



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Jo Clay MLA on 18 July 2023: Mr Ben Ponton took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Uncorrected Proof Transcript 18 July 2023 [PAGE 27-28]]

In relation to: Government Commitment for New Housing Developments

MS CLAY: On budget statement E, page 12, thought I would lead with that because people usually like to look it up, strategic objective one, and I will read it out, is to deliver a compact, efficient and sustainable city and a key focus is limiting urban spread and increasing density by building up to 70 per cent of new housing within Canberra's existing footprint and along major transport routes whilst supporting housing diversity for greater choice. Minister, can you tell me, is it your understanding and the directorate's understanding, that 70 per cent target, is that an aspirational target or is that a minimum mandatory floor that government is meeting?

Mr Gentleman: That was a target set in the 2018 planning strategy.

MS CLAY: I am actually surprised to hear that. So you do not consider that to be an actual government commitment to deliver 70 per cent of our housing within our infills?

Mr Gentleman: Yes, it is, a planning strategy was agreed to.

MS CLAY: Is it a target, is it an aspirational goal, or is that actually a minimum commitment that you will deliver at least 70 per cent?

Mr Gentleman: It is a commitment we made during the 2018 planning strategy and it is rolling out in our forward plans.

MS CLAY: Great. So why have we got it phrased in here as up to 70 per cent rather than saying at least 70 per cent?

Mr Gentleman: Well, I was looking at the page that you referenced and I cannot see it, so you said?

MS CLAY: Budget statement E page 12. I am referencing strategic objective one.

Mr Gentleman: I see what you are saying. The 70/30 was set in the 2018 planning strategy and of course we are moving forward to deliver on that announcement.

MS CLAY: Sure, but in here it says up to 70 per cent and up to 70 per cent might be 20, or 30, or 57 per cent—

Mr Gentleman: I see what you are saying.

MS CLAY: —whereas I thought the commitment in our parliamentary and governing agreement was at least 70 per cent which might be 70 or 80 or 90, they are quite different numbers, up to and at least are opposite numbers actually.

Mr Gentleman: I think if you are looking at this you need to understand that whilst government is delivering quite a bit of that strategy, indeed the private sector is as well.

MS CLAY: Sure, but can you just tell me what is the government commitment, is the government commitment to deliver at least 70 per cent, or is the government commitment to only deliver up to 70 per cent?

Mr Gentleman: 70 per cent in our current footprint and 30 per cent in Greenfields.

MS CLAY: At least or up to?

Mr Ponton: Why do I not take that on notice to check what the planning strategy says and I suspect Dr Brady has the exact words, but I suspect those words have come from the planning strategy, and if they are not aligned with the planning strategy then it is something that we could certainly have a closer look at. Dr Brady.

Dr Brady: Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, Planning and Sustainable Development. I have read and acknowledge the statement. The wording in the planning strategy was up to but the parliamentary agreement confirmed 70 per cent. So the wording in the parliamentary agreement is of a higher level of commitment in many respects because the planning strategy preceded that. So, our approach is that the PAGA agreement has committed more firmly to the 70 per cent and potentially above.

MS CLAY: So can you—

Dr Brady: Yes, we can take that on notice if you like to confirm the wording.

MS CLAY: I am not interested in the wording, what I am interested in is, is government committed to at least 70 per cent or is government only committed to up to 70 per cent, and I will go on with the rest of my question if that might help. So we have actually had a look at what amount of our new land releases were delivering infill versus brownfields, Greenfields versus brownfields, and what we are looking at is between 2016 and 2021 we have only seen around 57 per cent delivered as infill. So that is—up to 70 per cent, that is nowhere near at least 70 per cent. So I am just trying to find out, because you guys set the ILRP and all of our land release and this is pretty key in our district strategy and our planning review, can you just tell me is the government committed to delivering at least 70 per cent or has that commitment now been watered down to just doing up to 70 per cent.

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

The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 notes that the ACT Government will “support sustainable urban growth by working towards delivering up to 70 per cent of new housing within our existing urban footprint, and by concentrating development in areas located close to the city centre, town and group centres and along key transit corridors”.

The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) for the 10th ACT Legislative Assembly requires “at least 70 per cent of new housing development to be within Canberra's existing urban footprint, with an ambition to increase this share, in the context of an overall increase to the number of dwelling sites released over the coming decade”.

The ACT Government is committed to delivering in line with the PaGA, which requires *at least 70 per cent of new housing development to be within Canberra's existing urban footprint, with an ambition to increase this share.*

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature:



Date: 26/7/2023

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