



Inquiry into DPA-04: Missing Middle Housing reform

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: JO CLAY

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: CED - Planning

Hearing: 12 February 2026

In relation to: CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT – GENERAL PROCESS

Question received: 18 February 2026

Answer Due: 25 February 2026

Issues such as private open space, tree canopies, heat island effects and Water Sensitive Urban Design are issues which are considered on a block-by-block basis. On an individual basis the impacts of the issues outlined above are assessed.

How will the cumulative effects of these individual block developments be determined and taken into account during the assessment of future missing middle housing developments?

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Territory Plan (which must be met for individual developments to be approved) is supported and directly informed by the broader planning framework that compasses the hierarchy of strategic documents, including the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 and the nine District Strategies. These documents provide direction on the issues raised above, many of which are effectively considered at the macro or landscape scale where both privately-leased and public land contribute to the relevant policy objectives.

The primary assessment consideration within the Territory Plan is the assessment outcomes in the district, zone and other policies. These must be met for development approval to be given. The assessment outcomes relevant to the issues listed in the question are:

- Sufficient planting area, canopy trees, deep soil zones and water sensitive urban design measures are provided to enhance living infrastructure, support healthy tree growth and minimise stormwater runoff.
- Urban heat island effects are reduced through limiting impervious surfaces and provision of canopy trees and plants.

The Territory Plan also includes assessment outcomes that require consideration of the broader impacts development may have. These include:

- The proposed use and scale of development are appropriate to the site and zone.
- Adverse impacts of development on surrounding uses (both within a site and on adjoining sites) is minimised and residential amenity protected. This includes between residential uses and between non-residential and residential uses.

Matters such as tree canopy coverage, urban heat island effects and water sensitive urban design are assessed against the assessment outcomes above. Where technical specifications apply, these provide guidance on how the relevant Assessment Outcome could be met. Where a site does not meet a technical specification, consideration is given to how the development meet the assessment outcome in a different way, this may include consideration of how the surrounding area can contribute or be impacted.

Though a development application (DA) seeks approval for a proposed development on a specific site (including where consolidation of blocks is proposed), the *Planning Act 2023* also requires consideration to be given to the suitability of the development in the context of the site and surrounds. This ensures the DA assessment considers the area surrounding the site and how it may impact, or be impacted by, a development proposal.

Please also refer to the response to part (4) of QON 01.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature:



Date: 25/2/26

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Mr Chris Steel MLA