



Legislative Assembly for the ACT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Long-term Planning for the Provision of Land for Aged Care Facilities in the ACT

AUGUST 2004

REPORT 34

Committee membership

Ms Roslyn Dundas MLA	Chair
Mr John Hargreaves MLA	Deputy Chair
Mrs Helen Cross MLA	Member
Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA	Member

Committee Staff

Ms Robina Jaffray	Committee Secretary
Mrs Judy Moutia	Administration

Resolution of appointment

- (1) The following general purpose standing committees be established and each committee to inquire into and report on matters to it by the Assembly or matters that are considered by the committee to be of concern to the community:
 - (f) A Standing Committee on Planning and Environment to examine matters relating to planning and land management, conservation and heritage, transport services and planning, environment and ecological sustainability.
- (2) If the Assembly is not sitting when the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment has completed consideration of a report on draft plan variations referred pursuant to section 25 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 or draft plans of management referred pursuant to section 204 of the Land (Planning Environment) Act 1991, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation

Terms of reference

The Committee will inquire into and report on long term planning for the provision of land for aged care facilities in the ACT to meet the predicted needs of the ACT's ageing population.

Acronyms

ACSA	Aged and Community Services Assn of ACT & NSW
ACTPLA	ACT Planning and Land Management
ACAR	Aged Care Allocations Round
ACAT	Aged Care Assessment Team
BCC	Belconnen Community Council
CACP	Community Aged Care Package
CCRC	Continuing Care Retirement Community
CMD	Chief Minister's Department
COTA	Council on the Ageing [now incorporating National Seniors]
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
HIA	Housing Industry Association
ILU	Independent Living Unit
PALM	Planning and Land Management

Table of contents

Acronyms.....	iii
List of recommendations	vii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Terminology	1
2. CURRENT PLANNING FOR AGED CARE ACCOMMODATION. 3	3
Commonwealth funded aged care.....	3
Other forms of aged care accommodation.....	4
Canberra's changing demographic structure	5
Planning for residential aged care – the allocations process.....	6
Provisional allocations.....	7
Previous Aged Care Allocations	8
Allocated and Operational Places as at December 2003	8
Planning for Aged Care in the ACT	10
Recreation and Community Facility Location Guidelines	12
The development application process.....	13
The nature of future demand.....	14
Recent ACT Government initiatives.....	15
ACT/Commonwealth liaison.....	17
The land bank.....	18
3. MAJOR COMMUNITY ISSUES AND CONCERNS	19
Issues of concern.....	19
Availability of aged care places.....	19
The availability of land and the planning system in the ACT	21
Planning requirements	24
The ACT Government's position	25
4. THE BELCONNEN EXPERIENCE.....	28
Bushfire risk	29
Committee comment.....	32
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	33
Residential aged care	33
Streamlining and flexibility of the planning approval process	34
Section 87 Belconnen.....	34
Financial disincentives to developments	34

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF SUBMISSIONS	37
APPENDIX 2 – PUBLIC HEARINGS.....	39
APPENDIX 3 – LETTER FROM CHIEF MINISTER TO COMMITTEE, DATED 9 AUGUST 2004.....	41

List of recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

5.11. In recognition of the clear evidence from across the community that there are insufficient residential aged care places, the Committee recommends that the Government expedite the planning process for all sites currently under consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 2

5.12. The Committee recommends that the Government prioritise the allocation of land for residential aged care developments, specifically:

- ▮ that the Government recognise the immediate unmet need in the allocation of land for the development of residential aged care places; and
- ▮ Undertakes an immediate and substantial increase in land allocations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

5.13. The Committee recommends that the Government reviews its policies and procedures around the allocation of land for residential aged care and other forms of accommodation for the aged, including, but not limited to, consideration of the following matters:

- ▮ Compliance with the Building Code of Australia should be the single condition of approval for sites assessed as having some bushfire risk.
- ▮ The location guideline of 400 metres distance from an aged person facility to a bus route or service facilities should be reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION 4

5.14. The Committee recommends that the Government streamlines its planning approval processes for aged care accommodation similarly to that done to provide development incentives in town centres.

RECOMMENDATION 5

5.15. The Committee recommends that the Government ensure that the land bank comprises a variety of sites, in order to meet a wide spectrum of needs for the different types of accommodation for the aged.

RECOMMENDATION 6

5.16. The Committee recommends that the Government recognise the need for the allocation of land for self care or retirement village accommodation and acts now to increase allocations.

RECOMMENDATION 7

5.17. In order that the Government is able to accurately assess the need for residential aged care, the Committee recommends that the Government maintain waiting lists for both high and low care places, through its ACAT assessment program.

RECOMMENDATION 8

5.18. The Committee recommends that the Government treat such forms of accommodation for the aged as aged persons' units and independent living units in the same way as supported accommodation for the purposes of the Territory Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 9

5.19. The Committee recommends that the residential overlay on Section 87, Belconnen be removed.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Committee undertook the inquiry into long term planning for aged care accommodation following concerns that planning processes may be failing the aged in the ACT community. The principal concerns included waiting lists for residential aged care and the responsiveness of current planning processes to ensure that land availability and allocation for accommodation for Canberra's aged community were appropriate. There was also a concern that the kinds of accommodation currently available to the aged did not adequately reflect demand or need.

1.2. The inquiry was self-referred on 21 April 2004 with the following terms of reference:

The Committee will inquire into and report on long term planning for the provision of land for aged care facilities in the ACT following examination of the predicted needs of the ACT's ageing population.

1.3. The inquiry was advertised requesting submissions by 31 May 2004. Nineteen submissions were received and public hearings were held on 5, 7 and 16 July 2004.

1.4. The Committee would like to thank all those who made submissions to the inquiry and who appeared at public hearings.

Terminology

1.5. Some clarification is required for some of the terminology used throughout the inquiry. Principally this relates to the scope of the inquiry in relation to what is meant by older persons' accommodation and the meaning of the term 'ageing in place'.

1.6. Older persons' accommodation includes not only Australian Government funded aged care facilities, but also retirement villages, supported accommodation and aged persons units. Care has been taken to differentiate between the different types of accommodation, given that different planning considerations and different government funding arrangements apply. Briefly, the different types of aged care accommodation comprise:

- Residential aged care facilities, which offer either low care or high care or some combination of the two
- Assisted living facilities;

- ▢ Retirement villages, which offer self-care units or townhouses; and
- ▢ Aged persons units [older persons units] generally built and managed by ACT Housing.

1.7. It should be noted that there are also various types of community care available to older people who still live in their own homes and the extent to which the home is suitable or adaptable for occupation by elderly people is a factor in the level of community care demanded and provided.

1.8. The term 'ageing in place' was used regularly in submissions and at the hearings. However, it is clear that the concept is being used in a broader sense than in the Commonwealth aged care arena. The policy term was introduced following the 1997 reforms and was designed to enable residents, whose care needs had increased from low care to high care, to remain *in situ* in those aged care facilities which could offer appropriate accommodation and care levels. During the course of the inquiry it became clear that the term is being used in the broader community to refer to ageing in place whether it be in a residence, in a retirement village complex or at home and as a policy basis to support adaptable and accessible housing.¹

¹ CMD Submission 15, p 6 and p 12

2. Current planning for aged care accommodation

2.1. In the ACT, land is set aside for community facilities needs, including older persons' accommodation. The ACT Planning and Land Authority [ACTPLA] is responsible for planning and development policy and the regulation of development.² ACTPLA prepares a five year residential and commercial Land Supply Strategy underpinning the Canberra Plan³. Specifically the Land Supply Strategy, in relation to accommodation for the aged, aims to respond to the needs of an ageing population through the provision of suitable accommodation [emphasis added]⁴. The Canberra Social Plan has as one of its key priorities the building of strong, cohesive communities, part of which is caring for and providing for the needs of the ageing community.⁵

2.2. The Commonwealth Government currently controls the supply of aged care places and ultimately the number of beds available for low and high care accommodation in the ACT and elsewhere in Australia. The ACT Government's responsibility is to ensure that land is available for the development of aged care facilities and for operating aged care assessment teams [ACATs] on a cost sharing arrangement with the Australian Government. ACATs are responsible for assessing people to establish care needs, including community care needs, and eligibility for entry into aged care facilities. Delays in ACAT assessments can contribute to a consequential delay in being allocated a place in a residential care facility.

2.3. The provision of or access to retirement villages, independent living or supported accommodation is quite different. These forms of accommodation are made available by the private sector as well as operators of Australian Government funded aged care accommodation, be they private operators, religious and charitable sector or community operated facilities. Residents of such facilities generally have a greater degree of independence, may own the properties in which they are living and are more easily able to relocate.

Commonwealth funded aged care

2.4. The ACT has 635 operational high care places, 912 operational low care places, and 367 operational community aged care packages (CACPs). The

² ACTPLA, *Residential, Commercial and Community Land Supply Strategy*, 2004, p 1. much of the description of ACTPLA's role and the policy development underpinning land use is drawn from this document.

³ The Canberra Plan comprises three components, the Spatial Plan, Economic White Paper and the Social Plan.

