ Submission 25, 31.

³⁰ Submission 9.

³¹ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p17.

- 2.13 The Property Council of Australia (ACT) believes that the northern RZ3 and RZ4 zones should have the same opportunities for redevelopment as those further south, particularly as they are close to the services of Dickson.³²

ACT Government Monitoring and Evaluation Report

- 2.14 The Committee notes that the ACT Government believes removing the rule 'would facilitate an increased housing supply in the area which should contribute to reduced car use on the journey to work, shorter trips and widen housing choice'³³
- 2.15 The 'Monitoring and Evaluation Report' on RZ3 and RZ4 Residential Redevelopment Policy highlighted that Rule 21 has resulted in an average of 100 additional dwellings per year since its inception. The Committee notes from that report that if the staged development policy remains and development continues at the current rate, it would potentially 'take another ten to fifteen years before RZ4 policy can be implemented in Lyneham, Dickson and O'Connor'³⁴ and redevelopment of those areas would take around twenty-five years to complete.³⁵
- 2.16 The Monitoring and Evaluation Report stated that, as of November 2008, 51 per cent of the RZ4 zones of O'Connor, Turner and Braddon, south of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues, and north of Cooyong Street and Donaldson Streets, had been redeveloped for multi units.³⁶ This equates to 11.9 hectares having been developed out of 25.9 hectares of RZ4 land South of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues.³⁷
- 2.17 The Report advises that if all the existing single dwellings were redeveloped into multi-units, there would be a net increase of about 4000 dwellings in the area.³⁸

³² Submission 30.

³³ Submission 24 (Government Submission).

³⁴ ACTPLA, *North Canberra, RZ3 and RZ4, Residential Redevelopment Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation*, November 2008, p4.

³⁵ Minister for Planning, Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 25 June 2009, p2935.

³⁶ ACTPLA, *North Canberra, RZ3 and RZ4 Residential Redevelopment Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation*, November 2008, p24.

³⁷ ACTPLA, *North Canberra, RZ3 and RZ4 Residential Redevelopment Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation*, November 2008, p3.

³⁸ ACTPLA, *North Canberra, RZ3 and RZ4, Residential Redevelopment Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation*, November 2008, p4.

Committee Comments

- 2.18 The Committee notes from submissions that there appears to be a high level of support for removing Rule 21 from the *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development*.³⁹ The Government’s Monitoring and Evaluation Report also provides statistics that indicate keeping Rule 21 would significantly delay redevelopment in north Canberra, to the detriment of housing supply and sustainable journey to work preferences.⁴⁰
- 2.19 The Committee notes that if Rule 21 was removed, developments in these RZ4 areas would still need to comply with the RZ4 zone objectives and development table, the *Inner North Precinct Code* and, if not a single dwelling, the *Multi Unit Housing Development Code*.
- 2.20 The Committee considers that there is no merit in maintaining Rule 21 of the *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code* relating to the restrictions on use in RZ4 Medium Density Residential development zone – ‘Staging of Development – Inner North Canberra’.
- 2.21 The Committee notes that the proximity to Dickson and to the major thoroughfare of Northbourne Avenue make the Dickson, Lyneham, O’Connor and Downer RZ4 zones equally as suitable for increased densification as those south of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues. Removing the limitation on RZ4 development north of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues will also enable those areas to be developed as the housing market demands and may prevent further mothballing and land banking practices.

RECOMMENDATION 1

- 2.22 **The Committee recommends that Rule 21, restricting development in RZ4 zones north of Macarthur Avenue and Wakefield Avenue, be removed from the *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code*.**

³⁹ Submission 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 19, 21, 25, 30, 31, 39, 46.

⁴⁰ ACTPLA, *North Canberra, RZ3 and RZ4, Residential Redevelopment Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation*, November 2008.

3 RULE 44 – MORATORIUM ON SECTION 47 AND SECTION 63, BLOCKS 12-21, TURNER

Inner North Precinct Code

- 3.1 Rule 44 is set out in Part C (4) Turner of the *Inner North Precinct Code* and is intended ‘to protect the existing residential amenity of neighbouring lessees’.⁴¹ It states:
- Rule 44 - Redevelopment is not permitted on Turner Section 47 and Section 63 Blocks 12-21.
- Criteria 44 - Minor additions or alterations, which do not result in a significant change to the scale and/or character of the dwelling, may be permitted.⁴²
- 3.2 The Committee notes that if the moratoria were lifted, redevelopment in Section 47 and Section 63 (Blocks 12-21) Turner, including multi unit redevelopment, would be permitted however those redevelopments would still be limited to two storeys (plus an attic and/or basement) and a maximum plot ratio of 65% as they have an RZ3 zoning.
- 3.3 Future redevelopments in this area would need to comply with the zone objectives and development table for an RZ3 zone, as well as the relevant sections of the *Inner North Precinct Code* and, depending on the type of dwelling, the *Multi Unit Housing Development Code* or the *Single Dwelling Housing Development Code*.

Section 63, Blocks 12-21 Turner

- 3.4 As outlined in the Committee’s Discussion Paper, following the implementation of the B1 Area Specific Policy in 1993 (later divided into B11 Urban Housing and B12 Increased Density Development), there were numerous objections to the policy change by Turner residents who were concerned about the potential rush of

⁴¹ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code, Part C (4) Turner*, p21.

⁴² Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code, Part C (4) Turner*, p21.

prospective developments in the area.⁴³ In 1999 many residents of Turner continued to express an overwhelming objection to further higher density redevelopment in the area and, as a result, a moratorium on redevelopment was implemented on Section 63, Blocks 12-21.⁴⁴

Residents' Concerns

- 3.5 The Committee received submissions from all but two leaseholders of Blocks 12-21 Section 63 and notes that all of those who made submissions to the Committee are in favour of removing the moratorium.⁴⁵ The Committee also notes that only four out of the original ten leaseholders who supported the moratorium in 1999 remain in the section.⁴⁶
- 3.6 Residents highlighted in their submissions that the moratorium 'has created considerable uncertainty about the future options for leaseholders'.⁴⁷ The Committee notes that residents are currently not permitted to rebuild a single detached dwelling on their property, denying them a right that most other residential leaseholders in the ACT are entitled to.⁴⁸
- 3.7 Submissions from residents of Blocks 12-21 Section 63 support residential redevelopment where it provides leaseholders the ability to renovate or knock-down and rebuild single or dual occupancy dwellings and townhouses. They also support multi unit developments if a balance between one, two and three bedroom residences can be achieved.⁴⁹
- 3.8 Residents noted that because the moratorium applies to only part of Section 63 it is also not achieving a consistent character, with some houses already being surrounded by a multi unit development.⁵⁰
- 3.9 Other submitters are also in favour of removing the moratorium, including the

⁴³ *The Canberra Times*, Thursday 3 November 1994, p3.

⁴⁴ *The Canberra Times*, 28 June 1999, p5.

⁴⁵ Submission 23, 29, 31, 38.

⁴⁶ Submission 31.

⁴⁷ Submission 29.

⁴⁸ Submission 23, 30.

⁴⁹ Submission 23, 29, 31, 38. [This issue is discussed further in part 6].

⁵⁰ Submission 38.

Property Council of Australia (ACT).⁵¹ The Property Council advised the Committee that these sections are ‘identical to others in the vicinity and should be subject to the same redevelopment rules.’⁵²

- 3.10 The ACT Government is also in favour of removing the moratorium, noting in its submission that the moratorium ‘makes little strategic sense given the proximity of the area to Civic and its metropolitan accessibility’ and an ‘underutilisation of infrastructure’.⁵³

Comments in favour of keeping the Moratorium

- 3.11 The Turner School Board supports the moratorium in part, opposing higher density developments around the school. The Board is particularly concerned that existing medium-density developments adjacent to the school appear to have contributed to increased traffic movement and congestion from on-street parking around the school, and believe that this would worsen with increased density. On-street parking has created difficulties for drivers of the small school buses which transport special needs students to and from Turner School. The Board is not opposed to smaller-scale densification around the school, such as dual occupancies.⁵⁴
- 3.12 The Turner Residents Association (TRA) is in agreement with Turner School and proposed that any redevelopment of Section 63 Blocks 12-21 be limited to rebuilding of single dwellings and dual occupancies.⁵⁵
- 3.13 The Committee notes that other submitters believe the parking issues around Section 63 are caused by the school community rather than by the higher density residential developments in Hartley St Turner.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Submission 11, 30.

⁵² Submission 30.

⁵³ Submission 24, p18.

⁵⁴ Submission 7.

⁵⁵ Submission 9.

⁵⁶ Submission 23, 29.

Committee Comments

- 3.14 As the majority of residents are in favour of removing the moratorium and because higher density development in Turner will enable more people to access the local services, infrastructure and amenities and potentially aid reduction in car use, the Committee believes that Blocks 12-21, Section 63 Turner should be removed from Rule 44 and Criteria 44 of the Inner north Precinct Code.

RECOMMENDATION 2

- 3.15 **The Committee recommends that Rule 44, restricting use on Blocks 12-21, Section 63 Turner should be removed from the *Inner North Precinct Code*.**
- 3.16 The Committee believes that concerns about traffic associated with Turner School need to be managed on the school site where they are related to student pick-up and drop-off. Residential parking provisions are discussed further in part 8.34 of this report.
- 3.17 The Committee notes the concerns of other Turner residents about achieving a balance of housing types and size to attract a mix of residents to the Turner community. The issue of the scale of development and housing variety in RZ3 and RZ4 zones is dealt with in more detail at part 7 of this report.

Section 47, Turner

- 3.18 In 2001, a moratorium on redevelopment was also placed on Section 47 in Turner.⁵⁷ The moratorium came into effect following an inquiry by the Fourth Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services into Section Master Planning Turner Sections 46, 47, 48 and 62 (report No. 75). That Inquiry had received a strong response from lessees in Section 47 indicating that they had no interest in selling or redeveloping their property in the foreseeable future and that they sought some assurances on the future of their neighbourhood.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁷ Territory Plan, Part 10.3, *Inner North Precinct Code, Part C (4) Turner*, p21.

⁵⁸ *Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services, Report No. 75, August 2001*, p.1 - referring to the Transcript of the public hearing of 6 April 2001.

Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services therefore recommended at that time:

...that Section 47 Turner be treated in the same manner as Section 63 Turner, and that a Section Master Plan be developed which reflects the fact that there is no redevelopment intention for the section.⁵⁹

- 3.19 The ACT Government agreed to the recommendation but upheld the view that an RZ3 zoning for the section remained appropriate and that a periodic review would gauge future intentions of lessees.⁶⁰

Comments in Favour of Keeping the Moratorium

- 3.20 The Committee received 19 submissions discussing the moratorium on Section 47 Turner. Of those, 12 supported keeping the moratorium, generally believing that the only densification in that section should be via dual occupancies.⁶¹

Heritage

- 3.21 The majority of those in support of the moratorium believe that the area has some heritage value. A heritage nomination that was submitted in 2004, nominating Sections 46 to 50 Turner, was rejected on the grounds 'that a historical background was needed before the application could be properly considered as warranting heritage listing'.⁶² The Committee notes that the Heritage Council advised the National Trust in 2005 that, whilst it had not accepted the nomination, it would like the nomination to progress but required further information before the nomination could be considered.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services, Report No. 75, August 2001, Recommendation 2, p14.*

⁶⁰ *Government Response to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services, Report No 75, 'Section Master Plans for Turner Section 46, 47, 48 and 62', p3.*

⁶¹ Submissions 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 22, 27, 28, 32, 45.

⁶² Submission 8, 28.

⁶³ ACT Heritage Council, *Statement of Reasons*, 'Decision regarding the inclusion of Section 47 Turner in an interim heritage places register', 2001.

- 3.22 The National Trust does not appear to have followed up on that correspondence.⁶⁴ The Committee heard that the National Trust did not win a grant to fund the necessary historical analysis so the application did not proceed any further.⁶⁵
- 3.23 Most residents of Section 47 Turner believe that the historical background should be researched and a new heritage nomination made before the moratorium is removed to ensure its heritage status is resolved.⁶⁶ The Committee notes that residents of Section 47 Turner, the National Trust, or any other party is able to submit a request for heritage consideration to the ACT Heritage Council at any point, should they wish to follow up on these concerns.

Character, Streetscapes and Housing Type

- 3.24 Submissions to the Committee also wanted to maintain the character and streetscapes of Section 47 Turner, citing that the area is a good example of post-war bungalow style housing with wider streets and that too few of these original areas remain.⁶⁷
- 3.25 Those in support of the moratorium also emphasised that retaining or ‘formalising’ the moratorium on Section 47 by reclassifying the section to RZ1 residential zoning would maintain the sense of community spirit that has developed amongst those residents. They advised the Committee that that sense of community would be lost if redevelopment were to take place.⁶⁸
- 3.26 The need for a mix of housing types and maintaining some ‘family’ housing in Turner was also raised in support of maintaining the moratorium on Section 47⁶⁹, however submitters argued against a mix of housing types being included in a single section.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Advice provided to the Committee Secretary by the Heritage Unit, 26 October 2010.

