

APPROPRIATION BILL 2021-2022 AND
APPROPRIATION (OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY)
BILL 2021-2022

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

NOVEMBER 2021

REPORT 6

THE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair)
Mr Mark Parton MLA

SECRETARIAT

Dr David Monk Senior Director, Committee Support
Ms Janice Rafferty Acting Secretary
Ms Joanne Cullen Acting Secretary
Ms Lydia Chung Administrative Assistant
Mr Nick Byrne Administrative Assistant

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone (02) 6205 0127
Post GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601
Email LCommitteePTCS@parliament.act.gov.au
Website <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/ptcs>

RESOLUTION OF APPOINTMENT

RESOLUTION OF APPOINTMENT

On 2 December 2020 the Legislative Assembly resolved to establish the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services.¹

Under the Resolution the Committee is responsible for examining the following areas:

- City Renewal Authority;
- Suburban Land Agency;
- Planning and Land Management;
- Transport;
- City Services including waste and recycling;
- Housing (excluding service provision); and
- Building and Construction.²

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The resolution of establishment³ for Standing Committees of the Tenth Assembly requires the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services to inquire into ACT Budget 2021-22;

- (7) the committees so established are required to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the main appropriation bills for the Territory and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the annual budget and prepare a report to the Assembly within 60 days of the presentation of the budget bills;

At its meeting on Tuesday 9 November 2021, the Assembly resolved to amend the due date for Standing Committees to report on the ACT Budget, by requiring Committees to report by 12 November 2021.⁴

¹ Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 2 December 2020, pp17, 20, available at: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1669030/MoP002F.pdf.

² Legislative Assembly for the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 2 December 2020, pp 17, 20, available at: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1669030/MoP002F.pdf.

³ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 2, 2 December 2020, p 17 (as amended 11 February 2021, 30 March 2021, 22 April 2021, 16 Sept 2021 and 9 Nov 2021).

⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 28, 9 November 2021, p 349.

ACRONYMS

CCCACT	Combined Community Councils Australian Capital Territory
CEMP	Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHC	Community Housing Canberra
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CRA	City Renewal Authority
CSO	Community Service Obligations
DA	Development Application
ECI	Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
FOGO	Food Organics and Garden Organics
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GCC	Gungahlin Community Council
ILRP	Indicative Land Release Program
ISCA	Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australis
MBA	Master Builders Association
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MPC	Major Projects Canberra
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
MVCF	Molonglo Valley Community Forum
NCA	National Capital Authority

PAC	Public Accounts Committee
SLA	Suburban Land Agency
TCCSD	Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate
UNSW	University of New South Wales
WVCC	Woden Valley Community Council
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE COMMITTEE	I
Committee Membership	i
Secretariat	i
Contact Information.....	i
Resolution of appointment	ii
Terms of reference.....	ii
ACRONYMS	III
RECOMMENDATIONS	VII
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
ACT Budget 2021-2022	1
Conduct of Inquiry	2
Public Hearings	3
Questions Taken on Notice at Hearing and Questions Placed on Notice	3
References to Hansard Transcripts.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	3
2 COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS	4
Community Councils	4
Property Council of Australia (ACT)	5
Master Builders Association.....	5
Key Issues.....	6
3 TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE	11
Transport Canberra (Output Class 1)	11
City Services (Output Class 2)	12
Key Issues.....	15
4 CITY RENEWAL AUTHORITY AND SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY	30
CRA and SLA Statements of Intent	30
Key Issues.....	32
5 ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE	34
Statutory Planning (Output Class 1)	35
Environment (Output Class 2)	35

Climate Change and Energy (Output Class 3).....	36
Development and Implementation (Output Class 4)	37
Asbestos Response Taskforce (Output Class 5).....	37
Planning and Urban Policy (Output Class 6)	38
Key Issues.....	40
Committee Comment.....	49
6 CHIEF MINISTER, TREASURY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE	
.....	50
Access Canberra (2.1).....	50
Key Issues.....	51
APPENDIX A - WITNESSES.....	53
15 October 2021.....	53
18 October 2021.....	53
22 October 2021.....	54
25 October 2021.....	55
28 October 2021.....	55
APPENDIX B – QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE/ QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	57

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

- 3.24 The Committee recommends that future budgets give a clear methodology to allow comparison on total expenditure on Roads and Active Transport and publish the total amount spent on active transport infrastructure as a separate line item.

RECOMMENDATION 2

- 3.25 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider updating the Transport Strategy to contain mode share targets for active and public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 3

- 3.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release its path and shared path maintenance review.

RECOMMENDATION 4

- 3.27 The committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing an accountability indicator to establish the percentage of shared paths and footpaths in good condition, similar to the indicator for roads.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- 3.28 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing an accountability indicator to report the average amount of days it takes for footpath and shared paths repairs to be actioned once reported via Fix My Street.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- 3.35 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should ensure that strategic planning for crematoria and other major facilities is in alignment with statutory planning, to ensure that what is developed in Canberra is only what is needed for our current and future population numbers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

- 3.40 The Committee recommends the ACT Government provide regular reporting on the implementation of the urban forest strategy including planting numbers.

RECOMMENDATION 8

- 3.45 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures sufficient funds are allocated on education to ensure the upgraded MRF and new FOGO facility provide low contamination and high recovery rates.

RECOMMENDATION 9

- 3.51 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the need for water quality testing at public dog swimming areas given that dogs are classed as sentient beings in the ACT and to help prevent dogs suffering from algae poisoning.

RECOMMENDATION 10

- 3.59 The Committee recommends the ACT Government explore joint procurement options with NSW for zero emissions buses.

RECOMMENDATION 11

- 3.65 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider hourly weekend bus services as part of Transport Canberra's next tranche of network improvements.

RECOMMENDATION 12

- 3.66 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should investigate barriers to achieving a higher on-time running performance including lack of bus priority measures, or inaccurate route timings with a view to increasing the performance target in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 13

- 3.70 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider separating the accountability indicators in Budget Statements I for the CIT Woden Project and the Light Rail to Woden Project.

RECOMMENDATION 14

- 3.76 The Committee recommends that Major Projects Canberra demonstrate how they will be reducing Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as part of the light rail project and publish this for public access.

RECOMMENDATION 15

- 3.77 The Committee recommends that Major Projects Canberra continue to assess new construction technologies and techniques which may further reduce emissions from major construction projects.

RECOMMENDATION 16

- 3.80 The Committee recommends that Transport Canberra and City Services should consider opportunities to improve the use and experience of dryland ovals, including opportunities to turn some or all of the oval into other uses, such as playgrounds or other community facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 17

- 3.83 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government match mowing services to the prevailing weather conditions including services in very wet years.

RECOMMENDATION 18

- 3.84 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate alternative mowing solutions.

RECOMMENDATION 19

- 4.12 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an explicit plan on how it will achieve the 70% infill target.

RECOMMENDATION 20

- 4.16 The Committee recommends that the SLA apply the new methods commenced in Whitlam earlier this year to avoid block scraping and explore further methods to avoid block scraping in all greenfield developments.

RECOMMENDATION 21

- 5.31 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its 2019 assessment of apartment buildings impacted by combustible cladding and conduct an audit to determine the full scope of the issue.

RECOMMENDATION 22

- 5.32 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release all documents in relation to the establishment of the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

RECOMMENDATION 23

- 5.38 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish more information on ecosystem condition scores and what these mean and publish plans to improve ecosystem condition scores.

RECOMMENDATION 24

- 5.45 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate barriers to community housing partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION 25

- 5.56 The Committee recommends that, given the stated response that Federal tax settings around Capital Gains Tax and negative gearing are contributing to high housing prices in Canberra, that the ACT Government lobby Federal Parliament to change these tax settings.

RECOMMENDATION 26

- 5.57 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government identify all factors within the ACT's control for increasing housing affordability as part of the planning review process and make these identified options public.

RECOMMENDATION 27

- 5.58 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider all methods including additional advertising for increasing the uptake of the affordable "Rentwell" and "HomeGround" programs to increase the supply of affordable rentals.

RECOMMENDATION 28

- 5.64 The Committee recommends that EPSDD has adequate resourcing to meet accountability indicators for processing times on DAs.

RECOMMENDATION 29

- 5.69 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on planting to ensure new suburbs will be able to achieve 30% tree canopy cover over time.

RECOMMENDATION 30

- 6.7 The Committee recommends that noting only 14 show cause and seven controlled activity orders issued from 866 complaints, the ACT Government advise whether good outcomes are being achieved in compliance and that Access Canberra create and distribute a survey to assess satisfaction with the service from complainants.

RECOMMENDATION 31

- 6.11 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should explore options to ensure commercial lease conditions are met and enforced and that regulators have the adequate tools to ensure that land is being used efficiently and not "land banked".

1 INTRODUCTION

ACT BUDGET 2021-2022

- 1.1 The *Financial Management Act 1996* sets the framework for Territory appropriations and budgets. Government expenditure must be authorised by the Assembly through an Appropriation Bill.⁵ Immediately after the presentation of an Appropriation Bill, the Treasurer must present to the Assembly the proposed budget for the Territory and for each directorate for the year.⁶ The Act specifies information that must be included in the proposed budget, and requires that it be in a form that assists a comparison with the budget for the previous financial year.⁷ The financial statements included in the proposed budget must include budget estimates for each of the next three financial years.⁸
- 1.2 On 6 October 2021 the *Appropriation Bill 2021-2022* and *Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022* were presented in the Assembly⁹, and the related Budget papers were tabled and published on the Treasury website.¹⁰
- 1.3 During this inquiry the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services was required to examine the expenditure proposals for the following outputs in the main appropriation bills for the Territory, as outlined in *Budget Statements B*, *Budget Statements E*, *Budget Statements H*, and *Budget Statements I*;
- Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate:
 - Output Class 2: Access Canberra—Access Canberra (output 2.1);
 - Environment, Planning, and Sustainable Development Directorate:
 - City Renewal Authority Statement of Intent;
 - Suburban Land Agency Statement of Intent;
 - Output Class 1: Statutory Planning—Statutory Planning (output 1.1);

⁵ Section 6, *Financial Management Act 1996*, (Web Page, 6 October 2021) <<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-22/>>

⁶ Section 10, *Financial Management Act 1996*, (Web Page, 8 November 2021)
<<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-22/>>

⁷ Section 11, *Financial Management Act 1996*, (Web Page, 8 November 2021)
<<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-22/>>

⁸ Section 11, *Financial Management Act 1996*, (Web Page, 8 November 2021)
<<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-22/>>

⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings No 25*, 6 October 2021, pp 306–309.

¹⁰ Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, *Budget Papers* (Web Page, 6 October 2021)
< <https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/budget/budget-2021-22/budget-papers>>.

- Output Class 2: Environment—Parks and Conservation (output 2.2);
- Output Class 3: Climate Change and Energy—Climate Change and Energy (output 3.1);
- Output Class 4: Development and Implementation—Development and Implementation (output 4.1);
- Output Class 5: Asbestos Response Taskforce—Asbestos Response Taskforce (output 5.1);
- Output Class 6: Planning and Urban Policy:
 - Planning Policy (output 6.1);
 - Building Reform (output 6.2);
 - Housing Strategy (output 6.3);
- Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate:
 - Output Class 1: Transport Canberra—Transport Canberra (output 1.1);
 - Output Class 2: City Services:
 - Roads and Infrastructure (output 2.1);
 - Library Services (output 2.2);
 - Waste and Recycling (output 2.3);
 - City Maintenance and Services (output 2.4);
 - Capital Linen Services (output 2.5); and
- Major Projects Canberra:
 - Output Class 1: Major Projects Canberra.

