



**Submission:**

**Housing Choices Discussion Paper**

**Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development**

**Directorate**

**March 2018**

## About ACTCOSS

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for not-for-profit community organisations, people living with disadvantage and low-income citizens of the Territory.

ACTCOSS is a member of the nationwide COSS network, made up of each of the state and territory Councils and the national body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

ACTCOSS' vision is to live in a fair and equitable community that respects and values diversity, human rights and sustainability and promotes justice, equity, reconciliation and social inclusion.

The membership of the Council includes the majority of community based service providers in the social welfare area, a range of community associations and networks, self-help and consumer groups and interested individuals.

ACTCOSS advises that this document may be publicly distributed, including by placing a copy on our website.

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## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this paper on Housing Choices in the ACT.

The foundation for a decent life is affordable, accessible, safe housing with security of tenure. The ACT Government recognised this in the ACT Labor and ACT Greens Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th ACT Legislative Assembly – please refer [Attachment A](#).

In this term of government ACTCOSS expects investment and planning reforms that will deliver the scale of growth of housing supply needed in the lowest cost end of the market, including both growth in public housing stock in line with population growth as well as growth of other housing options for low-income renters not eligible for public housing.

In addition to the areas identified by the paper, we would also note that drivers for housing choice include incomes, mobility, proximity to transport and social connections.

Housing choice needs to be about more than densification but ensuring that new development is accompanied by adequate social and community infrastructure, adequate greenspace and, above all, that it delivers more affordable housing within the reach of people in the lower income deciles.

Proximity to transport, community services, spaces and healthcare also need to be reconsidered in the use of rezoning. We cannot assume that we can build it and they will come.

ACTCOSS supports additional densification provided it opens up more housing choice and affordable housing in Canberra, but we do so with some important caveats – especially the need for attention to building quality and safety as well as a curatorial approach that creates communities with adequate social and community infrastructure, greenspace and community development resources to ensure the development of vibrant and harmonious communities.

ACTCOSS notes that the ability to exercise housing choice in Canberra is primarily constrained by high rents, land costs and a lack of viable options for people in the lowest two income quintiles, especially in private rental.

Some groups of people have very limited housing choices due to a combination of a lack of affordable housing, access to finance and a lack of suitable built form.

Some people consider housing choice in the context of other factors such as the need to sustain social, family and community connectedness. Other people experience a lack of housing choice through their existing housing becoming unsuitable over time and difficulties with locating accessible housing.

Community and public housing need to continue to be part of the housing choice mix in Canberra and we need additional community housing capacity to manage consistent failure in the private rental market.

Public housing continues to play an important role in Canberra; we support the growth of public housing and would not support any reduction to security of tenure for public housing tenants.

## **Diversity and location**

Section 4.1 the Housing Choices paper canvasses a range of options including rezoning in greenspace areas and in the outer suburbs.

ACTCOSS notes that housing choice and rezoning for residential needs to encompass a diversity of choices which meet the personal and economic circumstances of individuals with considerations including proximity to transport, employment, childcare, education and community services.

We agree with the Women's Centre for Health Matters who have told us that choice, densification and location need to be seen as interrelated and that there are risks in creating isolated communities which cluster large numbers of people on the fringes of Canberra away from social and community supports without consideration to transport disadvantage or basic services like healthcare.

## **Densification**

ACTCOSS welcomes the opportunity for a community discussion on the types of housing, densities, greenspace, and social and community infrastructure required for the future of Canberra.

Changes to the Territory Plan are needed to facilitate better utilisation of available land in greenfields, infill and renewal sites.

These changes would need to ensure urban infill and densification:

- acknowledges the existing neighbourhood and social fabric, and is of high quality design and construction

- provides access to urban infill sites for community housing organisations and community housing developers
- addresses the gap between supply and demand for different housing types by increasing the diversity of housing form, including accessibility, work on Universal Design and size (e.g. micro-units).

ACTCOSS broadly supports additional densification provided it includes development which is purposed towards broadening the range of affordable housing options in Canberra.

Densification also needs to be accompanied with adequate set asides for social and community infrastructure plus greenspace.