⁴ *Residential, commercial and community land supply strategy*, p 2

⁵ *Building for our ageing community policy*

total number of operational places is 1,909. As at 1 July 2004, the Commonwealth benchmark for places will change due to the increase in the residential aged care provision ratio from 100 to 108 operational places for every 1,000 people aged 70 years or over. The ACT Government advises that the ACT will be over the benchmark for operational low care places, just under for CACPs, and under for high care places. The total number of provisional⁶ aged care places in the ACT is now 226.⁷

Other forms of aged care accommodation

2.5. Assisted living facilities are usually small units or apartments where meals, cleaning and laundry services are supplied. The two facilities in Canberra offering assisted living, where residents purchase their own units, are Grange-Deakin, managed by the Hindmarsh Group and Ginninderra Gardens at Page, run by Anglican Retirement Services.⁸

2.6. Aged persons units have generally been built by the ACT Government, although some built by private developers and are individually owned. They are purpose built one or two bedroom properties and residents must meet ACT Housing eligibility criteria and the dwellings are designed and built with adaptations to the needs of older people. Such residents may also qualify for community care assistance at either ACT Government or Australian Government level.

2.7. In the ACT, residents of retirement villages generally occupy their units on a lease-licence arrangement and are responsible for their own care. Different financial arrangements apply for entry to a retirement village than those applicable for entry to a residential aged care facility. While some retirement villages are located within a complex which also has a residential aged care facility, there is no guarantee that residence will give special access to the residential facility should the need arise in the future.

2.8. In addition to the CACP packages offered at Commonwealth level, it is possible for the elderly still resident in their own homes to access Home and Community Care programs, which essentially provide complementary services to CACPs.

⁶ Provisional aged care places are those allocated but not yet operational.

⁷ ACT Government Submission 15, p 10

⁸ COTA, Submission 4, p 4

Canberra's changing demographic structure

2.9. The Department of Health and Ageing, in its submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing, noted:

As a result of the sustained decline in Australia's fertility rate and the increase in life expectancy, Australia is about to experience a sustained period of structural and numerical ageing.⁹

2.10. As in the rest of Australia, Canberra's demographic structure is changing. The following table sets out the expected changes to the older population in Canberra over the next 30 years.

Table 2.1: Demographic structure 2002-2032¹⁰

	2002	2012	2032
Population aged 65 years and over	28 200	43 600	85 500
Population aged 75 years and over	12 500	18 000	46 000

2.11. Currently 9 per cent of the Australian population [1.76 million people] is over the age of 70 years. This proportion is predicted to increase to 16.9 per cent within 30 years.¹¹ In the ACT the population is expected to grow by 67 000 over the next 30 years, with a significantly changed age structure.¹² While the population for almost every age up to 32 will decline, the most rapid growth will be in the over 85 age group, which will grow from fewer than 3 000 to over 15 000 in 30 years time. The largest growth is for those aged in their 70's, increasing to more than 23 000 people by 2032.¹³ The increased longevity of the population and the increasing numbers of the very old has implications for demand for aged care accommodation.

2.12. Further, the number of households is expected to increase by more than one third during the 30 year period. According to the Demographic Unit

⁹ Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, *Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing*, January 2003, p 10

¹⁰ *Residential, Commercial and Community Land Supply Strategy*, p 8

¹¹ Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, *Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing*, January 2003, p 41

¹² Chief Minister's Department, *Submission 15*, Attachment A, p 3

¹³ *ibid*

of the Chief Minister's Department, the housing mix will depend on the nature of the changing demand for housing and housing choice which will be impacted by factors such as family types, social change, economic and financial considerations, land availability and spatial availability and preferences.¹⁴

2.13. The ACT Government submission notes that 'within a decade or so, almost half of all ACT households will have only one person, many of whom will be aged over 50'¹⁵. The submission therefore concludes that the extent and type of demand for both high and low care accommodation through to independent living units, as well as land, is not fully understood. However, the submission does note the following considerations:

- ≡ The next wave of retirees from the 'baby boomer' generation will generally have higher expectations for services and facilities;
- ≡ There will remain a need to provide affordable housing for some older members of the community;
- ≡ There is a growing body of knowledge that suggests that the majority of older people wish to remain independent and in their own homes; and
- ≡ Some older people wish to remain independent but move to smaller dwellings such as a town house, apartment or dual occupancy dwelling where there are less maintenance responsibilities. However, many of these people wish to remain in the community that they have lived in for many years.¹⁶

Planning for residential aged care – the allocations process

2.14. The Australian Government's policy aim in allocating new places is to attain and maintain a target ratio of operational places for every 1,000 people aged 70 years or more for the aged care planning regions across Australia. The aged care provision ratio is 108 operational places per 1,000 people aged 70 years or older. Government policy has recognised that older Australians prefer to remain in their own homes as long as possible and have consequently amended the balance between residential and community care places. The ratio now provides for 20 community care places, 48 low care places and 40 high care places.

¹⁴ Submission 15, Attachment A, p 5

¹⁵ Submission, 15, p 3

¹⁶ Submission 15, p 3

2.15. The process of allocating places seeks to:

- ⇒ ensure places are distributed equitably between and within States and Territories and that people with special needs have access to quality appropriate care;
- ⇒ ensure an appropriate balance of services in each aged care planning region, including services provided to people in their own homes and residential care services for people with lower levels of need, as well as people with higher levels of need;
- ⇒ increase the capacity for recipients of residential care to age in place; and
- ⇒ appropriately balance the provision of permanent and respite residential care.

2.16. Each financial year, the Minister determines the number of new residential, community and flexible care places available in each State and Territory for allocation. Once the number of new places has been determined the following process takes place:

- ⇒ the Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing allocates places by state;
- ⇒ the available places are then distributed within each State or Territory amongst the Aged Care Planning Regions. In the case of the ACT, the aged care planning region is the ACT;
- ⇒ The places are advertised for allocation in the various regions and approved providers wishing to supply aged care services are invited to apply for allocations.
- ⇒ applications are then competitively assessed to decide which application, if approved, would best meet the needs of the aged care community in the region.

Provisional allocations

2.17. An allocation of places to an approved provider is a provisional allocation if the provider is not ready to provide care immediately, for example if the facility is still to be constructed. A provisional allocation is for two years, although the Secretary can extend the provisional allocation if the circumstances warrant. The provisional allocation will only be extended if there is still a need for the places at the end of the extension and the extension

is necessary because no other provider is ready and able to satisfy the need. If the facility is in the process of being built, the Secretary must be satisfied the work on the facility is proceeding satisfactorily.

2.18. The capacity to bring previously allocated but not yet operational places as well as future allocations of aged care places into effect in a timely fashion is an important consideration in order to meet the operational aged care target as well as emerging community need. Providers are required to report on all provisional allocations to facilitate their being brought into effect in a timely manner.

2.19. Progress of providers with provisional allocations exceeding two years is monitored by the Department of Health and Ageing. Nationally, 70% of delays beyond two years in bringing provisional allocations of residential aged care places into operation are due to issues over planning approvals and appeals or land availability and site suitability.

Previous Aged Care Allocations

Over the past five years (1999 to 2003) the ACT planning region was allocated a total of 489 new aged care places. Details are set out in the following table.

Table 2.2: Aged Care Approvals Round Allocations¹⁷

ACAR Allocation	ACT Places
1999	68
2000	126
2001	76
2002	79
2003	140
Total	489

Note: Covers residential places and Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs).

Allocated and Operational Places as at December 2003

2.20. As at 31 December 2003, the ACT planning region had 2,071 aged care places allocated, of which 1,909 places were operational. This represented an allocated planning ratio of 101.7 per 1,000 people aged 70 or more and an operational ratio of 93.7 per 1,000 people aged 70 or more.¹⁸ These figures, which represent the actual situation, will not mirror the prospective planning ratio of 108 per 1 000 people aged over 70 (See paragraph 2.14).

¹⁷ Submission 15, p 9

¹⁸ Submission 15, p 9

2.21. As at 31 December 2003 the ACT had 162 provisionally allocated places not yet brought into operation of which there were 102 high care, 41 low care and 19 were Community Aged Care Package (CACP) places. There were no provisionally allocated places over two years old at 31 December 2003, although at that time there were 50 high care and 15 low care places which were 23 months old. The high and low care places had been provisionally allocated between January and November 2002, while the CACPs were provisionally allocated in November 2003.¹⁹

2.22. The ACT Government advises that there are between 400 and 500 people assessed as requiring high care residential accommodation.²⁰ No figures are available for people assessed as eligible for admission to a facility for low care.²¹ Exact numbers are difficult to quantify, given that there is no centralised waiting list and potential residents may be on more than one facility's waiting list. However, information on the size of waiting lists provided to the Committee in submissions and at public hearing indicate that this figure is reasonably accurate.

2.23. Following the Australian Government's May 2004 Budget announcements, 505 new places were made available over the next three years for the ACT. The majority of these places will be advertised and allocated through the conduct of the 2004 Aged Care Approvals Round and aged care providers will have the opportunity to apply for the 265 new places made available in the ACT for 2004-2005.

2.24. To assist providers in all States and Territories in their future planning for aged care, the Government has determined to announce indicative numbers of new places for three years in advance to allow beds to open more quickly once allocated. The following table indicates the number of new aged care places to be allocated in 2004-05 as well as indicative releases for 2005-06 and 2006-07 for both the ACT and Australia together with an as yet undistributed number of places in a national pool.

¹⁹ Submission 15, p 10

²⁰ CMD, Submission 15, p 11

²¹ Correspondence to Committee, ACT Department of Health

Table 2.3: New aged care places to be allocated in 2004-05 and indicative releases for 2005-06 and 2006-07

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Three year Total
ACT	265	145	95	505
National Pool	1,250	1,150	1,150	3,550
Australia	13,030	8,800	6,045	27,875

Note: There may be some variations in the indicative figures due to possible annual population projections and the actual rate at which previously allocated places open.

