



BETTER DEVELOPMENT **For the Community, by the** **Community**

The Greens will take on shoddy developers

As our city grows, we need to protect the quality of our homes and our neighbourhoods. We can create spaces that promote community and protect the things we love about Canberra while planning for our changing needs.

As our city grows, the ACT Greens believe that we should set a high standard for the quality of our homes and our neighbourhoods. We have an opportunity to create spaces that promote community, and protect the things we love about our bush capital, while planning for our changing needs. The ACT Greens want to see cutting-edge urban design that delivers great, connected neighbourhoods. Our homes and communities are so important to our quality of life, and everyone should be able to benefit from good urban design.

The Greens support urban infill in appropriate locations as an alternative to suburban sprawl on the city's fringe. This requires urban design excellence at the precinct scale, including buildings and the public domain. Urban planning needs to address issues of increasing urban density, an ageing population, the need to reduce pollution and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

It is essential that the community is fully engaged with the decisions we make about our city. Canberra should be built by, and for, our community - not big developers.

> Community-Led Design

The ACT Greens believe that it should be the people of Canberra, not the big developers, who decide how we build our city. Our city should be designed to work for young and old, for today and into the future.

We are committed to having a meaningful conversation about the future of our city with everyone in our community. That means having a dialogue with existing residents who wish to maintain the qualities of the communities that they have helped develop as well as younger people who aspire to live in a vibrant city with housing options to rent or buy, including in established areas.

The ACT Greens are committed to facilitating and engaging broad, inclusive and meaningful conversation around the future of our city through a process of deliberative democracy.

At a minimum, the ACT Greens will ensure the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation (as defined by the

International Association for Public Participation):

- » Those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process;
- » There is a promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;
- » Sustainable decisions recognise and communicate the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers;
- » Those potentially affected by, or interested in a decision are sought out and their involvement facilitated;
- » Participants have input in designing how they participate;
- » Participants are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and
- » Participants are communicated with on how their input affected the decision.

We will also explore:

- » Hosting citizens' forums on planning and development to have an open conversation about the different needs and aspirations of members of our community, for our city;
- » Better notification of proposed territory plan changes;
- » Bringing back neighbour consultation, for example where large two story buildings are proposed in existing areas; and
- » Providing secretariat support to assist community councils do their work.

> Re-Establish the Independence of the Planning Authority

Canberrans deserve to have confidence in the planning of their city. That's why the ACT Greens will re-establish the independence of the Planning Authority.

There is currently a conflict of interest, both real and perceived, with the Government's land development arm taking on more of a

planning function outside of the guidance of the planning authority. This includes taking the lead on planning for specific development proposals and strategic purchases of land.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Commit \$250,000 to re-establishing the independence of the Planning Authority;
- » Reinforce the legislative powers, including through the Administrative Arrangements of the separate entities, so that strategic planning takes precedence over the land development arm of government. This means land development would take place within a framework established by an independent Planning Authority.

> Restructure the Land Development Agency

Government Land Organisations have a key role to play in urban development. They can address market failure by providing leading edge developments that showcase housing affordability, energy efficiency and design excellence.

Around Australia, some of the best examples of urban infill and greenfield developments have been delivered by Government Land Organisations.

However in Canberra, there is currently a perception in the community that the ACT's Land Development Agency is largely driven by financial interests and is not operating within a rigorous and community endorsed planning framework.

The ACT Greens support the principle of a Government Land Organisation, but will redefine the role of the Land Development Agency to enhance its social licence. The ACT Greens will put the community first and

ensure that the LDA operates within a framework defined by the Planning Authority. The LDA will also be benchmarked against best practice Government Land Organisations, in terms of delivering innovative, high quality urban developments and affordable housing.

The ACT Greens will broaden the expertise of the LDA Board to include:

- » A representative from the social / affordable housing sector
- » Expertise in innovation and design excellence; and
- » A community representative

And, it will be required to report publicly against key performance measures.

> Review Territory Plan to Support Smarter, Greener Developments

As our city grows, we need to protect our urban open spaces while at the same time encouraging positive development in our transport corridors and town centres.

We look to cities that are leading the way and developing new and innovative models of housing close to key fixed public transport routes, such as Portland, Vancouver and Melbourne. And, we must catch up with the rest of the world and improve the sustainability of our greenfield and infill developments.

That's why the ACT Greens will:

- » Undertake reviews of relevant Residential and Estate Development Codes and land release practices to ensure housing diversity and innovative design in new developments. For example, recommendations that may emerge from a review could include developing estate guidelines to optimise

solar access to all dwellings or alternative block types to deliver compact homes, small scale multi-unit developments and larger apartments suited to families.

- » Work with the community to review residential codes in established areas, to ensure protection of the existing look and feel of suburbs while allowing for more strategic block consolidation. For example, a review may find that there are opportunities for more sustainable townhouses, with good solar access, landscaping and better traffic arrangements. This would help first home owners in established areas and support downsizing for older Canberrans.

- » Encourage compact and innovative housing including private-public partnerships for small-scale affordable housing developments, for example through targeted land supply.

