



# **Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027**

## **Answer to question on notice**

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Asked by: Ms Leanne Castley MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Reference: Planning – City and Environment Directorate

Hearing: 24 July 2026

In relation to: Urban Growth Boundary

Question received: 3 August 2026

Answer Due: 10 August 2026

- (1) What are the policy objectives the Government is seeking to achieve with the Urban Growth Boundary?
- (2) What alternative policies were considered for achieving each objective?
- (3) Did the alternatives considered include direct protection of land with identified environmental value; stronger biodiversity and environmental assessment requirements; minimum-density requirements for new greenfield development; infrastructure and transport standards for new urban areas; and development charges reflecting the full infrastructure or environmental costs of expansion;

For each alternative:

- (a) what assessment was undertaken?
  - (b) what were its estimated benefits and costs? and
  - (c) why was it rejected in favour of an Urban Growth Boundary?
- (4) Please provide a list of reports, briefings, options papers and analysis relating to the consideration of alternative policies, including the dates these were provided and which Ministers received them, and whether copies can be provided to Members

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

(1) Consistent with the Assembly resolution of 10 April 2025, the Government is considering an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to provide greater certainty about the long-term extent and location of urban development in the ACT, while balancing future growth needs with environmental protection. The UGB is intended to manage Canberra's future growth by directing development to appropriate locations, promoting a compact and connected city, protecting environmental and agricultural land, and ensuring future housing and employment needs can be accommodated in a sustainable manner.

The principal policy objectives are to:

- Protect areas of environmental value by limiting outward urban expansion into environmentally sensitive land.
- Support a compact and sustainable city by focusing growth within existing urban areas and well-connected centres, improving access to jobs, services and public transport, reducing emissions and infrastructure costs, and protecting biodiversity and environmental values.
- Protect agricultural and rural land and encouraging appropriate agricultural uses.
- Reduce infrastructure costs by focusing growth where infrastructure already exists, limiting the need for major new infrastructure in greenfield areas.
- Provide for the Territory's long-term housing and employment needs through strategic planning for a growing population, while ensuring growth occurs in a managed way that is consistent with environmental constraints and broader land use objectives.
- Create a clear and enduring strategic planning framework for future land use decisions, giving the community, industry and government greater certainty about where urban growth should and should not occur.

(2) No alternatives were considered as the above objectives are consistent with agreed government policy.

(3) Refer to the response provided to question 2.

(4) Refer to the response provided to question 2.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Signature:



Date:

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

10/9/26