Planning for Aged Care in the ACT

2.25. ACTPLA is responsible for the Territory Plan, the Land Release program, development applications, leases and licences, regulating development and the building industry, land use, community consultation and public education.

2.26. The *Planning and Land Act 2002* established the ACT Planning and Land Authority and the ACT Planning and Land Council. The Act 'reasserts planning as a vital public function that must be conducted in an open, educative and accountable manner'²². The Act also established the Land Development Agency, which undertakes the development of public land, land sales and major development projects on behalf of the ACT Government.

2.27. A central plank of the Government's objectives in land planning is to provide for the community, which is underpinned, *inter alia* by the following:

- ▢ Ensuring that planning policies and the land release program respond to the objectives of social equity;
- ▢ Preparing needs assessment for different groups/activities in respect to the land release program and land availability;
- ▢ Ensuring that affordable housing stock is provided, and that there is ample housing choice for the changing community profile;
- ▢ Ensuring that land release and housing offer appropriate independent living opportunities for senior citizens and people with disabilities, and allows them to remain included in community life.²³

²² ACTPLA Website, <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/aboutus/statements/intent.htm>

²³ ACTPLA Website, <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/aboutus/statements/intent.htm>

2.28. Residential care accommodation is listed in Schedule 1 of Part B4 of the Territory Plan, as is supportive housing. However, independent living units are not included in that Schedule and therefore different criteria apply to any development application for those kinds of units. The Schedule sets out the uses which are included within the ambit of 'community land use'. The specific objectives of the community land use policies include:

- Ensuring that adequate sites are available to meet community needs for community services and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations;
- Provide sites for adaptable and affordable housing for people in need of supportive housing and residential care.²⁴

2.29. The ACT Government has established a strategy for managing the accommodation needs for older Canberrans. As part of this strategy, *Building for our Ageing Community*, the position of Case Manager for aged persons accommodation has been created, to primarily act as a single point of contact for developers and service providers and to assist applicants through the land release and development application process.²⁵

2.30. The ACT Government advises in its strategy that it is committed to ensuring there is a rolling program of aged persons' accommodation development sites by:

- Identifying a specific land release program for aged persons accommodation;
- developing a stock of pre-planned and serviced sites for aged persons' accommodation; and
- identifying surplus Government land suitable for aged care accommodation.

2.31. The Strategy also states:

We are committed to taking a long term strategic approach to meeting the accommodation needs of our ageing community. We will:

- continue to request that the Commonwealth Government reviews its allocation policies;
- through targeted research, data collection and dialogue with the service providers and the construction industry, establish a

²⁴ ACTPLA, *The Territory Plan*, Part B4, p 1

²⁵ CMD Submission, p 8

strong understanding of the market for aged accommodation;
and

- ⇒ foster effective relationships with industry to provide and market a range of accommodation options for older people.²⁶

2.32. However, the Australian Government controls the release of aged care places and the release of land for that purpose is consequential on the allocation of places. The same restriction does not apply to the allocation of land for aged persons' units or independent living units, which are not dependent on any aged care place allocation process. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing submission notes that there have been a number of initiatives to address the delays in making aged care places operational within the ACT noted below.²⁷

2.33. COTA notes that the early identification of suitable sites for future release for aged care facilities, i.e. a land bank, is a desirable development:

COTA has for many years advocated that a land bank of suitable sites should be identified and available for developers and service providers to access immediately when they receive an allocation of aged care places from the Commonwealth.²⁸

Recreation and Community Facility Location Guidelines

2.34. Location guidelines for community and recreation facilities were published by Planning and Land Management [PALM] in February 1998. The guidelines set out criteria for each land use type as follows:

- ⇒ relationship to shops;
- ⇒ relationship to other uses;
- ⇒ co-location opportunities;
- ⇒ other issues.

2.35. Land uses include as separate categories special care hostels, which includes aged persons' hostels, retirement complexes and aged persons units.

2.36. 'Special care hostels', such as aged persons hostels should be:

- ⇒ 400 metres from shops where the maximum gradient is 1:20, otherwise closer;

²⁶ ACT Government, *Building for our Aged Community*

²⁷ Submission 16, p 11

²⁸ COTA, Submission 4, p 11

- ▢ located in quiet areas, preferably on a pedestrian path system with good access to health facilities, places of worship and parks;
- ▢ separated from or buffered from major/and or continuous sources of noise, not located on major arterial roads with high traffic volumes unless safe crossing is provided to access facilities.²⁹

2.37. The Guidelines indicate that hostels and nursing homes should be located so as to maximise views and overlook active streetscape in residential areas. An assessment of the extent of relevant facility provision in the surrounding area is required.³⁰

2.38. Retirement complexes, i.e. independent aged persons units, should be located:

- ▢ within 400 metres from shops where the maximum gradient is 1:20, otherwise closer;
- ▢ within or adjacent to residential areas and near medical centres, on a public transport route to hospitals, major health facilities, town centre and on a pedestrian path system, with access to parks and local centres;
- ▢ so as to avoid residents having to cross roads with high traffic volumes to access shops and public transport, with noise separation from schools, colleges and youth centres.³¹

2.39. The establishment of independent living units and retirement complexes also requires an assessment of the extent of facility provision in the surrounding area. Where there is a shortfall in relevant transport, community, retail, health or personal services, these may be required on site.³²

The development application process

2.40. The development application process is set out in publications such as *"Development Applications: Multi-residential Developments, Commercial and Industrial Developments and Institutional Developments"*, accessible from the ACTPLA website. The process is complex and although indicative timelines are not provided, there is no doubt that the development application process

²⁹ PALM, *Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities*, February 1998, pp 32-33

³⁰ PALM, *Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities*, February 1998, p 33

³¹ PALM, *Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities*, February 1998, p 33

³² PALM, *Location Guidelines for Community and Recreation Facilities*, February 1998, p 33

is time consuming, particularly where that process requires a variation to the Territory Plan.

The nature of future demand

2.41. In referring to residential aged care, COTA notes that 'services in the ACT presently are not able to cope with current demand'³³ given the hundreds of people on the waiting lists at many facilities. The demand is from occupiers of acute hospital beds, estimated at approximately 30 on any given day, and those in their own homes awaiting placement.³⁴ COTA claims that fewer than 50 new beds are being developed each year, despite the allocation of a greater number of places.³⁵

2.42. The ACT Government submission noted that the understanding of what is appropriate accommodation for the aged in the future is changing, that 'ageing in place' is the future of aged care where people will be encouraged to live in appropriate, non-institutional accommodation with services provided as required.³⁶ The ACT Government argues that 'in the longer term there may be a decline in nursing home care with a simultaneous increase in the provision of services to the home' and therefore estimate that 1400 additional aged persons' units by 2012 will need to be provided, with the greatest need in Gunghalin and Tuggeranong.³⁷

2.43. COTA stated in their submission:

A growing number of older people are already seeking change. Some because of changing health circumstances, others because of financial pressures to maintain a large house and yard with a very high rates bill, while others are simply seeking a change in lifestyle.

Older people are looking for homes that will provide them with easy access; are adaptable in case their needs change; and also allow them to maintain their social infrastructure. They generally do not want larger houses but they do not want homes that cannot accommodate the occasional visitor or prevent them from entertaining family and friends.³⁸

2.44. Goodwin Aged Care Services suggested that there is currently a misconception in the ACT Government that the problem is a lack of

³³ COTA, Submission 4, p 8

³⁴ COTA, Submission 4, p 9

³⁵ COTA, Submission 4, p 9

³⁶ CMD Submission 15, p 12

³⁷ CMD Submission 15, p 12

³⁸ COTA, Submission 4, p 3

residential care facilities, that the attention of Government has been in that area, when in fact there is a greater need for self-care or independent living units to be built.³⁹

Recent ACT Government initiatives

2.45. The ACT Government submission listed a number of initiatives that had been undertaken recently to provide for ageing residents, including:

- The provision of low cost accommodation for older Canberrans through the construction of 82 aged persons units in 2004-2005 financial year to be located in older suburbs;
- expenditure of \$1.5 million on modifications to properties for new and existing tenants, many of whom are aged.⁴⁰

2.46. The ACT Government submission notes the importance of facilitating 'ageing in place', specifically through the provision of adaptable and accessible housing.⁴¹

2.47. The submission sets out progress towards increasing the supply of aged persons' accommodation in the Territory as follows:⁴²

- Lease offers have been made to:
 - Little Company of Mary Calvary Health Care Holdings for a site in Bruce that will provide a 100 bed residential care facility and 80 ILUs;
 - Southern Cross Care (ACT & NSW) Inc for a site in Garran that will provide a 70 bed residential care facility and 14 ILUs;
 - Uniting Care (Mirinjani) for a site in Weston that will provide a 32 bed residential care facility;
- The Fadden Gowrie multi-unit adaptable housing sites were auctioned in March this year. A minimum of 40 dwellings will be constructed on the two sites;⁴³

³⁹ Goodwin Aged Care Services, Submission 3, pp 1-2

⁴⁰ Submission 15,

⁴¹ Submission 15, p 6

⁴² Submission 15, p 7

⁴³ However, it should be noted that in evidence, ACT Government witnesses advised that the land was for adaptable housing, but there was potential for it be used in future for aged care accommodation. See Transcript of Evidence, 5 July 2004, page 15.