CONDUCT OF INQUIRY

- 1.4 The delivery of the 2021-22 Budget was deferred until 6 October 2021 in response to the COVID-19 lockdown and subsequent revisions to the sitting schedule of the ACT Legislative Assembly. The ACT Budget 2021-22 public hearings were held from 15-29 October 2021. The continued public health restrictions during the COVID-19 outbreak in the ACT meant that all Committee public hearings for the ACT Budget were conducted remotely through Webex.
- 1.5 The motion establishing the inquiry into the ACT Budget 2021-22 was amended on 9 November 2021 requiring Committees to report by 12 November 2021.¹¹

¹¹ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 28, 9 November 2021, p 349.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1.6 The Committee held a public hearing for community organisations on 15 October 2021.
- 1.7 The Committee held public hearings on 18 October, 22 October, 25 October and 28 October 2021 where the Committee heard from ACT Government Ministers and their accompanying directorate officials; statutory officers; and members of governing boards.
- 1.8 Witnesses who appeared before the Committee are listed at [Appendix A. Transcripts](#) from the hearings are available on the Assembly website.¹² Footage of the hearings is available via video on demand on the Legislative Assembly website.¹³

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT HEARING AND QUESTIONS PLACED ON NOTICE

- 1.9 A total of 67 questions were lodged during the inquiry, 14 questions were taken on notice by Ministers and statutory office holders during the hearings, and 53 questions on notice were submitted by Committee Members and visiting MLAs following the hearings.
- 1.10 The answers to questions, and a list of questions (by subject, submitter, recipient) are available at [Appendix B](#), and on the [inquiry webpage](#).

REFERENCES TO HANSARD TRANSCRIPTS

- 1.11 Footnotes in the report generally reference the proof transcripts of evidence. Page numbers may vary between the proof and the final Hansard transcript.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 1.12 The Committee thanks everyone who participated in, or otherwise assisted, this inquiry. This includes ACT Government Ministers, directorate officials, statutory officers, members of governing boards, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members' staff, and staff of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

¹² Available at <https://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2021/comms/default.htm>

¹³ Available at <https://aod.parliament.act.gov.au/>

2 COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS

2.1 The Committee invited the following community and industry groups to appear at a public hearing for the ACT Budget 2021-22 on 15 October 2021:

- Combined Community Councils ACT (CCCACT);
- Property Council of Australia (ACT); and
- Master Builders Association (MBA).

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

MATTERS CONSIDERED

2.2 Community Councils providing evidence at the hearings were:

- Woden Valley Community Council (WVCC);
- Gungahlin Community Council (GCC); and
- Molonglo Valley Community Forum (MVCF).

2.3 The Committee discussed the following matters during their appearance:

- Government consultation with community councils;¹⁴
- funding for community councils;¹⁵
- single point of contact within Government;¹⁶
- Southern Memorial Park development;¹⁷ and
- Land Release Program.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 1.

¹⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 1.

¹⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 4.

¹⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 5.

¹⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 6.

PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (ACT)

MATTERS CONSIDERED

2.4 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Australian Capital Territory Executive Director of the Property Council of Australia (ACT):

- skills shortages;¹⁹
- challenges for the sector due to COVID lockdowns;²⁰
- business support;²¹
- building standards and climate adaption;²² and
- build to rent.²³

MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

MATTERS CONSIDERED

2.5 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Chief Executive Officer of the Master Builders Association:

- skills shortages;²⁴
- diversity in the workforce;²⁵
- apprenticeship funding;²⁶
- infrastructure spend for local companies;²⁷
- infrastructure plan;²⁸ and
- public and social housing.²⁹

¹⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, pp 8 and 12

²⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 9.

²¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 9.

²² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 10.

²³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 12.

²⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 14.

²⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 14.

²⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 16.

²⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 16.

²⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 17.

²⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 18.

KEY ISSUES

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

2.6 The Committee heard from witnesses from the community councils about their experiences with Government consultation.

2.7 Ms Fiona Carrick, President, WVCC stated:

“Frankly, as far as consultation goes, I feel that our public meetings are basically used to tick the box so that the Government and developers can come along and say that they have consulted with the community.”³⁰

2.8 Mr Peter Elford, President, GCC made the point that he had been involved with community councils for more than 10 years and in his experience consultation:

- has no mechanism for community councils to engage with the Government on a spatial level³¹;
- is fragmented, there is no single point of contact, the councils have to liaise with every Directorate through a variety of mechanisms, sometimes even within the same Directorate;
- appears to overlap on occasions and data collected seems to be lost;
- quality is inconsistent;
- is poorly advertised;³² and
- is not done early enough, projects are planned without community consultation as part of the process, projects are presented already planned.³³

2.9 Ms Carrick, WVCC also noted the difficulty of trying to engage across all the agencies and would support a single point of contact who looks after all the activities in a district, that is someone who has the spatial view of an area, who could provide a single interface for councils.³⁴

³⁰ Ms Fiona Carrick, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 1.

³¹ Mr Peter Elford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 2.

³² Mr Peter Elford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, pp. 3.

³³ Mr Peter Elford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 5.

³⁴ Ms Fiona Carrick, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 3.

- 2.10 Mr Ryan Hemsley, Interim Spokesperson, MVCF noted that this is very helpful as the Molonglo Valley Community Forum mostly has a single entity to deal with in the Suburban Land Agency who is still developing the area. Despite this there is a disconnect between the strategic planning and delivery of projects on the ground in Molonglo Valley.³⁵

FUNDING

- 2.11 The Committee heard from witnesses from the community councils about their funding. All witnesses stated that community councils are volunteer organisations.
- 2.12 Mr Elford, GCC in particular noted that the Government has made it difficult for community councils to operate. He gave an example that they are required to negotiate their own public liability insurance as opposed to Government assisting with a joint arrangement for all councils. He also noted that community councils are managing on \$13,000 a year which barely covers rent and printing, while the City Renewal Authority has \$9 million annually.³⁶
- 2.13 Ms Carrick, WVCC also noted there is no mechanism for community councils to engage with the Government on a spatial level.³⁷

INTEGRATED PLANNING

- 2.14 The Committee heard from witnesses from the community councils about what outcomes they would like to see.
- 2.15 Ms Carrick, WVCC asked what has happened to integrated transport and land use and provided some examples:
- ACT Health manages the hospital footprint – what about the 10 hectares across the road, how could this be better used for health outcomes³⁸; and
 - Land release program taking the best blocks left in Woden - Light rail/bus interchange done by Transport Canberra, they are taking the car parks near Hellenic club and Athllon Drive – who is planning for cultural and recreational facilities in Central Woden, sites are all going to commercial developers.³⁹

³⁵ Mr Ryan Hemsley, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 4.

³⁶ Mr Peter Elford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 2.

³⁷ Ms Fiona Carrick, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 3.

³⁸ Ms Fiona Carrick, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 5.

³⁹ Ms Fiona Carrick, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p. 6.

- 2.16 Mr Hemsley, MVCF notes the difficulty of obtaining the indicative land release program released every year and impacts greenfield developments and is utilised by the community councils to check the alignment between the residential development and capital works funding.⁴⁰
- 2.17 Mr Elford, GCC reinforced the need for a district view of Canberra to better connect communities and capitalise on the value of major sites under development.⁴¹

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

- 2.18 The Committee heard from witnesses from the Property Council of Australia and the MBA about support for their industries.
- 2.19 Ms Adina Cirson, Australian Capital Territory Executive Director, Property Council of Australia noted that despite opening up COVID is still impacting, sites have closed when staff have been sent into quarantine, supply chains are slow, confidence to employ staff is low and there are difficulties in recruiting qualified staff.⁴² She points out that having an announced infrastructure pipeline is beneficial as it allows the sector to feel confident in the work coming and they can recruit staff accordingly.⁴³ There have been delays in some projects due to COVID and the diversion of resources, for example the new stadium, which can be transformational projects that also lead to economic recovery.⁴⁴ Other opportunities identified include:
- \$100 million for public housing, this is welcomed by the sector;⁴⁵ and
 - Build to rent, which is a separate asset class that provides long-term secure tenure, currently has two sites for a pilot scheme, however the Council is of the view that the Government “just needs to get on and do this.”⁴⁶
- 2.20 Mr Michael Hopkins, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), MBA noted that large projects such as light rail and the hospital are probably completed by interstate companies, they would like to see the Government encourage local content through subcontractors, suppliers and designers as part of these major projects⁴⁷. There is also a requirement for a range of sizes in infrastructure packages to benefit local industry, which will help small through to large contractors.⁴⁸ He also

⁴⁰ Mr Ryan Hemsley, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 6.

⁴¹ Mr Peter Elford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 6.

⁴² Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 9.

⁴³ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 10.

⁴⁴ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 11.

⁴⁵ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 11.

⁴⁶ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 12.

⁴⁷ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 17.

⁴⁸ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 18.

noted the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the industry and observed that the withdrawal of Government support will result in more businesses ceasing to exist.⁴⁹

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BUILDING

- 2.21 The Committee heard from witnesses from the Property Council and MBA about modernisation and innovation in the building sector.
- 2.22 Ms Cirson noted that new builds in the commercial sector have been built to high standards, with high green-star ratings. One challenge is that demand for office buildings is high, vacancy rates are at 7.7 per cent, the lowest in 12 years. There is a problem with planning in the housing, urban infill and densification. A Government review of the planning system is underway, environmental principles should be built into a reformed planning system.⁵⁰

SKILLS SHORTAGES

- 2.23 The Committee heard from witnesses from the Property Council of Australia and the MBA about skill shortages.
- 2.24 Ms Cirson stated that labor skill shortages are impacting the sector, noting that there has been a 25 per cent decline, covering a broad range of jobs including architects, professional services, building and construction workers and labourers.⁵¹ The council is doing work in high schools to expose girls to the property sector and possible career paths, but identified the need to provide incentives for all students to consider a trade.⁵²
- 2.25 Mr Hopkins stated that industry has a chronic undersupply of skills in all areas, including in the areas of gender and mature age workers. He also noted the decline in workers from a high of 20,000 in May 2020 to currently around 14,000 people. This is the biggest drop in any State or Territory and represents a 12.8 per cent decline since the start of the pandemic.⁵³

⁴⁹ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 19.

⁵⁰ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 10.

⁵¹ Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 8.

⁵² Ms Adina Cirson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, pp 8–9.

⁵³ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 14.

- 2.26 In relation to gender, Mr Hopkins reported that the MBA is running programs to attract women to the industry as across the country there is less than two per cent of females in trade careers.⁵⁴ He also noted that completion rates are high once a person starts their training, the difficulty is in attracting workers to the industry to complete training in the first instance. The MBA is also working to improve diversity in the workforce.⁵⁵
- 2.27 Mr Hopkins noted that the National Skills Commission prepared a [report](#)⁵⁶ which surveyed the 10 most common VET training courses in the nation, including Certificate III in carpentry and Certificate III in plumbing. In both of those courses, the ACT ranked the lowest of any Australian jurisdiction. The funding for training in this budget has not increased, and it has not been increased for a number of years, despite training compliance for organisations such as the MBA having increased. He also notes that underfunding in training decreases the quality of training, which in turn decreases the quality of builders, subcontractors and other building practitioners.⁵⁷ He stated:

“In both cases, and probably, generally speaking, with construction training, as a training organisation I can say that it is very expensive. It is not like, say, a business administration course which could be conducted in a classroom with a computer. We need to invest heavily in workshops, and in tools and equipment, and the level of funding provided for that is simply insufficient.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 14.