⁶⁵ Mr Archer of Section 47 Turner, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p82.

⁶⁶ Submission 8, 10, 28, 32.

⁶⁷ Submission 9, 10, 12, 22, 28.

⁶⁸ Submission 13, 22, 32, 45.

⁶⁹ Submission 8, 12, 45.

⁷⁰ Submission 10.

Comments against the Moratorium

- 3.27 Another six submissions to the Committee believed the moratorium on Section 47 should be removed.⁷¹
- 3.28 Reasons specifically relating to Section 47 included the notion that the moratorium has achieved its original aim in slowing development in the area⁷² but now a blanket prohibition in that section is not appropriate.⁷³
- 3.29 Some residents of the area highlighted to the Committee that the existing housing is of poor quality and has little heritage value and in some cases are being mothballed.⁷⁴ They suggested that retaining the moratorium is discriminatory and that residents should be able to extend or demolish current dwellings just as other homeowners in the ACT are generally able to do.⁷⁵ Similarly, they noted that Section 47 is the same or similar to others in the vicinity and should be subject to the same redevelopment rules⁷⁶ and should be ‘opened up for redevelopment in a controlled and measured way’.⁷⁷

Suburban Renewal

- 3.30 More general support for removing the moratorium on Section 47 focused on the need for greater densification close to the city centre.⁷⁸
- 3.31 Submissions to the Committee cited the need to reduce urban sprawl, and stop ‘misuse’ of land which is a non-renewable resource.⁷⁹ Submitters also supported making greater use of existing infrastructure, increasing the public transport catchment and making optimal use of land and public open spaces. They particularly supported providing more residents with the opportunity to live in proximity to central amenities and services such as schools, community services and shops.⁸⁰

⁷¹ Submission 11, 15, 20, 30, 44, 51.

⁷² Submission 44.

⁷³ Submission 15.

⁷⁴ Submission 15; Mr Emil Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p33.

⁷⁵ Submission 15, 20

⁷⁶ Submission 30.

⁷⁷ Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p30.

⁷⁸ Submission 11, 15, 44, 51.

⁷⁹ Submission 11.

⁸⁰ Submission 15, 44, 51.

- 3.32 Submission emphasised to the Committee that suburban renewal development is cheaper and more sustainable than greenfield developments,⁸¹ although any redevelopment must be high quality and ecologically sensitive.⁸² They also noted that denser building ratios provide larger volumes of affordable housing.⁸³
- 3.33 Regarding the inner north redevelopment area, a couple of submissions reinforced the notion that Sullivans Creek provides a natural delineation between higher and lower density areas which should guide future redevelopment.⁸⁴
- 3.34 The AIA also noted that allowing the current intentions of existing residents to be the basis for determining planning policy is a debateable practice. They highlighted that development and the rate of change will remain gradual in any area where the majority of existing residents do not wish to sell so a policy-based restriction is unnecessary.⁸⁵

Committee Comments

- 3.35 The Committee notes that as there are not currently any confirmed heritage considerations with regard to Section 47, and therefore the designated RZ3 zoning under the Territory Plan should apply. The area is highly suitable for higher density development considering its proximity to the city and the Haig Park open space directly adjacent to the section.
- 3.36 The Committee recognises that retaining the streetscape of the area, particularly the canopy of street trees and verge widths is important to the garden city character of inner Canberra and believes that these should be retained.
- 3.37 The Committee notes that Section 47 retains an RZ3 zoning. Any re-zoning of a block (or Section) in the Territory requires a Variation to the Territory Plan. Territory Plan Variations are subject to a public consultation process conducted by ACTPLA as required by the *Planning and Land Development Act 2007* and may then be referred to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning,

⁸¹ Submission 51.

⁸² Submission 15.

⁸³ Submission 51.

⁸⁴ Submission 15, 29; Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p32.

⁸⁵ Submission 25, p9.

Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services for separate inquiry and report. The Committee therefore notes that any future redevelopment would not be of an unexpected scale.

RECOMMENDATION 3

- 3.38 **The Committee recommends that Rule 44, restricting use on Section 47 Turner should be removed from the *Inner North Precinct Code*.⁸⁶**

RECOMMENDATION 4

- 3.39 **The Committee recommends that existing street trees in good condition and verge widths should be maintained.**

⁸⁶ Ms Le Couteur expressed the view that the moratorium should not be lifted until the Committee's other recommendations which aim at improving the quality of residential development and amenity are implemented. These are recommendations 4 -12 and 15. The rest of the Committee did not support this change to the recommendation.

Ms Le Couteur expressed the view that the decision with respect to section 47 was a difficult one. Most – but not all – landowners support a moratorium. While Heritage listing could provide a rationale for a moratorium the residents have not sought to finalise the work for such a listing. As you can see from Ms Le Couteur's additional comments she is of the view that the inner north precinct is suitable for more residential development than at present. She believes that even if the moratorium was supported at this time there would be continuing pressure leading to more reviews and eventual removal.

4 HIGHER DENSITY DEVELOPMENT – INNER NORTH

- 4.1 The Committee supports the concept of higher density development along transport corridors and in proximity to town centres in principle. However, the appropriate application of the densification concept requires considerable additional research and consultation with stakeholders including the broader ACT community and there are key planning considerations that must be taken into account.

Drivers for Change

Demographics and Household Size

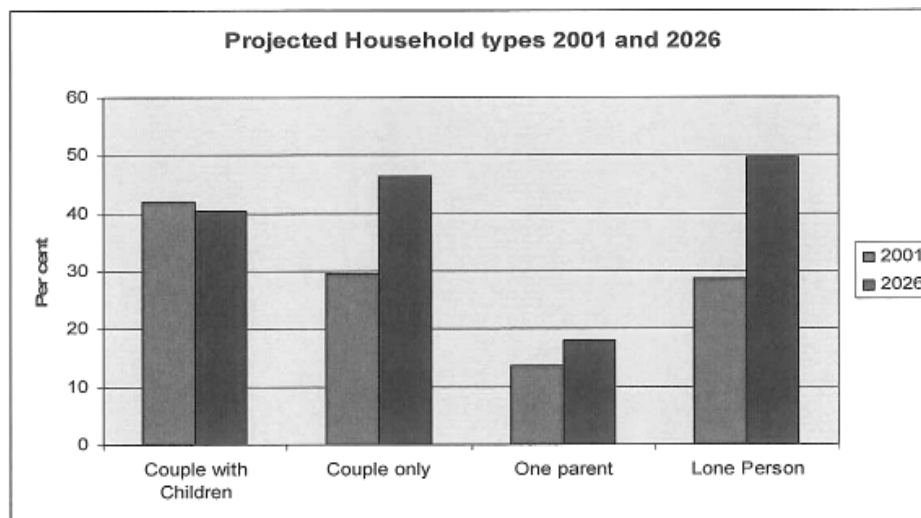
- 4.2 The Committee acknowledges that Canberra's demographics are changing with an ageing population and an evident increase in couple and sole person households.
- 4.3 According to the report *Canberra at the 2006 Consensus, Population and Housing*, between 2001 and 2006 there was an increase in the number of people aged over 55 years and a decline in those aged less than 15 years.⁸⁷
- 4.4 The report noted that between 1996 and 2006, there were appreciable increases in couple households without children and lone person households, and no growth in households consisting of a couple with children.⁸⁸
- 4.5 The census also discovered that dwelling occupancy rates fell from 2.69 persons per dwelling in 1996 to 2.55 persons per dwelling in 2006.⁸⁹
- 4.6 Projections by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicate that there are unlikely to be increases in couple-with-children households between 1996 and

⁸⁷ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, p5.

⁸⁸ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, p 14.

⁸⁹ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, p 7.

2026 but there will be substantial growth in couple without children, single parent and lone person households.⁹⁰



Source: ABS Household and Family Projections from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (*Cat No 3236.0*) ⁹¹

- 4.7 The Committee notes that residential redevelopment needs to reflect these predicted population and household changes and provide for a variety of dwelling choices throughout Canberra.

Climate Change

- 4.8 The Committee also acknowledges that there will be a limit to Canberra's ability to build in Greenfield sites in the future. Climate change is an acknowledged issue for all cities when planning for future growth.
- 4.9 In 2004 the ACT Government published an ecological footprint for Canberra which suggested that:

...because of our affluence, the density of our city, and our location, we are consuming at levels which are slightly higher than nationally and that the land required to maintain our lifestyle is greater than the area of the ACT.⁹²

⁹⁰ Submission 24; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household and Family Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2031* Catalogue 3236.0, 2004.

⁹¹ Submission 24; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household and Family Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2031* Catalogue 3236.0, 2004.

⁹² ACTPLA website, *Sustainability Issues in Canberra – background* webpage, available at: http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/topics/significant_projects/change/sustainable_future/sustainability_issues_in_canberra__background at 25 January 2010.

- 4.10 The ACT's emission profile is different to the national profile. There is almost no heavy industry or intensive agriculture in the Territory; instead our emissions are primarily (72.2%) due to heavy consumption of electricity (and gas) to heat, cool and light our buildings followed (distantly but significantly) by our use of motor vehicles (22.8%).
- 4.11 Due to the ACT's unique emissions profile⁹³, it is important that our building energy efficiency, urban planning and transport planning and practices are addressed.
- 4.12 Further reading on the climate change issue can be found in the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water's 2009 interim report on ACT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets.⁹⁴
- 4.13 Given predictions that petrol prices could become more expensive, it is likely that changes in our transport system will eventuate. Most of the areas considered by this inquiry are close to frequent bus services and significant parts are within walking distance to the centers of Civic and/or Dickson. This makes it a good area for intensification.⁹⁵

⁹³ ACTPLA website, *Sustainability Issues in Canberra – background* webpage.

⁹⁴ Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water, Report 2, *Inquiry into ACT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets*, Interim Report 2009, available at:
<http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/downloads/reports/CCEW02%20Green%20Gas%20revised%20inclu%20errata.pdf>

⁹⁵ Mr Coe believes it is important to consider the car parking needs for residents of higher density developments.

5 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS - STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 5.1 A large proportion of the evidence provided to the Committee called for more strategic implementation of densification policies across the inner north, rather than what many saw as a current ‘piecemeal’ approach to redevelopment.⁹⁶
- 5.2 The Committee heard from a group of Dickson residents who expressed their desire for orderly development, ‘not random acquisition of individual extant housing and conversion on that site into over-scaled, cheaply constructed dwellings...creating shading on neighbours’.⁹⁷ They noted that a lot of the developments in Dickson is overbearing and out of character with the existing housing and the streetscapes.⁹⁸
- 5.3 Similarly residents from Section 63 Turner highlighted the need for redevelopment to be strategic, taking into account established land uses, community infrastructure like schools and the needs of the current and future community, rather than ‘an over-reliance on a policy of increasing housing densities along transport corridors in established areas’.⁹⁹

Community Consultation

- 5.4 The Committee notes that any strategic planning process will require broad consultation with the Canberra community particularly about densification and redevelopment across all of Canberra, not just the inner north.
- 5.5 The Chief Planning Executive advised the Committee that the opportunity for the community to be involved in a broader strategic planning would occur soon with the evaluation of the Canberra Spatial Plan and via the sustainable futures

⁹⁶ Submission 6, 14, 34, 36, 43, 46, 48, 50; Section 63 residents (Sub 31), *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86; Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72-3.

⁹⁷ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72.

⁹⁸ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p74.

⁹⁹ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86

initiative.¹⁰⁰ The Committee notes that the 'Canberra 2030 Time to Talk' initiative also provided an avenue for a broader discussion on densification.

- 5.6 Submissions to the Committee and witnesses, however, demonstrated a particular desire to see more strategic planning at the neighbourhood or suburb level, not just the overarching policy.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.7 Many groups presenting evidence to the Committee noted that the neighbourhood planning processes undertaken prior to the implementation of the new Territory Plan had been a suitable way for communities to be involved in strategic suburb planning and in the complex process of urban renewal.¹⁰¹
- 5.8 The Committee was advised that the neighbourhood planning process was useful to establish the community's desire for a suburb's character and establish some overarching neighbourhood planning vision.¹⁰² Many expressed frustration at the current community involvement processes where, to have a say, the public is essentially forced to comment on individual development applications as they arise.¹⁰³ The Committee heard that this process is time consuming and repetitive, with the same concerns and issues continuing to present in development applications and consistently being highlighted by the public as non compliant with the Territory Plan.¹⁰⁴ The Committee notes that the Legislative Assembly moved a motion on improved neighbourhood planning, calling on the ACT Government to develop 'a process for meaningful consultation with the Canberra community on planning' with enhanced master planning processes.¹⁰⁵
- 5.9 The Dickson residents group noted that there was scope for orderly redevelopment of some older housing in Dickson but would like to see more

¹⁰⁰ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p46.