- ▢ Planning and consultation for sites in Greenway, Nicholls, and Gordon is well underway. These sites will be available in a pre-planned state ready for sale when bed allocations become available from the Commonwealth. Release of these sites before bed allocations become available would almost certainly result in ILUs being built without any high or low care facility;
- ▢ Planning studies on sites in Monash and Hughes are well advanced. Before the sites can be used for aged persons' accommodation the planning policy for each site needs to be varied. ACTPLA is preparing a variation for the site in Monash and is considering its position on the site in Hughes;
- ▢ A considerable number of extra beds have been allocated to the ACT in the Commonwealth budget. The allocation announced in the budget is 265 places, over double that allocated last year.
- ▢ Considerable progress has been made in preparing part Block 6 Section 87 Belconnen for release as a retirement complex. The site provides the opportunity to attract providers that may develop a facility that will house around 100 high and low care beds and a minimum of 150 Independent Living Units. The new facility will also include community facilities consistent with contemporary expectations. A Preliminary Assessment has been submitted to ACTPLA for evaluation.

2.48. The submission states that the above developments 'will supply high and low care beds to meet projected demand for the next five years'⁴⁴.

2.49. In relation to recent developments, the HIA noted:

HIA agrees with a number of goals set out in the recently launched Canberra Social Plan. Importantly, there are two clear objectives for aged person's accommodation, which HIA believes need to be given greater priority. Meeting these objectives promptly will ensure that the type, size and location of housing in the ACT meets the changing needs of the community, and that the regulatory regime to enable individual needs to be addressed will be improved.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ CMD, Submission 15, p 8

⁴⁵ HIA, Submission 10, p 1

ACT/Commonwealth liaison

2.50. The Commonwealth advised on initiatives to address delays in making aged care places operational within the ACT⁴⁶, which include:

- The Australian and ACT Governments working collaboratively toward synchronising the allocation of places through the aged care approvals round and the release of land in the ACT;
- the establishment of an ACT Land Planning Forum by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing ACT Office, where ACT Government Departments, aged care industry and aged care community organisations attend and share their views on the aged care planning process in the ACT. The aim of the forum was to identify any problems in the planning and approvals process and establish mechanisms and processes to resolve the issues;
- regular correspondence with the ACT Government Land Development Agency by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to keep up to date on the progress of the sale processes of sites in the ACT which have aged care places allocated to them;
- the introduction of planning reforms to streamline timeframes for the sale of land in the ACT by reducing the number of community consultations;
- The Australian Government is working closely with the ACT Government Land Development Agency, Planning and Land Authority and the Chief Minister's Department to collaboratively influence the conditions attached to the sale of land zoned for aged care in the ACT.⁴⁷

2.51. The Department of Health and Ageing stated:

Arising from these initiatives there is an expectation that the ACT Government will release land zoned for aged care to take account of changing demographics in the ACT. There is also an expectation that the ACT Government will implement timely planning processes in respect of land release and sale to the providers who have been allocated places in the aged care approvals rounds.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Commonwealth Dept of Health & Ageing, Submission 16, p 10

⁴⁷ Commonwealth Dept of Health & Ageing, Submission 16, p 10

⁴⁸ Commonwealth Dept of Health & Ageing, Submission 16, p 10

The land bank

2.52. Locations for future residential aged care facilities and other forms of aged accommodation are largely determined through the Land Supply Strategy, the Land Development Agency's (LDA) associated Land Sale Program and by submissions for land grants to the Land Development Agency.⁴⁹

2.53. The ACT Government advised that the development of a land bank of pre-planned aged persons' accommodation sites is well advanced, with 'sufficient sites [being] available for release in advance of bed allocations from the Commonwealth', stating that 'these sites will cater for projected demand of the ACT for the next five years and more'⁵⁰. The land bank is designed to include aged care accommodation in the form of nursing homes as well as for ILUs and supportive housing models. The CMD advised at public hearing that 'the land release program over the next few years will keep us, as it were, just ahead of that expected provision by the Commonwealth'.⁵¹

2.54. However, not everyone is in favour of the land bank. Goodwin Aged Care Services advised that there was a necessity for land to be released now and not to be stored in a land bank.⁵² However, COTA states:

One mechanism for achieving a reduction of time in obtaining planning approvals is the establishment of a "Land Bank". This will require the government to identify sites across Canberra that are appropriate and ensure they are development ready so that an aged care facility can be built. Feasibility studies including community consultations need to be carried out and zoning approvals in place ready for a provider/developer to purchase. This would reduce delays and uncertainty associated with the developer finding land and go through the whole process of community consultation and planning approvals. At present providers are required to spend considerable funds before they even know whether they can develop the facility to house the allocation of beds they have already received.⁵³

⁴⁹ CMD Submission 15, p 12

⁵⁰ CMD Submission 15, p 11

⁵¹ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 147

⁵² Goodwin, Submission 3, p 1

⁵³ COTA, Submission 4, p 15

3. Major community issues and concerns

Issues of concern

3.1. Concerns were expressed from community and industry representatives about:

- ⇒ insufficient availability of residential aged care places and consequential long waiting lists;
- ⇒ insufficient supply of quality retirement village stock in the ACT and a need for the Government to release suitable sites for development;
- ⇒ the ACT's planning approval processes, specifically the uncertainty, inflexibility and lack of transparency of planning processes;
- ⇒ delays in the land allocation process, which mitigated against bringing aged care places into operation expeditiously; and
- ⇒ the current planning policies, which did not support or encourage choice of accommodation for the ageing population.

Availability of aged care places

3.2. Providers who made submissions noted waiting lists in the order of 500-700 applicants for places.⁵⁴ Even if there are names on multiple lists it seems likely that there are several hundred people awaiting placement in a residential care facility. ACT Health admitted at public hearing that the ACAT waiting lists for high care contained in the order of 500 names.⁵⁵

3.3. Margaret Kelly from Morshead Home for the Aged stated:

It is obvious, based on current waiting lists, that the existing Aged Care Facilities are unable to meet current needs which means it will be impossible to meet the needs of the ACT's ageing population in the long term unless new and/or expanded facilities are planned for and become available sooner rather than later.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Submissions 3, 7 and 10

⁵⁵ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 156

⁵⁶ Submission 7, p 3

3.4. COTA stated:

There is a manifest lack of available aged care facilities. Even the major hospitals, with professional staff attempting to secure placements, are unable to obtain satisfactory results.

Families in the community are being overwhelmed by the difficulty of obtaining appropriate care for loved ones who require high-level personal or medical assistance. The situation is even worse for people who live in the community and do not have family or friends to advocate, and harass, on their behalf.

In addition to the local demand for aged care facilities in the ACT, there is a strong net demand from other parts of Australia. The majority of enquiries that we receive are from two groups. The first is from people that have been long term residents of the ACT who now wish to bring a parent to the ACT because of the need for increased care. The second group wishes to move from outlying areas to the ACT largely because they have traditionally come here for their specialist medical treatment. A third, smaller group, are former Canberrans who wish to move back for their last years.⁵⁷

3.5. The Aged and Community Services Association of ACT and NSW [ACSA] was critical of the ACT Government, arguing that aged care in the ACT continues to be in crisis:

There appear to be no procedures in place to put the [Building for our Ageing Community] Strategy into practice and ensure the provision of care and housing for the ageing population of the ACT. This includes residential aged care, supporting the delivery of community care services, self care or retirement village accommodation and adaptable housing.⁵⁸

3.6. In advice to the Committee the CMD confirmed that, as at the end of May 2004 there were 479 people assessed as eligible for high level care.⁵⁹ The Department qualified the advice, stating:

It is difficult to give an exact number at this stage of people waiting for residential aged care placement because aged care facilities are private enterprises, and keep their own waiting lists and are not required to register their clients on a centralised waiting list. Participation on the centralised waiting list being developed by ACT Health is voluntary for providers, and at this stage estimates

⁵⁷ COTA, Submission 4, p 13

⁵⁸ ACSA, Submission 5, p 3

⁵⁹ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment F [Appendix 3]

are only available for the high level care waiting list. A low level care waiting list is yet to be established.⁶⁰

The availability of land and the planning system in the ACT

3.7. The availability of land and the expected increase in demand for aged care accommodation was an issue of serious concern to submissions. COTA stated:

By any of these measures, the historical rate of the provision of land for aged care facilities will be grossly inadequate. The high number of allocated places, where building of facilities has not commenced, is a reflection of the lack of appropriate planning and processes for land allocation.

The requirement for additional aged care facilities in the next ten years will be at least fifty percent greater than the last decade. This is based on the expected increase in the number of people over seventy years of age and does not take into account any 'catch-up' or improved level of servicing of older people.