⁵⁵ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 15.

⁵⁶ [VET average price benchmarks](#) - Findings from the national VET average price benchmark database, National Skills Commission, 26 March 2021.

⁵⁷ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 16.

⁵⁸ Mr Michael Hopkins, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 15 October 2021, p 16.

3 TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

- 3.1 As stated in [Budget Statements H](#) the: “[the Directorate] assists Canberrans to move around the city and provides high quality city services to the community. Delivery of these services is citizen-focused with a goal of improving the liveability of our city through the provision of core services and an integrated transport network, ensuring Canberra remains a great place to live, work and relax.”⁵⁹
- 3.2 On 18 October 2021 the Minister for Transport and City Services and the Minister for Sport and Recreation and their officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:
- Output Class 1 Transport Canberra—Output 1.1: Transport Canberra.
 - Output Class 2: City Services:
 - Output 2.1: Roads and Infrastructure;
 - Output 2.2: Library Services;
 - Output 2.3: Waste and Recycling;
 - Output 2.4: City Maintenance and Services; and
 - Output 2.5: Capital Linen Services.
 - Output class 1: Major Projects Canberra.

TRANSPORT CANBERRA (OUTPUT CLASS 1)

- 3.3 Output 1.1 in [Budget Statements H](#) states that: “Transport Canberra includes the Government subsidy paid to bus and light rail operations, and the strategic oversight of the public transport network, public transport asset management and the Active Travel Office.”⁶⁰

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 3.4 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials:
- active travel;⁶¹

⁵⁹ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 1.

⁶⁰ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 17.

⁶¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 21.

- electric bus procurement;⁶²
- interim timetable;⁶³
- light rail;⁶⁴ and
- Civic 40km/hr speed limits.⁶⁵

CITY SERVICES (OUTPUT CLASS 2)

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE (2.1)

- 3.5 Output 2.1 in [Budget Statements H](#) is the: “Management of the Territory’s road and associated assets, stormwater infrastructure, community paths, bridges, traffic signals, streetlights and car parks. This output also includes the provision of road safety policy, asset information services, capital works and development approvals relating to the acceptance of new infrastructure assets.”⁶⁶

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 3.6 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials:
- active travel infrastructure;⁶⁷
 - shared path and footpath maintenance;⁶⁸
 - Age Friendly Suburbs Program;⁶⁹ and
 - Southern Memorial Park.⁷⁰

⁶² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 43.

⁶³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 47.

⁶⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 51.

⁶⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 61.

⁶⁶ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 17.

⁶⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 21.

⁶⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 23.

⁶⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 23–24.

⁷⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 26.

LIBRARY SERVICES (2.2)

- 3.7 Output 2.2 in [Budget Statements H](#) is the: “Provision of library services to the community through Libraries ACT’s branches, home library service, the ACT Virtual Library and the Heritage Library.”⁷¹

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 3.8 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials:
- digital resource usage;⁷²
 - mystery box service;⁷³ and
 - future library in Molonglo Valley.⁷⁴

WASTE AND RECYCLING (2.3)

- 3.9 Output 2.3 in [Budget Statements H](#): “Provision of domestic waste, recyclables and green waste collection services, operation of resource management and recycling centres, development of waste policy, and implementation and evaluation of waste management programs.”⁷⁵

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 3.10 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials:
- Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO);⁷⁶ and
 - bulky waste service.⁷⁷

CITY MAINTENANCE AND SERVICES (2.4)

- 3.11 Output 2.4 in [Budget Statements H](#) is the: “Planning and management of the Territory’s parks and urban open space system including associated community infrastructure, maintaining the

⁷¹ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 18.

⁷² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 24.

⁷³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 24.

⁷⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 25.

⁷⁵ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 18.

⁷⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 35.

⁷⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 40.

look and feel of the city, and managing the urban forest and sportsgrounds facilities. The Directorate also provides advice, education and compliance services in relation to municipal ranger functions, domestic animal management, plant and animal licensing and significant tree protection. This output also includes Yarralumla Nursery and Birrigai.”⁷⁸

MATTERS CONSIDERED

3.12 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services, the Minister for Sport and Recreation and their officials:

- Better Suburbs Strategy and Play Space Strategy;⁷⁹
- local shop upgrades;⁸⁰
- swimming areas for dogs;⁸¹
- Yerrabi Pond;⁸²
- dryland ovals;⁸³
- sports grounds maintenance;⁸⁴
- female-friendly change rooms;⁸⁵
- Facility Management Plans;⁸⁶
- ground hire fees;⁸⁷
- waterway pollution;⁸⁸
- customer satisfaction with sports grounds;⁸⁹ and
- shipping containers.⁹⁰

⁷⁸ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 18.

⁷⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 32.

⁸⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 34.

⁸¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 38.

⁸² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 41.

⁸³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 78.

⁸⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 80.

⁸⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 80.

⁸⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 82 and 86.

⁸⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 83.

⁸⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 84.

⁸⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 85.

⁹⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 88.

CAPITAL LINEN (2.5)

- 3.13 Output 2.5 in [Budget Statements H](#) states that: “Capital Linen Service provides a managed linen service to a range of customers including public and private hospitals, health and aged care providers, hotels, restaurants, major tourist attractions, educational institutions and emergency services.”⁹¹

MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA (OUTPUT CLASS 1)

- 3.14 Output Class 1 in [Budget Statements I](#) states that: “Major Projects Canberra builds infrastructure for our community that helps make Canberra the world’s most liveable city.”⁹²

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 3.15 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials:
- Woden CIT and bus interchange;⁹³
 - light rail;⁹⁴ and
 - social cost of carbon.⁹⁵

KEY ISSUES

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- 3.16 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about funding for active travel infrastructure.⁹⁶
- 3.17 The Minister stated that there is around \$45 million extra in the budget for active travel, meaning a total pipeline of \$77 million in the forward estimates. Work in this means the

⁹¹ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 19.

⁹² [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements I: Major Projects Canberra](#), p 6.

⁹³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 56.

⁹⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 51.

⁹⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 60.

⁹⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 21-23.

Government is investing in improving the roads, public transport and off-road shared paths.⁹⁷ Specific examples of active travel projects include the:

- William Hovell Drive four kilometre duplication that also includes seven kilometres of off-road cycling shared path infrastructure connecting to existing cycle paths and allowing a new access route to the city;
- Sulwood Drive shared path that includes intersection crossing infrastructure to Mount Taylor Reserve;
- upgrade of tracks and trails in the Mount Taylor Reserve; and
- new trunk path infrastructure in the inner north garden city cycle path.⁹⁸

3.18 The Government has set mode share targets for the ACT for active travel of seven per cent by walking, seven percent by cycling and 16% by public transport for all journey to work trips by 2026.⁹⁹ The Committee asked if spending on active travel was sufficient to meet these targets.¹⁰⁰

3.19 The Minister explained that to meet this objective the Government is working to deliver strategic transport corridors to allow the efficient movement of people by a variety of modes. Business cases for each project assesses how they will deliver for the traffic network in terms of private travel, active travel and public transport.¹⁰¹ In his answer to [Question on Notice No. 1](#), 22 October 2021 (received 3 November 2021) in relation to the staffing levels in the Active Travel Office he stated that:

“There are 2 FTE allocated to the Active Travel Office. In addition, there are a number of other officers across TCCS including in development coordination, infrastructure planning, infrastructure delivery and Roads ACT teams who work collaboratively with these officers to deliver active travel outcomes.”¹⁰²

3.20 The Minister reported that \$1 million is being spent each year, meaning in the forward estimates across the next four years \$4 million will be spent on cycle path and shared path maintenance. He also noted that four additional suburbs would be added to the Age Friendly Suburbs Program.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 21.

⁹⁸ Mr Chris Steel, MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 21.

⁹⁹ [Building an Integrated Transport Network – Active Travel](#), Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2015, p vii.

¹⁰⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 22.

¹⁰¹ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 22.

¹⁰² Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No 1](#), received 3 November 2021.

¹⁰³ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 23.

- 3.21 [Budget Statements H](#), output 2.1 Roads and Infrastructure has an accountability indicator of greater than 89 per cent of territory roads in good condition;¹⁰⁴ however the Committee noted there is no equivalent accountability for the maintenance of shared paths and footpaths.¹⁰⁵
- 3.22 Mr Jim Corrigan, Deputy Director-General, City Services, TCCSD stated that the Directorate has been doing more work in this space and is looking to formalise appropriate indicators in this area. There is complexity with shared paths and footpaths and monitoring them and most of the requests to fix paths generally come through Fix My Street.¹⁰⁶
- 3.23 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question on Notice No. 7](#), 22 October 2021 (received 1 November 2021) in relation to the path network audit that:
- “The Jobs for Canberrans (JFC) program created four new temporary positions for path inspector roles for TCCS. These temporary inspectors are working closely with the existing Roads ACT inspectors to undertake condition audits and defect assessments of the full path network across Canberra. The additional four staff aim to proactively assess the entire ACT’s path network by the end of the 2021 calendar year.”¹⁰⁷

Recommendation 1

- 3.24 The Committee recommends that future budgets give a clear methodology to allow comparison on total expenditure on Roads and Active Transport and publish the total amount spent on active transport infrastructure as a separate line item.**

Recommendation 2

- 3.25 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider updating the Transport Strategy to contain mode share targets for active and public transport.**

Recommendation 3

- 3.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release its path and shared path maintenance review.**

¹⁰⁴ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 22.

¹⁰⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 23.

¹⁰⁶ Mr Jim Corrigan, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 23.

¹⁰⁷ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No. 7](#), received 1 November 2021.

Recommendation 4

- 3.27 The committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing an accountability indicator to establish the percentage of shared paths and footpaths in good condition, similar to the indicator for roads.**

Recommendation 5

- 3.28 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing an accountability indicator to report the average amount of days it takes for footpath and shared paths repairs to be actioned once reported via Fix My Street.**

SOUTHERN MEMORIAL PARK—CEMETERY

- 3.29 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about the Southern Memorial Park. The Committee notes that in the 2021-22 budget \$1.884 million¹⁰⁸ is allocated for Southern Memorial Park detailed design. In the 2020-21 Budget there was \$804,000¹⁰⁹ allocated for the same project.¹¹⁰
- 3.30 The Minister noted that work has been undertaken in the last few years to update the master plan for the Southern Memorial Park, substantial consultation with the community has been done and a report on this will be available soon. This work has fed into the latest budget initiative to start the detailed design work for stage one of the memorial park. He also noted that construction of the park cannot commence until the detailed design has been completed.¹¹¹
- 3.31 Mr Jeremy Smith, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure Deliver, TCSSD stated that there are a large number of requirements to complete the design that include heritage, environmental and Indigenous studies of the area. In addition to this is the infrastructure design work including road infrastructure, buildings, services above and below ground and establishment of sites for burials.¹¹² He also noted that additional infrastructure work to support the memorial park included signalisation of Long Gulley Road and Mugga Way, provisions of an entry way and improvements to Monaro Highway intersections.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 36.

¹⁰⁹ [ACT Government Budget 2020-21, Budget Statements H: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate](#), p 42.

¹¹⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 26–30.

¹¹¹ Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 27.

¹¹² Jeremy Smith, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 27.

¹¹³ Jeremy Smith, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 28.