¹⁰¹ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p71.

¹⁰² Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp71-3.

¹⁰³ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p75.

¹⁰⁴ Submission 9; *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p76 &90

¹⁰⁵ Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings* No.73—25 August 2010, pp834-836.

engagement of residents.¹⁰⁶ The Committee heard the Dickson Neighbourhood Plan, for example, should be revised via a consultative process to ‘establish a cohesive vision for planning and development across the entire suburb’ and ‘providing greater certainty in planning issues for both residents and developers.’¹⁰⁷ They emphasised that the revised plan should be based on most recent population and demographic projections and that consultation should include the views of all key stakeholders including residents, developers, government, ACTPLA, independent town planners, architects and experts in sustainable building.¹⁰⁸

Intent of Zonings

- 5.10 The Committee heard from the AIA that improved strategic planning should also include a review of all the Territory Plan zones, which should consider the intention of each zone type and the basic principles that each zone is trying to achieve.¹⁰⁹ They noted that the development codes need to be written simply and clearly, including the elements that are going to characterise RZ3 zones as opposed to the RZ4 zones and outlining what objectives for those zones are going to distinguish them from RZ2 or RZ1 zones.¹¹⁰
- 5.11 The PIA raised similar concerns including the need for more guidance on zone intentions and expectations.¹¹¹ They advised the Committee that the RZ4 zones are ‘not sufficiently accommodating the population growth needed to the extent proposed in the 2004 spatial plan’ and therefore not meeting their key objective or meeting changing household and community needs.¹¹²
- 5.12 The PIA considers that there is a ‘disconnect between the policies and the zones as they are laid out’¹¹³ and that the RZ3 and RZ4 policies and development controls

¹⁰⁶ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72 & 77.

¹⁰⁷ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p73.

¹⁰⁸ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p73.

¹⁰⁹ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p23.

¹¹⁰ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p23.

¹¹¹ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p12.

¹¹² PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p9.

¹¹³ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p9.

do not allow for the desired level of density in the inner north. Compared to the density in outer suburbs, such as Banks and Dunlop where there are around 30 people per hectare, the inner north suburbs have a much lower population density. O'Connor and Ainslie, for instance, house only about 21 people per hectare.¹¹⁴

- 5.13 They also argued that the Sullivan's Creek corridor creates enough delineation between low and medium density housing that the objective of RZ3 zoning as a transition may be unnecessary in Turner.¹¹⁵
- 5.14 The PIA advised the Committee that zones should be differentiated within the codes with the use of density controls and by determining the character for each zone type.¹¹⁶ The Committee heard that currently the zone controls do not have a bearing on density in terms of number of dwellings or number of people in a land area. The current zoning system relies on plot ratio and height controls which relate more to the bulk and scale of the built form.¹¹⁷
- 5.15 The Committee notes that the ACT Government is currently undertaking a review of the 2004 Canberra Spatial Plan¹¹⁸ as well as a review of the policy content in the Territory Plan.¹¹⁹ The Territory Plan review will include a 'progressive review of the land use codes in the Territory Plan'¹²⁰ and has so far resulted in the release of Draft Variations 301, 302 and 303 which propose changes to the residential subdivision, community facility and single residential development codes.¹²¹
- 5.16 The Committee believes that that these reviews should include an examination of the intent of each residential zone and mixed use zone type and clarification of how the intent will be achieved. The reviews should establish how the zones are

¹¹⁴ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p10.

¹¹⁵ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp8-9.

¹¹⁶ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p9.

¹¹⁷ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p9.

¹¹⁸ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p43.

¹¹⁹ ACTPLA, *Territory Plan Review*, available at: http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools_resources/legislation_plans_registers/plans/territory_plan/territory_plan_review

¹²⁰ Canberra 2030, *Land Use and Planning*, Discussion Paper, available at: <http://canberra2030.org.au/focus/landuseandplanning/>

¹²¹ Canberra 2030, *Land Use and Planning*, Discussion Paper.

distinct from each other, particularly the intent of each different zone and the type of developments the community can expect.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- 5.17 **The Committee recommends that, in the current reviews of the Spatial Plan and Territory Plan, ACT Planning and Land Authority includes an appraisal of all zone objectives and development codes in order to clarify the distinction between, and intent of each residential zone and the mixed use zone.**

6 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS - HOUSING MIX

- 6.1 One of the greatest criticisms from witnesses and in submissions regarding recent higher-density redevelopments in inner north Canberra has been the lack of variety in the recent dwelling types on offer.¹²²
- 6.2 The Committee heard that recent redevelopment appears to be driven by the investor market which has led to predominantly one and two bedroom apartments being built¹²³, and not offering much ‘family accommodation’. The Committee also heard that this, in turn, is changing the character and community of the suburbs – particularly in Turner and Braddon.¹²⁴
- 6.3 The Committee was advised that in Turner, for example, redevelopment with mainly apartments has progressed in a ‘crude’ fashion and has seen a demographic change in those areas, in particular a reduction in children in high density areas of the suburb.¹²⁵ A study commissioned by ACTPLA on ‘Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability’ also found that a striking difference between the surveyed Greenfield and Brownfield sites was the lack of presence of children in the Turner Brownfield survey. This became important in terms of perceived community needs and forms of local community participation.¹²⁶
- 6.4 A number of witnesses also commented that the trend for one and two bedroom apartments was attracting more ‘transient residents’ such as students who were not likely to remain in those dwellings for a long time.¹²⁷
- 6.5 Residents of Section 63 Turner advised the Committee that the market has also not delivered the necessary mix of housing that current planning policies aspire for in the RZ3 and RZ4 inner north zones.¹²⁸

¹²² Submission 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 39, 46, 49, 50.

¹²³ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86.

¹²⁴ Section 47 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p81; Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86; TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p16.

¹²⁵ Section 47 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p83.

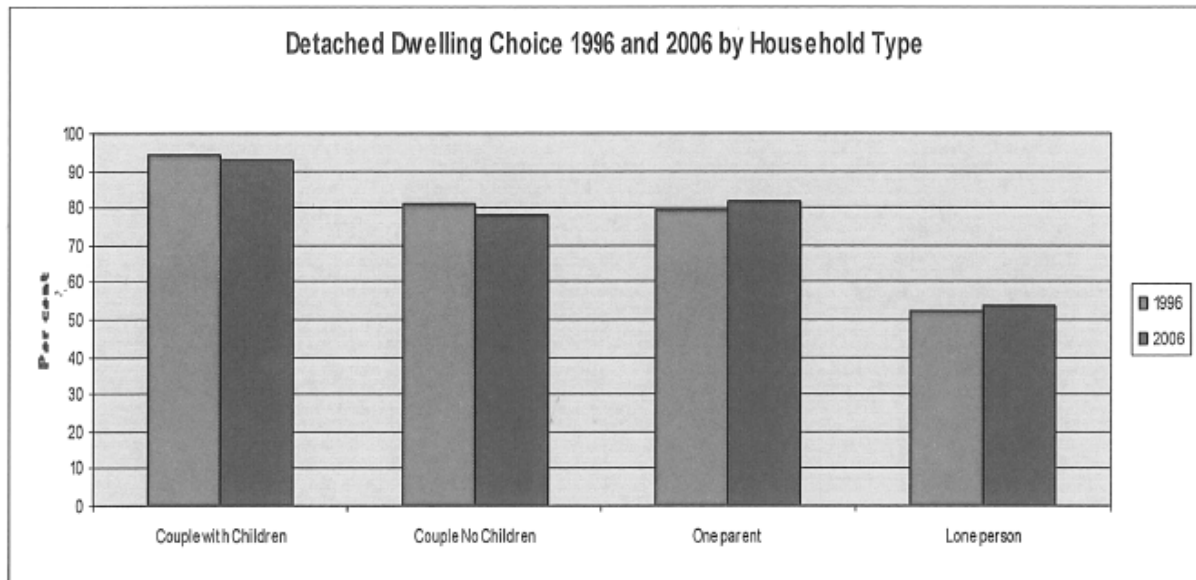
¹²⁶ ACTPLA, *Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability: a Canberra Study*, 2009, p3.

¹²⁷ Submission 9, 23, 31; Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86; TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp16-17; Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p32.

¹²⁸ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p86.

Housing Preferences

- 6.6 The Committee notes that housing preference for the majority of Canberrans is for a detached dwelling on its own block. In 2006, for example, 93 per cent of couple with children households lived in separate dwellings.¹²⁹



Source: ABS 1996 and 2006 Census's of Population and Housing

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- 6.7 Couple without children households appear slightly more likely to live in townhouses or apartments with only 78 per cent of couple without children households living in separate dwellings in 2006. There was a small increase in such households living in higher density dwellings between 1996 and 2006.
- 6.8 Similarly, lone person households are the most likely to live in apartments or flats, with around 25 per cent in apartments and around another 20 per cent of lone person households living in townhouses in 2006.¹³¹
- 6.9 The Committee notes, however, that between 1996 and 2006 the demand for townhouses and apartments rose very marginally overall and single dwellings are still the predominant housing choice in Canberra.¹³² It is not clear if that is due to demand or a potentially limited supply of alternative choices.

¹²⁹ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, p14.

¹³⁰ Submission 24, p10.

¹³¹ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, pp14-15.

¹³² ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, pp14-15.

- 6.10 The Minister for Planning advised the Committee that housing stock is going to have to change to suit the changing household structures and envisioned that the market would demand that change including a ‘reduction in the number of traditional family households in this city’.¹³³ A change in household type has also been predicted by the ABS.¹³⁴

Sense of Community

- 6.11 Without a mix of housing, the Committee heard that the inner north suburbs will lose their sense of community.
- 6.12 The Committee heard from Section 47 residents that a sense of community for them comes generally from a ‘very complex set of influences and confluences of people and geography and sociology’.¹³⁵ They outlined for the Committee what they thought contributed to the strong sense of community amongst their residents, including the opportunity for ‘planned and incidental encounters’, an emotional connection and trust in neighbours.¹³⁶ They also noted the mix of ages in the section added to the sense of community.
- 6.13 The Committee was advised that community is a function of the people who are there and can actually be strengthened by proximity to others.¹³⁷
- 6.14 The Committee heard that residents were concerned that the current mix of ages and community would be lost if redevelopment consisted primarily of one and two bedroom apartments because they do not generally attract families. The Section 47 residents also cited the ‘popularly held view’ that apartments tend to have high frequency turnover of residents who do not become part of the established community.¹³⁸

¹³³ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p48.

¹³⁴ Submission 24, p11.

¹³⁵ Section 47 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p81.

¹³⁶ Section 47 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp81-2.

¹³⁷ Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p30.

¹³⁸ Section 47 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp81-2.

- 6.15 The Committee notes that the *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing* report indicated that a higher percentage of apartments and townhouses are rented than separate houses. Some 30 per cent of households were renting in 2006 with 21 per cent of separate houses rented, 49 per cent of townhouses and 74 per cent of apartments.¹³⁹ The 'Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability' study also found a significant difference in housing tenure between the surveyed residents of Greenfield and the Brownfield areas. Over half of the Turner respondents were either renting their dwelling privately or were in government rental housing, which is not necessarily short term. Apart from the presence of a group of Defence rental households in the Greenfield survey, most Greenfields households were owner-occupiers.¹⁴⁰ The higher level of renters amongst apartment dwellers may contribute to a higher turnover of residents.
- 6.16 The TRA similarly acknowledged the need to achieve a balance between some form of higher density living in key areas and the desire to maintain a sense of community.¹⁴¹ They also noted the need for an 'appropriate balance between the types of dwellings to achieve and attract a mix of people to the area'¹⁴² including long term residents, families and students.
- 6.17 The Committee is of the opinion that developments should aim to encourage a sense of community by providing common areas such as gardens, dining areas, lounge areas etc.

Development Approaches

- 6.18 In light of these concerns, many submissions and witnesses to the committee stressed the need for a reasonable variety and diversity of residential accommodation, including of one, two and three-bedroom dwellings, in order to attract a range of residents and form a good community mix.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ ACTPLA, *Canberra at the 2006 Census, Population and Housing*, December 2007, p17.

¹⁴⁰ ACTPLA, *Community Formation and Attitudes to Sustainability: a Canberra Study*, 2009, p3.

¹⁴¹ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p15.

¹⁴² TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p16.