As a consequence, at least a fifty percent increase is needed in the system for the provision of land for aged care facilities.⁶¹

3.8. In particular, submissions noted that while medical facilities and schools were often catered for in a timely manner, the provision of aged care facilities appeared to lag.⁶² Gungahlin was specifically cited, the submission noting that few communities of 20 000 people would not have an aged care facility.⁶³ ACSA stated that the land grant and allocation process was unclear, that in practice there was often no acknowledgement that land use for residential aged care is a social benefit.⁶⁴ ACSA suggested that while '[t]he Chief Minister's Media Release of 24 May is noted and shows a positive intent...the experience of providers is this is not translating into prompt practical action'.⁶⁵

3.9. Private developers commented to the Committee on the difficulties they faced in becoming involved in aged care developments. The Hindmarsh Group listed a number of location requirements which made for a successful retirement village, including:

⁶⁰ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment F [Appendix 3]

⁶¹ COTA, Submission 4, p 14

⁶² See eg Submission 3, p 14

⁶³ See eg Submission 3, p 14

⁶⁴ ACSA, Submission 5, p 3

⁶⁵ ACSA, Submission 5, pp 3-4

- ▢ Within walking distance to shops
- ▢ Close to hospitals and medical services
- ▢ Located in a well sought after and leafy area
- ▢ Flat and non undulating site
- ▢ Close to public transport
- ▢ Large enough to provide community services

3.10. The Hindmarsh Group noted that the difficulty for a private developer is that sites that meet all of the above criteria were difficult to find in the ACT and if they were available, a developer was more likely to erect residential facilities where higher profit margins could be achieved.⁶⁶ Goodwin noted that suitable sites close to essential facilities were currently unavailable in the ACT.⁶⁷

3.11. COTA drew attention to ACT land pricing, stating:

The price of land is an important component in determining the viability of aged care facilities. The current ACT system of land pricing disadvantages aged care providers in the ACT relative to their counterparts in other parts of Australia.

Locating aged care facilities close to shops, other services and community facilities is seen as highly desirable. However, the better located the facility the higher the cost of the land because the higher the price that commercial interests (alternate uses) are theoretically willing to pay. The irony is that the community requires aged care facilities but they are not built until the suburbs mature and that is when the alternate land values have increased substantially. In these circumstances the price of land is likely to be prohibitive for the provision of aged care facilities.⁶⁸

3.12. The HIA notes that current planning policies discriminate against the kinds of redevelopment many residents may wish to undertake as they age. The HIA stated:

This could very likely be in the form of a smaller self contained and accessible house, which is paid for by the sale of a second house on the block. Current residential planning regulations, instigated through DVP200, are discriminating against many of those who want to change their housing while remaining in their place. The strategic redevelopment of the aging suburbs of Canberra has been placed on hold with the introduction of DVP200. Those aging

⁶⁶ Hindmarsh Group, Submission 9, p 2

⁶⁷ Goodwin Aged Care Services, Submission 3, p 5

⁶⁸ COTA, Submission 4, p 14

residents who may wish to remain in their familiar and supportive neighbourhood now face a number of restrictions. The residential code allows single houses to be built to cover 50% of any given block, while dual occupancies can only be erected on blocks larger than 800 square meters and can only have a floor area of 32.5% of the block area. This restricts the opportunity to provide both a reasonable sized family house and a self-contained aged person unit.⁶⁹

3.13. The HIA noted that the emphasis at all levels of government on providing care at home as much as possible will require major improvements to, and replacement of, the housing stock in the future:

The designs do not meet contemporary expectations of layout and sustainability. In the situation of ageing residents, a house or unit which is readily accessible, safe from accidents and secure will become more sought out in the market. It is also likely to be smaller in size, more comfortable due to better design and energy efficiency, with a more manageable garden.⁷⁰

3.14. The HIA further noted that community use sites and church land which are currently under-utilised would be very suitable for use by aged persons to meet their changing accommodation needs.⁷¹

3.15. ACSA has stated:

...there have been common obstacles which have arisen between an in-principle approval of land allocation and operationalising the aged care places. It is difficult to see how these delays can benefit any of the stakeholders, particularly those older people waiting placements. Obstacles include the following.

- ▢ Negotiation of lease conditions taking 8-10 months to complete.
- ▢ Once agreed, and in order to meet the lease conditions, which include a raft of ordinances and regulations, it can be necessary for the provider to liaise with 10 or more government departments.
- ▢ Departmental officers are not unwilling or unhelpful, but the lack of process means that each particular project is a re-invention of the wheel.

⁶⁹ HIA, Submission, 10 p 3

⁷⁰ HIA, Submission 10, p 2

⁷¹ HIA, Submission 10, p 4

- ▢ Exhaustive community consultation processes at every stage of a development can mean that a provider is expending funds on architectural, surveying and engineering fees at a very preliminary stage of the development.
- ▢ Lack of co-ordination between land allocation at the Territory level and allocation of places at the Commonwealth level.⁷²

Planning requirements

3.16. Goodwin Aged Care Services suggested that the Territory Plan 'makes it impossible to meet the present and future requirements of the aged'.⁷³ In their submission they suggested that the Plan required a critical review to assess the relative social and environmental issues associated with existing intended uses and to assess aged care vis-à-vis other uses in an environment where urban infill was an issue.⁷⁴ It was further suggested that residential villages in the ACT which occupy large amounts of land are an inefficient use of that land and cannot be afforded by the community, that major inefficiencies result from the provision of residential care in a single level facility and that multi-storey models are the future.⁷⁵ Goodwin Aged Care advised that its future facilities will be multi storey, up to four storeys in height, and would include assisted living accommodation and self care units.⁷⁶

3.17. Goodwin was also concerned that the planning system did not recognise that open space and parking requirements of older people are not those of the general residential system.⁷⁷ In relation to the siting of facilities within 400 metres of shops and services, COTA noted:

A further complicating fact is that residents of high level aged care facilities are unlikely to use outside shops and services unless given substantial assistance. In these circumstances location and proximity to external services is less important because residents required significant assistance with transport.⁷⁸

⁷² ACSA, Submission 5, p 8

⁷³ Goodwin Aged Care Services, Submission 3, p 5

⁷⁴ Goodwin Aged Care Services, Submission 3, p 5

⁷⁵ Submission 3, pp 2-3

⁷⁶ Submission 3, p 3

⁷⁷ Submission 3, pp 1-2

⁷⁸ COTA, Submission 4, p 15

The ACT Government's position

3.18. The ACTPLA representative at the hearings admitted to the Committee that some of the underpinning provisions of the Territory Plan were making it difficult to plan ahead with certainty about blocks of land which may have essential locational characteristics suitable for aged care accommodation. In particular, she suggested that the community facility land use policy had been identified as an area suitable for the provision of aged care accommodation where the take up for community uses had not been as expected.⁷⁹ ACTPLA advised that work was also being undertaken to look at the broader picture of land use distribution and 'at the locational characteristics that make land suitable for aged care accommodation to see if we can get some matching'⁸⁰ and:

In some instances the two things fortuitously align. Suitable land in the vicinity, perhaps under the community facility's designation, may be available. In other cases there are parcels of land that locationally may be suitable but the planning guidelines or planning framework need to be adjusted via a territory plan variation. So at any one time you might have a range of parallel situations—negotiations, further investigations, planning studies and preliminary assessments, which are assessing the suitability of land for that purpose.⁸¹

3.19. The Chief Minister's Department advised that the Government was addressing the question of increasing supply:

This government has taken a very proactive approach to the question of increasing supply. I think that you have had confirmed to you that, in relative terms, even the figure of 209 for non-operational, provisionally allocated beds is not out of kilter with the situation anywhere else in Australia. We are doing relatively well within the constraints of the national system for how those beds are allocated, which then requires individual service providers to get board approval, local planning approval, and then do the construction within the foreshadowed timeframe.⁸²

⁷⁹ Transcript, 5 July 2004, pp 26-27

⁸⁰ Transcript, 5 July 2004, p 27

⁸¹ Transcript, 5 July 2004, p 29

⁸² Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 20

3.20. There were concerns raised throughout the inquiry that there was a lack of certainty transparency and clarity in the planning process⁸³ and a perception existed that decisions surrounding certain planning decisions were arbitrary⁸⁴. The lengthy delays in getting projects to fruition and a lack of responsiveness to changing circumstances were also aspects of concern to submissions.⁸⁵

3.21. The planning agency was also heavily criticised for not being in tune with changing demands and not being flexible enough to take into account the different proposals to meet the changing needs of aged care accommodation arrangements.⁸⁶ In response to the committee's concern on this matter, the ACTPLA representative advised:

I think that the territory plan is probably now not reflective enough of the changing dynamics that Mr Hawkins has described, that there is a need for land use and development in the territory to reflect the spatial plan. I anticipate that over the next two or three years there will be some significant changes in the way the territory plan is adapted and used as an instrument to control and direct development outcomes.

One of the issues around territory plan variations that I have seen in the three months that I have been in this job is that, by its very nature as very much a site specific document, when there are new initiatives responding to market needs the territory plan is not always responsive enough or capable of being responsive enough to meet those changing circumstances. If a developer or proponent of a development—this is definitely not only in relation to aged care—wants to create a new type of living environment, perhaps they want to create a mix of housing units, some of which may be for supportive housing or aged care accommodation and some of which may be just for smaller or different types of housing units to suit market needs, often there is a fairly lengthy process that the ACT Planning and Land Authority has to go through to accommodate that.