- 3.32 The Committee queried the need for crematoria in the ACT and how gas-fired crematoria fitted with the Government's net zero emissions policies.¹¹⁴
- 3.33 The Minister stated that during the consultation for the review of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act* the community expressed a wish to have access to publicly run crematoria facilities. The Government delivered this by delivering a publicly operated gas-fired crematorium at the Gungahlin Cemetery. Work completed as part of the Gungahlin project estimated that the ACT needed three to four crematoria based on population. As part of the work being done for the Southern Memorial Park will includes consideration being given to having a crematorium at the site in the future.¹¹⁵ The [National Cremation Capacity Survey 2020](#) noted that crematoriums in the ACT are operating at 18% capacity, with an average of 1560 cremations done annually, with an annual capacity of 8736 cremations.¹¹⁶
- 3.34 The Minister also noted that there was a time imperative for the Gungahlin Crematorium, the Government needed to build facilities during a pandemic to meet potential needs. This meant using current gas-fired technology, going forward the Government will continue to look at available technologies in relation to crematoria, against its policies in the future.¹¹⁷

Recommendation 6

- 3.35 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should ensure that strategic planning for crematoria and other major facilities is in alignment with statutory planning, to ensure that what is developed in Canberra is only what is needed for our current and future population numbers.**

TREE PLANTING

- 3.36 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about funding to plant and maintain trees.¹¹⁸
- 3.37 The Minister outlined to meet its canopy target of 30 per cent it has trebled the number of trees planted from 17,000 to 54,000 across the budget to 2023-24, there has been a \$12.15 million increase in funding over the forward estimates.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 29.

¹¹⁵ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 28.

¹¹⁶ [National Cremation Capacity Survey 2020](#), 14 October 2020, p 4.

¹¹⁷ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 28.

¹¹⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 30–32.

¹¹⁹ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 30.

- 3.38 Mr Stephen Alegria, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation, TCCSD notes that there is significant planning and costs involved in the tree planting program, from identifying a suitable site, ensuring on-ground is appropriate for the tree, type and size of tree selected for the site and ensuring after-care, this is critical to the survival of the tree.¹²⁰
- 3.39 The Minister stated that there has been an increase of 14.25 FTE who have been employed to grow the tree canopy in Canberra.¹²¹ Mr Alegria, TCCSD noted that there are in-house planting crews, however the Directorate also employs contractors on occasion for specialised planting and to assist with watering younger trees to ensure survival.¹²²

Recommendation 7

- 3.40 The Committee recommends the ACT Government provide regular reporting on the implementation of the urban forest strategy including planting numbers.**

WASTE RECYCLING FACILITIES

- 3.41 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about increased funding for waste recycling, the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) facility and the amount of funding for public education.¹²³
- 3.42 The ACT has had to change the way it recycles due to both the import ban imposed by international jurisdictions on Australian waste and also the agreement to a waste export ban by the Commonwealth and States and Territories. The upgrade to the MRF is designed to improve the sorting technologies to increase the volume of materials being recycled and to also reduce the contamination levels of different waste streams.¹²⁴
- 3.43 The FOGO pilot will be rolled out in November, commencing in Belconnen, Bruce, Cook and Macquarie that has a good mix of multi-unit apartment buildings, townhouses and single residential households.¹²⁵ This pilot will be diverting food scraps that generally go to landfill to an organic recycling facility. Education will be critical to ensure participants understand the

¹²⁰ Mr Stephen Alegria, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 31.

¹²¹ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 32.

¹²² Mr Stephen Alegria, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 31–32.

¹²³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 35–38.

¹²⁴ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 35.

¹²⁵ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 38.

service and that contamination levels are low during the FOGO pilot before proceeding with the whole-of-Canberra rollout.¹²⁶

3.44 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question Taken on Notice No. 1](#), 18 October 2021 (received 27 October 2021) in relation to waste education funding:

- “\$935,522 plus GST (\$1,029,074 GST incl) this financial year is provided through the Materials Recovery Facility contract for waste education and FTE. This funds 7.6 FTE (8 people)”; and
- “the FOGO pilot budget has allocated \$118,000 for the ACT NoWaste FOGO education program from November 2021 to October 2023. An education component comprising funding for both FTE and program resources is contained within the contract, however, the exact figures are subject to commercial arrangements. The contractor will engage education staff to support the program.”¹²⁷

Recommendation 8

3.45 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures sufficient funds are allocated on education to ensure the upgraded MRF and new FOGO facility provide low contamination and high recovery rates.

DOG SWIMMING AREAS

3.46 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about dog swimming areas and water testing¹²⁸.

3.47 Mr Stephen Alegria, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation, TCCSD explained that water quality is a shared responsibility across directorates, with TCCSD being responsible for removing litter and foreign objects.¹²⁹ The Directorate is also responsible for signage around swimming areas for both people and dogs. Water quality testing itself is done by EPSDD and the Health Protection Service depending on the purpose of testing. Testing is usually done for safety reasons, such as bacterial and faecal coliforms, and environmental reasons, for example blue-green algae issues.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 36–37.

¹²⁷ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question Taken on Notice No. 1](#), received 27 October 2021.

¹²⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 38–39.

¹²⁹ Mr Stephen Alegria, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 38.

¹³⁰ Mr Stephen Alegria, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 39.

- 3.48 The Committee noted that animals in the ACT are classed as sentient beings, that dogs have suffered from blue-green algae poisoning at listed dog beaches and asked what the Government was doing to protect dogs.¹³¹
- 3.49 Mr Stephen Alegria, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation, TCCSD noted that in large bodies of water with good flows, such as the Murrumbidgee, there are few issues with blue-green algae.¹³²
- 3.50 The Minister noted that the Government informs the public about blue-green algae outbreaks, responsible dog owners should take note of these, areas considered unsafe for people to swim by extension would be unsafe for dogs to swim.¹³³

Recommendation 9

3.51 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the need for water quality testing at public dog swimming areas given that dogs are classed as sentient beings in the ACT and to help prevent dogs suffering from algae poisoning.

ELECTRIC BUS PROCUREMENT

- 3.52 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about electric bus procurement and the transition timelines, noting that NSW was aiming to have a fully electric fleet by 2030.¹³⁴
- 3.53 The Minister stated that the Government is currently procuring 90 electric buses and will lease an additional 34 buses to replace older buses, particularly those that do not currently meet Euro standards. The zero-emissions plan for Transport Canberra includes installing charging infrastructure to support electric buses, and budget initiatives for the upgrade of the Woden depot will incorporate this requirement.¹³⁵ The delay in development of the Woden depot has not impacted the timelines for the procurement of electric buses.¹³⁶ He also noted that work is underway to plan a fourth fully electric depot on the north-side which will cater for the increasing number of electric buses in the future.¹³⁷

¹³¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 39.

¹³² Mr Stephen Alegria, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 39.

¹³³ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 39.

¹³⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 43–47.

¹³⁵ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 43.

¹³⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 47.

¹³⁷ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 44.

3.54 The Minister noted that, in relation to the NSW target, theirs is an ambitious transition and “we have been working closely with them in terms of the lessons we can go through in both our processes.”. He also noted that the transport systems are quite different, the NSW system is privatised so they are working with private businesses to transition their fleet, the ACT has a wholly publicly owned fleet.¹³⁸

3.55 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question on Notice No. 3](#), 22 October 2021 (received 1 November 2021) in relation to :

“When the 2019-20 budget provided funding for Transport Canberra to commence replacement of its oldest buses, an ongoing provision was also established to support the ACT’s Zero Emissions Transition Plan which aims to transition to a fully zero emissions fleet by 2040. This replacement program is to be funded from the provision on a rolling annual basis to provide flexibility to adapt the Territory’s purchasing approach as technology improves. Transport Canberra will present future business cases to Cabinet in order to access this provision from 2023-24 onwards.”¹³⁹

3.56 Mr Ben McHugh, Deputy Director-General, Transport Canberra and Business Services, TCCSD said that the Zero Emissions Steering Committee developed a [Zero-emissions Transition Plan](#) for the bus fleet. It looked at a range of other jurisdictions around the world to develop a plan for Canberra. As noted by the Minister this includes the 34 replacement buses and the procurement of 90 buses, these are expected to arrive and be operating in the network in 2022.¹⁴⁰ In relation to the timeframes the Government is continually monitoring, updating and refreshing the transition plan to take into account new technologies in this area.¹⁴¹

3.57 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question on Notice No. 24](#), 25 October 2021 (received 5 November 2021) in relation to electric buses that in 2020-21 the Government owned no electric buses, in 2021-22 the number of vehicles will be subject to procurement outcomes.¹⁴²

3.58 The Minister outlined the advantages of changing from diesel to electric buses included:

- quieter, more comfortable ride;
- reduced noise pollution, particularly in residential areas;
- reduction in the PM2.5 particulate matter and other noxious gases in the atmosphere, which are detrimental to human health; and

¹³⁸ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 44.

¹³⁹ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No. 3](#), received 1 November 2021.

¹⁴⁰ Mr Ben McHugh, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 44.

¹⁴¹ Mr Ben McHugh, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 44.

¹⁴² Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No. 24](#), received 5 November 2021.

- reduction in carbon emissions.¹⁴³

Recommendation 10

3.59 The Committee recommends the ACT Government explore joint procurement options with NSW for zero emissions buses.

ACTION INTERIM TIMETABLE

- 3.60 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about the interim timetable for ACTION buses.¹⁴⁴
- 3.61 The Minister confirmed that the availability of drivers was a major decision-making point when developing the interim timetable.¹⁴⁵ As the ACT emerges from lockdown, school services have come back online in addition to the interim timetable, with the expectation that case numbers could rise and bus drivers could become close contacts. Business continuity planning included the need to plan a timetable that considered the impact of drivers being unavailable because they are placed in quarantine due to COVID-19. He also noted that public transport is a critical service for the community, and flexibility is needed to deliver services with changing conditions.¹⁴⁶
- 3.62 Ms Alison Playford, Director-General, TCCSD noted that Transport Canberra has also been required to provide additional services on top of the interim network such as shuttles to move families infected with COVID-19 to other accommodations and also people arriving in the ACT who were required to complete quarantine.¹⁴⁷
- 3.63 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question on Notice No.2](#), 22 October 2021 (received 3 November 2021) in relation to on time running:
- “Currently, there is no agreed standard in the Australian public transport industry for the measurement of on-time performance. Transport Canberra records timeliness more comprehensively across scheduled timing points along each bus route for the entire network than other public transport authority, including day, night and

¹⁴³ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 45.

¹⁴⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 47–51.

¹⁴⁵ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 47.

¹⁴⁶ Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 48.

¹⁴⁷ Ms Alison Playford, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 49.

weekends. A Transport Canberra bus is deemed to be on time when it departs a scheduled timing point within 1 minute earlier and 4 minutes later than scheduled.”¹⁴⁸

- 3.64 The Minister also noted in his answer to [Question on Notice No.2](#), 22 October 2021 (received 3 November 2021) that Transport Canberra operates a fixed timetable, this can lead to buses being faster or slower than the schedule because buses operate in a mixed traffic environment which is highly variable depending on the day of the week, school holidays, road works, traffic accidents or incidents and bus breakdowns. Transport Canberra uses performance data from the MyWay and NXTBUS systems to identify problematic running of services, and prior to updating timetables, also engages with the bus drivers and their union on route timings.¹⁴⁹

Recommendation 11

- 3.65 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider hourly weekend bus services as part of Transport Canberra’s next tranche of network improvements.**

Recommendation 12

- 3.66 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should investigate barriers to achieving a higher on-time running performance including lack of bus priority measures, or inaccurate route timings with a view to increasing the performance target in the future.**

WODEN CIT AND BUS INTERCHANGE

- 3.67 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials about the Woden Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and the bus interchange projects. The Committee noted that Woden CIT and Woden bus interchange projects are listed together as one line item in [Budget Statements I](#)¹⁵⁰ and queried the breakdown of funding between the two projects.¹⁵¹
- 3.68 The Minister stated that this is an integrated project, delivered by MPC in consultation with TCCSD. The Government has procurement partners for the first two projects, known as package 1 and package 2. Procurement for package 3, which is for the Woden CIT, is still to be completed and until this process is done the actual cost is unknown.¹⁵² This point was reinforced by Mr Duncan Edghill, Chief Projects Officer, MPC who stated that in line with

¹⁴⁸ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No.2](#), received 3 November 2021.

