

18/487 - Strengthening social housing assistance under the ACT Housing Strategy: A business case for the growth and renewal of public housing

Summary of Impacts	
<p>Stable and affordable housing enables economic and social participation which benefits both individuals and the Canberra community. Ongoing public housing renewal contributes to urban renewal, revitalising suburban communities through redevelopment and/or sale of ageing stock and reducing public housing density in older, established suburbs. It has positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for the public housing tenants and the broader community.</p> <p>Construction of replacement dwellings will establish holdings in new suburbs and population growth areas. The ‘salt and pepper’ dispersal of public housing across Canberra will ensure the long term social inclusion of public housing tenants as part of the Territory’s diverse and vibrant communities.</p> <p>Public housing renewal and growth improves the amenity, suitability and value of the public housing portfolio and will enable better alignment of the property profile to the needs of current public housing tenants. Public housing renewal stimulates the construction industry and the identification of an annual renewal target will provide certainty and assurance to the sector and minimise risks from downturns in the market.</p> <p>Older public housing dwellings are costly to maintain, and their low energy efficiency ratings means they have a high environmental impact and lead to increased cost of living for tenants on low income. Their renewal improves their amenity and liveability and reduces utilities cost for tenants.</p> <p>This Submission seeks agreement to the content of the public housing asset management plan and five-year growth and renewal program, including agreement to key policy parameters around portfolio growth, renewal and realignment. The public housing asset management plan is part of the broader ACT Housing Strategy and delivers on priorities around social inclusion, urban renewal, infrastructure and economic development.</p> <p>The public housing asset management plan targets the continued provision of public housing to the most disadvantaged Canberrans and proposes the development and implementation of a new business model which aims to establish initiatives that will improve the viability of the public housing portfolio.</p> <p>Positive impacts of the proposed future public housing renewal program will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring public housing properties are ‘salt and peppered’ throughout the city; • Ensuring public housing stock is better aligned to the needs and circumstance of tenants, further supporting the viability of public housing into the future; • Economic benefits for the ACT through stimulating the construction industry and assurance of a program of sustained renewal activity; • Economic benefits for tenants via more energy efficient properties which will reduce cost of living expenses for tenants; and • Environmental benefits via reduced energy use and reduced private vehicle travel and in construction of new, energy efficient replacement dwellings. 	

Key to impacts: Red – negative, Blue - neutral and Green - positive.

Social

Justice and Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing provides the stable platform required for access to health and well-being services; education and training; public transport; information and communication technology facilities; and access to community space and facilities. • The growth and renewal of the public housing portfolio will ensure that it better matches the diverse and complex needs of the current public housing profile, leading to improved outcomes for tenants.
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Economic

ACT Government Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The growth and renewal activities require budget funding of \$100 million over five years.
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The construction of new dwellings will continue to stimulate the construction industry.• Housing ACT aims to optimise the use of its available land resources while at the same time increase and improve the wellbeing of members of the Canberra community. From an efficiency perspective, Housing ACT will aim to provide an improved service with the least expenditure in time, money and materials by building properties that better fit tenants' needs; it will allocate resources while taking care the Canberra community gets the greatest return from Housing ACT's scarce land resources by better utilising run down and inefficient sites; and will strive to find innovative ways to redevelop these dwellings and provide better service delivery via employing new ways to undertake its operations.
Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities will be explored for institutional investment and for partnerships with community and commercial based housing providers (particularly in relation to multi-unit sites).• Public housing renewal, and associated urban renewal, especially along transport corridors and near commercial centres will encourage diversified investment in the ACT.

Environmental

Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewal of ageing public housing properties that are energy inefficient will improve energy efficiency leading to a reduction in fuel poverty and utility costs for people on low incomes. Increased housing within walking distance of major transport routes, commercial centres and community facilities (e.g. schools, sporting fields) will reduce reliance on motor vehicles and increase patronage of public transport.
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