We note that section 6.5 of the parliamentary agreement includes a commitment to:

Roll out micro parks in urban areas and establish an ‘adopt a park’ scheme to increase amenity and usage of local open spaces, and work with the community and private sector to reduce the heat island effect in urban areas, expand the urban and street shade canopy, and replace ageing trees;

We support the idea that densified communities need to be designed with a curatorial approach that includes these elements at the planning phase.

This should include access to community facilities, meeting rooms, places where young people can play and gather without spending money, proximity to local commerce, and design of spaces which support and encourage people to mingle and grow communities.

We would strongly support this approach in the planning of new housing choices so that we work to create and sustain community.

Our shared project should be to create new diverse communities for living, not simply spaces where people hold no common resources aside from their housing being clustered together. Housing choices should be framed by an understanding that the location and shape of built form can determine social, health and human rights outcomes.

## Building quality and design

We are pleased that section 4.2 of the paper deals with housing design issues and acknowledges that 60% of the ACT community surveyed indicated they were reluctant to consider living in higher density housing due to concerns about building design and poor quality construction<sup>1</sup>. We note the proposed focus on excellence in design and a design review panel.

ACTCOSS notes that the government is reviewing its building regulations in response to concerns about issues with building quality in some new denser housing developments around Canberra such as the Alara Apartments in Bruce<sup>2</sup>.

While a focus on recognising excellence is welcome, work is needed to ensure ACT building regulation, quality control and oversight is *consistent and high* to ensure that new densified development is sustainable and meets consistent standards for structural safety, environmental sustainability, fire safety, emergency evacuation, disability access, and climate and sound proofing, including in affordable dwellings.

Particular attention must be paid to lessons learnt from other jurisdictions about access and egress by people with disability and older tenants from medium to high density residential buildings in a fire or emergency – this should include evacuation planning and structural mitigations like evacuation lifts<sup>3</sup>.

We note ongoing concerns about building regulation in Canberra, including concerns about the independence of building certifiers, enforcement and appropriate standards, which have been raised in different ways by both property owners groups and builders groups.

For instance, the Owners Corporation Network of the ACT has lodged a package of complaints on behalf of owner-occupiers, suggesting a wide scale of defects across Canberra, especially in apartment complexes<sup>4</sup>.

The Master Builders Association, in response to a range of issues including the ABC Four Corners report on the Grenfell Tower tragedy in the UK, has called

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1 ACT Government, *Housing Choices Discussion Paper*, November 2017.

2 J Fettes, *Minister orders review of building regulations as owners of defect-riddled apartments face \$20m repair bill*, ABC News, 2 March 2018, <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-01/canberra-apartment-owners-call-for-stronger-building-regulation/9490984>>.

3 L Wilson, *How Do We Expect People with Disabilities to Evacuate?*, Sourceable, 18 May 2015, <<https://sourceable.net/how-do-we-expect-people-with-disabilities-to-evacuate/>>.

4 E Kelly, *Building reform submissions paint picture of substandard work in Canberra*, Allhomes, 14 March 2016, <<https://www.allhomes.com.au/news/building-reform-submissions-paint-picture-of-substandard-work-in-canberra-20160313-gndk61/>>.

for a centrally administered building product certification system with clear, accessible information and improved rigor and enforcement of the current regulations<sup>5</sup>.

ACTCOSS would add that attention should also be paid to consumer rights, protections, reporting mechanisms and the availability of housing advocacy to people who find themselves in rented or purchased housing with maintenance and structural concerns.

Densification and new housing models should also include a focus on universal design for older people and people with disabilities.

The Parliamentary Agreement commits the government to:

- a. Holding a roundtable to develop incentives that will encourage construction of new homes and apartments that meet the Liveable Housing Design Silver and Gold Levels;
  - b. Developing training programs for architects and builders;
  - c. Showcasing Universal Housing in demonstration housing projects; and
  - d. Playing an active role at COAG to push for genuine progress on the 2010 COAG agreement (in the National Disability Strategy), for new housing to meet Universal Design Standards; and
6. Establish a panel of independent auditors to conduct mandatory annual audits of building certifiers through a self-funding model.

## **Community development, social capital and responsive services**

We note that there are common themes in research which identify concerns about security and safety in dense social housing spaces, and the role of community development in response to this.

Living in insecure environments deteriorates social capital and there is significant research which finds links between housing type, social cohesion and the availability of community development<sup>6</sup>.

