



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City and Government Services

In relation to: Urban Forest Act 2023 review

Hearing: 11 February 2025

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Answer Due: 20/02/2025

Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for City and Government Services took on notice the following question(s):

MR COCKS: The review that you mentioned into the Act, can I ask very quickly, what is the current status of the review, and could you provide, maybe on notice, the terms of reference.

Ms Cheyne: So it is an internal review, Mr Cocks, so there is less of a terms of reference. It is more of a has been an issues log that has been developed where either peak bodies, industry leaders or just the general community has raised concerns with us that—or even across government, where we are looking to see how that is working against the other objectives of government and to then do some broader work on what some further changes may be.

But in terms of terms of reference, it is not a public consultation review at this stage. We are working through the feedback that we already have, which is not insignificant.

In terms of the timeline, it is early stages. So the election commitment was for it to begin at the beginning of 2025, and we are in week six.

MR COCKS: Perhaps I can rephrase the terms of reference side of the equation. Could you provide some information about the scope of the review then and the objectives. What is it that the review is going to actually deliver?

Ms Cheyne: Sure. I will take that on notice.

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

TCCS has commenced an internal review of the *Urban Forest Act 2023*. The review will consider feedback received from the community and industry during the first year of operation. The review will seek to identify improvements that can be made to the application process and the operation of the Act. The focus of the review will also consider:

- modifications to Canopy Contribution Agreements to allow for greater flexibility.
- the tree removal criteria.
- incentives and alternatives for replacement of canopy consistent with ACT Government priorities.
- that the objects of the Act support decision-making that leads to an appropriate balance between protecting or enhancing the urban forest while also supporting Government priorities.

Further consultation with cross government stakeholders and industry will occur during the review. Any legislative amendments tabled in the Assembly are intended to be practical and responsive to the issues raised and ensure a balance between achieving the objects of the Act and other ACT Government priorities.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services

Signature:



Date:

17/2/25

By the Minister for City and Government Services, Ms Tara Cheyne MLA