¹⁴⁹ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No.2](#), received 3 November 2021.

¹⁵⁰ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements I: Major Projects Canberra](#), p 12.

¹⁵¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 56–58.

¹⁵² Mr Chris Steel MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 56.

procurement principles the total cost of the project has not yet been notified as negotiations are still underway. The Minister and cabinet have visibility of budget assessments, however there is no intention to signal to the market what the proposed total budget is for this project.¹⁵³

- 3.69 Mr Edghill, MPC also explained that this is one project, being handled by one team in MPC which has flow on effects for the redevelopment of the CIT campus in Reid by the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The Directorate is working in a timely manner to deliver the Woden packages 1, 2 and 3 that will enable it to meet the timeframes of both this project and the associated UNSW development in Reid.¹⁵⁴

Recommendation 13

3.70 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider separating the accountability indicators in Budget Statements I for the CIT Woden Project and the Light Rail to Woden Project.

SOCIAL COST OF CARBON AND MAJOR PROJECTS

- 3.71 The Committee heard from Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services and officials on 18 October 2021 about the social cost of carbon in relation to major projects, including light rail.¹⁵⁵
- 3.72 Mr Duncan Edghill, Chief Projects Officer, MPC noted that sustainability is a key feature of all their major projects.¹⁵⁶ In terms of specific projects he noted that:
- Light Rail Stage 1 is powered by 100 per cent renewable energy, achieving an Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) leading rating;
 - the Woden CIT project will be built to at least a five star green rating; and
 - the hospital expansion project will be an all-electric facility.¹⁵⁷
- 3.73 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question Taken on Notice No. 4](#), 18 October 2021 (received 28 October 2021) that:
- “every major project directly delivered by MPC will have an independent sustainability rating”; and

¹⁵³ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 56–57.

¹⁵⁴ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 59.

¹⁵⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 60–61.

¹⁵⁶ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 60.

¹⁵⁷ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 61.

- “the ISCA rating undertaken as part of the Light Rail Stage 1 project included a tool for reporting and calculating the embedded emissions from materials used in the construction of the Light Rail, including; concrete, steel, asphalt, aggregates, piping etc. As part of the ISCA rating process the total quantum of materials and the corresponding embodied emissions from these construction materials were recorded in the Infrastructure Sustainability rating submission.”¹⁵⁸

3.74 The Committee heard from Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction and officials on 22 October 2021 about embedded emissions.¹⁵⁹

3.75 The Minister noted that she will shortly be tabling a report by the Commissioner for the Environment that will include reporting on scope three emissions.¹⁶⁰ She also noted that in the ACT there has been a focus on scope one and two emissions, there are specific challenges around scope three emissions, we have the least ability to influence them except through customer behaviour.¹⁶¹

Recommendation 14

3.76 The Committee recommends that Major Projects Canberra demonstrate how they will be reducing Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as part of the light rail project and publish this for public access.

Recommendation 15

3.77 The Committee recommends that Major Projects Canberra continue to assess new construction technologies and techniques which may further reduce emissions from major construction projects.

DRYLAND OVALS

3.78 The Committee heard from Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Sport and Recreation and officials about dryland ovals.¹⁶²

3.79 The Minister noted that a number of ovals are no longer used for sport and recreation activities because they were decommissioned during a past drought. They are now considered

¹⁵⁸ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question Taken on Notice No. 4](#), received 28 October 2021.

¹⁵⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, pp 104–105.

¹⁶⁰ Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 104.

¹⁶¹ Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 105.

¹⁶² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 78–80.

to be dryland grass areas, maintained by TCCSD for community use such as flying a kite and dog walking. The Minister also noted that:

- Higgins dryland oval has been returned to a sports field in recent times because of a growth in sport in the Belconnen district; and
- discussions will be held with the school and broader community in relation to the Florey oval to see how the space could be best utilised to provide additional sport and recreational activities in the suburb.¹⁶³

Recommendation 16

3.80 The Committee recommends that Transport Canberra and City Services should consider opportunities to improve the use and experience of dryland ovals, including opportunities to turn some or all of the oval into other uses, such as playgrounds or other community facilities.

MOWING

3.81 The Committee questioned Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services about the budget for mowing and the management of grass clippings near waterways.

3.82 The Minister stated in his answer to [Question on Notice No. 35](#), 25 October 2021 (received 4 November 2021) in relation to mowing and the management of grass clippings that:

- the 2021-22 ACT Budget is consistent with the base of the 2020-21 ACT Budget which provided funding for Phase 3 of the Fast-track program for additional lawn mowing across Canberra, therefore this is already factored into available resourcing;
- during peak growing periods the program seeks to mow public open spaces every four weeks and arterial roads every five weeks. Mowing of sportsgrounds is undertaken on a more frequent basis to ensure the playing surface remains safe and fit for purpose. Irrigated parks are mown more frequently than non-irrigated parks. Fire fuel reduction mowing is undertaken as required depending on seasonal conditions, when the grass has reached a suitable level of dryness;
- grass clippings are not collected in parks, grasslands and along roads, and excess grass in gutters and on footpaths is blown clean after an area is mown;
- generally, the area directly adjacent to waterways is not mown. Further back from these riparian areas, grass is mown between 75 and 100mm; and

¹⁶³ Ms Yvette Berry MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 78–79.

- grass clippings are not collected next to waterways. Contamination next to waterways is limited by mowing operators being trained to keep the grass discharge direction facing away from channels when mowing around stormwater drains and culverts. In addition to this, an unmown buffer zone is maintained between a waterbody and mown areas.¹⁶⁴

Recommendation 17

3.83 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government match mowing services to the prevailing weather conditions including services in very wet years.

Recommendation 18

3.84 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate alternative mowing solutions.

¹⁶⁴ Mr Chris Steel MLA, answer to [Question on Notice No. 35](#), received 4 November 2021.

4 CITY RENEWAL AUTHORITY AND SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY

CRA AND SLA STATEMENTS OF INTENT

4.1 As stated in [Budget Statements E](#), the:

- City Renewal Authority (CRA) “was established to play the crucial role of coordinating and implementing world-class urban renewal within the City Renewal Precinct. The establishment of the Authority ensures that as Canberra grows, its city centre and immediate surrounds will further evolve into a thriving precinct with well-designed buildings and public spaces that improve activity, connectivity and sustainability.”¹⁶⁵; and
- Suburban Land Agency (SLA) “develops and releases Government-owned land for residential, commercial, industrial and community purposes.”¹⁶⁶

4.2 On 18 October 2021 the Chief Minister and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about the:

- City Renewal Authority Statement of Intent; and
- Suburban Land Agency Statement of Intent.

4.3 On 25 October 2021 the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:

- Suburban Land Agency Statement of Intent (with the exception of those matters for which the Chief Minister is responsible).

CRA AND SLA STATEMENTS OF INTENT

MATTERS CONSIDERED

4.4 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Chief Minister and officials on 18 October 2021:

- social cost of carbon;¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 67.

¹⁶⁶ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 98.

¹⁶⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 64.

- land sales revenue;¹⁶⁸
- Haig Park;¹⁶⁹
- urban infill target;¹⁷⁰
- Conflict of Interest Policy;¹⁷¹
- community consultation;¹⁷²
- Acton Waterfront masterplan;¹⁷³
- City Hill activation;¹⁷⁴ and
- urban renewal sites.¹⁷⁵

4.5 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials on 25 October 2021:

- block scraping with SLA releases;¹⁷⁶
- land ballots;¹⁷⁷
- place design consultations;¹⁷⁸
- tree canopy;¹⁷⁹ and
- Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.¹⁸⁰

¹⁶⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 65.

¹⁶⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 66.

¹⁷⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 67.

¹⁷¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp. 67.

¹⁷² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp. 68.

¹⁷³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 70.

¹⁷⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, p 72.

¹⁷⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp. 76.

¹⁷⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 111.

¹⁷⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 113.

¹⁷⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 117.

¹⁷⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 121.

¹⁸⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 126.

KEY ISSUES

URBAN INFILL TARGET

- 4.6 The Committee heard from Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister and officials about the 70 per cent urban infill target.
- 4.7 EPSDD is responsible for publishing the ILRP in consultation with other directorates, SLA and CRA deliver the scheduled releases.¹⁸¹ [Budget Statements E](#) has a stated key action to deliver a compact and efficient city, one action under this is to “Deliver sustainable planning for new development by requiring at least 70% of new housing development to be within Canberra’s existing urban footprint.”¹⁸²
- 4.8 The Chief Minister stated in his answer to [question taken on notice no. 5](#), 18 October 2021 (received 29 October 2021) in relation to the urban infill target that:
- the draft [Indicative Land Release Program \(ILRP\) 2021-22 to 2025-26](#) identifies the development/urban infill sites and proposes a combined yield of 800 dwellings in the city which are the responsibility of the CRA; and
 - the SLA Urban Renewal projects are the Kingston Arts Precinct (KAP), the number of dwellings is subject to further engagement to confirm the developable area and the Canberra Brickworks Project (CBP) has an anticipated yield of 380 dwellings.”¹⁸³
- 4.9 The Committee also heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about the Government commitment to provide at least 70 per cent of new dwellings to be within the existing urban footprint and if this was only within areas already zoned residential.¹⁸⁴
- 4.10 The Minister noted that this target is being delivered by blocks previously occupied by single dwellings being redeveloped with medium density townhouse developments. He also noted that the target does not only relate to land currently zoned residential, the land can be re-zoned at a later date, the main criteria for the target is for development within the current urban footprint.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ [Indicative Land Release Program \(ILRP\) 2021-22 to 2025-26](#), ACT 2021, p 3.

¹⁸² [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 5.

¹⁸³ Mr Andrew Barr MLA, answer to [question taken on notice no. 5](#), received 29 October 2021.

¹⁸⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 142.

¹⁸⁵ Mick Gentleman MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 143.

- 4.11 Mr Ben Ponton, Director-General, EPSDD noted that the policy objective of 70 per cent urban infill is not just for the Government, it also includes the private sector.¹⁸⁶

Recommendation 19

- 4.12 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an explicit plan on how it will achieve the 70% infill target.**

BLOCK SCRAPING

- 4.13 The Committee heard from Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Urban Development and officials about the practice of block scraping with SLA land releases.¹⁸⁷
- 4.14 Mr Tom Gordon, Executive Director, Development Delivery, SLA noted that in developing a suburb, there are various standards for grade and road inclines that necessitates the moving of large quantities of soil around. The Directorate works to control sediment and runoff when creating new suburbs.¹⁸⁸ He also notes that services to the block such as sewerage and in particular stormwater, are gravity fed. This means that when building a new suburb there is a “level of land forming which needs to occur to ensure that every block can be services with those utilities.”¹⁸⁹
- 4.15 Mr Simon Tennent, Development Director, Development Delivery—Molonglo, SLA states that the SLA is working with the Natural Resource Management team (EPSDD) to implement best practice in Whitlam. The suburb of Whitlam has been a focus as it is located near the river reserve and we are working to reduce impacts on this as the suburb is developed. Water runoff is the biggest issue with actions being undertaken to control sediment and erosion including polymer spray on bare earth, multiple-row sediment fences and additional water retention ponds.¹⁹⁰

Recommendation 20

- 4.16 The Committee recommends that the SLA apply the new methods commenced in Whitlam earlier this year to avoid block scraping and explore further methods to avoid block scraping in all greenfield developments.**

¹⁸⁶ Mr Ben Ponton, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 144.