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5 Master Builders Australian Capital Territory, *Response to 4 Corners Report on Cladding*, Master Builders Australian Capital Territory, 7 September 2017, <<https://www.mba.org.au/news-and-media/news/article/response-to-4-corners-report-on-cladding/>>.



Work and consultation around the Atherton Gardens Estate in Victoria contains some interesting findings about the well-being of people in high rises:

"Residents in high-rises ranked themselves as better off than other families regarding measures of convenience of location in relation to services, families and friends. However, security ranked high as a concern. The Australian Institute for Family Studies concludes that, "the high-rise estates provide low-cost, convenient and basically adequate housing for families who have few alternatives. The difficulties that exist relate primarily to the common areas and the immediate environment of the estates<sup>7</sup>."

"A number of residents of the high-rise in front of the Cottage participate in the programs mentioned above. For many of the families in the high-rise, security is an issue. The working hours of the security guards has been increased and they are now easier to find, and walk families back to flat. But the general feeling in the high-rise is of insecurity. Many of the families do not want to let their children out to play<sup>8</sup>."

"Drug-related crimes are a real problem for residents. In some instances, both parents are using and this creates difficulties for the children. Strangers in the building, in the stairwells or sleeping in the laundry creates a feeling of insecurity for the residents. At the same time, residents are afraid to report or point out to those responsible or participating in such activities for fear of the consequences<sup>9</sup>."

This paper also discussed the combination of high density, and high CALD diversity, and the problems this created due to the unresponsiveness of programs and services.

The paper summarised the 'issues' of the estate as:

- (a) a resident, and largely immigrant, estate population increasingly dependent on welfare services, yet with less say in decisions relating to reallocations in welfare funding and economic policy.
- (b) high maintenance needs of the estate and low community involvement in sustaining and improving public areas of the estate.
- (c) Minimal agency capacity to engage in 'real' issues of estate residents due to welfare focus of current service-providers.

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6 K Hulse & W Stone, *Housing, housing assistance and social cohesion*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, September 2006.

7 N Fernandes et. al., *Shaping services to community needs: A case study of Atherton gardens public housing estate*, Ecumenical Migration Centre, September 2000, p. 25.

8 *ibid.*, p. 51.

9 *ibid.*, p. 58.

While the ACT Government is not planning to replicate Atherton Estate and we need to be cautious in comparing jurisdictions, denser types of housing (whether dual occupancy or multi story housing) will require planners and policy makers to work on ways to ensure that communities emerge which are vibrant, cohesive and connected with the means to build connection and avoid social problems and disputes.

There is specifically a need to invest in community development so that people have opportunities to build understanding, resilience, social capital, natural affinities and a sense of neighbourhood as well as feelings of safety.

High rise living offers great potential for community but also creates a need to invest to create feelings of safety and security in and around the precinct as well as responsive programs and services.

We would also note the need for housing advocacy and support for people who find themselves in neighbourhood disputes.

## Affordability

As part of a focus on growing housing choices, the ACT Government needs to shore up its commitment by a well targeted ACT Affordable Housing Strategy with significant investments.

In the Parliamentary Agreement the incoming Government agreed to

develop a new Affordable Housing Strategy to deliver more affordable housing options<sup>10</sup>

Investments are needed at a scale that delivers thousands of new dwellings.

Investment is needed in:

- a sizeable, practical centrepiece of the ACT Housing Strategy that would make a measurable impact in the chronic undersupply of affordable housing for people on low incomes in the ACT. We propose diverting \$100million from the current ACT Government bonds to create an investment fund for community housing providers for the purpose of building new accessible, affordable rental housing. The fund would be held in perpetuity and repaid at government bond rates. Alternatively, it could be the capital contribution necessary for the establishment of a new

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<sup>10</sup> Parliamentary Agreement for the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory, nd, <[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1013792/Parliamentary-Agreement-for-the-9th-Legislative-Assembly.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1013792/Parliamentary-Agreement-for-the-9th-Legislative-Assembly.pdf)>.

vehicle for financing affordable and social housing, enable asset recycling, and channel cash, in-kind contributions and investor capital from other sources.

- growing the supply of public housing at the same rate as population growth. This should include ensuring social housing is well located and facilitates access to opportunities and resources that enable social and economic participation and mobility.
- a land release pipeline.