¹⁴³ Submission 6, 8, 9, 12, 17, 23, 30, 31; Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p75; Mr Colin Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp5-6.

- 6.19 The Dickson residents group, for example, advised that the 2003 Dickson neighbourhood plan had outlined a vision for that suburb as a residential suburb with provision for older people as well as young families.¹⁴⁴ They noted that future development needs to include housing for older residents who wish to age in place and that universal design principles should be incorporated into all new residential buildings.¹⁴⁵ They also highlighted that the existing neighbourhood plan included a commitment to a mix of dwelling sizes.
- 6.20 The Turner Residents association also advised that, whilst they are not against some one or two bedroom apartments in the suburb, planners and developers need to be imaginative about how higher density living can be achieved.¹⁴⁶
- 6.21 Mr Stewart advised that redevelopment needs to achieve a ‘diversity of living opportunities for communities—all communities: young and old, rich and poor—and diversity in the types of units—garden units, lift access units, walk-up units.’¹⁴⁷

Townhouses and Larger Dwellings

- 6.22 Section 63 Turner residents advised the Committee that there is a gap in the diversity of the market between detached housing and one and two bedroom apartments. They noted that there is not much affordable family housing available to make appropriate use of local services including Turner School.¹⁴⁸ Blue Gum Community School also advised that the demand for services like schools and childcare facilities should be an integral part of planning decisions around suburban infill.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p73.

¹⁴⁵ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p73.

¹⁴⁶ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p16.

¹⁴⁷ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2.

¹⁴⁸ Submission 23, 29; Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p88.

¹⁴⁹ Submission 1.

- 6.23 Highlighting similar concerns, many of the Committee's witnesses and submitters proposed that a better housing mix would need to include more dual occupancies and three bedroom dwellings in the inner north with adequate size living areas and small garden spaces.¹⁵⁰ The Dickson residents group also noted that the Dickson neighbourhood plan mentions the virtues of terrace housing in the context of densification.¹⁵¹
- 6.24 The Committee was also advised that townhouses could be more easily designed to fit in with the scale of existing single residences than apartment complexes, particularly in terms of character of housing and the streetscape of existing inner north neighbourhoods.¹⁵²
- 6.25 Another submission noted the benefits of allowing dual occupancy developments in order to achieve higher density housing and maintain the character of the area.¹⁵³ The Committee was advised that currently the *Inner North Precinct Code* does not allow for dual occupancy developments where the additional dwelling is located to the rear of the block behind an existing dwelling or a new dwelling.¹⁵⁴ The Committee notes that this seems to be at odds with the intent of the restriction 'to provide for a range of residential forms whilst maintaining the residential character of the locality'.¹⁵⁵

Accessible housing

- 6.26 The Committee was also advised that the housing mix needed to include dwellings suitable for older residents to allow them to age in place, particularly by incorporating universal design principles into all new residential developments.¹⁵⁶ This concept is discussed at part 7.27 of this report.

¹⁵⁰ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p88; Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp30, 32, 35. Submission 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 23, 29

¹⁵¹ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72.

¹⁵² Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p34.

¹⁵³ Submission 4b

¹⁵⁴ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Part A, 'Restrictions on Use' Rule 1, p3.

¹⁵⁵ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Part A, 'Restrictions on Use' Rule 1, p3.

¹⁵⁶ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p73.

Current Requirements

- 6.27 The Committee notes that the *Inner North Precinct Code* does apply some controls on redevelopment to encourage a mix of dwelling types. Rule 2 of the General Development Controls requires that:
- On a block greater than 3000m², a variety of dwelling sizes must be provided i.e., 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings are required.¹⁵⁷
- 6.28 The Committee also notes however, that in many cases such as in Section 46 and Section 63 Turner, to achieve a block greater than 3000m² three or more existing residential blocks would generally need to be amalgamated. Recent redevelopments and development applications in Turner, Dickson and Braddon, as cited by witnesses and submissions to the Committee, do not appear to be amalgamating blocks to this extent and many are single-block developments with 10 or 12 apartments.¹⁵⁸
- 6.29 The Committee was advised that ‘there does not seem to be much flexibility in the current codes’¹⁵⁹ and notes that that Rule 2 does not appear to achieve the intent of ‘providing a range of residential forms whilst maintaining the residential character of the locality’¹⁶⁰ Additionally, the above rule does not specify the proportion of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings within that block and a development could meet this requirement by providing only one 3-bedroom dwelling within a complex.
- 6.30 The *Inner North Precinct Code* Control Plans also specify the required minimum block amalgamation¹⁶¹, and the Committee notes that in many cases, there is no minimum block amalgamation or the minimum block amalgamation is of only two blocks not three.
- 6.31 It is not clear whether the intent of the small minimum block amalgamation requirements is designed to encourage smaller scale redevelopment to blend with

¹⁵⁷ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Part A, p3.

¹⁵⁸ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp73-75; Section 47 residents (Sub 8), *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p83; TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p16.

¹⁵⁹ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p88.

¹⁶⁰ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Part A, p3.

¹⁶¹ Territory Plan, Part 10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Part A, p4.

the existing housing stock and streetscape. However, it appears to hinder the development of a mix of housing types.

Privacy

- 6.32 The Committee was also advised that the prevalence of apartment blocks in redevelopment areas is creating privacy concerns amongst existing, single-dwelling residents.¹⁶² The TRA highlighted its concerns about the impact on privacy from multi unit development overlooking existing single dwellings in Turner.¹⁶³
- 6.33 The Committee notes that redevelopment needs to achieve a balance between privacy and proximity to neighbours.

Affordability

- 6.34 The Committee acknowledges that a mix of housing types is also necessary to appeal to a mix of households and create a community that can make use of all the services on offer in the inner north.
- 6.35 The AIA advised the Committee that it is critical for affordable housing to be provided as part of any housing mix along Northbourne Avenue and areas in close proximity because of the ease of access to services, facilities and employment.¹⁶⁴
- 6.36 The Committee acknowledges that given high land prices in the area, that achieving affordability is challenging. It strongly supports maintaining the existing quantity of public housing and considering any innovation that will lead to more affordable housing.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Submission 9, 12,

¹⁶³ Submission 9, TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p19.

¹⁶⁴ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21.

¹⁶⁵ Mr Coe believes that if the Government had better policies to address housing affordability issues, there would be less demand for public housing.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- 6.37 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Planning and Land Authority review the development codes, particularly where they apply to multi-unit developments in RZ3 and RZ4 residential redevelopment areas, and ensure that new developments are encouraged, where appropriate, to include a mix of one, two and three bedroom dwellings.¹⁶⁶**

¹⁶⁶ Mr Coe disagrees with this recommendation.

7 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS - DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

- 7.1 Submissions to the Committee and witnesses to this inquiry consistently raised concerns about the quality of redevelopments which have been built in the inner north over recent years, particularly multi-unit developments.¹⁶⁷ Many stressed that they were not against redevelopment if it were well designed, sustainable, designed and built to last and if it respected the character and streetscape of the suburb.¹⁶⁸ As discussed above, the committee was advised that developments also need a variety of dwelling sizes to be incorporated.
- 7.2 One submission to the Committee also noted the need to maintain the garden city character within the RZ3 and RZ4 sections north of Macarthur and Wakefield Avenues.¹⁶⁹ Similar concerns for streetscape character and retention of existing large trees were raised by a group of Dickson residents.¹⁷⁰

Design Quality Assessment

- 7.3 In response to design concerns, the PIA proposed to the Committee that some form of design quality panel could be established to 'help the community have confidence in the outcomes of the planning authority and its development assessment process.'¹⁷¹ They note that in low and medium density areas where proposals are submitted for large groups of units on small block areas, the community is likely to be more concerned about the impacts on streetscape, amenity and the visual impact.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p10; Submission 27, 32, 48;

¹⁶⁸ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p10;
Submission 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 29, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Submission 31.

¹⁷⁰ Submission 48.

¹⁷¹ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p11.

¹⁷² PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p11.

- 7.4 Residents of Section 63 Turner advised the Committee that the 'Plan for Adelaide' includes the establishment of a similar assessment body, a Commission for Integrated Design 'to advise on quality in the built environment including the position of the Government Architect as part of a multidisciplinary Commission team.'¹⁷³
- 7.5 The Dickson residents group highlighted that such a panel would help the community feel more certain that ACTPLA checked all development applications to make sure they are consistent with the guidelines.¹⁷⁴ The Committee also heard from residents of Section 63 Turner that ACTPLA does not appear to assess DAs against the basic development controls before they are put out for public consultation. They advised the Committee that there were many instances where a proposed development did not meet appropriate codes and ACTPLA had not identified those compliance issues. The Committee heard that there is a risk that non-compliant developments are being passed with little scrutiny.¹⁷⁵
- 7.6 The Minister for Planning advised the committee that due to the 'highly subjective nature' of these redevelopments it would be inappropriate to establish a 'committee of good taste'.¹⁷⁶ He noted that even those within the design profession disagree about what is a high-quality development.¹⁷⁷ The Chief Planning Executive also advised the Committee that it is not possible to 'regulate for taste' but that the broad principles of good design are included in the development codes, such as the use of architectural relief on building facades.¹⁷⁸ The Committee heard that the Major Project Review Group includes architects, urban designers and landscape architects who provide their comments on large projects but that final design appearance cannot be regulated.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, QTON, information also available at: *The 30-year Plan for Greater Adelaide* <http://www.dplg.sa.gov.au/plan4adelaide/html/plan.cfm>.

¹⁷⁴ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp76-7.

¹⁷⁵ Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p90.

¹⁷⁶ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p48.

¹⁷⁷ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p48.

¹⁷⁸ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p48-9.

¹⁷⁹ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p49.

RECOMMENDATION 7

- 7.7 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Planning and Land Authority investigate models of design and construction quality assessment in Australia and internationally, undertaken with a view to whether a similar body could be established in the ACT. The review should consider how such bodies operate without overstepping the bounds of individual taste and choice in building design.**

Sustainability

- 7.8 The Committee notes that many of the concerns highlighted in submissions and by witnesses regarding quality of design actually related, not just the aesthetics of a building appearance, but to an apparent lack of consideration for sustainability in multi-unit developments such as passive solar design.¹⁸⁰
- 7.9 Most of those who commented on sustainability want to see multi-unit developments that demonstrate environmental values including solar access, north facing units and little to no overshadowing of neighbouring houses and units.¹⁸¹
- 7.10 The TRA stressed to the Committee the need for energy use to be taking into account when designing multi-unit developments. They particularly noted the need for all units to have access to space where clothes can be dried naturally, rather than forcing reliance on dryers. They outlined their concern that many multi-unit complexes also need 24 hour lighting for security, even in car parks and bike parking areas.¹⁸²
- 7.11 The AIA emphasised to the Committee that, however higher density development occurs, it is essential that water and energy efficiency are at the highest level

¹⁸⁰ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp74-5; Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2; TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p18; AIA *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21; Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p87 & QTON; Submission 6, 29, 48.

¹⁸¹ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp74-5; Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2; TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p18; AIA *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21; Section 63 residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p87 & QTON; Submission 4, 14, 15, 25, 29, 32, 37, 43, 46, 48, 50.

¹⁸² TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p18.

possible.¹⁸³ They also noted that the community needs to discuss ‘how we are going to live in this city’, citing the need for behavioural change in peoples lifestyle and demands to which the building form can contribute, such as clothes drying practices.¹⁸⁴ The AIA noted that buildings have to reward residents ‘for operating without high levels of energy use’ and when increasing density it is a good opportunity to change the current dependence on technologies like air conditioning.¹⁸⁵

7.12 With regards to ventilation, the AIA advised the Committee that when building higher density developments it is possible to have hybrid systems for natural flow-through ventilation or use outside air through other systems.¹⁸⁶

7.13 Mr Stewart similarly advised the Committee that whilst there are many opportunities beyond Northbourne Avenue to implement higher density development it needs to be green ‘so that they are not increasing the levels of energy usage and wastage, which a lot of buildings are.’¹⁸⁷ Although they may be near transport corridors and near town centres and therefore likely to be reducing car travel, higher density buildings have to be green in order to spend less energy ‘than driving 30km to somewhere in the suburbs’¹⁸⁸ and achieve the desired health and environmental benefits of a walkable community.¹⁸⁹

7.14 The Committee notes that bike parking provision guidelines must be enforced.

Solar Access

7.15 Solar access was a particular issue of concern for many witnesses and submitters.¹⁹⁰ The TRA advised the Committee about a situation where residents of an existing dwelling, being overshadowed by a new development, were advised ‘that they only had a right of access to two hours sunlight per day’.¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21.

¹⁸⁴ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp24-25.

¹⁸⁵ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p25.

¹⁸⁶ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p25.

¹⁸⁷ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2.

