



Inquiry into DPA-04: Missing Middle Housing reform

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: [Mr Peter Cain MLA](#)

Addressed to: [University of Canberra Health Research Institute](#)

In relation to: [Lease Variation Charge and Local Living Index data](#)

Hearing: 10 February 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p XXX

Transcript provided: DD Month YYYY

Answer Due: DD Month YYYY

[\[Insert Hansard providing question taken on notice\]](#)

UPT, pp 58-59

MR CAIN: Thank you.

I think you have given us the complex chart that I have ever seen in a committee hearing. So obviously comparing LVC, with—is that as if it is a two dwelling variation only?

Mr Learnihan: That is right. Yes, only here.

MR CAIN: And then comparing with the local living index across, and where each to the suburbs land.

Mr Learnihan: Yes.

MR CAIN: Your conclusions?

Mr Learnihan: Yes, so firstly, I will explain why I chose to create this graph, is that the lease variation charge is a significant factor in why developers, but also mum and dad in the case of this policy, will choose to develop because there is a cost involved. Increasing cost, we would suggest that developers may not want to proceed on blocks

that do not stack up. And what we did, we looked at the lease variation charge, which is charged based on a suburb level, that the LVCs are applied differently to different suburbs.

So we measured suburbs by their—what we called it, a local living index. Essentially, their distance to a variety of destinations. And so areas like Kingston and Braddon have very good access to local facilities. They are dense. But it is also costly for the LVC charges to develop there. And we have really high density in those environments. But what we see at the other end of the scale is areas that have a much, much, lower LVC charge and they do not have very good accessibility at all. Like virtually every suburb in our analysis has access to a bus stop within walking distance of 800 metres. The problem is the frequency of the service.

But this is real concern because, like 70 per cent of RZ1 blocks are in areas that are not what we would say walkable. And so if developers are going to look at these suburbs and look, thinking they are right for development because of a low LVC charge, the unintended consequence is we could have development going on in these areas without supporting infrastructure for these people. And that is a public health risk.

MR CAIN: Okay.

MS CARRICK: Which means they drive too.

Mr Learnihan: Congestion, you know, there is a lot of other unintended consequences. But the evidence supports, when we know that people have destinations around where they live, in our analysis, no ACT suburb got about over eight destinations, out of a possible 12. So we have got a lot of work to do all over the capital. But with places less than four, yes, we think that is the concern. Nothing to walk to. If development is going on in those areas you have congestion, you have a range of accessibility problems and then the health impact could be social isolation increasing in those areas as well.

MS CARRICK: Can we have that list.

Mr Learnihan: So I have provided the chart. I can—and I have provided the list of destinations. I can provide the list of the—

MS CARRICK: The analysis?

MR CAIN: Sure.

Mr Learnihan: —the suburbs, their score.

MS CARRICK: And how they stack up, yes.

Mr Learnihan: Yes.

[Mr Learnihan]: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

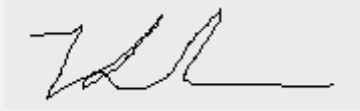
As requested, I have provided an excel spreadsheet containing the data used to create the chart originally provided as part of the submission. Data for each suburb of Canberra including the Local Living Index (mean value), the 2-dwelling Lease Variation Charge (LVC) as well as the count and proportion of RZ1 and RZ2 blocks is included in the spreadsheet.

To reiterate, our research indicates, 71.3% of RZ1 blocks in Canberra have low access to local destinations. Whereas 27.9% of RZ2 blocks have low access to local destinations. This submission argues for targeting of “missing middle developments” in areas where RZ1 and RZ2 have *medium to high levels of destination access* to promote active travel (an objective already part of the existing ACT Active Travel Plan). In the case of RZ1 blocks, our research indicates that 28,698 (28.7% of all RZ1) blocks would be eligible for an uplift in density under this scenario. In the case of RZ2 blocks, 10,837 blocks (72.1% of all RZ2 blocks) would be eligible.

This more restricted proposal could be part of a staged and more comprehensive approach to increasing housing diversity, sustainability and liveability whereby investment in local infrastructure in areas which have low scores on the Local Living Index can also be prioritised. Local infrastructure improvements are not limited to shops and services but should include active travel infrastructure such as protected cycle lanes, footpaths and pedestrian safety measures as well as green infrastructure.

OFFICIAL

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'VL', on a light gray background.

Signature:

Date: 04 March 2026

By the [name of witness] MR VINCENT LEARNIHAN