Unaffordable housing and homelessness impact across many services provided or funded by ACT Government and throughout the ACT economy. ACTCOSS recommends that all ACT Government directorates have responsibility to resource implementation of an ACT Housing Strategy. This should include pooled funds, minimum allocations and annual reporting.

## Community housing

In 2016 ACTCOSS, ACT Shelter, CHC Affordable Housing and Havelock House came together with Unions ACT, the Canberra Business Chamber, the Property Council of the ACT, the Master Builders Association of the ACT and the ACT Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects to articulate an agreed way forward on improving housing supply in Canberra. Our agreed position was published in October 2016 and is available to view at:

<http://www.actcoss.org.au/publications/advocacy-publications/housing-industry-roundtable-communicue-canberra-comes-together>.

This unusual alliance was formed because the members agreed that negotiation of a Territory wide Housing Strategy was an urgent priority for the 2016-20 term of the ACT Government.

We said the lack of affordable, diverse, sustainable housing constrains economic development and reduces social wellbeing, and restrictive planning regulations stifle innovation and limit diversity of housing in established neighbourhoods.

More than a year after the election, some progress has been made on the development of a housing strategy that is focused on ensuring all people in Canberra can obtain housing that is affordable, accessible, appropriate, safe and secure.

We have also seen progress on development of more contemporary, fit for purpose planning regulations.

At the Housing and Homelessness Summit in September 2017, the government announced there would be an increase in the number of new dwelling sites on which affordable housing must be built. A \$1million innovation fund was announced, and the first three projects eligible to use this fund were specified.

The government also announced establishment of a database of people eligible for affordable housing products.

In November, this discussion paper on housing choices was released providing a summary of current research on housing diversity and insights into views of people living in the ACT on diversifying what housing is available in the market.

Whilst this long term strategic work is welcome, it is also important to take action to ensure the growth of supply of affordable housing is delivered effectively right now.

We are concerned, for instance, that whilst this long term strategic direction is considered, land is being released and developed that has no requirement for affordable housing. That includes the most recent release of land for development – at Red Hill, with no requirement to meet such policy objectives. This seems at complete odds with the current focus by the ACT Government on addressing the issue of housing affordability. This is but one example.

The Parliamentary Agreement indicates that the Government will

Set affordable housing targets across greenfield and urban renewal development projects, with structures to prevent resale windfall profits” as well as; “grow and diversify the not for profit community housing sector, through a combination of capital investment, land transfer and other means<sup>11</sup>

We recommend the ACT Government make provision in the 2018-19 ACT Budget to increase the capacity of community housing providers (CHPs) already operating in the ACT to grow their stock.

**This would require:**

- that CHPs and/or under joint ventures with the government and/or private developers be given first option to develop the sites for affordable housing dwellings

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11 *ibid.*, sections 6 and 8.

- provision of land for which the ACT Government is the vendor at 50% of market price to CHPs, deferring land payment and having split contracts for affordable housing that have the effect of reducing holding costs
- removing third party appeal provisions for sites designated for CHPs to build affordable housing
- providing a designated officer within government to steer CHP affordable housing developments through the planning process
- rates and other tax concessions for CHP affordable housing sites.

**We also recommend:**

- affordable housing is required in all precinct developments, including both greenfields and infill sites
- completion of comprehensive demand analysis research so that property developers understand what household types are in the affordable housing market, what diversity of supply of dwelling types are needed and the locations in which affordable housing does not currently exist
- that the review of the Lease Variation Charge be broad enough to ensure it considers how it could be better leveraged to contribute to policy objectives (e.g. urban renewal, affordable housing, diversifying supply of dwelling types, incentivising community/business partnerships) and to assess its costs to revenue and benefit to the community.