¹⁸⁸ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p5.

¹⁸⁹ Submission 17.

¹⁹⁰ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p18; Submissions 4, 9, 14, 29, 43, 46, 48, 50.

¹⁹¹ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p18.

- 7.16 The Committee notes that the *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code* requires a minimum of three hours direct sunlight as outlined in the following Development Type Controls:

Rule 86: Development is sited to allow a minimum of 3 hours of direct sunlight onto the floor or internal wall of the main daytime living area of the dwelling between the hours of 9.00 am and 3.00 pm on 21 June (winter solstice).¹⁹²

- 7.17 In inner north Canberra the following is required:

Rule 146: Development is sited to allow a minimum of 3 hours of direct sunlight onto the floor or wall of the internal primary living space and the private open space of any dwelling within the development and any dwelling/s adjacent the subject site, between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm on 21 June (winter solstice).¹⁹³

- 7.18 The Committee heard that setting more ambitious targets or controls for sustainable living will encourage industry to create a more sustainable product.¹⁹⁴ With some good insulation, cross ventilation and solar access most units could achieve very high green star ratings according to the Australian Green Star Building Council rating system.¹⁹⁵

- 7.19 The Committee notes that Draft Variation to the Territory Plan Number 303 proposes changes to both the single dwelling and multi unit housing development codes to enhance solar access provisions and ‘limit overshadowing of neighbouring residential properties’¹⁹⁶. According to ACTPLA ‘the new rules are designed to restrict overshadowing of neighbouring properties to no more than a shadow cast by a 1.8 metre fence on the boundary.’¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² Territory Plan, Part 3.3, *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code*.

¹⁹³ Territory Plan, Part 3.3, *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code*.

¹⁹⁴ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp5-6.

¹⁹⁵ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p6.

¹⁹⁶ ACTPLA, A quick guide to draft variation 303 (DV 303), available at:

http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools_resources/legislation_plans_registers/plans/territory_plan/territory_plan_review/a_quick_guide_to_dv_303

¹⁹⁷ ACTPLA, A quick guide to draft variation 303 (DV 303), available at:

http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools_resources/legislation_plans_registers/plans/territory_plan/territory_plan_review/a_quick_guide_to_dv_303

- 7.20 The Committee believes that more ambitious solar access targets should be included in the development controls.¹⁹⁸

Efficiency of Buildings

- 7.21 The AIA outlined to the Committee details of research undertaken by Griffith University into the energy efficiency of today's higher rise developments. They noted that more sustainable outcomes and higher levels of efficiency are achieved in the four to six storey developments.¹⁹⁹
- 7.22 A report prepared by EnergyAustralia on energy efficiency of different housing types indicated similar findings. It proposed that townhouses and villas on average resulted in less total greenhouse gas emissions in tonnes of CO₂ per dwelling per annum (and per person), as well as less annual energy use per dwelling per year. Low rise development (up to three storeys) were the next efficient in terms of greenhouse gas emissions followed by mid rise developments (four to eight storeys).²⁰⁰ High rise buildings of nine or more storeys 'represented the least efficient housing form'²⁰¹ particularly when over ten storeys.
- 7.23 The Chief Planning Executive advised that 'absolute high rise does not necessarily work from an energy consumption point of view' because of the embodied energy in the building and the cost of common areas. He noted that development between six and 10 storeys appears to be the preferred height for energy efficiency. The Committee heard that in some European cases the rule of thumb for preferred height is what people are prepared to walk on a staircase, meaning around six and eight storeys.²⁰² The Chief Planning Executive also noted that such heights also have a human scale to them and are not as intimidating as high-rises.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Mr Coe disagrees with this comment. He believes that 'it is important that changes to development controls do not drive up the cost of housing. We must ensure that there is some flexibility at all levels of the planning process to ensure that a reasonable balance between yield, affordability and energy efficiency can be achieved.'

¹⁹⁹ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p24.

²⁰⁰ EnergyAustralia, *Multi Unit Residential Buildings, Energy and Peak Demand Study October 2005* [The study notes that given the limited number of buildings in the study, results are not statistically representative and should be interpreted with care. They do point to average energy use trends but also highlight areas of variability.]

²⁰¹ EnergyAustralia, *Multi Unit Residential Buildings, Energy and Peak Demand Study October 2005*, p10.

²⁰² Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p51.

²⁰³ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p51.

- 7.24 The AIA also highlighted to the Committee that development controls other than building height are what determine whether the desired level of density can be achieved to realise the energy efficiency benefits at lower heights.²⁰⁴
- 7.25 The Minister for Planning told the Committee that mandatory energy requirements through the Building Code of Australia (BCA) have progressed significantly in recent times, with six star energy ratings required for all single residential developments and increased requirement for multi-unit developments.²⁰⁵ He advised that the ACT Government's water sensitive urban design requirements as well as initiatives like the feed-in tariff are seeing more sustainable outcomes and have been in operation since July 2010.²⁰⁶

RECOMMENDATION 8

- 7.26 **The Committee recommends that multi-unit dwellings be designed to optimise energy efficiency.**

Universal and Adaptable Design

- 7.27 The Dickson resident group raised concerns to the Committee about the lack of consideration given to universal and adaptable design principles in many medium density residential redevelopments.²⁰⁷ Whilst there are proposed changes to recognise solar access, the development codes do not appear to address human access.²⁰⁸
- 7.28 Universal design is the design of products, services and environments to be useable by everyone regardless of age or ability, without the need for specialised design. It can be economically adapted to meet the changing needs of home occupants.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p24.

²⁰⁵ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p51.

²⁰⁶ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p51.

²⁰⁷ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p71.

²⁰⁸ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p71.

²⁰⁹ Australian Network for Universal Housing Design, available at: <http://www.anuhd.org/article/what-universal-design>

- 7.29 The Dickson residents advised the Committee that they would like to see 25 per cent of all residential developments meet universal design criteria to facilitate access by people with a disability and ageing residents, and support people who choose to age in place.²¹⁰
- 7.30 The Committee heard that it is also possible to put some accessible housing and aged housing on the ground floor of multi-unit developments, allowing other types of housing above.²¹¹
- 7.31 The *Australian Standard AS4299 (1995) -Adaptable Housing* outlines the requirements for adaptable housing, including the essential and desirable features to enhance adaptability.²¹²
- 7.32 The Committee notes that multi unit housing consisting of 10 or more dwellings must be designed so that 10 per cent of those dwellings meet the relevant Australian Standard for Adaptable Housing.²¹³ The multi unit complex must also comply with the *Access and Mobility General Code* which 'applies to all new developments and major alterations and or extensions to existing buildings (if the work affects more than 50% of the floor area of the whole of an existing building) across all zones in the ACT.'²¹⁴
- 7.33 The Committee would like to see developments of five or more dwellings also be required to provide a per cent of dwellings which meet the relevant Australian Standard for Adaptable Housing and the *Access and Mobility General Code*.²¹⁵
- 7.34 The Committee believes that the inclusion of more universally designed dwellings, particularly in multi unit development, would provide housing suitable for a range of residents and the opportunity to age in place.

²¹⁰ Submission 48

²¹¹ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p3.

²¹² *Australian Standard AS4299 (1995) -Adaptable Housing*.

²¹³ Territory Plan, Part 3.3, *Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code*, p39, R70.

²¹⁴ Territory Plan, Part 11.3, *Access and Mobility General Code*.

²¹⁵ Mr Coe disagrees with this comment as he feels the Committee did not investigate this issue thoroughly enough to make such statements.

RECOMMENDATION 9

- 7.35 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on the progress it has made in relation to its commitment to universal design principles and the relevant Australian Standards for Adaptable Housing.**

Flexibility in Outcomes

- 7.36 The Committee heard from Mr Colin Stewart that there needs to be greater flexibility in the design and height of buildings, stressing the need for performance based measures such as social and environmental outcome and fewer structural based controls.²¹⁶
- 7.37 He advised that in Paris, where many buildings were built before the advent of lifts, it is a norm for buildings of five and six storeys to be walk-up rather than serviced with mechanical lifts.²¹⁷
- 7.38 The AIA and Property Council of Australia also highlighted to the Committee that appropriate land uses also need to exist at the street level interface.²¹⁸ The CZ5 Mixed Use zoning allows for mixed used on the lower levels and residential above and there may be opportunities for some flexibility within RZ3 and RZ4 zones to allow ancillary uses such as ground floor commercial activities.

Public Open Space

- 7.39 The Committee notes that the provision of suitable open space is essential to support higher density and multi-unit development.²¹⁹
- 7.40 The Committee heard from the AIA and TRA that the large areas of open space in the inner city must be maintained as they are needed for management of stormwater and 'for the provision of sports and recreation fields for the

²¹⁶ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2.

²¹⁷ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2.

²¹⁸ Submission 25, 30.

²¹⁹ Submission 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 23, 25, 34, 44, 46, 50.

population.’²²⁰ The Committee was also advised that the existence of many well distributed open spaces makes medium density living in proximity to the city more attractive to families.²²¹

- 7.41 The Chief Planning Executive advised the Committee that as development moves to higher densities, accessible public open space is particularly necessary. He noted that there is a move away from pocket parks because they tend not to be well utilised or surveilled and a preference for urban forms that wrap around larger open space and provide passive surveillance.²²²
- 7.42 The Committee was also advised that there are numerous frontages to parkland in the inner north ‘which are ideal places for high density so people in units can enjoy the parkland’²²³ As noted earlier, Sullivans Creek provides clear delineation between the higher density development closer to Northbourne Avenue and the low density housing closer to Black Mountain.²²⁴ By addressing Sullivans Creek with wetland treatments, the Committee heard that it would also enhance the usability and benefits of that environment.²²⁵
- 7.43 The Executive Director of the Land Management and Planning Division (LMPD) in TaMS advised the Committee that TAMS provides feedback to ACTPLA about the utilisation of open spaces rather than undertaking strategic planning of open space (done by ACTPLA). She noted that where densification is occurring, open space can have a diverse group of people using the same space, so it is designed to be more flexible and multipurpose.²²⁶

²²⁰ TRA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p17; AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22; submission 25.

²²¹ Submission 25, p13.

²²² Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p52.

²²³ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p3.

²²⁴ Submission 15; Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p32.

²²⁵ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22; Submission 25, p13.

²²⁶ Executive Director LMPD, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p64.

- 7.44 In response to questions from the Committee, the Executive Director LMPD also advised that TaMS would be willing to work with ACTPLA to help identify suitable sites for community garden (or allotment) space, and recognise that ‘those sort of projects are what brings the community together’.²²⁷

RECOMMENDATION 10

- 7.45 **The Committee recommends that existing public open space networks be retained to provide for the recreational needs of residents in higher density residential developments.**

- 7.46 The Committee was advised in submissions that there also appears to be a lack of investment in open space in the inner north to maintain its useability.²²⁸ The AIA commented that there needs to be:

...greater consideration of the character and quality and ongoing commitment to maintenance of the public real within and near the RZ4 and RZ3 development areas given the greater intensity of used and its capacity to supplement the private open space provided within developments.²²⁹

- 7.47 The AIA also noted that there is evidence of degradation of existing infrastructure. The Committee heard that public amenities in Haig Park such as bins, seating and barbeque areas, for example, have been removed.²³⁰ Many open spaces have playgrounds are run down and underutilised, open space lacking in shade trees and vegetation and many lacking footpaths and adequate lighting.²³¹

RECOMMENDATION 11

- 7.48 **The Committee recommends that existing public open spaces be maintained and enhanced to provide safe green space which is useable for a wide variety of recreational and active pursuits.**

²²⁷ Executive Director LMPD, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp66-67.

²²⁸ Submission 15, 32, 39.

²²⁹ Submission 25, p13.

²³⁰ Submission 32, p5.

²³¹ Submission 50, Submission 32

8 DENSITY ALONG TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

- 8.1 The Committee notes that there are opportunities to extend residential redevelopment policies to other areas of Canberra, particularly along major transport corridors.
- 8.2 The Minister for Planning advised the Committee that there ‘is a compelling case to locate a greater proportion of our population close to where our major employment zones are’ as well as to diversify housing types and make better use of existing infrastructure.²³² He noted that the development in the Territory needs to respond to a number of challenges particularly climate change and the scarcity of land for development in the ACT as well as changing demographics.²³³
- 8.3 The Committee was advised that the Canberra Plan, the Spatial Plan, the Territory Plan and the Sustainable Transport Plan provide the broad vision about suitable areas for densification be and ACTPLA is continuously ‘drilling down’ to the detail of how that density can be delivered.²³⁴ The Chief Planning Executive also advised that it was now necessary to consider how to facilitate good forms of high density development adjacent to our transport corridors.²³⁵
- 8.4 As highlighted by the PIA, if the ACT Government’s target in the 2004 Spatial Plan to have 50 per cent of new development as suburban renewal is going to be achieved ‘something fundamental needs to happen in inner city zonings.’²³⁶ They advised that to achieve the policy, minimum levels of development also need to be specified so high density zones are not under-developed.²³⁷
- 8.5 Minimum size requirements for development in RZ3 and RZ4 zones may ensure outcomes that are more consistent with the Territory Plan zoning objectives.

