



# Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–24

## Answer to question taken on notice

---

Asked by: Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to: Average time taken to process builders' licences in the last 12 months, including a breakdown by percentile.

Hearing: **18 February 2025**

Uncorrected Proof Transcript: **18 February 2025, pg 23-24**

Transcript provided: **21 February 2025**

Answer Due: **28 February 2025**

Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development took on notice the following question(s):

MR EMERSON: I have a question about building licenses. What is the average turnaround time? I have heard from someone who has been waiting months to get a license. What is the average turnaround time from when someone applies for a license to receive one?

Mr Steel: Thank you. I will hand over to you.

Mr Lhuede: Thank you. I will just change my glasses. Access Canberra, to give some context, a construction – for construction licenses, and we do actually also issue other licenses, such as white cards and high-risk work licenses. Has about 62 license classes and about 162 pathways for endorsement. And I only say that to paint a picture that there is no single answer.

For relatively straight forward licensing applications, the turnaround time is around about four to six weeks. However, for more complex licenses, such as a Class A Builders License, and that is the license you are required to build a medium high rise, Class 2 to 9, that can be up to six to eight months.

We have had an increase in license applications. And we also have a large number actually applying from interstate. In fact we did a bit of work a couple of – well, earlier last year, to sort of try and understand the extent of that problem, and we did find quite a large proportion of license applications were coming from interstate.

So what we have done there is just to put in place – and just actually we notified people last week, a triaging system, whereas we will give priority to ACT and region license applications. And applicants, and this is in builders' licenses – and applicants who are showing evidence that they propose to work in the territory. That could be a lease, or it could be a contract or tender. And that is just to try to bring down that timeframe, particularly around the construction licenses.

## OFFICIAL

But they are complex licenses. We have an evidentiary requirement, but also examinations and assessments that we undertake with license holders.

MR EMERSON: Is there any sense of benchmarking against other jurisdictions? Six to eight months seems like a very long time, especially given the level of construction we are hoping we will happen in the ACT, to address housing crisis and so on. Is there work being done to reduce that? I understand the triaging objective. But that is a long time for work to be stuck in a process.

Mr Lhuede: It can be a long time for those licenses. And it is through that triaging process that we are looking to bring that down. Now that has only been, as I said, introduced recently. So we are not seeing the results of that. But the intent is absolutely to reduce that longer timeframe, particularly for the more complex builders' licenses.

MR EMERSON: Would you be able to provide, on notice, just that six to eight months is kind of the average turnaround time, an average over the last 12 months?

Mr Lhuede: Yes.

MR EMERSON: Any – for the licenses that have been delivered but as licenses specifically?

Mr Lhuede: Yes, so for—

MR EMERSON: What the turnaround time is?

Mr Lhuede: Sorry, yes. Yes, I can look at providing that on notice in terms of builder's license classes and turnaround time.

MR EMERSON: That would be great. A bit of a breakdown. Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Yes, excellent. Thank you.

MR COCKS: A supplementary on that.

THE CHAIR: Briefly.

MR COCKS: Just on the triage, I can see a potential issue if you are triaging a simple and straight forward, that those that are not simple or straight forward take longer because they are waiting in the queue for longer, have you considered that risk? What are you doing about it? And in terms of the data, Mr Emerson has asked for, perhaps you could also provide a bit of a breakdown by percentile, rather than just for the average.

Mr Lhuede: Yes.

MR COCKS: It will provide a better picture of what is going on.

Mr Lhuede: Yes, I will just clarify, in terms of the triaging, it was absolutely focused on builders' licenses, and A, B, and C licenses. So it was targeted at the harder licenses. But it also reflected that the work that we did, it was about 4,700 active builders licenses in the ACT. About 1,600 were from interstate, and most of those do not work here. That is the evidence we found.

So people from other jurisdictions, quite legally are looking at mutual recognition arrangements to get a license and through mutual recognition operation in their home jurisdiction. That is what we

OFFICIAL

are quite specifically aiming to target with that triage process, is builders' licenses and to bring those times down. But we can provide details as asked.

**Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Between 1 January 2024 and 20 February 2025, Access Canberra processed 334 builder licence applications. The average turnaround time for these applications was 2.01 months. Turnaround time is the time between when the application for the licence is received by Access Canberra and the issuing of the licence.

Below is a breakdown of licence applications processed by class of builder licence between 1 January 2024 and 20 February 2025.

Builder Class	Applications
Class A	183
Class B	31
Class C	112
Class D	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>334</b>

Additionally, the following table is a breakdown of the builder licence application turnaround timeframes by class and percentile between 1 January 2024 and 20 February 2025.

Builder Class	< 1 month	2 months	3 months	> 4 months
Class A	68.31% (125)	25.14% (46)	3.28% (6)	3.28% (6)
Class B	51.61% (16)	16.13% (5)	6.45% (2)	25.81% (8)
Class C	65.18% (73)	8.04% (9)	4.46% (5)	22.32% (25)
Class D	75% (6)	12.5% (1)	-	12.5% (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.87% (220)</b>	<b>18.26% (61)</b>	<b>3.89% (13)</b>	<b>11.98% (40)</b>

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services

Signature: 

Date: 28/2/25

By Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development