# **Attachment A – Parliamentary Agreement**

## **Extracts from the ACT Parliamentary Agreement 2016**

### **1. Action to improve Canberrans' health and access to healthcare**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens agree to continue to focus on giving patients the best care, and deliver services when and where they need them, so that Canberra remains Australia's healthiest community. To achieve this goal, the parties agree to:

1. Design, construct and commence the operation of three nurse-led walk-in centres in Gungahlin, Weston Creek and the Inner North, based on the successful model currently operating in Belconnen and Tuggeranong; and assess the benefits of extending the centres' hours of operation;
2. Establish the Office for Mental Health to roll out and oversee mental health services and provider funding, develop a strategy that sets targets for suicide reduction, and provide more support for young people;
3. Reduce the incidence of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other preventable health conditions, by expanding and refocussing the Healthy Weight Initiative, appointing a Preventative Health Coordinator and developing a comprehensive preventative health strategy;
4. Improve dental treatment for those who can't easily access it by operating two additional mobile dental clinics, and implement subsidy and opening hour policies to increase care for low income Canberrans;
5. Provide better healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by building a new health clinic for Winnunga Nimityjah Aboriginal Health Service;
6. Increase frontline nursing staff to provide better healthcare services in hospitals and the community, by expanding Hospital in the Home, providing more outpatient nurses, reviewing current ACT Health outpatient and community based services, and implementing incentives to raise nurse qualifications and career development opportunities; and
7. Develop a Nurse Safety Strategy through forums with stakeholders, focussing on high risk areas.

### **2. Supporting our schools and higher education**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens:

1. Will continue to strongly advocate for the Commonwealth Government to honour the original six year Gonski funding agreement, in full, because the Gonski model of needs-based schools funding is the best chance for every Canberra child, attending a public, independent or Catholic school, to reach their full potential;
2. Recognise that the Canberra Institute of Technology should remain the primary provider of high-quality vocational training in the ACT, and commit to maintain the CIT under public ownership. The Government will continue to

directly fund CIT to a minimum of 70% of total ACT Government funding for VET;

3. Agree that the Government will employ an additional 20 school psychologists over the term to strengthen mental health and wellbeing support in our schools, strengthen community based counselling services for children and young people, and implement a streamlined referral process that can be utilised by all schools;

4. Continue social and emotional learning programs in schools to enhance the skills of children and young people to engage in respectful relationships, including to prevent violence and sexual assault;

5. Employ an additional four senior teachers with expertise in pedagogy, learning difficulties, and literacy and numeracy programming, to implement a coaching and mentoring model to build teaching capacity; and conduct a trial of innovative teaching methods; and

6. Implement measures to improve road safety around schools, including the development of individual traffic management plans for every school.

### **3. Building an integrated transport network**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens recognise that Canberrans support an integrated transport network comprising buses, light rail, roads, rideshare, taxis, cycling and walking. To achieve this strong network, the parties agree to:

1. Immediately commence community consultation, scoping and design work of Stage 2 of the light rail network, to progress the Woden Stage 2 extension to the procurement stage and contract signing in this term;

2. Encourage bus patronage by implementing free bus travel for seniors and concession card holders (excluding students) on all routes, and two months' free bus travel on new Rapid routes for all travellers;

3. Expand the reach and accessibility of the flexible bus service to the Inner North;

4. Implement new ACTION Rapid routes to provide better services through town centres and major destinations, as announced by Government prior to the election period and funded in the pre-election update;

5. Develop an ACTION fleet management strategy, with new and replacement buses to be purchased following evaluation of the sustainable fuels bus trial, prioritising green technologies such as hybrid and electric, and considering criteria including value for money and operational cost, environmental performance, energy efficiency and sourcing, and disability accessibility compliance;

6. Conduct a strategic assessment of innovative transport options for Canberra, including autonomous and semi-autonomous vehicle trials and better utilisation and connection of taxis and buses in off-peak periods;

7. Raise the profile of the Active Travel Office, and through the Office coordinate the rollout of \$30 million in additional priority footpath maintenance, cycling and walking route upgrades, and age-friendly suburb improvements in our shopping centres and existing suburbs;

8. Adopt the World Health Organisation's HEAT model for Budget assessment of active travel projects; and

9. Facilitate the establishment of bike hubs by the private sector (such as those operating in Brisbane).

#### **4. Improving social housing and housing affordability**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens agree that that improving housing affordability is essential to ensuring secure accommodation is available to all Canberrans, and home ownership remains a realistic goal. To meet these aspirations, the parties agree to:

