



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Environment
and Planning

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Planning (Missing Middle Housing) Amendment Bill 2026

Submission number: 004

Submitter: Planning Institute Australia (NSW and ACT)

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Standing Committee on Environment and Planning
ACT Legislative Assembly
LACommitteeEnvironment@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Committee,

RE: PIA submission on the Planning (Missing Middle Housing) Amendment Bill 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Planning (Missing Middle Housing) Amendment Bill 2026. **PIA is supportive of the proposed changes in the interests of a user-friendly planning system and proportionate assessment of subdivision and lease variations.**

This submission is aligned with PIA's previous submissions on the 2025 [Missing Middle Planning Reforms](#) and related [Inquiry](#) by the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning. Both of those submissions supported the aims of encouraging compact development forms and widening housing choices for Canberrans. Our recommendations centred on the need for coordinated infrastructure planning – linked to District Strategies – to give effect to Territory Plan amendments. **Changes to zoning and development control alone will not equip places for sustained growth.** PIA continues to emphasise the link between strategic planning and housing delivery.

Comments on proposed changes

1. Amended definition of subdivision development proposal

PIA supports changes to improve usability and embed a risk-weighted approach. Small subdivisions excluded from the revised definition can be adequately addressed through a standard development assessment.

2. Entitlement for secondary dwellings

Automatic secondary dwelling entitlements on residential leases that allow the use of land for single dwellings are supported. PIA notes that separate lease variation assessments for these proposals are unnecessary, especially considering that they are already exempt from the lease variation charge (LVC).

3. Exempt development declarations for Crown lease variations

Full assessment of lease variations for matters such as an increase in the number of dwellings is duplicative and can be reduced – on the condition that strategic plans are given effect at the earlier plan-making stage. Whether a development proposal is “*suitable in the context of the land and surrounding area*” should be overwhelmingly determined by its alignment with the strategic vision, given effect through the Territory Plan. Reduced site-level assessment is only ‘proportionate’ to the risks and opportunities involved if they are managed earlier in the planning structure.

PIA supports limiting lease variation assessment to 10-days and only basic criteria such as permissibility and access, on the basis that strategic plans are given effect in the Territory Plan. **PIA recommends that land use and infrastructure planning be progressed for the ‘change areas’ identified in ACT District Strategies.**

Ongoing role of strategic planning

Infrastructure is part of housing delivery

The current Bill and recent Territory Plan Amendments are valuable in encouraging a wider range of housing types, but are only one part of the planning and delivery of healthy, compact, walkable communities. Transport, public domain and a mixture of other land uses must all be catered for at the Territory, District and neighbourhood scales.

The quality and completeness of supporting infrastructure links to whether housing permitted under the new planning controls is attractive, feasible and ultimately built.

Amenity, infrastructure and housing delivery are therefore closely linked and should be coordinated to realise planning aims.

The intersection of infrastructure and development points to the ongoing role of strategic planning in the ACT. Strategic plans describe how infrastructure will be focused to support housing, economic and social needs, providing a signal for housing developers.

As PIA noted in past submissions on the Missing Middle Planning Reforms, the current ACT District Strategies correctly state that detailed planning should be undertaken for the change areas they identify. This remains a missing step to maximise the delivery of medium-density housing and the quality of places where it is built across Canberra.

Value capture is fair and efficient

Value capture mechanisms, such as the LVC, are also an important tool of strategic planning – both for reducing wasteful land speculation and recouping a portion of the land value uplift conferred through infrastructure and upzoning. This ensures that there is a sustainable funding source for the infrastructure needed to make development attractive and precincts successful. PIA is supportive to working with the ACT Government on improvements to the LVC to make it fair and predictable for development proponents.

All PIA submissions are available on our [website](#).

For further information please contact our team at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

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