- » Relax commercial zoning in targeted areas to support small-scale mixed-use precincts to achieve increased affordable housing in and around local and group centres and close to public transport.

> Urban Design Centre of Excellence

The Greens support urban infill in appropriate locations to mitigate against urban sprawl as our city grows. However, it is essential that this is of high quality design at the building and precinct scale.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Establish an Urban Design Centre of Excellence to provide feedback and advice about conditions of sale and design review for proposals at key sites and for ACT housing stock;
- » Upgrade of the role of Government Architect with the support of an Urban Design Studio and independent design

expertise through a Design Review Panel and existing staff from EPD and EDD; and
» In areas of national significance explore how to improve and expand an approach of genuine partnership between Commonwealth and Territory Governments where land, planning resources and development controls are shared to ensure a quality of development that reflects the significance of the National Capital. This would include developments such as the Australia Forum, City to the Lake, ANZAC Parade and Constitution Avenue.

> Better Apartment Design

With increased urban densification, an aging population and a changing climate - it is vital that apartments and townhouses are designed and constructed to a higher standard.

NSW has an Apartment Design Guide (SEPP 65) that delivers improved solar access, cross ventilation, sense of place, appearance from the street and room for deep rooted tree plantings. The guide recognises that design quality is best achieved through shared responsibility including mandating the involvement of an architect, and good decision making through the use of design review panels. Right now the quality of much of the apartment design in Canberra would not be allowed in NSW. Victoria also has a Draft Apartment Design Standard, proposing that all new apartments provide adequate daylight, storage and ventilation. This standard addresses building setbacks, room depth, accessibility, waste, water and energy efficiency, open space and noise minimisation. The Victorian Standard requires that planning applications meet set standards. However, alternative plans can show how liveability will be ensured through design solutions,

encouraging innovation and best-practice planning.

The ACT Greens will improve apartment design by:

» Establishing new design standards for apartments to ensure the ACT meets Australia's best practice. The ACT Planning and Land Authority would benchmark the NSW Apartment Design Guide (SEPP 65) as a priority to deliver for example, better solar access, cross ventilation, sense of place and appearance from the street and space for deep rooted plantings.

» Adopting principles in the Victorian Apartment Design Standard. The ACT Planning and Land Authority would amend the framework of regulations in order to reward design excellence and innovation. This would include incentives for the delivery of publicly beneficial outcomes such as affordable housing and enhanced public realm.

> Improved Building Certification

Many Canberrans have been let down by shoddy construction and certification. They've had to live with apartment defects such as major water leaks, falling render and cracking in new units and apartments.

Since 2009, complaints about builders, building work and defects have doubled, at more than 350 every year. The Canberra community deserves better than this. Every Canberran should have confidence in the quality of construction of the buildings they live and work in.

Right now, property developers can pick and choose their own building certifiers. The community does not have confidence in developers getting their mates to check their work. That's why the ACT Greens will put the

community first and end the close relationship between developers and certifiers. We will require better assessment of the quality of buildings throughout the construction process.

The ACT Greens will improve construction standards by:

- » Establishing a Panel of Independent Auditors to conduct mandatory annual audits of building certifiers. The ACT Planning and Land Authority will randomly allocate an Auditor from the Panel to assess the work of all certifiers. Failure to comply would result in cancellation of licence to operate and criminal penalties.
- » Working with industry to establish a schedule of additional mandatory assessments that certifiers are required to carry out at various stages during the construction process, particularly at the critical stage of waterproofing and to ensure compliance with Energy Efficiency Ratings (EER).

Industry would largely cover the cost of this initiative with the Certifier making payment to the Auditor as a cost of doing business. Any additional cost to building purchasers from this initiative would be insignificant compared with the current costs of repairs and maintenance in many apartments.

There would be a role for Government, and some costs in administering the panel of Auditors.

> Energy Efficient Ratings

The community needs to be confident that energy ratings are actually being achieved. Buildings also need to be designed for the future, and not use EER systems designed for the past. Note: a comprehensive review

of ERR will be undertaken as outlined in further detail in the 'Green Homes' Initiative.

> Apartment Requirements for Sustainable Transport

The increase in apartment living and mixed use developments gives our city new opportunities for innovation in sustainable transport.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Require provision of a number of electric vehicle charging outlets in new multi unit developments.
- » Improve the Bicycle parking code in order to provide adequate space for residents bikes and bike parking for visitors outside;
- » Improve the provision and enforcement of accessible visitor parking and space for deliveries and emergency vehicles in mixed use buildings;
- » Adopt a more flexible approach to car parking provision in areas with good public transport, including light rail. This could include reduced car parking requirements, developer contributions to a parking offset fund, or provision of car share facilities. This will significantly reduce traffic congestion and the cost of new properties.

> Showcase Precincts

The ACT Greens will commit start up funds to create demonstration showcasing precincts over 2 years to showcase a range of housing typologies from compact through to larger 3 bedroom family apartments. These would be adaptable, energy efficient and include more affordable homes and apartments. These projects should demonstrate carbon neutral housing in operation.