



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to: Urban Edge Studies

Hearing: 12 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript: pp 43-44

Transcript provided: 18 November 2025

Answer Due: 25 November 2025

MR BRADDOCK: I will try to be quick. The EPSDD annual report refers to the commitment to at least 70 per cent of new housing within Canberra's existing urban footprint. That will be page 32. But the government in April this year in the Assembly agreed to set an urban growth boundary, so there is no mention of this commitment in the annual report. So what work is underway within CED on establishing an urban growth boundary as agreed in the parliament?

Mr Steel: Well, there is absolutely that mention in the statement of planning priorities, which I have just released, which reflects the commitments that the government made at the election, that we had support for, and also the commitments we made in the supply agreement with the Greens as well, which included consideration of an urban growth boundary. So that is a piece of work that will kick off. It relates quite strongly to the development of a landscape plan for the ACT, which is a Labor commitment that we made at the election to, I guess, productively identify those areas of environmental value and develop a spatial plan.

The refresh of the planning strategy is something that we are required to do under the Planning Act, and there is a synergy there with all of those pieces of work that we will be working on. There is, of course, studies that are required to be undertaken to help develop that piece of work and inform that piece of work. It is not something where a decision can be made immediately without those studies having been undertaken.

And the other point I want to make that is highlighted in the planning priorities statement is that we want to take a regional approach to this, not just focused on the borders of the ACT. The city of greater Canberra, including the surrounding area—we do not want to see unsustainable development outside of the border that puts pressure on the ACT, puts pressure on the environmental values, including natural temperate grassland which crosses the border. And there are issues around water security to consider, there are a whole range of things, transport is being—access being a big one, and the impact on our infrastructure of that kind of unsustainable sprawl, but also impact on the health system. Up to 25 per cent of people, you know, from New South Wales in our health system, in our hospitals, at any one time.

So all of that needs to be considered, and we will be engaging with both the local governments around us as part of that process but also New South Wales government. And they are also undertaking regional planning at the same time, so I think I think it is actually a good time to be having that discussion around, “What does that look like, and does this sort of approach need to be undertaken beyond the border and not just the borders of the ACT?”

THE CHAIR: I wonder on notice, Minister, given we are at the end of the time, you mentioned some studies have been done. Can you provide a list of the studies that have been done on notice?

Mr Steel: I think there is ongoing work and there may be further studies identified as well, so it is actually a conversation I am having right now with the environment minister about what is required to be able to get us to a point where we can then inform that work, yes.

THE CHAIR: Could you provide on notice the studies that have been done, or the studies that have been identified that need to be done, like that list of what—can you provide that on notice?

Mr Steel: Yes, so look, I mean, a lot of the studies that have been undertaken, some of them are already reflected on ACTmapi, some of those broader environmental studies. Some of them are associated with work that is already underway for the eastern broadacre which has been, as you know, underway for some time around the strategic assessment there. And then also the work that have been undertaken for the continuing investigation on the western edge, which are large tracts of land in the ACT that we will really be looking at closely as part of this process.

THE CHAIR: Yes, absolutely. All of that sounds great. Maybe on notice a list of the studies that have been done that relate to this urban edge and the regional approach, and also clarity as to whether those studies have been published, whether they are complete, like, where they are up to. Can we get that on notice?

Mr Engele: Most of those are available online but we can take on notice and—

THE CHAIR: Some of them are not. I know that there are 31 western edge studies, for instance, and there are 15 online.

Mr Engele: Yes, yes, I agree. Yes. No, I appreciate that.

THE CHAIR: So if we can get a list of what the studies are and what the status is and whether they are public or not.

Mr Engele: Yes, no problem.

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

Studies in the Western Edge and Eastern Broadacre areas for the period of 2020 to current are provided in the table below. These are planning-led investigations, and other areas of government such as the Suburban Land Agency may have completed site specific studies.

Study	Status
Western Edge Investigation Area Studies	
Preliminary Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Assessment + Contamination Assessment	Complete and available on webpage Western edge investigation - City and Environment Directorate - Planning
Water Values and Environmental Hydrology Assessment	Complete and available on above webpage
Alternate Text for Western Edge Investigation Area Water Values and Environmental Hydrology Assessment Report	Complete
Preliminary Ecological Review and Assessment	Complete and available on above webpage
Landscape Character Values and Visual Assessment	Complete and available on above webpage
Preliminary Bushfire Risk Assessment	Complete and available on above webpage
Preliminary Air Quality Assessment	Complete and available on above webpage
Preliminary Assessment of Engineering Opportunities and Constraints	Complete and available on above webpage
Cultural Heritage Assessment	Complete – partially released as part of FOI25-048
Capability & Suitability Assessment	Complete – partially released as part of FOI25-048

Capability & Suitability Assessment - additional amendments	Complete – this is a variation to address comments of the draft Capability & Suitability Assessment
Western Edge Investigation Area: River and Riparian Zone	Complete and available on above webpage
Ecological Condition and Habitat Surveys	Complete
Little Eagle Survey	Complete and available above on webpage
UXO Induction Training	Complete
Bird Surveys	Complete
A preliminary survey of small native mammals and their habitat at Stromlo East and West ACT	Complete and available on above webpage
Bushfire Risk Assessment (3 areas)	Complete – partially released as part of FOI25-048
Murrumbidgee Flood Study Scoping	Complete and available on above webpage
Murray Crayfish Survey	Complete and available on above webpage
Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment	Complete
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	Complete – released as part of FOI25-048
Stormwater Management Strategies -Options assessment for the WEIA	Complete – missed in the previous QTON179 list
Plant Community Type Mapping	Complete
Vegetation Plot Mapping	Complete
Big Trees and Superb Parrot Assessment	Complete

Bat Survey	Complete
Pink-tailed Worm Lizard Habitat Mapping	Complete
Woodland Bird Survey	Complete and available on above webpage
Utilities (including Water, Sewerage/Wastewater and Electrical Power) Serviceability and Options Study	Underway
Strategic Transport Assessment	Underway
Dam and Riparian Study	Complete
Small Mammal Survey	Complete
Vegetation Mapping and Threatened Species	Complete
Social Needs Assessment including education, sports and recreational activities	Underway
Economic and Market Analysis	Underway
Ecological Values and Constraints Assessment	Underway – new contract since last QTON179
Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment Studies	
Eastern Broadacre Striped Legless Lizard Survey	Underway
EBSA Conservation and Development Plan (Program Report)	Underway
EBSA Strategic Assessment Report	Underway
EBSA Survey Season 1 (Spring/Autumn 2025/26) Stage 1 Ecological Assessment Report	Underway
EBSA Survey Season 2 (Spring/Summer 2026/27) Stage 2 Ecological Assessment Report – January 2027 TBC	Underway

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature: 

Date: 26/11/25

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