¹⁸⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 18 October 2021, pp 111–113.

¹⁸⁸ Mr Tom Gordon, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 112.

¹⁸⁹ Mr Tom Gordon, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 113.

¹⁹⁰ Mr Simon Tennent, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 112.

5 ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

- 5.1 As stated in [Budget Statements E](#) the: “[the Directorate] promotes the orderly growth of our city, strengthens the Territory’s response to climate change, conserves the ACT’s natural and cultural environments and heritage, manages the Territory’s parks and reserves, and provides an integrated planning and land use system that contributes to the sustainable development and future of the ACT.”¹⁹¹
- 5.2 On 22 October 2021 the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:
- Output Class 3: Climate Change and Energy—Output 3.1: Climate Change and Energy;
 - Output Class 5: Asbestos Response Taskforce—Output Class 5.1 Asbestos Response Taskforce;
 - Output Class 6: Planning and Urban Policy—Output 6.2: Building reform; and
 - Output class 1: Major Projects Canberra.
- 5.3 On 25 October 2021 the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:
- Output Class 6: Planning and Urban Policy—Output 6.3: Housing Strategy.
- 5.4 On 28 October 2021 Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:
- Output Class 1: Statutory Planning—Output 1.1: Statutory Planning;
 - Output Class 2: Environment—Output Class 2.2: Parks and Conservation;
 - Output Class 4: Development and Implementation—Output Class 4.1: Development and Implementation; and
 - Output Class 6: Planning and Urban Policy—Output 6.1: Planning policy.

¹⁹¹ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 4.

STATUTORY PLANNING (OUTPUT CLASS 1)

STATUTORY PLANNING (1.1)

- 5.5 Output 3.1 in [Budget Statements E](#) is to: “Facilitate and manage growth and change within the ACT through development assessment and leasehold management, with the overarching objective of promoting and facilitating economically productive, sustainable, attractive, safe and well-designed urban and rural environments in the ACT.”¹⁹²

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 5.6 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021:
- new housing development;¹⁹³
 - *Planning and Development Act 2007* and Territory Plan;¹⁹⁴ and
 - accountability targets for Development Applications (DA).¹⁹⁵

ENVIRONMENT (OUTPUT CLASS 2)

PARKS AND CONSERVATION (2.2)

- 5.7 Output 2.2 in [Budget Statements E](#) is for the: “Planning and management of the ACT’s parks, reserves, unleased public land and plantations, including associated community infrastructure. The land manager role includes management of land for recreational use; conservation management; including management of national parks, nature reserves; fire management; and pest and weed control as well as the management of the Territory’s softwood plantation and oversight of rural production areas.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 18.

¹⁹³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 142.

¹⁹⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 149.

¹⁹⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 162.

¹⁹⁶ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 18.

MATTERS CONSIDERED

5.8 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021:

- Parks and Conservation funding;¹⁹⁷
- Franklin grasslands;¹⁹⁸ and
- ecosystem condition score.¹⁹⁹

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY (OUTPUT CLASS 3)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY (3.1)

5.9 Output 3.1 in [Budget Statements E](#) relates to the development of policy and providing advice in relation to the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25, investments in renewable electricity, energy efficiency measures and the administration of the ACT's Zero Emissions Government Scheme.²⁰⁰

MATTERS CONSIDERED

5.10 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction and officials on 22 October 2021:

- embedded emissions;²⁰¹ and
- energy efficiency.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 140.

¹⁹⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 145.

¹⁹⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 147.

²⁰⁰ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 19.

²⁰¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 104.

²⁰² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 106.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION (OUTPUT CLASS 4)

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION (4.1)

- 5.11 Output 2.2 in [Budget Statements E](#): “Delivers projects that involve multiple policy outcomes. This work includes the identification of key precincts and individual projects, prioritisation of projects based on community need, undertaking feasibility studies and due diligence, and project delivery including demolition and minor works. This work seeks to integrate urban renewal opportunities across Government around defined urban renewal precincts, including within town and group centres and within pockets of established suburbs, such as local centres.”²⁰³

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 5.12 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021:
- build to rent schemes;²⁰⁴ and
 - Gungahlin Community Centre.²⁰⁵

ASBESTOS RESPONSE TASKFORCE (OUTPUT CLASS 5)

ASBESTOS RESPONSE TASKFORCE (5.1)

- 5.13 Output 5.1 in [Budget Statements E](#) states the: “The Asbestos Response Taskforce delivers the Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme safely, compassionately and efficiently. It provides support and advice to affected homeowners, the Canberra community, industry and Government.”²⁰⁶

²⁰³ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 19.

²⁰⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 159.

²⁰⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 165.

²⁰⁶ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 20.

PLANNING AND URBAN POLICY (OUTPUT CLASS 6)

PLANNING POLICY (6.1)

- 5.14 Output 6.1 in [Budget Statements E](#) states that: “The Environment and Planning Forums are one of the mechanisms the directorate uses to engage with key stakeholders on matters pertinent to the Environment and to Planning portfolios. The 5-year Indicative Land Release Program sets out the Government’s intended land releases of residential, mixed use, commercial, industrial, and community and non-urban land.”²⁰⁷

MATTERS CONSIDERED

- 5.15 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021:
- community housing;²⁰⁸
 - housing affordability;²⁰⁹
 - place making;²¹⁰
 - Western Edge investigation;²¹¹ and
 - gender sensitive urban design.²¹²

BUILDING REFORM (6.2)

- 5.16 Output 6.2 in [Budget Statements E](#) states the: “Government recognises the importance of compliance with building standards for health, safety, amenity and sustainability in maintaining our quality of life and has committed to series of reforms to the ACT’s building regulatory system to improve compliance with building standards and lift industry practices.”²¹³

²⁰⁷ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 21.

²⁰⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 152.

²⁰⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 155.

²¹⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 156.

²¹¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 167.

²¹² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 169.

²¹³ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 21.

MATTERS CONSIDERED

5.17 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction on 22 October 2021:

- environmentally sustainable building;²¹⁴
- Developer Licensing Scheme;²¹⁵
- building reform;²¹⁶ and
- Residential Dispute Resolution Scheme.²¹⁷

HOUSING STRATEGY (6.3)

5.18 Output 6.3 in [Budget Statements E](#) states that the: “ACT Housing Strategy was launched in October 2018 and establishes an overarching policy framework to guide decisions about policy, planning and delivery of housing across the ACT over its ten-year lifespan.”²¹⁸

MATTERS CONSIDERED

5.19 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials on 25 October 2021:

- community housing;²¹⁹ and
- ACT Housing Strategy reporting.²²⁰

MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA (OUTPUT CLASS 1)

5.20 Output Class 1 in [Budget Statements I](#) states that: “Major Projects Canberra builds infrastructure for our community that helps make Canberra the world’s most liveable city.”²²¹

²¹⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 91-92.

²¹⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 93.

²¹⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 98.

²¹⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 100.

²¹⁸ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 22.

²¹⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 128.

²²⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 134.

²²¹ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements I: Major Projects Canberra](#), p 6.

MATTERS CONSIDERED

5.21 The Committee discussed the following matter during the appearance by the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction and officials on 22 October 2021 in relation to building quality in the ACT:

- Combustible cladding.²²²

KEY ISSUES

COMBUSTIBLE CLADDING

5.22 The Committee heard from Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction and officials about investigations into buildings affected by combustible cladding.

5.23 The Minister noted that initial investigations on apartment buildings, three stories or higher, were undertaken by ACT Fire and Rescue and there were around 90 buildings potentially identified. This is providing the baseline for determining how the Government can assist private building owners.²²³ She also noted that the responsibility for cladding sits with the building owners, the Government is encouraging owners to engage with the process to determine if they have combustible cladding.²²⁴

5.24 Mr Duncan Edghill, Chief Projects Officer, MPC noted that it is difficult to ascertain combustibility without removing the cladding and getting it tested. The first phase of the combustible cladding scheme now underway to engage with building owners to organise for the removal and testing of cladding.²²⁵

5.25 Mr Edghill, MPC outlined the phase one Private Buildings Cladding Scheme workflow is:

- that owner corporations met to determine if they would participate in the scheme;
- to apply to participate in the scheme;
- for owners to engage suitably qualified experts to test the cladding;
- the testing is done; and
- if determined to be combustible, quantity surveyors or builders determining the amount of work that needs to be done.²²⁶

²²² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 101.

²²³ Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 101.

²²⁴ Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 102.

²²⁵ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 102.

²²⁶ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, pp 102-103.

- 5.26 The Committee noted that the [Equity Economics report](#) 2019²²⁷ identified 157 buildings in the ACT with combustible cladding, 71 of them deemed as extreme or high risk.²²⁸
- 5.27 The Minister reiterated that the scheme is for building owners who have the responsibility for this issue and that the focus of the scheme is to facilitate and support the process for dealing with combustible cladding.²²⁹
- 5.28 Mr Edghill, MPC expanded on the phases of the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme:
- phase one—engagement with building owners to identify combustible cladding in their buildings; and
 - phase two—relates to remediating the issue of combustible cladding, this will include the option of a concessional loan scheme to support owners to get the work completed.²³⁰
- 5.29 Mr Adrian Piani, Chief Engineer/Executive Group Manager, Infrastructure Delivery Partners, MPC stated that, as part of their industry consultation on the issue of combustible cladding, they met twice with the Insurance Council, the peak body that provides a national viewpoint, to understand how the insurance industry has engaged with customers in relation to this issue. The Insurance Council informed them that broadly speaking that a low risk assessment would be acceptable for them.²³¹
- 5.30 The Minister accepted that while they do not know the entire scope of the issue, significant analysis and work has been done, a number of properties have gone through assessment and the Government is drawing on the experiences of other jurisdictions to design the scheme.²³²

Recommendation 21

- 5.31 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its 2019 assessment of apartment buildings impacted by combustible cladding and conduct an audit to determine the full scope of the issue.**

²²⁷ [The Cost of Apartment Building Defects](#), Equity Economics, 2019, p 12.

²²⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 104.

²²⁹ Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 104.

²³⁰ Mr Duncan Edghill, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 107.

²³¹ Mr Adrian Piani, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 108–109.

²³² Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 22 October 2021, p 109.

Recommendation 22

5.32 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release all documents in relation to the establishment of the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

ECOSYSTEM CONDITION SCORE

- 5.33 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about the accountability indicator for output 2.2 ecosystem condition score and what this means.²³³
- 5.34 [Budget Statements E](#) states that this is a “New indicator: The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP) is an overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework for the ACT conservation estate.”²³⁴
- 5.35 Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, Environment, Water and Emissions Reduction, EPSDD noted that they have an in-house conservation research branch who monitors conservation outcomes. The CEMP is an overarching plan that gathers data across the ACT’s parks estate. The information collected is then benchmarked against national standards to provide a health check on the conservation values of an area.²³⁵
- 5.36 Mr Daniel Iglesias, Executive Branch Manager, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD confirmed this noting that the ecosystem condition score is essentially a natural system scorecard, with ecologists identifying elements that are important or critical to the wellbeing of the environment. The score can provide a useful measure over time, showing if it is improving, declining or remaining stable, so that as land managers they can reflect on future needs for that ecosystem area.²³⁶
- 5.37 Mr Rutledge, EPSDD noted that, in effect, the ecosystem condition score is a star rating where one is poor, two is moderate, three is good and four is excellent.²³⁷

²³³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 147–149.