1. Continue the five year program of public housing renewal;
2. Develop a new Affordable Housing Strategy to deliver more affordable housing options;
3. Continue to cut stamp duty in every ACT Budget;
4. Create an innovation fund to support new approaches to affordable housing, starting with support to establish HomeGround Real Estate, Homeshare for older Canberrans, and the Nightingale Housing Model in Canberra;
5. Maintain a role for public sector land development with a board that includes independent members with skills from the social and affordable housing sector;
6. Set affordable housing targets across greenfield and urban renewal development projects, with structures to prevent resale windfall profits;
7. Work with community and business partners to construct purpose built accommodation for people experiencing mental health concerns and housing difficulties, utilising the 'MyHome for Canberra' project plan;
8. Grow and diversify the not for profit community housing sector, through a combination of capital investment, land transfer and other means;
9. Strengthen specialist homelessness and housing support services to make sure vulnerable groups (eg. older women, indigenous communities and women escaping violence) get the support they need; support people seeking housing who have a lived experience of trauma; fund professional development and training for the Specialist Housing and Homeless Service Providers; and support Uniting City Early Morning Centre provision of essential services;
10. Convene a homelessness summit in 2017 bringing together all key stakeholders to develop innovative proposals to combat homelessness; and
11. Expand after hours and weekend intake referrals to homelessness services utilising the existing 'OneLink' service for a one year pilot program, and evaluate for continuation.

#### **5. Better planning processes, consultation and outcomes**

1. Establish an Assembly Committee Inquiry into planning, to recommend amendments to the Territory Plan, ways to improve the planning process, consultation requirements, design and sustainability outcomes, energy performance, and range of housing options;
2. Strengthen community consultation processes, including through the use of deliberative democracy strategies, so that diverse views are taken into account in major project proposals;
3. Conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Energy Efficiency Ratings Scheme;



4. Actively progress discussions with the NSW Government and Yass Valley Council regarding moving the ACT/NSW border in West Belconnen;
5. Encourage Universal Housing initiatives by:
  - a. Holding a roundtable to develop incentives that will encourage construction of new homes and apartments that meet the Liveable Housing Design Silver and Gold Levels;
  - b. Developing training programs for architects and builders;
  - c. Showcasing Universal Housing in demonstration housing projects; and
  - d. Playing an active role at COAG to push for genuine progress on the 2010 COAG agreement (in the National Disability Strategy), for new housing to meet Universal Design Standards; and
6. Establish a panel of independent auditors to conduct mandatory annual audits of building certifiers through a self-funding model.

## **6. Protecting the environment and mitigating climate change**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens reconfirm their genuine commitment to protecting the local environment, and doing everything we can as a community and city to combat human-induced climate change. To meet these goals, the parties agree to:

1. Continue all necessary policy and contractual steps to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020;
2. Sign the 'Under 2 MOU' and set firm interim targets to reach zero net emissions by 2050 at the latest;
3. Fund the ACT Environmental Defenders Office for at least two years from November 2016, while working with the EDO to develop sustainable wider revenue streams;
4. Establish a container deposit scheme and install 100 recycling bins around the city, to increase recycling rates and improve the amenity and health of our waterways and parklands;
5. Roll out micro parks in urban areas and establish an 'adopt a park' scheme to increase amenity and usage of local open spaces, and work with the community and private sector to reduce the heat island effect in urban areas, expand the urban and street shade canopy, and replace ageing trees;
6. Conduct an assessment of a Sustainable Bonds scheme to fund sustainable infrastructure;
7. Undertake a regulatory impact statement into setting minimum EER standards for rental properties by the end of 2017, with a view to implementing measures to improve energy efficiency of rental properties;
8. Develop a four year program to deliver weed and pest animal control;
9. Undertake a feasibility study into establishing a new northern Canberra region National Park, including existing nature reserves around Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie and Mulligans Flat; and
10. Implement the key findings of the Waste Feasibility Study so that ACT waste management is national best practice.