I am not making excuses for the system. The system has arisen, obviously, from an historical process. There is a lot of very useful

⁸³ See for example, COTA submission 4, p 9; ACS Submission 5, pp 6 & 8; Belconnen Community Council, submission 14, p 2, HIA, Submission 10, Transcript, 5 July 2004, p 31

⁸⁴ Madison Lifestyle Communities, Submission 12 and Belconnen Community Council, submission 14, p 1

⁸⁵ See especially HIA, Submission 10

⁸⁶ HIA, Submission 10

land data in the territory plan that I think needs to be respected. The distribution of community facility land, for example, is very even-handed across the territory. If we targeted aged care accommodation to that land, I think we would have a good geographic distribution. There is work that needs to be done.⁸⁷

3.22. The CMD advised that 'we have the spatial plan framework and we have a commitment to be flexible in the future'⁸⁸. It was further added:

Quite a lot of work has been done by the Land Development Agency to understand what the market wants on a site, especially on section 87. We have spoken to providers. We have had meetings with the Commonwealth. Seminars have been held at which we have tried to understand where we think the market is at and where the market is actually going to be going, so that when a block of land is released we put parameters around it that actually allow for the best form of development to meet the needs of the aged in Canberra.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 153

⁸⁸ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 153

⁸⁹ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 153

4. The Belconnen experience

4.1. Madison Lifestyle Communities described to the Committee their experience in attempting to get what they call a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) development located on part of Block 11 Section 99 Holt, currently land occupied by the Belconnen Golf Course.⁹⁰

4.2. A 99 year lease is held over the Belconnen Golf Course. The lease is an ordinary commercial lease that requires the leaseholder to maintain an 18 hole golf course. The course was originally constructed as an 18 hole course which was eventually extended to 27 holes, however the 19th – 27th holes were closed in 2003, as management deemed them unsustainable. Woodhaven Investments Pty Ltd is the Crown lessee of the land, and the Golf Course is operated under tenancy by the Belconnen Magpies Sports Club. The Territory Plan designates the land as 'Restricted Access Recreation' and Community Facility or Residential is not a purpose presently permitted under Part B5, Schedule 1.

4.3. Madison advises that the ACT Government has resisted the proposal for the following reasons:

- ▢ The proposed development is too far from retail and other facilities to meet the requirements of the Guidelines for Access to Community Facilities;
- ▢ The proposed development is too close to the urban edge to be safe for elderly people in the event of a bushfire;
- ▢ The land is presently classified as restricted access open space and if the Territory Plan was varied to excise that part of the Belconnen Golf Course required for the development, there would be a nett loss in recreation open space in the Territory.⁹¹

4.4. Madison questions the relevance of some of the criteria and argues that:

- ▢ car usage is high for older people and for those with limited mobility, motorised scooters are commonly used to travel distances in excess of the 1500 metres the development would be from the Holt shops. For those whose mobility is severely restricted even the current 400 metre guideline is irrelevant;

⁹⁰ Madison Lifestyle Communities, Submission 12, p 3

⁹¹ Madison Lifestyle Communities, Submission 12, p 4

- ⇒ its proposed development is within reasonable distance of local and group centres although this is an accident of location and such a precondition for development is unnecessary because of the demonstrated independent mobility of community members;
- ⇒ Under the current ACTPLA Locational Guidelines there is the capacity to meet the requirement of being located close to facilities and services by providing these within the development;
- ⇒ The bushfire risk assessment lacks any scientific or technical basis and is inconsistent with fact;
- ⇒ In relation to the net loss of land argument, the government position would appear to be that if the present golf course fails, the land should be retained as restricted access recreation against unforeseen demand in the future. The ideological reasons that appear to underlie the present situation are patently unsound and based on out of date and incorrect planning precepts relating to the nature of the demand for older persons accommodation on the one hand, and the perceived need for restricted access recreation on the other.⁹²

Bushfire risk

4.5. It should be noted that so far as the bushfire risk is concerned, HIA noted:

Some new sites suitable for aged person accommodation will possibly be available on the urban edge, and abut bushland, which can create a bushfire risk. This situation should not be a reason to reject use of the land for aged person accommodation. The Territory's bushfires of 2002 and 2003 have led to an uncertainty as to whether ACT Government will apply additional bushfire conditions outside of the Building Code of Australia. Compliance with the Building Code of Australia should be the single condition of approval, and the addition of special Territory requirements would only add to the confusion and uncertainty of the planning approval process.⁹³

4.6. Strong community support was exhibited from the Belconnen Community Council [BCC] and the Ginninderra Catchment Group among others for the proposed development at Holt by Madison.⁹⁴ Further COTA noted in its submission:

⁹² Madison Lifestyle Communities, Submission 12, pp 4-5

⁹³ HIA, Submission 10, p 5

⁹⁴ Belconnen Community Council, Submission 14, p 1

We have seen details of this proposal and have written in support of this development...The combination of good quality retirement village (self care) units with a residential aged care facility providing both low and high level care is the most sought after mix of accommodation by older people contemplating a move from their long term family home to their "last home". The proposed project appears highly suitable and in an area with a very large number of people approaching retirement or retired.⁹⁵

4.7. The BCC was critical of the Government in relation to the release of land for aged care accommodation:

The first [matter] is the continued refusal of sections of the ACT government to take advantage of the many fine sites they could use for this purpose with strong community blessing. The second is the rigid determination of those authorities to build such accommodation on the shores of Lake Ginninderra, virtually the only site in Belconnen where such accommodation will be opposed.⁹⁶

4.8. However, COTA supported the proposal for aged care facilities on Section 87 Belconnen:

This site would appear ideal for another facility combining retirement (self care) units and an aged care facility. Planned appropriately with a suitable set back from the lake to allow for the bike path and picnic facilities we can see no detrimental impact on either social use of the lake or the environment. There are still large areas of the lake foreshore that are left untouched and a development close to the Town Centre and its facilities would be an excellent location.⁹⁷

4.9. When questioned on the issue of the approval for the section 87 site on the Belconnen lakeshore and the rejection of the Holt site for development, the Chief Minister's Department representative advised that he was not in a position to argue the planning merits of individual sites⁹⁸, but he did undertake to provide some additional advice on the development application processes for the two parcels of land. That advice is contained in full at Appendix 3.

⁹⁵ COTA, Submission 4, p 12

⁹⁶ Belconnen Community Council, Submission 14, p 1

⁹⁷ COTA, Submission 4

⁹⁸ Transcript, 16 July 2004, p 20

4.10. In relation to the planning processes generally, the Chief Minister advised:

The assessment of suitability of sites naturally takes into account typical urban planning considerations as well as other factors, such as community benefit, transport connections, community facilities, and proximity to related aged care services.

Where submissions demonstrate an inconsistency with the Territory Plan, a variation process may be initiated. The Planning and Land Authority has discretion to initiate such variations (s 15, *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*)

In some cases, a proposal may be inconsistent with policy eg: a proposal would result in a loss of essential open space; or the chosen location may be unsuitable for the use eg: proximity to sensitive land uses, contrary to Neighbourhood Planning principles lack of suitable supporting physical and social infrastructure or other factors. In cases like this the proponent is likely to be advised that ACTPLA would not support a variation.

In other situations, technical impediments to a proposal may be capable of being resolved eg: boundary adjustments between land use policy areas. In these situations, the proponent may be required to undertake a Planning study which can determine the form and nature of a variation and subsequent assessments.⁹⁹

4.11. In relation to the site specific matters, the Chief Minister advised:

In the case of the Belconnen Golf Course site, the proposal to vary the Territory Plan was, on balance not supported having regard to a range of factors including relative bushfire risk assessment, location at the western urban periphery, relative remoteness from core services and facilities, the opportunities now and in the future for suitable alternative community and recreational uses on the site. In this particular instance the Government also had regard to advice given the community in the past that no additional residential development would be undertaken on the Golf Course site.

4.12. However, the advice defended the Calvary site, stating:

However, the site does present an opportunity for very appropriate integrated development, making sound use of existing

⁹⁹ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment C

infrastructure, in close proximity to associated services at Calvary Hospital.¹⁰⁰

4.13. In relation to Block 6, Section 87, the Department noted:

Block 6 Section 87 Belconnen, is a government land release for a specific purpose. The proposal to issue a lease for building in excess of 7000m² triggered a Preliminary Assessment (PA) of the environmental impacts of the proposal. The PA was publicly notified and matters arising from the assessment are resolved through imposition of the lease and development conditions.¹⁰¹

4.14. The advice went on to say:

...While it is acknowledged that not all aspects of the Community and Recreation Facilities Location Guidelines can be met in all cases, the principle of having facilities and housing for the aged in locations that are central and accessible to emergency services, social infrastructure and public transport routes [sic] ... The Belconnen Golf Club site and the related development proposal, did not sufficiently satisfy these core principles. Consideration of these issues has resulted in the proposal being declined.¹⁰²

4.15. The CMD advice concluded that it is the inability of the Belconnen golf course site to meet core principles which resulted in the failure of the proposal.¹⁰³

Committee comment

4.16. The Committee is concerned that the planning principles on which the refusal to allow this development were based do not appear to be consistently applied. This inconsistency of application contributes to the uncertainty of the planning process, one of the criticisms leveled at the current situation.

¹⁰⁰ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment C

¹⁰¹ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment C

¹⁰² Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment C

¹⁰³ Correspondence, 5 August 2004, Attachment C

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. There is no doubt that the ACT Government needs to plan for the demographic change that is occurring now and will accelerate over the next 30 years. However, the Committee has concerns over the capacity of current planning processes and the flexibility of those processes to adequately meet current and future demand. In particular, the Committee is concerned that the planning and development application process may be somewhat arbitrary and not sufficiently clear to enable developers to proceed with their projects with certainty.

Residential aged care

5.2. The Committee is concerned that the Government does not know how many people are awaiting placement in residential care in the ACT. Assessments are carried out by ACAT teams, who are officers of the ACT Department of Health. It is curious that the Department responsible for assessing people for placement in aged care is unable to provide figures on the numbers of people awaiting placement at both high and low care levels.

