

# Planning Review

## ACT Greens Perspective

**Rebecca Vassarotti MLA**  
**Member for Kurrajong**  
**Minister for the Environment and Heritage**



# What we went to the election promising



Our election platform outlined key priorities for the planning review that was already underway:

- Substantially lifting the quality of development
- Creating more respectful engagement with communities (e.g. improving pre-application consultation and supporting better access to information)
- Ensuring development is climate change-ready and more environmentally sustainable
- Delivering more affordable housing for all Canberrans
- Better protecting trees, green space and heritage, including through more effective linkages with heritage and tree protection legislation

Planning Review seen as a key opportunity to improve ACT planning system

# Who has been engaging?



Jo Clay MLA: ACT Greens spokesperson on Planning; Chair of Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: Minister for Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Sustainable Building and Infrastructure, responsibilities around Living Infrastructure

Shane Rattenbury MLA: Greens Leader, Minister for Climate Emissions Reductions

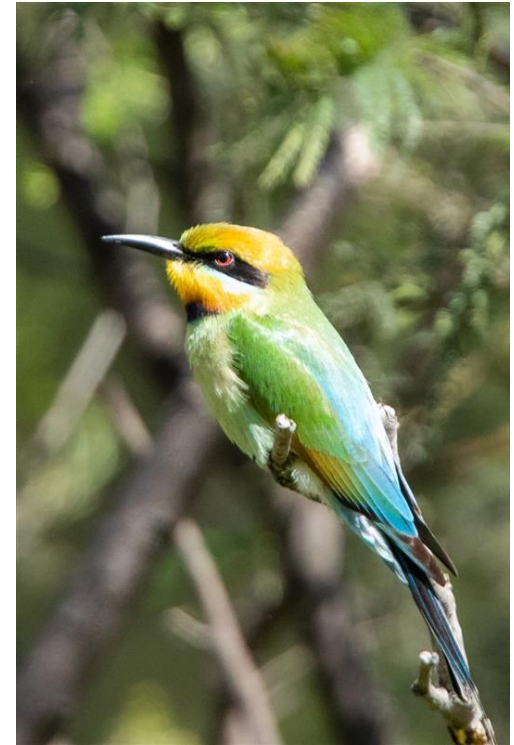


Our priorities:

- Ensuring planning decisions reflect our community's aspirations around climate, environment, inclusion and connection
- Strong environmental protection and emphasis on climate resilience
- Community engagement and consultation
- Clear understanding of decision making processes

What we have been doing:

- Through consultation phase, engaged strongly with community groups and environmental stakeholders
- Advocated for enhanced consultation through the process
- Held major concerns the bill presented to Parliament did not adequately reflect community engagement so we left cabinet and did not support it
- Active engagement with the Inquiry Process
- Positive engagement with ALP on improvements that reflect feedback through inquiry



## Our thresholds

- Positive engagement with the recommendations of the Inquiry: movement on key issues
- Stronger protection of environment and climate in objects/definitions
- Embedding community consultation in the legislation
- Safeguards around Territory Priority Projects
- Pathway to deal with governance concerns that have been raised

## Points of discussion:

- What does simplicity look like in a complex system?
- Outcomes vs rules when we have seen rules/criteria drive mediocre development
- Are there ways to improve processes such as pre-DA consultation (key concern expressed is lack of engagement with the statutory decision makers)



# Planning Bill: the ongoing discussion re an outcomes based system



## Problem

- A proponent led rules based system has driven mediocre development vs
- Concern proposed approach leads to more discretion and may create even poorer outcomes

## Proposed solution: A cascading model

- Head legislation outlines structure / process
- Plan/Codes provide an articulation of what is being achieved/parameters/thresholds
- Technical guides / design guides provide the common pathway for compliance (provides options for alternatives but a baseline / performance guideline that must be met)