²³⁴ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 25.

²³⁵ Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 148.

²³⁶ Mr Daniel Iglesias, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 148.

²³⁷ Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 148.

Recommendation 23

5.38 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish more information on ecosystem condition scores and what these mean and publish plans to improve ecosystem condition scores.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

- 5.39 The Committee heard from the Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials on 25 October 2021 about community housing and making more community and church land available through community partnerships.²³⁸
- 5.40 The Minister noted that community housing sits across a number of different portfolios including SLA and the ILRP, however the Government will work closely with community housing providers.²³⁹
- 5.41 The Committee also heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021 about releasing land for the provision of community housing, including access to church land or other sites to address homelessness and affordability issues.²⁴⁰
- 5.42 Mr Ben Ponton, Director-General, EPSDD noted that the strategic planning work includes looking at community housing opportunities, for both new and emerging or existing communities.²⁴¹
- 5.43 Dr Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, Planning and Sustainable Development, EPSDD stated that a number of community housing sites have been released. Since the 2018 ACT Housing Strategy through to July 2021, community housing providers have been offered 287 sites, 26 of these have been accepted. She also noted that to bring the sites to fruition there was a need to build capacity and a better connection with community housing providers.²⁴²

²³⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 128.

²³⁹ Ms Yvette Berry MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 128.

²⁴⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 152–153.

²⁴¹ Mr Ben Ponton, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 152.

²⁴² Dr Erin Brady, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 152.

- 5.44 Ms Bethel Sendaba, Executive Branch Manager, Building Reform, EPSDD outlined that, on top of offering sites, additional incentives for development to reduce costs were being considered. These included things like land tax exemptions, policies around shared equity, partnership models, build to rent and affordability targets.²⁴³

Recommendation 24

- 5.45 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate barriers to community housing partnerships.**

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- 5.46 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about housing affordability in the ACT.²⁴⁴
- 5.47 The Minister noted that affordability is a challenge that will be taken into account as part of the planning review, levers utilised by the Government include block release and a wide choice of housing from large single blocks to apartments. He indicated however that the biggest effect on affordability was Federal Government taxation policies.²⁴⁵ He quoted from a submission by the Reserve Bank of Australia in their submission to an inquiry on this issue:

“Some features of Australia’s tax and transfer system incentivise owner occupation and investing in property, and discourage mobility. This affects the balance of demand and supply in the housing and rental markets, and may contribute to affordability pressures for some.

Housing prices have risen relative to income in many, but not all, areas. At the same time interest rates have been low for a prolonged period, which has lowered the cost of debt service for borrowers. For those looking to purchase a property, the combination of low interest rates, low income growth, and high median housing prices have made it harder to save a deposit.”²⁴⁶

- 5.48 Mr Ben Ponton, Director-General, EPSDD reinforced that there are a range of levers in relation to affordability, not all are under the control of the ACT Government, and not all levers are about planning; for example interest rates.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Ms Bethel Sendaba, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 153.

²⁴⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 153-155.

²⁴⁵ Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 155.

²⁴⁶ Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 161.

²⁴⁷ Mr Ben Ponton, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 155.

- 5.49 The Government also has in place a scheme where property owners are incentivised to forgo some rental income in exchange for having their land tax waived. There are two community housing providers currently operating the scheme: HomeGround, operated by Community Housing Canberra (CHC); and Rentwell, operated by Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Canberra.²⁴⁸

BUILD TO RENT

- 5.50 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about housing affordability and build to rent schemes in the ACT.²⁴⁹
- 5.51 Mr Ben Green, Executive Group Manager, Development and Implementation, EPSDD noted that there is often confusion between affordable build to rent and build to rent as a product.²⁵⁰ This was reinforced by Ms Bethel Sendaba, Executive Branch Manager, Building Reform, EPSDD who noted that Government can release land that is designated build to rent with an affordability requirement as part of the project.²⁵¹

AFFORDABLE HOME PURCHASE SCHEME

- 5.52 The Committee heard from Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials about the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.²⁵²
- 5.53 Mr John Dietz, Chief Executive Officer, SLA noted that the scheme is for people with a particular income threshold and approximately 15 percent of developments on average are allocated to the scheme. It is for eligible people who are in a particular income threshold and have not owned property who can then purchase through a ballot process.²⁵³
- 5.54 Ms Jessica Hillcrest, Program Manager, Built Form and Divestment – Housing Choice, EPSDD noted for the *Affordable Home Purchase Scheme* that:
- “we sell blocks of land, where there are housing targets in place, we apply requirements to those sites for a certain number of dwellings to be sold at certain price thresholds. Those dwellings are sold to eligible buyers who meet the criteria, and we provide an opportunity to match the eligible buyers with properties that meet their needs. We provide offerings through a ballot process, which gives eligible buyers the

²⁴⁸ *Debates Weekly Hansard*, [12 May 2021](#), p 1400.

²⁴⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 159–162.

²⁵⁰ Mr Ben Green MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 160.

²⁵¹ Ms Bethel Sendaba, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 161.

²⁵² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, pp 126–127.

²⁵³ Mr John Dietz, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 126.

chance to identify whether those properties suit them. The fixed price thresholds are consistent with what is established for us by EPSDD in accordance with the housing strategy.”²⁵⁴

- 5.55 Ms Jessica Hillcrest, Program Manager, Built Form and Divestment – Housing Choice, EPSDD also, noted other initiatives they are looking at in the affordable housing space include shared equity and build to rent.²⁵⁵

Recommendation 25

- 5.56 The Committee recommends that, given the stated response that Federal tax settings around Capital Gains Tax and negative gearing are contributing to high housing prices in Canberra, that the ACT Government lobby Federal Parliament to change these tax settings.**

Recommendation 26

- 5.57 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government identify all factors within the ACT's control for increasing housing affordability as part of the planning review process and make these identified options public.**

Recommendation 27

- 5.58 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider all methods including additional advertising for increasing the uptake of the affordable "Rentwell" and "HomeGround" programs to increase the supply of affordable rentals.**

ACCOUNTABILITY TARGETS FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS (DA)

- 5.59 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about the accountability indicators for processing DA.²⁵⁶
- 5.60 [Budget Statements E](#) sets out the accountability indicators for Output 1.1—Development application processing times as:
- an average of 45 working days; and

²⁵⁴ Ms Jessica Hillcrest, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 126–127.

²⁵⁵ Ms Jessica Hillcrest, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 127.

²⁵⁶ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, pp 162-164.

- a median of 30 working days.²⁵⁷

5.61 The Minister noted that there has been additional staff processing DAs to work on the backlog, which has dramatically reduced.²⁵⁸

5.62 Mr Ben Ponton, Director-General, EPSDD noted that there are a number of factors influencing the outcomes of the accountability targets including more complex applications being received due to the 70 per cent urban infill target rather than greenfield developments. In addition to this the increased complexity has meant DAs are not always completed correctly, the Directorate has been working with industry to improve the quality of applications received.²⁵⁹

5.63 Mr George Cilliers, Executive Group Manager, Statutory Planning, EPSDD noted that with the additional resources there has been improved operational benefits, especially in relation to the integrity of decisions and improved outcomes.²⁶⁰ He provided the following statistics for 2020-21:

- 876 DA received;
- The average processing time was 61 days; and
- The median timeframe was 42 days.²⁶¹

Recommendation 28

5.64 The Committee recommends that EPSDD has adequate resourcing to meet accountability indicators for processing times on DAs.

TREE CANOPY

5.65 The Committee heard from Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials on 25 October 2021 about the commitments to the 30 per cent tree canopy and 30 per cent permeable surfaces.

²⁵⁷ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements E: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate](#), p 24.

²⁵⁸ Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 162.

²⁵⁹ Mr Ben Ponton, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 163.

²⁶⁰ Mr George Cilliers, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 163.

²⁶¹ Mr George Cilliers, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 164.

- 5.66 Mr Rob Thorman, Program Manager, Program Solutions – Sustainability and Release Coordination, SLA stated that much of the 30 per cent target would be met in the public domain through our street trees, public parks and protected remnant vegetation. He also drew the Committee’s attention to the joint project with EPSDD on the *Living Infrastructure Policy*, and also the recently published *Climate Wise Garden Designs* book to assist residents in increasing canopy in their own gardens.²⁶²
- 5.67 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021 about the tree canopy in the ACT.²⁶³
- 5.68 Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, Environment, Water and Emissions Reduction, EPSDD stated that the current figure for canopy across the urban footprint is 22.5 per cent.²⁶⁴

Recommendation 29

- 5.69 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on planting to ensure new suburbs will be able to achieve 30% tree canopy cover over time.**

HOUSING STRATEGY REPORTING

- 5.70 The Committee heard from Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and officials about Output 6.3 ACT Housing Strategy.
- 5.71 The Minister stated that the strategy “was never meant to be a document that just sits and gathers dust, it was always going to change and be innovative and adjust, depending on the circumstances around us.”²⁶⁵
- 5.72 The Minister also noted in relation to questions being out of scope for the session that:
- “this seems to happen with every one of our estimates hearings with regard to the strategy, Housing ACT and the inability to make them combine. There is always a lot of confusion. I think we will have to put on notice for future estimates or hearings that we need to work out something better in this space, because it is obviously not working very well for any of us.”²⁶⁶

²⁶² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, pp 121–122.

²⁶³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 159–162.

²⁶⁴ Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 165.

²⁶⁵ Ms Yvette Berry MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 136.

²⁶⁶ Ms Yvette Berry MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, p 131.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

- 5.73 The Committee spent considerable time in the session on the ACT Housing Strategy trying to determine exactly what questions could be asked, many questions which Members asked were identified as being out of scope. The Committee commented that to avoid confusion in the future that sessions be rolled together so that all officials can appear together to answer questions on this area of the budget.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 25 October 2021, pp. 131.

6 CHIEF MINISTER, TREASURY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

6.1 On 28 October 2021 the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials appeared before the Committee to answer questions about:

- Output Class 2: Access Canberra—Output 2.1: Access Canberra.

ACCESS CANBERRA (2.1)

6.2 Output 2.1 in [Budget Statements B](#) states that: “Through the Access Canberra output the Directorate contributes to the economic growth and vibrancy of the ACT community and helps protect its citizens and the community through compliance, licensing and regulation.”²⁶⁸

MATTERS CONSIDERED

6.3 The Committee discussed the following matters during the appearance by the Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials on 28 October 2021 in relation to planning, development, land and lease regulation:

- planning complaints;²⁶⁹
- unit title assessment reports;²⁷⁰
- e-conveyancing;²⁷¹
- shopping centre leases;²⁷²
- building dispute resolution;²⁷³ and
- staffing for planning regulation.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ [ACT Government Budget 2021-22, Budget Statements B: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#), p 28.

²⁶⁹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 172.

²⁷⁰ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 173.

²⁷¹ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 174.

²⁷² *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 174.

²⁷³ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 176.

²⁷⁴ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 176–177.