5.3. What is clear is that almost 500 people in the ACT are on a waiting list for a high care residential place. Whether that figure is increasing or decreasing over time is not possible to determine on the information provided to the Committee by the ACT Department of Health. It is also not possible to state how long a person must wait before being offered a place. It seems to the Committee that, given the delay in bringing into operation allocated aged care places, it must inevitably increase. For this reason the Committee considers that the ACT Department of Health must keep accurate records of waiting lists for both high and low care accommodation and lengths of time before a place is made available to a person on the list.

5.4. The major problems with bringing places on line appear to be in the allocation of suitable land or sites and the lengthy timeframes involved in the planning and land purpose variation process. For example, while land at South Bruce has been allocated for some time, the planning process in relation to that land has been protracted.

5.5. The Committee considers that the processes must be streamlined for aged care if sufficient development is to take place within the context of the current allocations system. The Committee supports the Government's moves to develop a land bank, but is concerned that there may still be a lack of flexibility in the current system.

Streamlining and flexibility of the planning approval process

5.6. The Committee is concerned that there is a lack of flexibility in the planning process and a lack of recognition of retirement village and independent living options. For example, it is virtually impossible to find a site for aged care accommodation which satisfies the current guidelines, which means that there is always a capacity to reject a proposal for not fitting the guidelines. Further, while it is possible to determine to some extent the demand for residential care, the extent of demand for retirement village and other forms of independent living accommodation is less certain. However, the ACT Government itself has admitted that the demand for aged care accommodation is not restricted to residential aged care and is more likely in future to encompass different forms of housing options.

5.7. Whatever the specifics may be, it does appear that there will be an increased demand in future for appropriately designed independent living accommodation, which facilitates the delivery of *in situ* aged care.

5.8. If the ACT Government is to efficiently and effectively deliver aged persons accommodation, then the planning approval processes must be streamlined. Streamlining of planning approval processes has been undertaken previously to provide development incentives in town centres, and similar arrangements should be considered to remove the increasing bottleneck for aged persons' accommodation projects. HIA suggests that, for example, if a housing proposal meets the permissible uses on a community facility site, then the costly and uncertain time delaying public consultation and appeal rights should be removed.¹⁰⁴

Section 87 Belconnen

5.9. The Committee is concerned at the extent to which the residential overlay has the potential to limit the future development of Section 87 Belconnen and. For this reason, the Committee would like to see the residential overlay removed.

Financial disincentives to developments

5.10. While the Committee has not been able to deal with this issue in detail in the report, the Committee is concerned that there may exist financial disincentives to the development of residential aged care accommodation and other forms of accommodation for the aged. Such disincentives include the imposition of betterment tax on developments, which may or may not have

¹⁰⁴ HIA, Submission 10, p 5

any resale value and the differential treatment on land grants for not-for-profit residential aged care providers and for-profit providers. The Committee considers that these matters may merit further investigation at a later date.

Recommendation 1

5.11. In recognition of the clear evidence from across the community that there are insufficient residential aged care places, the Committee recommends that the Government expedite the planning process for all sites currently under consideration.

Recommendation 2

5.12. The Committee recommends that the Government prioritise the allocation of land for residential aged care developments, specifically:

- that the Government recognise the immediate unmet need in the allocation of land for the development of residential aged care places; and**
- Undertakes an immediate and substantial increase in land allocations.**

Recommendation 3

5.13. The Committee recommends that the Government reviews its policies and procedures around the allocation of land for residential aged care and other forms of accommodation for the aged, including, but not limited to, consideration of the following matters:

- Compliance with the Building Code of Australia should be the single condition of approval for sites assessed as having some bushfire risk.**
- The location guideline of 400 metres distance from an aged person facility to a bus route or service facilities should be reviewed.**

Recommendation 4

5.14. The Committee recommends that the Government streamlines its planning approval processes for aged care accommodation similarly to that done to provide development incentives in town centres.

Recommendation 5

5.15. The Committee recommends that the Government ensure that the land bank comprises a variety of sites, in order to meet a wide spectrum of needs for the different types of accommodation for the aged.

Recommendation 6

5.16. The Committee recommends that the Government recognise the need for the allocation of land for self care or retirement village accommodation and acts now to increase allocations.

Recommendation 7

5.17. In order that the Government is able to accurately assess the need for residential aged care, the Committee recommends that the Government maintain waiting lists for both high and low care places, through its ACAT assessment program.

Recommendation 8

5.18. The Committee recommends that the Government treat such forms of accommodation for the aged as aged persons' units and independent living units in the same way as supported accommodation for the purposes of the Territory Plan.

Recommendation 9

5.19. The Committee recommends that the residential overlay on Section 87, Belconnen be removed.

Roslyn Dundas MLA
Chair
23 August 2004

Appendix 1 – List of Submissions

No.	Name
-----	------

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Community Connections |
| 2. | Confidential |
| 3. | Goodwin Aged Care Services |
| 4. | Council on the Ageing (ACT) |
| 5. | Aged and Community Services Association of NSW and ACT |
| 6. | Community Transport and Volunteer Program & Trips ACT |
| 7. | Morshead Home |
| 8. | Woden Valley Community Council Inc |
| 9. | Hindmarsh Group |
| 10. | ACT and Southern NSW, Housing Industry Association |
| 11. | St Andrew's Village |
| 12. | Madison Lifestyle Communities |
| 13. | West Belconnen Residents Group |
| 14. | Belconnen Community Council |
| 15. | Chief Minister of the ACT |
| 16. | Commonwealth Dept of Health & Ageing |
| 17. | North Canberra Community Council |
| 18. | Belconnen Magpies Sports Club |
| 19. | Murrumbidgee Country Club |
| 20. | Madison Lifestyle Communities |

Appendix 2 – Public Hearings

Monday, 5 July 2004

Commonwealth Dept of Health and Ageing

*Mr Stephen Dellar, Assistant Secretary, Residential Program Management Branch,
Ageing and Aged Care Division*

*Ms Margaret Horne, A/g Director Allocations Management, Residential Program
Management Branch, Ageing and Aged Care Division*

ACT Government

Mr Andrew Rice, Acting Senior Director Policy Group, Chief Minister's Department

Mr Peter Johns, Senior Manager, Chief Minister's Department

Ms Jacqui Lavis, Director Strategic Planning and Policy, ACTPLA

Mr Ian Thompson, Executive Director, ACT Health

Aged & Community Services Assn of NSW and ACT

Mr Paul Sadler, Chief Executive Officer, ACSA

Mr Mike Siers, CEO, Mirinjani Village

Ms Sue Irvine, CEO, Anglican Retirement Community Services

Council on the Ageing (ACT)

Mr James Purcell, Executive Director

Mr Paul Flint, Deputy Executive Director

Goodwin Aged Care Services

Mr Bruce McKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

Ms Gaye D'Arcy, Chief Financial Officer

Belconnen Magpies Sports Club

Mr Jon Burrows, General Manager

Wednesday, 7 July 2004

Belconnen Community Council

Mr Graeme Evans, President

Ms Susan McCarthy, Treasurer

West Belconnen Residents Group

Mr Brian Rhynehart, Member and Interim Chairperson

Mr Norman Henry, Committee Member

Housing Industry Association

Ms Caroline Lemezina, Executive Director ACT/SNSW

Mr Alan Morschel, Planning Advisor

Madison Lifestyle Communities

Mr David O'Keeffe, Managing Director, Madison Lifestyle Communities

Mr Paul Cohen, Planning Consultant, Campbell Dion

Mr Tony Fearnside, Bush Fire Management Consultant, Renaissance Forestry

Morshead Home for the Aged

Ms Margaret Kelly, CEO

Ms Jan Properjon, Financial Manager

Ms June Healy, Board Member

Hindmarsh Group

Mr Darren Dougan, General Manager Group Development

Community Connections

Ms Brenda Malcolm, Manager

Friday, 16 July 2004**North Canberra Community Council**

Dr Mac Dickens, Chair

Mrs Joan Kellett, Deputy Chair

ACT Government

Mr Lincoln Hawkins, Deputy Chief Executive, CMD

Mr Andrew Rice, Acting Senior Director Policy Group, CMD

Mr Peter Johns, Senior Manager, CMD

Ms Jacqui Lavis, Director Strategic Planning and Policy, ACTPLA

Mr Ian Thompson, Executive Director, ACT Health

Mr Ross McKay, Case Manager Aged Persons Accommodation

Murrumbidgee Country Club

Mr Warren James, General Manager

Madison Lifestyle Communities

Mr David O'Keeffe, Managing Director, Madison Lifestyle Communities

Appendix 3 – Letter from Chief Minister to Committee,
dated 9 August 2004



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA



Ms R Dundas, MLA
Chair, Standing Committee on Planning
and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO BOX 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Dundas

A number of officers from my Department, ACT Health and the Planning and Land Authority recently appeared before the standing Committee on Planning and Environment's inquiry on long term planning for the provision of land for aged care facilities in the ACT.

During the course of questions in the Assembly committee hearings on July 16 a series of questions were taken on notice. Some of the questions were quite complex and involved consideration and input from a number of agencies, hence the delay for which I apologise.

The responses to the questions are detailed in attachments A to F to this letter.

