



# Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

## Answer to question on notice

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Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: CED

Hearing: 12 November 2025

In relation to: ACT SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PATHWAYS

Question received: 20 November 2025

Answer Due: 27 November 2025

One of the goals of the Ministerial Sustainability Guidelines under the ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway is to address embodied carbon in the building and construction sector. What is the Government doing to reduce embodied carbon in new and existing buildings, and in particularly, identifying low carbon materials for construction?

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

The ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway, published in late August 2024, indicates initial steps and directions on the path towards more sustainable buildings. It is intended that the actions delivered under the ACT Sustainable Buildings Pathway will target best practice under a least cost approach to achieve our sustainability goals.

Embodied carbon is set to become the largest share of building-related emissions as grids decarbonise, and we have been taking initial actions to prioritise the development of nationally consistent benchmarks and a standard methodology to address it. Nationally consistent parameters give project teams confidence to estimate, plan and deliver carbon reductions, and enable credible targets to be set. Progress made to support initiatives to reduce embodied carbon and encourage the use of more sustainable materials include:

- Through the Building Ministers' Meeting, the ACT has led the development of a voluntary embodied carbon disclosure framework for commercial buildings. A guidance document will be published for use nationally by the Australian Building Codes Board alongside the new National Construction Code early next year. This will ensure there is a nationally consistent method of measuring and disclosing embodied carbon in buildings, providing certainty and a level playing field for industry as they seek to reduce their carbon footprint.

- Key national Government strategies strongly reflect the ACT-led position promoting national consistency and have further built on it by highlighting work to calculate and consider minimum standards for embodied carbon in new and renovated buildings. These include the Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings (a national strategy for Commonwealth, State and Territory action across all buildings) and the Built Environment Sector Plan (one of 6 sector plans under the Australian Government's Net Zero Plan and charts the built environment sector's pathway to net zero by 2050).
- Through the ACT Low Carbon Concrete Policy (LCC Policy), Government has committed to implement Phase 1 and use low carbon concrete (LCC) in ACT Government projects, where fit for purpose.
- Low carbon concrete is now specified in ACT projects such as the Molonglo Bridge, and the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation building which achieve an upfront carbon reduction of 15% by using 74 tonnes less concrete, reducing reinforcing steel by 12 tonnes and structural steel by 14 tonnes, and cutting Portland cement content from its concrete mixes by 30%. This project also diverted 95% of construction waste from landfill, with 125 tonnes of waste recycled.
- Through a technical partnership with the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS), a new tool will be developed so that existing buildings undergoing a major refurbishment or adaptive re-use will also be able to obtain an embodied carbon rating. This performance indicator will make visible the environmental benefits from preserving parts of an existing structure in renovation or adaptive re-use projects.
- As there is currently no nationally consistent framework for measuring and disclosing embodied carbon in residential building construction, an internal modelling project based on recent ACT residential developments will be undertaken to investigate embodied carbon intensity and identify least cost designs and low carbon material options. As part of this work the impact of prefabricated construction techniques on reducing embodied carbon will be explored.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date:

25/11/25

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