## **7. Making our community even stronger and more inclusive**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens understand that government has an active and positive role to play in making sure everyone in our community is supported, welcomed, and has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The parties therefore agree to:

1. Develop a carers strategy in close consultation with Carers ACT, disability groups and other affected community members;
2. Create a new policy unit to monitor and support the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, oversee grants to improve the ability of people with disabilities to participate in mainstream community groups, better support parents of children with disabilities; and a resourced Disability Reference Group to include people with disabilities and to address access issues for transport and new developments;
3. Establish an ongoing Multicultural Advisory Board to assist with the implementation of the ACT Multicultural Framework; and convene a multicultural summit;
4. Conduct a program to increase community access to government facilities, such as school halls;
5. Establish a Drug and Alcohol Court and associated support programs as part of a goal to reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025, continue existing funding of justice reinvestment programs and assess the need for any additional funding as part of the budget process;
6. Introduce an ACT Rights of Victims Charter; and
7. Continue existing funding for community legal services and assess the need for any additional funding as part of the Budget process.

## **8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

ACT Labor and the ACT Greens are committed to supporting Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and the parties will continue to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and Indigenous organisations to ensure we deliver the best possible outcomes. This commitment includes:

1. Continuing funding support for dedicated culture and language programs in schools and after-school programs; and
2. Ensuring cultural connections are considered in planning and heritage assessments.

## **9. Reducing harm from gaming**

1. Reduce the number of electronic gaming machine licenses in the ACT to 4000 by 1 July 2020;
2. Explore further harm reduction measures, including mandatory pre-commitment systems and bet limits for electronic gaming machines;
3. Increase the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund levy from 0.6% of gross

gaming machine revenue to 0.75%, and direct additional funds into addressing problem gambling; and

4. Review the current community contribution scheme, with a view to maximising the direct benefit to the community from the scheme.

## **10. Strengthening government, parliamentary and electoral integrity**

Canberrans are entitled to have confidence that their government is working in their best interests at all times. ACT Labor and the ACT Greens agree to implement a package of reforms that will build on measures previously implemented to improve probity, integrity and accountability in decision-making in the Territory:

1. Establish an Independent Integrity Commission, broadly structured on those operating in similarly sized jurisdictions, following a Parliamentary Committee inquiry into the most effective and efficient model for the ACT;

2. Effective immediately, neither party will accept donations from property developers, and the Government will bring to the Assembly a legislative ban on all such donations based on bans operating in other jurisdictions;

3. Establish a Select Committee to review the operation of the 2016 ACT election and Electoral Act, and make recommendations on lowering the voting age, improving donation rules and reporting timeframes, and encouraging more people to enrol, vote and participate more widely in political activity;

4. Through the Assembly process, expand the scope of the lobbyist register to capture in-house government relations staff, industry associations, and project management liaison officers and companies, and conduct a review of its effectiveness after one year; and

5. Strengthen the Commissioner for Standards' role by streamlining the referrals process for complaints against MLAs.

Further reforms of the Executive are set out at Appendix 3.

## **11. Emergency services and law reform**

1. Progress jointly-committed investment in fire-fighting equipment, personnel and facilities, and establish a rigorous ongoing consultation process, including through a roundtable meeting, to discuss wider resourcing, structural and organisational reform, and increasing diversity in the fire-fighting service;

2. Undertake legislative reforms to expand the definition of domestic violence in the Crimes Act to include emotional and social violence; and implement any outstanding ALRC recommendations on sexual assault;

3. Establish an ACT medicinal cannabis program in 2017, to allow sick and dying people timely and efficient access to medicinal cannabis products, on prescription; and establish appropriate regulations, administration and education and training to ensure the programme is effective; and

4. Bring forward a submission for Cabinet consideration to enact a 'right to appeal' law.

## **12. Public Infrastructure**

Social, city and economic infrastructure is essential to keep Canberra liveable and productive, and to strengthen its reputation as a leading international artistic and sporting city. ACT Labor and the ACT Greens agree to progress major infrastructure projects:

1. Complete Stage 1 of Light Rail from Gungahlin to the City;
2. Construct Stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre, to allow a wider range of use by community, artistic and performance groups;
3. Progress feasibility and business case development work on the Australia Forum convention centre and a new Canberra Theatre; and
4. Undertake feasibility studies into the construction of two multi-purpose indoor sports centres in Woden and Gungahlin.

### **13. Animal welfare**

1. End the ACT Government subsidy to the ACT greyhound racing industry at the conclusion of the current MOU, and actively support the transition steps required to end the operation of the greyhound racing industry, including animal welfare and training support; and
2. Expand and ensure the effectiveness of cat containment, and increase funding for cat de-sexing.