I look forward to the outcome of the committee's deliberations.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

- 9 AUG 2004

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433



RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday, 16 JULY 2004

Mrs Dunne -

1. *In relation to changes to supportive housing concerning community land use, was it raised in the variation process that there would automatically be an increase in calculation of a compulsory betterment?*
2. *Is there any discretion in the Land Act or elsewhere for the Executive to waive the levy betterment on land that, essentially, cannot be sold, even if you have to calculate the increase in the change of use charge?*

Response:

1. No comments were received during the consultation period for the Variation regarding the questions of betterment being levied in cases where supportive housing was introduced. The decisions made in relation to change of use charges associated with lease variations are independent of planning assessments (for land use policies as defined by the Territory Plan), and these matters would not have been taken into account in preparing or considering the variation.
2. Section 184C of the *Land Act* provides for the remission of change of use charges in circumstances provided for under the regulations.

Regulation 21 provides for remissions in accordance with Ministerial policy directions, with the criteria for these disallowable instruments set out in regulation 20. These criteria include circumstances where it is "necessary or desirable to" promote development of an area; change the purposes for which land or buildings, or part of land or buildings, in an area may be used; promote the construction of housing accessible to, or adaptable for, frail or disabled persons' and provide land for the exclusive use of community organisations.

**RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday , 16 JULY 2004

Mrs Dunne -

Is the Urban Edge Review publicly available? If not, when will the Urban Edge Review be made publicly available?

Response:

"Understanding Fire Risk at Canberra's Urban Edge – a shared responsibility" is currently in preparation and will be released in the near future.

The document requires further agency input and a release date has not yet been set.

RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday , 16 JULY 2004

Ms Dundas (The Chair), Mrs Dunne and Mrs Cross - *[What] Criteria [is] used to assess whether an aged care submission is accepted including checkpoints and explanations, with explicit reference to Belconnen Golf course and Calvary site.*

Response:

During the hearings the Committee sought information on the assessment of Aged care development proposals at certain specific locations such as Belconnen Golf Course, Calvary site at Bruce, and the basis of those assessments.

The assessment of suitability of sites naturally takes into account typical urban planning considerations as well as other factors, such as community benefit, transport connections, community facilities, and proximity to related aged care services.

Where submissions demonstrate an inconsistency with the Territory Plan, a variation process may be initiated. The Planning and Land Authority has discretion to initiate such variations (*S 15, Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*)

In some cases, a proposal may be inconsistent with policy eg: a proposal would result in a loss of essential open space; or the chosen location may be unsuitable for the use eg: proximity to sensitive land uses, contrary to Neighbourhood Planning principles lack of suitable supporting physical and social infrastructure or other factors. In cases like this the proponent is likely to be advised that ACTPLA would not support a variation.

In other situations, technical impediments to a proposal may be capable of being resolved eg: boundary adjustments between land use policy areas. In these situations, the proponent may be required to undertake a Planning study which can determine the form and nature of a variation and subsequent assessments.

Site Specific Comments

The three sites have different requirements for resolving "planning" matters.

In relation to the Calvary site at Bruce there are, as the Committee intimated, a range of design and environmental issues which have been assessed at the strategic level in giving support to the land allocation for aged care accommodation. However, the site does present an opportunity for very appropriate integrated development, making sound use of existing infrastructure, in close proximity to associated services at Calvary Hospital.

The Calvary proposal will go through a Development application process. Most technical issues associated with site development have been or will be capable of resolution through negotiation.

Block 6 Section 87 Belconnen, is a government land release for a specific purpose. The proposal to issue a lease for building in excess of 7000m² triggered a Preliminary Assessment (PA) of the environmental impacts of the proposal. The PA was publicly notified and matters arising from the assessment are resolved through imposition of the lease and development conditions.

In the case of the Belconnen Golf Course site, the proposal to vary the Territory Plan was, on balance not supported having regard to a range of factors including relative bushfire risk assessment, location at the western urban periphery, relative remoteness from core services and facilities, the opportunities now and in the future for suitable alternative community and recreational uses on the site. In this particular instance the Government also had regard to advice given the community in the past that no additional residential development would be undertaken on the Golf Course site.

The following additional comments are provided to Committee are in good faith to provide some explanatory information about the assessment, but are not intended to establish the "public record" as it were for, of that decision, and its reasons.

Issues arising from Older Persons Housing Proposal At Belconnen Golf Course

- The proposal by Madison Constructions on behalf of the lessee of Block 11 Section 99, Holt, (the Belconnen Golf Club) was to develop the southwest portion of the site on land previously used for holes number 19-27 of the golf course for a residential development including a residential aged care and independent living units.
- The proposal as presented consisted of a 'lifestyle village' containing a proposed nursing home, older persons self-care units surrounded by housing for more 'active' persons. The proposed area of the development

although only indicative suggest it would cover a similar area to the existing residential development, which is approximately 31 hectares.

- Concerns with the proposal included: -
 - The proposed development would create an isolated pocket of development with limited egress on the western fringe of Belconnen facing an area that was the subject of a significant threat during the 2003 bushfires. The proponents have stated that their preferred strategy is for residents to be able to stay and fight a fire should it come close. This strategy is of particular concern given the proposal is specifically targeted at housing for older persons.
 - The Belconnen Golf Club was the subject of a previous Preliminary Assessment (PA) and variation to the Territory Plan to change the land use policy from Restricted Access Recreation to Residential. This was gazetted on 27 August 1993. At the time, the PA stated that further extension of the residential component was not contemplated and indicated that the playing areas of the golf course are intended to remain permanently.
 - The Belconnen Golf Club is among a number of potential proposals by lessees of other Restricted Recreation sites, including other golf courses, enclosed ovals, tennis centres and swimming facilities that have sought ACTPLA support for land use policy changes to enable the use of the land for more profitable purposes, particularly residential. A number of these have stated that they would like to target their proposals for the older persons residential market. The progressive loss of recreation facilities for current and future generations remains a key consideration.
 - While it is acknowledged that not all aspects of the Community and Recreation Facilities Location Guidelines can be met in all cases, the principle of having facilities and housing for the aged in locations that are central and accessible to emergency services, social infrastructure and public transport routes.
 - The Belconnen Golf Club site and the related development proposal, did not sufficiently satisfy these core principles. Consideration of these issues has resulted in the proposal being declined.

**RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday , 16 JULY 2004

Ms Dundas (The Chair) -

In regards to s87 Belconnen were any further issues raised through the preliminary assessment process that need to be further explored?

Response:

No issues were raised during the preliminary assessment process that required further assessment. As a matter of course, issues raised by the preliminary assessment can be incorporated into the lease and development conditions.

**RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday , 16 JULY 2004

Ms Dundas (The Chair) -

Does the government have a program to address the growing community of aged carers needing to enter aged care accommodation, whom are prevented by primarily supporting mature, high needs children?

Response:

- Disability ACT funds Mature Carer programs with three non-government agencies Koomarri, Centacare and Community Connections.
- According to the Commonwealth funding guidelines carers aged over 65 who care for a person with a disability are given priority for access to these programs (or in the case of Aboriginal people aged 45 years or over). Once these most critical needs are met, attention may then be turned to those families where the carer is approaching this age with an emphasis on those who have been caring for over 30 years.
- The Mature Carers programs assist mature carers with planning and case management to ensure that future options are considered and implemented both for them and the person they care for. The programs include:
 - assessment;
 - assisting the family to plan future short term respite care at home;
 - access to community activities;
 - education programs to teach social and living skills to the person being cared for;
 - residential respite care; and
 - transitional accommodation for longer term care.
- This program has a strong focus on assisting the person with a disability to remain within their home and community environments, when the carer is no longer able to fully carry out their role.
- The Government has allocated \$1,774,305 to these programs over 2003-04 and is committed to continue funding mature carer initiatives into the future.

ATTACHMENT E

- Koomarri, Centacare and Community Connections assist a total of 88 families.
- In addition to specifically targeted Mature Carer programs the Government also supports generic services utilised by mature carers and the person they care for. These include:
 - a recently established respite program for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Part of the program specifically targets individuals caring for an older person. Funding was allocated through the 2003-04 Respite Care Budget Initiative and is administered by Disability ACT.
 - Two respite houses administered by Disability ACT which provide respite for adults, many of whom have mature carers.
 - Individual Support Packages funded by Disability ACT which give priority to those individuals whose primary carer is aging or in ill-health.
- The *Caring for Carers Implementation Strategy* is to be released in early September 2004 and includes a range of actions that will benefit mature carers and the person they care for. As part of this strategy \$200,000 will be allocated through the first annual round of the Carer Recognition Grants Program. This funding was advertised on Saturday 4 July 2004.
- The Home and Community Care (HACC) program administered by ACT Health provides services to mature carers through a range of carer support agencies including Carers ACT. These programs assist carers and the people they care for to remain in the home environment.

**RESPONSES TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

(Reference: Long term planning for aged care accommodation)

Refer Hearings of Friday , 16 JULY 2004

Ms Dundas (The Chair) -

To provide statistics on persons whom have been assessed as eligible for care (high and low) and the number of persons who are not yet in aged care accommodation.

Response:

- At the end of May 2004, the most recent figures available, the estimate was 479 people in the community, who had been assessed as eligible for high level care, were awaiting residential aged care placement in the ACT. Clients who have been approved for residential care are now being placed on a new centralised waiting list being developed by ACT Health so that in the future, there will be a more accurate picture of the numbers of clients waiting for high level care placements.
- It is difficult to give an exact number at this stage of people waiting for residential aged care placement because aged care facilities are private enterprises, and keep their own waiting lists and are not required to register their clients on a centralised waiting list. Participation on the centralised waiting list being developed by ACT Health is voluntary for providers, and at this stage estimates are only available for the high level care waiting list. A low level care waiting list is yet to be established.