²³² Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p38.

²³³ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, pp38-39.

²³⁴ Minister for Planning, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p42.

²³⁵ Chief Planning Executive, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p40.

²³⁶ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p10.

²³⁷ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp12-13.

RECOMMENDATION 12

- 8.6 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with developers to achieve the desired zoning outcomes.**
- 8.7 The Committee was advised by Mr Stewart, for example, that the policies introduced along Northbourne Avenue are good way to increase densities but those policies do not go far enough, only covering that one avenue. He highlighted that there are numerous other avenues in Canberra suitable for such densification and the policy should be extended and applied throughout the central area, as appropriate.²³⁸ He noted that any location that allows more people to live a walkable lifestyle near the city, open space, the ANU, Dickson and close bushland should be considered for higher density.²³⁹
- 8.8 Mr Stewart suggested that the transport corridors needed to be clearly articulated, with some of the cross streets also being visually reinforced with higher density. He told the Committee that there are densification opportunities on all 25 avenues, particularly Canberra Avenue, Constitution Avenue, Wakefield Avenue and Macarthur Avenue, as well as possible opportunities on streets that lead to local centres like David and Wattle Street. Mr Stewart advised that there should also be high density within the area one hundred meters back from Northbourne Avenue but noted that the RZ3 zones need to be protected as part of the low density fabric of the neighbourhood.²⁴⁰
- 8.9 The Committee also heard from the Dickson residents group that Majura Avenue was a suitable avenue for higher density development and that the amenity of living on a four lane road would not significantly change with increased development.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p1.

²³⁹ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p1.

²⁴⁰ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp6-7.

²⁴¹ Dickson Residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p75.

The National Capital Plan

- 8.10 The Committee notes that any consideration of higher density development along major transport corridors is likely to encompass many of the ACT's main approaches and avenues which are identified in the National Capital Plan (NCP).
- 8.11 The NCP is the strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory. It ensures that 'Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance' including Canberra's role as the National Capital, respect for the key elements of Canberra's original design by Walter Burley Griffin, respect for environmental values and national sustainability concerns, maintaining the unique setting including landscape features and managing important sites, approaches and backdrops for national and local uses.²⁴²
- 8.12 The main avenues and approaches under the NCP are listed below.

Main Avenues	
Kings Avenue	State Circle
Sydney Avenue	Commonwealth Avenue
Hobart Avenue	Brisbane Avenue
Melbourne Avenue	Canberra Avenue (to Hume Circle)
Perth Avenue	Adelaide Avenue
Edinburgh Avenue	Northbourne Avenue
Ainslie Avenue	University Avenue
Anzac Parade	Limestone Avenue (south of Ainslie)
Constitution Avenue	

²⁴² The National Capital Authority, *The National Capital Plan*, available at:
http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=372&Itemid=260#2

Approach Routes

Barton Highway

Federal Highway

Fairbairn Avenue

Morshead Drive/Pialligo Avenue to the ACT border

Canberra Avenue from Hume Circle to the ACT border

Monaro Highway and its extension as the Eastern Parkway to Morshead Drive

- 8.13 The NCP requires that the Main Avenues and Approach Routes 'be developed and maintained as high quality landscaped corridors. In built-up areas, the established design theme of irrigated grass verges and medians and formal tree plantings will be maintained.'²⁴³ The avenues and approaches must also enhance views to recognisable and popular images of the National Capital.²⁴⁴
- 8.14 The Committee notes that some avenues and approach routes have special consideration, such as Anzac Parade which is not suitable for residential development.

Northbourne Avenue

- 8.15 Northbourne Avenue, between Antill/Mouat Street and Barry Drive/Cooyong Street, is identified as Main Avenue and has been identified in the NCP as a commercial and residential high-density corridor.²⁴⁵
- 8.16 Northbourne Avenue does not currently have any RZ3 or RZ4 zones abutting it. The length of Northbourne Avenue from Haig Park to the Antill/Mouat Street intersection is zoned CZ5 for mixed use development.

²⁴³ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p76.

²⁴⁴ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p76.

²⁴⁵ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p77.

- 8.17 Buildings along Northbourne Avenue must not be less than 3 storeys in height, not including plant rooms, with landscaped front set-backs exclusive of parking.²⁴⁶ Other requirements include ensuring
- ‘...that the parapets of buildings adjacent to Northbourne Avenue are not higher than 25 metres above natural ground level except for the two ‘landmark nodes’ at the intersections of Mouat/Antill Streets and Macarthur/Wakefield Avenues with Northbourne Avenue where parapets may be up to 32 metres above natural ground level.’²⁴⁷
- 8.18 The NCP also requires buildings on Northbourne Avenue to be designed and finished to a high standard, be predominantly light in tone and avoid using continuous glass facades.²⁴⁸

Main Avenues

- 8.19 Buildings adjacent to Main Avenues other than Northbourne Avenue may be built up to 4 storeys in height, with additional plant rooms.²⁴⁹ The frontage should be predominantly landscaped and building height should generally not exceed the ‘height of the established tree canopy’²⁵⁰

Approach Routes

- 8.20 The Barton and Federal Highways from the ACT border to their junction with Northbourne Avenue, including Northbourne Avenue north of Antill and Mouat Street are also two of the significant Approach Routes into Canberra as listed in the NCP.

²⁴⁶ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p78.

²⁴⁷ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p78.

²⁴⁸ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p77.

²⁴⁹ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p78.

²⁵⁰ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p79.

- 8.21 An identifiable approach should be enhanced by high quality development that 'enhances the role and status of the city'.²⁵¹
- 8.22 Special requirements exist in the NCP for development on land fronting the Approach Routes and not more than 200m from the middle line of the road.²⁵²

Committee Comments

- 8.23 The Committee believes that there should be an increase in residential density along other major avenues where applicable, however, it notes that this inquiry has focused primarily on the inner north and very little of the evidence received by the Committee commented on the general concept of densification across Canberra. Comments in submissions and from witnesses, other than the peak bodies, were primarily focused on the inner north suburbs where those individuals reside.
- 8.24 The Committee also notes Mr Stewart's comments that any substantial increase in densification should only be implemented over five or 10 per cent of any neighbourhood. He advised that 'blanket high density development areas just destroy people's social networks'²⁵³ and therefore increasing density on transport corridors and major avenues offers a suitable opportunity for densification
- 8.25 The Committee therefore acknowledges the need for the ACT Government to conduct a more significant level of public consultation before applying a blanket densification policy along transport corridors.

²⁵¹ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p77.

²⁵² National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan Part One - Principles, Policies and Standards. Designated Areas, Special Requirements (Part 2 to 4)*, July 2010, p79.

²⁵³ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p7.

RECOMMENDATION 13

- 8.26 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct in-depth consultation with the Canberra community regarding densification opportunities along transport corridors and along specific avenues and approach routes.**

Integration of Transport, Parking and Density Policies

- 8.27 The Committee was advised that it is also essential for land use planning to be integrated with transport policies.²⁵⁴
- 8.28 The ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment advised the Committee that to achieve change
- ...we need to reshape the way we think about the future and explore innovative sustainable transport options based on:
- Building a place not a project
 - Reducing urban sprawl (such as infilling and growing up not out)
 - Smarter technologies
 - Innovative use of existing infrastructure such as making public transport more appealing.²⁵⁵
- 8.29 The Commissioner noted that her 2007/2008 *ACT State of the Environment Report* made recommendations to strive for integrated sustainable planning including the need to:
- Continue to implement the Canberra Spatial Plan, particularly with respect to achieving higher densities and protecting ecological connectivity;
 - Work towards achieving greater integration between territory and airport developments;
 - Create subdivision layouts and building regulations that foster passive solar housing designs;
-

²⁵⁴ Submission 14, 17, 29, 30 ; Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p1; AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p23.

²⁵⁵ Submission 14.

- Contain the urban footprint;
- Protect areas of conservation value; and
- Progress sustainable transport.²⁵⁶

- 8.30 The Committee also heard from Mr Stewart, who advised that there is an important connection between transport policies and planning policies and unless they are integrated Canberra will not achieve a legible, workable and sustainable system that encourages a modal shift to public transport and walking.²⁵⁷ Mr Stewart explained to the Committee that whilst the current vision for Northbourne Avenue, for example, provides an overarching vision, it does not extend throughout the main transport corridor/spine from Watson to Fyshwick or Phillip.²⁵⁸ He advised that without integrated land use and transport planning, the public transport system will never be satisfactory or well patronised.²⁵⁹
- 8.31 The AIA advised that public transport needs to be made available to residents at the same time as the new residential developments are released and at a frequency and consistency during the day that enables residents to access their employment, services and recreation places conveniently.²⁶⁰
- 8.32 The Committee anticipates with great interest the results of the feasibility study of transport options on Northbourne Avenue.

RECOMMENDATION 14

- 8.33 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish a plan for the provision of public transport in new suburbs that can be made available to residents.**

Parking

- 8.34 One issue of contention relating to increasing residential density of the RZ3 and RZ4 zones in the inner north of Canberra was the required parking provision for

²⁵⁶ Submission 14.

²⁵⁷ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p1.

²⁵⁸ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p5.

²⁵⁹ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p5.

²⁶⁰ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p23.

multi-unit dwellings. The Committee heard arguments for increasing the parking provided on-site for residents of multi-unit developments²⁶¹ as well as arguments for reducing the parking provisions to lessen reliance on cars²⁶².

Reduce parking allocations

- 8.35 Mr Stewart advised the Committee that the parking policies need to reflect the fact that people living in the city are likely to use their cars much less often than those in outer suburbs. He advised that the parking policy in the inner higher-density areas should be reduced to a maximum of one car space per unit.²⁶³ Mr Stewart noted that Canberra needs a cultural shift away from car use and that current car parking rates act as a disincentive to using public transport.²⁶⁴ He also advised that parking is one of the dominant planning policies in Canberra and that this was not appropriate, highlighting that planning should be led by environmental and cultural policies.²⁶⁵

Against limiting parking

- 8.36 The Committee also heard from residents of the inner north about the current parking situation and that off street residential parking is essential for residents and visitors.²⁶⁶ The Committee heard that without adequate parking residents will park on the nature strips or on both sides of suburban streets as they are already doing.²⁶⁷
- 8.37 The Committee heard from Mr Emil Bulum that he believes society will eventually move to zero-emission cars rather than stop driving and that people would not accept that they do not have access to a car because of the convenience.²⁶⁸ He noted that residents in dwellings closer to the city and transport corridors may not use their cars as often, particularly not for

²⁶¹ Submissions 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 48, 50.

²⁶² Submissions 25, 30, 36; Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, pp1-5.

²⁶³ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p2.

²⁶⁴ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p4.

²⁶⁵ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p3; submission 30.

²⁶⁶ Submission 4, 6, 9, 12, 31; Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p33

²⁶⁷ Submission 4, 6, 9, 12, 22.

²⁶⁸ Mr Bulum, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p33

commuting to work, but many will still own a car for out-of-town trips or use on weekends.