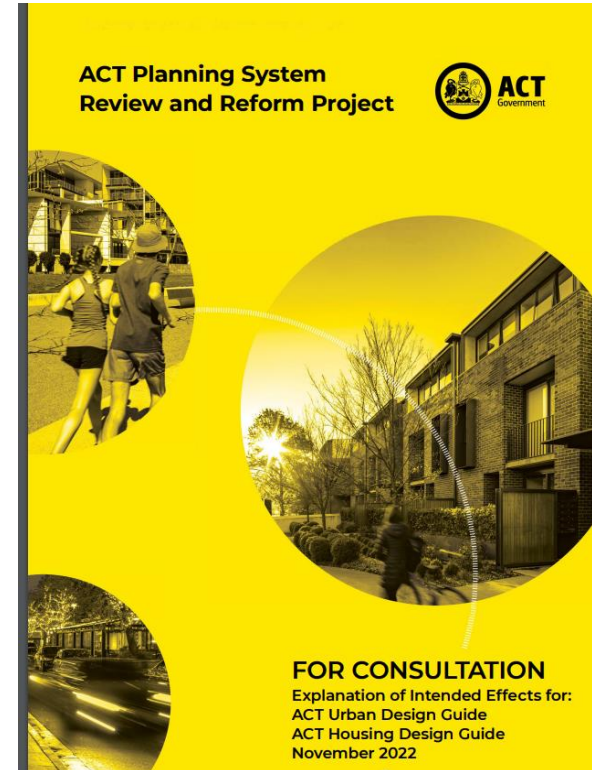
- Community consultation has just closed – significant engagement
- We are currently going through submissions and keen to see Gov analysis of submissions
- Key emerging conversation: zoning (discussion in last sitting around a complementary discussion around the missing middle)
- From a portfolio perspective – strongly engaging with design guides / technical specs



# Territory Plan: Design guides



- Two key guides:
  1. urban design (public realm)
  2. housing design (private realm)
- Aimed to provide guidance to support the decision making process
- Areas working with Planning team include Environment and Climate Change to develop key guidance on issues such as urban biodiversity sensitive design – these will be key in delivering good decisions
- Watch this space as these are worked on





# Territory Plan: technical specifications



A key mechanism to deliver living infrastructure provisions.

- Variation 369' planting area, tree canopy and site coverage provisions is extended to all suburbs.
  - Single dwellings: [Residential Technical Specification](#) page 5 (planting area) and page 12 (tree planting)
  - Multi-unit housing: [Residential Technical Specification](#) page 12 (planting area, tree canopy and tree planting)
- Stronger tree canopy and permeability provisions for public land in greenfield residential estates and development on commercial zones and Community Facility Zone blocks. See:
  - Greenfield residential estates: [Subdivision Technical Specification](#) page 5
  - Commercial zones blocks: [Commercial Technical Specification](#) page 7
  - Community Facility Zone blocks: [Community Facilities Technical Specification](#) pages 4 and 5
- For the first time, there are urban heat provisions - Including cool roof, cool façade, cool paving and protection from heat provisions for greenfield residential estates and development on commercial zones and Community Facility Zone blocks.
  - Greenfield residential estates: [Subdivision Technical Specification](#) pages 5 and 6 (cool paving and shade only as subdivision does not include approval of buildings)
  - Commercial zones blocks: [Commercial Technical Specification](#) page 7 to 9

# Territory Plan: issues still to be worked through



- Finalisation of the Design Guides and associated documents to support urban biodiversity sensitive design
- Ensuring that the new system delivers our broader scale planning objects around environmental issues
- Explore how we protect ecologically significant areas outside of the reserve network (building on good work of the Conservation Council / FOG).
- Continue to explore how we will ensure enforcement and compliance of biodiversity-related provisions in the new outcomes-based system



## Positives

- New feature – brings conversation to a district level
- Blue / Green Network: ecologists now embedded in the planning team to assist with this. Also working with stakeholders such as Conservation Council and Friends of Grasslands to ensure this captures key issues

## Concerns:

- Lots of data – things missed in drafts (eg – Tugg Homestead)
- Confusion / concern regarding potential development sites – more discussion needed



# Adjacent to the planning review, what have we been doing?



- Living infrastructure on private land (V 369)
- Significant uplift in tree protection legislation (Urban Forest Act)
- Environmental connectivity work (Connecting Nature Connecting People initiative)
- Major review in building standards (accessibility standards, 7 star energy efficiency rating from Oct 2023)
- Major Heritage Review (phase one under way)



- Important to see responses to Inquiry Report and recommendations
- Continue to engage constructively with ALP on the Bill: will assess if we can support / move amendments
- Also waiting for response to consultation on the Territory Plan and District Strategies
- If Bill passes, there will be an interim territory plan
- Planning Committee will be statutorily required to consider conducting an inquiry

