



## Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

### **Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023**

### **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Ms Jo Clay MLA:

Reference: Hearing on 14 November 2023, Annual Report of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

In relation to: Housing Preferences

In responding to a question on work undertaken in 2015 by Winton Sustainable Research and Strategies into peoples preferences for housing the Chief Planner and Director General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development advised:

*'2015 was the Winton work and we have done further work and engagement to understand people's preferences'.*

Can you provide details of the 'further work and engagement' that was carried out. If consultants were engaged to undertake this work and engagement can a copy of the report be made available or references provided as to where the documents can be located. If the work was undertaken by EPSDD can a copy of the work be provided or references provided on where the work is located.

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The Winton survey, completed in 2015, was a one-off survey undertaken to gauge community views across the Territory on the type of housing they preferred (noting the parameters of some of the questions are important to considering the responses).

In 2015, I as the Minister for Planning and Land Management, consulted on my proposed Statement of Planning Intent and heard from the community about desires for different types of housing. The Statement of Planning intent is available [online](#).

Work exploring the housing choices for Canberra was subsequently undertaken (Housing Choices Project) and a [Housing Choices Discussion Paper](#) (available online) was prepared in early 2018 that sought feedback through an extensive engagement process, from the community on questions such as:

- What do you think about the current range of housing options in the lower density suburbs?
- What changes would you support in the RZ1 zone to improve housing choice?

- What changes would you support to help increase diversity of housing choices in the RZ2 zone?
- What changes would you support to the medium density residential zones to improve housing choice?
- Do you think we have the right balance of residential zones to support greater housing choice?

The outcomes of this consultation process (that received 600 survey responses, 150 formal submissions and 340 people provided feedback at kiosks) are available in the [Housing Choices Discussion Paper Community Engagement Report](#) available online. Feedback received touched on a range of topics including the following:

- Age in place and downsize
- Housing affordability
- Housing delivery, ownership and rental models
- Housing density and infill
- Housing and block options and types.

The outcomes from the Housing Choices engagement process were then considered further by a Collaboration Hub – a randomly selected group of 38 individuals that represented a broad cross-section of the Canberra community. The Collaboration Hub was a deliberative process that brought together these citizens to discuss, deliberate and receive information on housing choices. The group convened on five separate occasions to discuss how housing policy in the ACT could be improved to meet the needs of the city as it changes and grows in the future, with the goal of providing the ACT Government with community-driven recommendations for housing policy.

The outcome was a report of [13 recommendations](#) for housing choices in Canberra (available online) that was presented to me as the Minister for Planning and Land Management in July 2018. The ACT Government [agreed in-principle](#) to all of the Collaboration Hub recommendations and that response is also available online. These recommendations related to a range of matters including: increasing the mix of dwelling sizes and housing types in all residential zones; soft landscaping and planting areas; and considering whether to allow dual occupancy developments with separate title in RZ1.

Planning changes to respond to these recommendations include Territory Plan variations made to the *Territory Plan 2008* related to living infrastructure, boarding houses, and co-housing, as well as enabling demonstration housing projects (see below for further detail). The new *Territory Plan 2023* also responds to these recommendations by allowing unit titled dual occupancies in RZ1 (subject to certain requirements), apartments in the RZ2 zone and increasing the dwelling limits in the RZ2 zone.

The Demonstration Housing Project (<https://www.planning.act.gov.au/urban-renewal/demonstration-housing-project>) is closely aligned with the Housing Choices project and responds to an ACT Legislative Assembly resolution passed in June 2017 to deliver demonstration housing proposals.

Recommendation from the Housing Choices Collaboration Hub, helped to develop the evaluation criteria for Demonstration Housing Project proposals. In early 2018, the Demonstration Housing Project called for Stage 1 Expressions of Interest for anyone who had a housing concept they wanted to test and deliver in Canberra. Successful proponents were invited to the next evaluation stage, Stage 2 Request for Proposal/Tender.

Proponents found successful in the Stage 2 RFT/RFP are required to undertake community engagement as part of the pre-development application process. EPSDD wrote to all community councils about the Demonstration Housing Project and presented to the councils where projects are being proposed.

In some instances, comments from the community have led to design changes in the proposals. The lessons learnt from the Demonstration Housing Project have been considered in developing the new Territory Plan and to support improved housing choice in Canberra.

Separate to, but consistent with and building on the Housing Choices project, there has been extensive engagement undertaken with the community as part of developing and settling the ACT Planning Strategy (2018) and throughout the Planning System Review and Reform Project. These engagement activities sought comments from the community on the growth of the city, preferred locations for dwelling density and other planning considerations related to housing a growing population.

The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 was developed following extensive research, discussion with stakeholders and consultation with the community, including innovative engagement methods that reached across the city to hear from a wide cross-section of our residents with a wide range of views.

During 2018, the government consulted widely as part of the Planning Strategy refresh, including with professionals, peak bodies, regional neighbours, industry groups and community members. The consultation confirmed the appropriateness of the Strategy's five strategic directions and helped shape the detailed directions and their actions.

The outcomes of the consultation are available in the [ACT Planning Strategy Community Engagement Report](#). Feedback received on housing choice included:

- Housing choice and affordability are critical. We need to think about the needs of younger and older people. Place transit orientated developments with affordable and social housing.
- Provide infill housing to cater for families closer to the city, such as more apartments with 4 bedrooms not just 1 and 2 bedrooms.

Public consultation was undertaken as part of development of the draft district strategies in 2021. Feedback was obtained by seeking to understand:

- How the community would like change to look in their district, as the government moves towards implementing the ACT Planning Strategy.
- In what location the community would like to see that change occur.

Workshops were held on four themes for planning of all ACT districts: building and housing, environment, infrastructure and transport, and community amenity. Feedback received on housing included the need to provide diverse housing including public housing, affordable housing, ageing in place and family homes. Further information is available in the [District planning consultation report](#) released in November 2021 and available online.

Public consultation was undertaken on draft district strategies and the draft new Territory Plan from November 2022 until March 2023 as part of the Planning System Review and Reform Project. Feedback indicated that increased urban density would allow opportunities to provide greater housing choice such as small apartment blocks. This was balanced with a desire to make sure that the existing character of suburbs was maintained through planning provisions. Further information is available in the [Listening report](#) released in April 2023. The government's response to the matters that were raised by community and industry during this period is outlined in the [Consultation response report](#).

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

Signature:



Date: 24/8/2023

By the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Mick Gentleman MLA