8.38 The Committee notes that the *Parking and Vehicular Access General Code* requires the following minimum parking requirements for apartments in residential and mixed use CZ5 zones²⁶⁹:

Apartment	1 space/unit for single bedroom dwellings
	2 spaces/unit for dwellings with two or more bedrooms
	or
	1.5 spaces/unit for two bedroom units in a multi-unit complex if provision beyond 1 space can be shared
Attached house	plus
	0.25 visitor spaces/house or unit where a complex comprises 4 or more units
	1 space/house or unit for single bedroom dwellings
	2 spaces/house or unit for dwellings with two or more bedrooms
	OR
	1.5 spaces/house or unit for two bedroom dwellings in a multi-unit complex if provision beyond 1 space can be shared
	plus
	0.25 visitor spaces/house or unit where a complex comprises 4 or more units

8.39 The Inner North Precinct code also outlines an intent to restrict parking provisions in the inner north.²⁷⁰

8.40 The Committee believes that more research needs to be conducted on the parking needs of residents living in proximity to transport corridors and central services. The Government Submission acknowledges that ‘additional work is required in relation to the redevelopment impacts on road capacity and parking generated by redevelopment.’²⁷¹

Sequencing of Development

8.41 The Committee also heard from the PIA that implementation of any higher density redevelopment policies needs to be sequenced in a logical way, with the

²⁶⁹ Territory Plan, Part 11.1, *Parking and Vehicular Access General Code*, Schedule 3.1.5.
²⁷⁰ Territory Plan, P10.2, *Inner North Precinct Code*, Element 4, Parking and Site Access, p10.
²⁷¹ Submission 24, p8.

city centre and town centres being developed before concentrating on the transport corridors and then moving out to the medium density RZ3 and RZ4 areas.²⁷²

- 8.42 This sequencing of development would also support the public transport network with transport nodes providing patronage and increasing the effectiveness of inter-town services.²⁷³

Northbourne Housing Precinct

- 8.43 The Committee notes that many submissions and public hearing discussions highlighted the need for change along Northbourne Avenue.²⁷⁴
- 8.44 The Committee notes that Northbourne Avenue itself is not subject to either an RZ3 or RZ4 zoning; however it acknowledges that Northbourne Avenue and the Northbourne Housing Precinct (units on either side of Northbourne Avenue in Dickson and Lyneham) offer significant potential for considered redevelopment and densification.
- 8.45 Some witnesses also commented that the Northbourne housing precinct should be redeveloped to showcase the government's commitment to sustainable, compatible and tasteful urban design.²⁷⁵
- 8.46 The Committee notes that it is important to maintain current levels of public housing in the inner north area.²⁷⁶

Heritage

- 8.47 The Committee heard from Mr Colin Stewart, a member of the Heritage Council, that he believes the heritage citation 'allows significant redevelopment of those sites, subject to a conservation management plan'.²⁷⁷ He noted that the corridor

²⁷² PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p13.

²⁷³ PIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p13.

²⁷⁴ Dickson residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72.

²⁷⁵ Dickson residents, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p72.

²⁷⁶ Mr Coe believes that if the Government had better policies to address housing affordability issues, there would be less demand for public housing.

²⁷⁷ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p7.

offers great potential for redevelopment including higher density, mixed use and office, commercial and residential development without 'knocking down houses in the local streets.'²⁷⁸

8.48 The AIA also highlighted that the Sydney Ancher development (the Northbourne Avenue public housing precinct) is significant in heritage terms and it is essential that the Heritage Council make a determination on the value of the site.²⁷⁹

8.49 The AIA advised the Committee that it does not see heritage listing as mothballing the building and they stressed that 'in order to retain their heritage value to the community into the future, they need to have a viable future and they need to be appropriately used.'²⁸⁰

8.50 The AIA quoted its heritage policy to the committee in order to outline the types of options available for heritage listed properties:

Some buildings are of such significance that retention in their original or existing form is essential. In other cases it may be necessary to be upgraded to achieve compliance with current standards, and/or adapted for new uses in order to survive. Adaptive re-use involves appropriate and acceptable modification of the existing entity and perhaps sympathetic extensions, in order to reinvigorate the building and to achieve a dignified and viable future.²⁸¹

8.51 The Manager of Heritage in the Culture and Communication Division in Chief Minister's Department advised the Committee that there are a number of options the Heritage Council could consider including total preservation, keeping a representative sample or looking at a design that is sympathetic to the existing development.²⁸²

8.52 The AIA noted that a conservation management plan should be prepared immediately to identify what is important in the Northbourne Avenue housing precinct, what should be protected and what adaptive change and potential extension can be done to make the area more viable.²⁸³ They noted that it is a

²⁷⁸ Mr Stewart, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p7.

²⁷⁹ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22.

²⁸⁰ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22.

²⁸¹ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22.

²⁸² Manager of Heritage, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p57.

²⁸³ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p22.

significant tract of land and it needs to be clear what can proceed there.²⁸⁴ They advised the Committee that to continue being used as housing, the precinct buildings would need to be brought up to the current Australian Standards.²⁸⁵

- 8.53 A Conservation Management Plan would also help understand the level of community support for particular heritage conservation options. The Committee heard, however, that the heritage status of the Dickson and Lyneham flats has been undecided for over 15 years.

Conservation Management Plan

- 8.54 The Committee notes that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services Annual Report 2009-10 outlines that the Northbourne Housing Precinct has been nominated for listing on the ACT Heritage Register.²⁸⁶ It further notes that:

A consultant was engaged to prepare a Conservation Management Plan. A draft Conservation Management Plan was provided to the ACT Heritage Council. Housing ACT is working with the ACT Heritage Council to resolve the nomination.²⁸⁷

RECOMMENDATION 15

- 8.55 **The Committee recommends that the Heritage Council expedite the assessment of the Northbourne Housing Precinct and finalise a conservation management plan for the precinct.**
- 8.56 The Committee notes that any change or redevelopment of the Northbourne housing precinct will require ACT Housing to consider the needs and future dwellings for the current public housing occupants.
- 8.57 The Committee also heard from the management committee of St Phillip's Care at Northbourne about the support services they provide to residents in the Northbourne Flats including care and meals. They would like to see sufficient public housing, interspersed with green space, retained in the Dickson area to

²⁸⁴ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p28.

²⁸⁵ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p26-7.

²⁸⁶ DHCS Annual Report 2009-10, p89.

²⁸⁷ DHCS Annual Report 2009-10, p89.

enable residents to maintain current support and social networks and the existing sense of community. They also highlighted the need for a venue in the region from which St Phillip's Care at Northbourne could continue to provide its support services.²⁸⁸

Infrastructure

- 8.58 With regards to the infrastructure capacity for increased higher density development in the inner north, the Committee notes that the sewer, storm water and road systems all have capacity for an increase in population²⁸⁹, despite concerns raised to the contrary.²⁹⁰

Roads

- 8.59 The Director of Roads ACT advised the Committee that with any redevelopment application there is a traffic impact assessment which considers the impact of the development on the local area. TAMS provides comments on those assessments to ACTPLA. He advised that TAMS is aware of the overall direction of development in a particular area and noted that ACTPLA has conducted a number of studies on the capacity of the inner north infrastructure.²⁹¹

Sewerage and Stormwater

- 8.60 The Director of Roads ACT also informed the Committee that TAMS had a good understanding of the infrastructure it is responsible for in the inner north suburbs and the inventory of existing infrastructure is updated annually. He noted that further residential development will require the infrastructure to be supplemented at some specific locations through the capital upgrades program, for example development in Braddon has required the stormwater system there to be supplemented.²⁹² The Director of Roads ACT also noted that due to climate change it is likely that increasingly extreme weather events will require the

²⁸⁸ Submission 42.

²⁸⁹ Submission 30

²⁹⁰ Submission 8, 26,

²⁹¹ Director, Roads ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p58.

²⁹² Director, Roads ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p68.

stormwater system to be augmented regardless of densification of residential dwellings.²⁹³

- 8.61 The Committee heard from the AIA that the sewerage infrastructure in Dickson and the inner north is older 'but the actual increase in water efficiency of systems and the decrease in population means that that system actually has capacity' ... 'the system is suffering from a lack of material flowing through it. It actually has capacity and needs capacity'.²⁹⁴

Public Transport and Cycling Facilities

- 8.62 The Committee notes that a feasibility study has recently been commissioned to consider public transport and cycling facilities requirements on Northbourne Avenue. The study is likely to be completed by the end of February 2011.²⁹⁵ The Committee notes that this study will inform future changes to the transport and cycling facilities on that route.

²⁹³ Director, Roads ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p69.

²⁹⁴ AIA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 August 2010, p21.

²⁹⁵ Director, Roads ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 11 August 2010, p64.

9 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 9.1 The Committee supports the notion of increasing density along transport corridors in inner north Canberra and believes that the area can sustain such an increase. The Committee notes that with the increasing population of Canberra and changing demographics, including a trend towards smaller family sizes and increased lone-person households, there is growing demand for a variety of dwelling options.
- 9.2 The Committee recognises that there are also similar higher density redevelopment opportunities along other major transport corridors and major avenues in Canberra and around the town centres. These opportunities need to be investigated as Canberra's ability to continue building on greenfield sites further away from the urban core is not sustainable.
- 9.3 The Committee supports the government's policy to increase modal shift to more sustainable transport options such as public transport and walking, and particularly allowing residents to live within close proximity to service and employment centres. Adequate public transport also needs to be available to support the desired modal shift.²⁹⁶
- 9.4 The Committee also notes that the terms of reference for this inquiry are limited to one area of Canberra and a broader conversation must be had with the whole community about densification and redevelopment across Canberra. The Committee therefore believes that any policy change towards increasing higher density residential development should only be implemented following high-level strategic planning, particularly at the suburb and neighbourhood level, conducted in consultation with the community and integrating land use and transport planning.
- 9.5 Redevelopment for densification must also include a variety of dwelling types and sizes to attract a mixed community base and to ensure residents make

²⁹⁶ Mr Coe believes that modal shift should not be brought about by policies which make it harder for motorists to use their cars, but achieved through making improvements to other modes (e.g. improvements to the bus network).

optimum use of all the types of services available in that area, including schools and public open space.

- 9.6 Where higher density developments interface with existing suburbia, particularly in RZ3 zones which act as a transition between medium and low density, the design requirements should respect the existing character and streetscape of the relevant suburb. The Committee believes that all types of residential redevelopment must seriously consider privacy, safety and affordability concerns.
- 9.7 The Committee notes that it is imperative for all redevelopments to be sustainable, including consideration of solar access needs, cross ventilation and adequate thermal and noise insulation. The Committee also notes that multi unit developments usually have a longer life-span than single dwellings as they are not extended, redeveloped, refurbished or knocked down at the same rate as stand-alone houses. Higher density developments therefore need to be designed to last, not only in structural terms and quality of fixtures and fittings but, also with due consideration for universal and adaptable design principles for residents who may wish to age in place.
- 9.8 The opportunities for higher density residential redevelopment in Canberra must be implemented with due consideration of the community's concerns.

Ms Mary Porter MLA

Chair

9 February 2011

Appendix A Submissions, Exhibits and Witnesses

List of Submissions

No.	Author
1	Blue Gums Community School - Maureen Hartung, Executive Director
2	Ian Barnes and Avigail Abarbanel
2b	Ian Barnes – additional comments
3	Michael Rabey
4	Maurice Austin
4b	Maurice Austin – additional comments
5	HR Burmester
6	Greg Hutchison
6b	Greg Hutchison – additional comments
7	Turner School Board – Robert Edwards, Chair 2009
8	Section 47 Residents: Jim Garvey (Spokesperson); Kristen Krippner; Nicole Mayo; Ken Arthur; Judy Anderson, Margaret Hocking; Ken Madej; Audrey Healy; Jerome Ho; Kerry Finlay; Pamela and W Challis; D Meyer; Frances Powrie; Ben Cheung; Roger Cook for Isabel Ferrari, Heather Tomson.
9	Turner Residents Association Inc
10	Jim Garvey and Kirsten Krippner
11	Barbara Barlin
12	Kerry Finlay
13	Margaret H Hocking
14	Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment - Dr Maxine Cooper
15	Emil Bulum
16	Audrey Jones
17	Heart Foundation ACT - Tony Stubbs CEO
18	Henry Gardner
19	Ian Rankin
20	Doug and Shirley Meyer
21	Fook Min and Jena Jing Jee Cheung

No.	Author
22	Ken Madej
23	Anthony Crook
24	Government Submission – Minister for Planning, Mr Andrew Barr MLA
25	Australian Institute of Architects ACT Chapter
26	Greg Weir
27	W.J. Challis
28	Patricia Gresham
29	David and Margaret Brett
30	Property Council of Australia - Catherine Carter, ACT Executive Director
31	Owners of Blocks 14-17 & 19, Section 63, Turner - Will Tucker (spokesperson); Lisa Robins and Peter Kanowski; Ian and Courtney Macintosh; Sanie Ymer; Robert and Felicity Williams; Mark Palu.
32	Ken Archer and Nicole Mayo
33	Catherine (Kate) Sewell
34	Rosemary Blemings
35	Canberra Pedestrian Forum - Leon Arundell, Convenor
36	Colin Stewart Architects – Colin Stewart, Director
36b	Colin Stewart Architects – additional comments
37	CB Richard Ellis Town Planning - Kip Tanner
38	Hans Sawa for Ursula Sawa
39	Julie Clutterbuck
40	David Turbayne
41	Pedal Power ACT Inc. - Jeff Ibbotson, Vice President
42	Management Committee of St Philip's Care at Northbourne - Liz Drysdale
43	Felix MacNeill
44	Rashmi and Ramesh Malik
45	Mary-Julia Diethelm and David Abbott
46	Geoff and Susan Davidson
47	Long Nguyen
48	Dickson residents: Marie Coleman; Virginia Metherell; James Grieve; Sally Pryor; Dr Peter Stanley and Claire Cruickshank; Felix MacNeil Attachment: Women with Disabilities (ACT)
49	Richard Griffiths

No.	Author
50	Braddon Area Residents Action Group: Susan and Geoff Davidson (spokesperson); Steve and Sylvia Alston; Andrew Bajkowski; Eugene and Jolanta Bajkowski; Greg Duffy and Karen Bissaker; Gerlinde Sullivan.
51	Alexander Bozic and Mary Sertich
52	Abby Robinson

List of Exhibits

No.	Author	Date Received
1	Geoff and Susan Davidson	30/3/2010

List of Witnesses

Witness
Mr Colin Stewart – Colin Stewart Architects.
Mr Hamish Sinclair – Vice President, ACT Division, Planning Institute of Australia.
Mr Trevor Fitzpatrick – Convenor, Policy Sub-committee, Planning Institute of Australia (ACT).
Ms Anne McMahon – President, Turner Residents’ Association.
Ms Nicole Mayo - Committee Member, Turner Residents’ Association.
Ms Sheila Hughes - ACT Chapter President, Australian Institute of Architects (ACT).
Mr Alan Morschel - Chair, ACT Planning Committee, Australian Institute of Architects (ACT).
Mr Emil Bulum – Turner resident.
Mr Andrew Barr, Minister for Planning.
Mr Neil Savery, Chief Planning Executive.
Mr Carrick Calnan, Manager, Development Policy.
Mr Gary Byles, Chief Executive, TAMS.
Mr Tony Gill, Director, Roads ACT, Transport and Infrastructure, TAMS.
Ms Fay Steward, Executive Director, Land Management and Planning, TAMS.
Mr Jim Corrigan, Asset Acceptance, Land Management and Planning, TAMS.
Mr Gerhard Zatschler, Manager, Heritage, Chief Ministers Department.
Ms Marie Coleman, Dickson Resident.
Ms Virginia Metherell, Dickson Resident.