KEY ISSUES

PLANNING COMPLAINTS

- 6.4 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about planning complaints received by Access Canberra.²⁷⁵
- 6.5 Mr Nick Lhuede, Executive Branch Manager, Construction, Utilities and Environment Protection, Access Canberra provided statistics of 866 complaints received in 2021, a broad breakdown on issues include:
- untidy blocks (232 complaints);
 - unapproved structure (230 complaints);
 - fencing/boundaries (72 complaints);
 - privacy;
 - safety;
 - business; and
 - abandoned blocks.²⁷⁶
- 6.6 Mr Lhuede, Access Canberra stated in relation to compliance that they had 14 show cause notices for controlled activity orders, from these seven controlled activity orders were issued. The compliance model for Access Canberra is a process of engagement, education and enforcement. Issues can be resolved with direct engagement with citizens in the first instance to achieve compliance. Most issues will be resolved this way, enforcement is the last step in the process.²⁷⁷

Recommendation 30

- 6.7 The Committee recommends that noting only 14 show cause and seven controlled activity orders issued from 866 complaints, the ACT Government advise whether good outcomes are being achieved in compliance and that Access Canberra create and distribute a survey to assess satisfaction with the service from complainants.**

²⁷⁵ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 172–173.

²⁷⁶ Mr Nick Lhuede, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 172.

²⁷⁷ Mr Nick Lhuede, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 172.

SHOPPING CENTRE LEASES

- 6.8 The Committee heard from Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management and officials about complaints in relation to undeveloped shopping centres with leases in place.²⁷⁸
- 6.9 Nick Lhuede, Executive Branch Manager, Construction, Utilities and Environment Protection, Access Canberra stated that for lease compliance cases, there are 11 open cases in relation to business compliance. And in 2020-21 there were 62 business-related lease compliance cases.²⁷⁹
- 6.10 The Minister noted that, whilst there may be a lease in place, not being present at the lease does not mean that they are in breach of their lease conditions, we work with the lease owners to get the best outcomes for Canberrans. We are also looking at what policies can be put in place to ensure commercial areas are as vibrant as possible.²⁸⁰

Recommendation 31

- 6.11 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should explore options to ensure commercial lease conditions are met and enforced and that regulators have the adequate tools to ensure that land is being used efficiently and not "land banked".**

Jo Clay MLA

Chair

12 November 2021

²⁷⁸ *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, pp 174–176.

²⁷⁹ Mr Nick Lhuede, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 174.

²⁸⁰ Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence*, 28 October 2021, p 175.

APPENDIX A - WITNESSES

15 OCTOBER 2021

Community day

- Fiona Carrick, President, Woden Valley Community Council
- Peter Elford, President, Gungahlin Community Council
- Ryan Hemsley, Interim Spokesman, Molonglo Valley Community Forum
- Adina Cirson, Australian Capital Territory Executive Director, ACT Property Council
- Michael Hopkins, Chief Executive Officer, Master Builders Association

18 OCTOBER 2021

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services
- Alison Playford, Director-General, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCSD)
- Ben McHugh, Deputy Director-General, TCCSD
- Jim Corrigan, Deputy Director-General, TCCSD
- Vanessa Little, Acting Chief Operating Officer, TCCSD
- Andrew Pedersen, Chief Financial Officer, TCCSD
- Ken Marshall, Acting Executive Group Manager, TCCSD
- Bruce Fitzgerald, Acting Executive Group Manager, TCCSD
- Craig Jordan, Executive Group Manager, TCCSD
- Judith Sturman, Executive Group Manager, TCCSD
- Jeremy Smith, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Michael Trushell, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Stephen Alegria, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Geoffrey Davidson, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- John Bowdery, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Petra Crowe, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Ian McGlinn, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Jo Dawson, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- David Pryce, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra
- Neal Guthrie, Chair, Cemeteries and Crematoria Authority Governing Board

Major Projects Canberra Directorate

- Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services
- Duncan Edgehill, Chief Projects Officer, Major Projects Canberra (MPC)
- Shaun Strachan, Deputy Chief Projects Officer, MPC
- Damon Hall, Executive Group Manager, Project Development and Support, MPC

- David Doctor, Executive Branch Manager, Technical Development, MPC
- Nikki Pulford, Executive Branch Manager, Ministerial, Governance and Corporate Support, MPC
- Wayne Ford, Project Director, CIT Woden Campus Development, MPC
- Ashley Cahif, Project Director, Light Rail, MPC
- Tania Navarro, Senior Director, Communications and Engagement, MPC

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister
- Malcolm Snow, Chief Executive Officer, City Renewal Authority
- Craig Gillman, Chief Operating Officer, City Renewal Authority
- John Dietz, Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency
- Irena Sharp, Development Director, Suburban Land Agency

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

- Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Sport and Recreation
- Alison Playford, Director-General, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCSD)
- Jim Corrigan, Deputy Director-General, TCCSD
- Stephen Algeria, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD
- Jeremy Smith, Executive Branch Manager, TCCSD

22 OCTOBER 2021

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction
- Ben Ponton, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)
- Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, EPSDD
- Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, EPSDD
- Bethel Sendaba, Executive Branch Manager, EPSDD
- Ben Green, Executive Group Manager, EPSDD
- Lea Durie, Executive Group Manager, EPSDD
- Nick Lhuede, Executive Group Manager/Construction Occupations Registrar, EPSDD

Major Projects Canberra Directorate

- Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction
- Duncan Edgehill, Chief Projects Officer, Major Projects Canberra (MPC)
- Damon Hall, Executive Group Manager, Project Development and Support, MPC
- Adrian Piani, Chief Engineer/Executive Group Manager, Infrastructure Delivery Partners, MPC
- Di Stewart, Project Director, Cladding, MPC
- Tania Navarro, Senior Director, Communications and Engagement, MPC
- Nikki Pulford, Executive Branch Manager, Ministerial, Governance and Corporate Support, MPC

25 OCTOBER 2021

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate – Suburban Land Agency

- Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
- John Dietz, Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency
- Neil Bulless, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency
- Tom Gordon, Executive Director, Suburban Land Agency
- Nicholas Holt, Executive Director, Suburban Land Agency
- Joseph Lee, Chief Financial Officer, Suburban Land Agency
- Sally Gilbert, Executive Branch Manager, Suburban Land Agency
- Jessica Hillcrest, Program Manager, Suburban Land Agency
- Rob Thorman, Program Manager, Suburban Land Agency
- Chris Webb, Program Manager, Suburban Land Agency
- Simon Tennent, Development Director, Suburban Land Agency
- Irena Sharp, Development Director, Suburban Land Agency
- Mayumi Piper, Senior Director, Suburban Land Agency

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
- Ben Ponton, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)
- Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, EPSDD
- Bethel Sendaba, Executive Branch Manager, EPSDD

28 OCTOBER 2021

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management Development
- Ben Ponton, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)
- Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, EPSDD
- Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, EPSDD
- Carolyn O'Neill, Executive Group Manager, EPSDD
- Daniel Iglesias, Executive Branch Manager, EPSDD
- George Cilliers, Executive Group Manager, EPSDD
- Ben Green, Executive Group Manager, EPSDD
- Lea Durie, Executive Branch Manager, EPSDD
- Bethel Sendaba, Executive Branch Manager, EPSDD

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management Development
- Ben Ponton, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

- David Pryce, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra
- Margaret McKinnon, Chief Operating Officer, Access Canberra
- Nick Lhuede, Executive Group Manager, Access Canberra
- Radmila Andric, Senior Director, Strategic Business and Trade Inspectorates, Access Canberra

APPENDIX B – QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE/ QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions taken on Notice 18 October 2021

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
1	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Waste education funding	27.10.21
2	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Current driver workforce	27.10.21
3	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Road accident history	28.10.21
4	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Light Rail Stage 1 Embedded Emissions	28.10.21
5	18.10.21	Braddock	EPSDD—CRA and SLA	Urban infill—70% target for new housing	29.10.21
6	18.10.21	Cain	EPSDD—CRA and SLA	Board conflicts of interest	28.10.21
7	18.10.21	Clay	EPSDD—CRA and SLA	Budget spent on community consultation	28.10.21
8	18.10.21	Clay	EPSDD—CRA and SLA	CRA staff qualifications	28.10.21
9	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Decrease in the sportsground maintenance budget	1.11.21
10	18.10.21	Davis	TCCSD	Formula for identifying grounds for upgrade	1.11.21
11	18.10.21	Milligan	TCCSD	Cost of shipping containers	1.11.21

Questions taken on Notice 28 October 2021

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
12	28.10.21	Cain	EPSDD	Indicative Land Release Program	4.11.21
13	28.10.21	Clay	EPSDD	Complaint resolution	9.11.21
14	28.10.21	Clay	EPSDD	Shopping centre leases	9.11.21

Questions on Notice

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
1	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Active Travel Office	3.11.21
2	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Bus on time running	1.11.21
3	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Buses supporting new bus network	1.11.21
4	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Charnwood shops	3.11.21
5	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Woden CIT live music	Answered in public hearings ECI 29/10/21
6	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Consultation on street tree removals	1.11.21
7	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	FTEs for path network audit and maintenance	1.11.21
8	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Garden City Cycle Route	1.11.21
9	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Growing the public transport network	1.11.21
10	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Library collection	1.11.21

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
11	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Major Projects Canberra staff	Redirected to PAC
12	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	New public transport ticketing system	1.11.21
13	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Northside bus depot	1.11.21
14	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Whitlam bus service	1.11.21
15	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Woden bus depot and electric bus procurement	1.11.21
16	18.10.21	Pettersson	TCCSD	Waste and recycling	1.11.21
17	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Aranda & Kaleen cricket facilities	4.11.21
18	18.10.21	Clay	TCCSD	Gender impact assessments	5.11.21
19	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Ticketing system OK	3.11.21
20	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Raising London Circuit	Outstanding
21	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Bus driver workforce	4.11.21
22	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Bus services including schools	3.11.21
23	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Bus services new suburbs	3.11.21
24	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	Bus vehicle assets	5.11.21
25	18.10.21	Parton	TCCSD	CSO payments	1.11.21
26	18.10.21	Kikkert	TCCSD	William Hovell Drive consultation	8.11.21
27	18.10.21	Kikkert	TCCSD	William Hovell Drive noise study	8.11.21
28	18.10.21	Lee	TCCSD	Campbell shops	3.11.21

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
29	18.10.21	Cain	EPSDD—SLA	Suburban Land Agency	Outstanding
30	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Crematorium capacity	4.11.21
31	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Southern Memorial Park	4.11.21
32	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Local shops	3.11.21
33	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Fadden playground	4.11.21
34	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Abandoned vehicles	4.11.21
35	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Mowing	4.11.21
36	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	New libraries	4.11.21
37	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	New RSPCS	4.11.21
38	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Waste and recycling	4.11.21
39	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Food and organic waste	4.11.21
40	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Green waste	3.11.21
41	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Single use plastic	4.11.21
42	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	GPT	4.11.21
43	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	FOGO trial	4.11.21
44	18.10.21	Lawder	TCCSD	Waste sensitive urban design	4.11.21
45	28.10.21	Lee	EPSDD	Hackett horse paddocks	4.11.21
46	28.10.21	Cain	EPSDD	ACT Land and Property Reports	9.11.21
47	22.10.21	Parton	EPSDD	Building reform	5.11.21
48	28.10.21	Clay	EPSDD	Resources in the context of planning review	Outstanding

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
49	28.10.21	Pettersson	EPSDD	Parks and Conservation	Outstanding
50	28.10.21	Kikkert	EPSDD	EOI planning principles	Outstanding
51	28.10.21	Kikkert	EPSDD	Kippax Expansion SLA Handover	Outstanding
52	28.10.21	Kikkert	EPSDD	Kippax Expansion two-stage sales process	Outstanding
53	28.10.21	Kikkert	EPSDD	Kippax Expansion zoning, land release and residential dwellings	Outstanding