



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2025–2026 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2025–2026

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Fiona Carrick MLA

Addressed to: Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

Reference: CED

Hearing: 1 August 2025

In relation to: Urban Planning and Green Space & Biodiversity

Question received: 11 August 2025

Answer Due: 18 August 2025

Urban Planning, Green Space & Biodiversity

- What mapping has been done to identify green corridors in densifying suburbs like Mawson and along the Light Rail Stage 2B corridor?
- Can the government provide a list of cross-portfolio programs and their budgets related to green infrastructure?
- How is the government ensuring that green space is preserved before land is released for development?
- What mechanisms are in place to prevent piecemeal development from undermining ecological connectivity?
- How will the new landscape plan integrate with existing biodiversity strategies and the Conservation Council's network?

Suzanne Orr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- **What mapping has been done to identify green corridors in densifying suburbs like Mawson and along the Light Rail Stage 2B corridor?**

The Urban ACT Ecological Network (Network), which is shown in the District Strategies blue-green map that guides planning and urban development, identifies green spaces and corridors which are important for supporting urban wildlife, while also providing space for recreation, access to nature, urban cooling and other ecosystem services.

The Network identifies core habitats (key areas that support wildlife), and corridor habitats (areas predicted to help wildlife move through the city). Building on this, the Light Rail Stage 2B Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) presents a substantial body of ecological analysis across the area, identifying and mapping areas of native vegetation and endangered ecological communities within the broader corridor. It confirms habitat and movement corridors for key species including the golden sun moth, gang-gang cockatoo, and superb parrot. The EIS also outlines landscape planning principles to support biodiversity and ecological connectivity. This work can be leveraged to inform future planning and development along the corridor.

• Can the government provide a list of cross-portfolio programs and their budgets related to green infrastructure?

- The City and Environment Directorate are funded in FY2025-2026 for a SPOC Senior Ecologist (Urban) of \$177,573 and PO2 Urban Ecologist of \$150,406 for one year to carry out strategic, landscape scale mapping of conservation values across the ACT to inform the development of a Landscape Plan and Planning Strategy.
- Urban Treescapes programs include Shade our Play, Wattle Day celebration, City Renewal Authority (CRA) precinct planting audit, screening of the ACT NoWaste facility on Mugga Lane, and the provision of mulch, logs, and timber to ACT Parks and Conservation Service/Education Directorate/CRA/City Services and Urban Parks and Places Volunteer groups. Urban Treescapes also works with Environment, Heritage and Parks (EHP) to enhance urban ecological outcomes, utilising the EHP Planting and Mowing Advice Map and restoration planting species list developed by the Office of Nature Conservation.
- Urban Treescapes is also working on planting projects with local landcare groups such as the Urban Rivers riparian restoration program, as well as planting trees in streets and parks with a draft budget of \$2,362,000 for planting and watering in 2025-26. An additional \$300,000 has also been allocated to the installation and repair of permeable tree surrounds around public trees in paved environments.
- The Nature in the City: Cooling Your Suburb Grants program (refer <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/policy-programs/nature-in-the-city-cooling-your-suburb-grants#Round-6-projects-2024-25>) supports projects to make urban areas cooler and more resilient to climate change by integrating more plants and natural materials. Four successful projects in Round 6 for 2024-25 received a total of \$152,957 and four successful projects in Round 5 for 2023-24 received a total of \$150,000.
- A variation to PIEP0004829 Medium Density Housing Design Guide (Missing Middle) between the Territory and Urbis Pty Ltd was executed on 24 March 2025, which included provisions for a Living Infrastructure study and associated works. The Adaptation and Resilience Policy team, funded this portion of the works, to the value of \$55,000 inc. GST, through the Action on Climate Change 2023-24 initiative. The Missing Middle Housing Reforms, and specifically the Missing Middle Housing Design Guide, Section 7.1A was informed by this work.

• **How is the government ensuring that green space is preserved before land is released for development?**

- The ACT Government ensures green space preservation through a suite of integrated planning tools and strategies. The ACT Planning Strategy and the District Strategies limit the encroachment of urban development on greenspace and prioritise development within the existing urban footprint, thus safeguarding Canberra's bushland character and preserving access to green space. Other documents like the Living Infrastructure Plan, Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) Guide and the Territory Plan set requirements for tree canopy coverage and deep soil zones in residential developments, ensuring that nature is embedded into urban design from the outset.

• **What mechanisms are in place to prevent piecemeal development from undermining ecological connectivity?**

- Conservation of the connectivity areas, including those identified in the Urban ACT Ecological Network is operationalised through the Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) Guide. It is one of the new elements in ACT's reformed Planning System and introduces new requirements for development application (DA) proponents and assessors. One of the assessment outcomes specific for the Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide is "Biodiversity connectivity is maintained across the landscape", which the proponents are required to address in their DAs.

• **How will the new landscape plan integrate with existing biodiversity strategies and the Conservation Council's network?**

- The ACT Landscape Plan provides an opportunity to consider and integrate strategic conservation, planning and urban development, and climate adaptation objectives for the ACT.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2025–2026

Signature:



Date: 28-8-25

By the A/g Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, Michael Pettersson MLA