Witness
Dr James Grieve, Dickson Resident.
Ms Fiona McQueenie, Dickson Resident.
Mr Felix MacNeill, Dickson Resident.
Mr Jim Garvey, Section 47 Resident.
Ms Krista Krippner, Section 47 Resident.
Mr Ken Archer, Section 47 Resident.
Mr Ken Madej, Section 47 Resident.
Dr Sanie Ymer, Section 63 resident.
Mr Robert Williams, Section 63 resident.
Mr William Tucker, Section 63 resident.

Appendix B Additional Comments – Caroline Le Couteur MLA

Additional Comments – Caroline Le Couteur MLA

Vision for Northbourne Avenue/ Inner North Precinct

Given the imminent pressures of climate change and peak oil to the functioning of Canberra, I believe that we need to transition to a more sustainable and vibrant twenty first century city. Improving/ focusing on the Inner North Precinct, which this committee report examines, is a lynchpin to this transformation. The Inner North Precinct comprises the areas adjacent to Northbourne Avenue, up to Sullivan's Creek to the West and the residential areas that are currently zoned RZ3 and above to the East to Limestone and Majura Avenues.

The precinct is close to Civic - our major employment and commercial centre, the Australian National University, two wonderful natural areas in Mt Ainslie and Black Mountain, as well as having local shopping centres, schools, wetlands and parks. Northbourne Avenue has – by Canberra standards – frequent public transport and is a busy cycling and walking route in addition to three lanes of car traffic. Significant redevelopment has occurred here and this will continue. I believe that as a city it is important that we grasp the opportunity presented in the precinct to create a truly cosmopolitan and sustainable community along Northbourne Avenue. It is a very desirable place to live and the current redevelopment pressure reflects that desirability.

The Inner North Precinct was designed by **Walter Burley Griffin** together with his wife and partner Marion Mahoney as part of the original design for Canberra with a projected population of 25,000 – 30,000. Today Canberra's population is now over ten times this, at 350,000. Many of the buildings in the Inner North Precinct are 50 years old (or more) and in need of substantial renovation or demolition. We should seize this opportunity of the inevitable change to support our increased population and create a truly sustainable precinct – socially, economically and environmentally. We should retain the best of the existing development in areas which are a good example of the 'garden city' environment. We must ensure that we are building to meet the needs of the future, not only the design of the past.

Any redevelopment must address our environmental constraints such as impending peak oil, food security and more extreme weather events. It must support our wider goals such as 40% greenhouse gas reduction by 2020.

Residential Buildings

Redevelopment is being partly driven by social issues – household sizes are reducing with more singles and childless households than ever before, and existing long term residents are getting older, and some may find that the house and garden which was a delight is now a burden. If long term residents are to be able to age in place then more options must be provided.

Any changes to the Territory Plan or associated codes or government policy will not lead to short term changes on the ground. However, when a house is redeveloped, it is important to then ensure that the block is used to support Canberra's broader goals.

We have some good examples of redevelopment in or near the precinct. On Northbourne Avenue are the Space buildings (around 9 stories) and on Northbourne Avenue. I think this height is

appropriate on Northbourne Avenue itself although I would not like to see such tall buildings throughout the precinct. However, I would like to see more commercial uses, such as coffee shops and convenience stores on the ground floor of residential buildings facing out to Northbourne. I would also like to see minimum unit density requirements for all new developments within one block back from Northbourne into Braddon (Mort, Lowanna (West side only) and Henty Streets), Turner (Moore and Forbes Streets), Lyneham (DeBurgh, Oliver and the East side of Goodwin Streets), and Dickson (Karuah, Dooring, Lowrie and Challis Streets). The City Edge development in O'Connor (next to the shops) is a good example of a three storey, medium density development.

Whatever the population density, it is important to ensure that these buildings are of a high quality and sustainably designed. This must include social sustainability. Apartment complexes should include some communal space, and be designed to prevent social isolation.

ACT Housing owns significant buildings (which are generally in poor condition) along Northbourne Avenue and the Inner North precinct. When the ACT Housing buildings are redeveloped it will be important to maintain or enhance the level of public housing available in the precinct as well as wider sustainability and Canberra planning aims.

Vibrancy – commercial and community facilities

In conjunction with the increase in residential development in the Northbourne Precinct, there will need to be a proportionate increase in amenities – including commercial and community services as well as recreational sites and services.

The commercial needs would most likely include an increased level of cafes, corner shops, and childcare centres. The Northbourne Avenue transport corridor is an excellent place to maintain a high density of office buildings. The Government should evaluate whether there is a need for community use spaces, such as halls and meeting places in the area. These may be able to be incorporated into other developments - particularly ground floors on high to medium density residential apartment buildings.

There is also plenty of opportunity for the ACT Government, in conjunction with the NCA, to incorporate more public art and art spaces along Northbourne Ave, as well as more historical information about the Walter Burley Griffin designs for the area – for example, near the intersection of Wakefield and Macarthur Avenues. Given that the ACT Tourist Centre is on Northbourne Ave in Dickson, it would be easy to integrate a tourist walking path, connecting all the hotels along Northbourne Ave, with historical and tourist information along the way to make it an interesting walk. Tourists could then walk from their hotels into Civic and even around the lake. Public art would make this walk more interesting.

Relaxation and recreation

With the growth of wetland sites along Sullivans Creek (Dickson, Lyneham and 2 in O'Connor), this creates a fantastic opportunity to co-locate community gardens with those parks. There is generally space close by and water easily available. This would help create very useable and attractive community hubs. Community gardens could also be incorporated into many (new and existing) medium density developments as well as the public housing areas.

As the population in the area grows, it is very important that all current parks in the area are maintained, and facilities on key sites should be enhanced. Some parks should be maintained as quiet, natural areas without many facilities, and some may need to have upgrades to incorporate the growing recreational demands. The range of amenities which may be required might include: BBQs, ovals, playgrounds, toilets, obstacle courses and children's bike paths.

It will also be important to ensure that residents have good walking links to local nature reserves, walking and cycling path networks, local shops and public transport routes.

Transport

Canberra urgently needs to move away from car-dependent planning, and instead plan for a sustainable, resilient city that supports mobility with low or no fossil fuel consumption. Canberra is likely to start feeling the major impacts of peak oil in the next decade. If we are not prepared, this will cause substantial, negative impacts to our way of life. Peak oil, as well as climate change and growing congestion problems, mean the Government must plan for alternatives to auto-dependence. The solutions are good planning and a good public transport system, and good provision for walking and cycling.

As one of Canberra's busiest and most important transport routes, Northbourne Avenue should be a model of efficient, sustainable transport. Currently it is congested, and perceived by many as dangerous for walking or cycling. As an important spine of a frequent rapid route as identified in the Strategic Transport Network Plan, it is a problem that the buses are sharing lane space with other vehicles and are therefore subject to congestion. This contravenes the aims of the frequent rapid network in providing rapid, uninterrupted services that are time-competitive with private car travel. As the population increases in Gungahlin and rural commuter areas in NSW the pressure on Northbourne Avenue is increasing.

The last budget allocated funds for a feasibility study of redevelopment of Northbourne Avenue's transport options. I believe that the outcomes of the study will be vital to solving these issues and facilitating good redevelopment in the Inner North Precinct.

In the long term, the only way to really solve Northbourne Avenue's problems is to contain the amount of car traffic moving into the city by giving commuters better and faster alternatives. The redevelopment of Northbourne Avenue needs to prioritise sustainable transport modes, like buses, bikes and walking. Expanding roads will never be the long-term solution to congestion and long commuting times in Canberra. Providing cheap, fast, safe networks for sustainable and active transport at Northbourne Avenue will give people a better option than cars and will improve transport in Canberra for everyone.

Buses

Northbourne Avenue requires major upgrades to improve the speed and frequency of bus travel. We recommend that this be achieved by using bus only priority lanes going each way on Northbourne Avenue. The space would also be suitable for conversion to light rail.

Bus priority lanes would greatly improve the effectiveness of bus routes travelling down Northbourne Avenue by substantially reducing their travel time. Improving the travel time of these services should increase demand for these services and encourage modal shift. This modal

shift in turn would reduce congestion on Northbourne Avenue by reducing the number of car users.

Dickson has been identified as a 'major stop' on the Strategic Transport Network Plan. This stop should be integrated with planning for the inner north precinct with retail and higher density residential development. The station would provide a triangular high frequency hub-link with Belconnen and Gungahlin stations, as well as being a termination point for Hackett, Downer and Watson 'coverage' routes. The station should also be designed to be retro-fitted for light rail.

Walking

Northbourne Avenue requires major upgrades to the footpaths on both sides, and to the lighting. It should be a street which accommodates a high volume of pedestrians, and it should be a street where people want to walk. The inadequacy of the existing paths is highlighted by the existence of 'goat trails' around the edges of the paths, showing that people are having to walk on the grass.

Signalised intersections along Northbourne should be improved, particularly at high-volume walking routes, so that phase times allow adequate crossing times so people can cross both parts of the road in one go. Some four way intersections may be able to utilise diagonal crossing, allowing walkers to make one crossing, instead of having to wait to cross two sets of lights. This works well in the centre of Sydney and would be most beneficial in the city sections of Northbourne Avenue.

Cycling

Northbourne Avenue is a busy route for people commuting by bike, particularly from North Canberra into Civic. With three lanes of car traffic in each direction, a number of traffic lights, no bus lane, and only a narrow on-road bike lane, it is perceived by some as a dangerous and difficult cycle. The increasing popularity of these lanes mean that the lack of room for cyclists to overtake is becoming a major drawback, as the route does not facilitate riders of different speed and skills. Buses use the cycle lane to stop at bus stops, which can cause chaotic situations for buses, cyclists, and cars. The footpath on Northbourne Avenue is not adequate for cyclists and pedestrians so this is not an option most cyclists use.

Northbourne needs an improved cycle lane that lets people ride quickly and safely from North Canberra to the city. It also needs to include feeder routes in the Inner North Precinct.

Cars

Improved buses, cycling and walking facilities should see a reduction in car usage but there will still be a need for some cars and service vehicles (deliveries, police, ambulance, etc) on Northbourne Avenue. The improvements to alternative transport in the Inner North will reduce the need for car dependence throughout north Canberra. This is particularly important for people living in outer suburbs, who are especially vulnerable to the combination of high fuel prices and

mortgage debt.²⁹⁷ If improved transport options mean that households are able to reduce from two cars to one they can save over \$5,000 a year based on NRMA figures.

The improvements to transport systems should not just be limited to the Inner North of course; there must be connections right through to the outer suburbs that feed into the inner north.

Conclusion

We need a vision for a more sustainable Inner North – and the will to implement it.

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MLA for Molonglo

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²⁹⁷ Dodson J, and Snipe N, *Unsettling suburbia: the new landscape of oil and mortgage vulnerability in Australian cities* (2006), Griffith University (http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/88851/urp-rp17-dodson-sipe-2008.pdf)