



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

(Reference: [Inquiry into the ACT Planning Strategy 2018](#))

Members:

MS C LE COUTEUR (Chair)

MS S ORR (Deputy Chair)

MR M PARTON

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 29 MARCH 2019

Secretary to the committee:

Ms Annemieke Jongsma (Ph: 620 51253)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.38 am.

GENTLEMAN, MR MICK, MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management
CUSACK, MS KATHY, Executive Director, Planning, Land and Building Policy,
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
MORONEY, MS ANNE, Manager Planning and Urban Design Policy, Environment,
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PAYNTER, MR PATRICK, Principal Engineer/Planner, Environment, Planning and
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PONTON, MR BEN, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable
Development Directorate

THE CHAIR: Welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal inquiry into the ACT planning strategy 2018. Today we are going to be hearing from Minister Gentleman and directorate officials.

Before I start, there are a few housekeeping matters I need to make sure that everyone is aware of. Proceedings are being recorded by Hansard for transcription purposes, webstreamed and broadcast live.

Minister Gentleman, on behalf of the committee, I thank you and your colleagues for attending today. I draw your attention to the pink privilege statement hiding under the planning strategy. I am confident you have all seen that before but, for the record, can you please confirm that you have understood the privilege implications of the statement.

Mr Gentleman: Yes, we can.

THE CHAIR: Before we go to questions, minister, do you have an opening statement?

Mr Gentleman: I do. We also have a presentation that we would like to do after the statement if that is acceptable to the committee. It will give you a great overlook of the important work that has been occurring over the past number of years.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Gentleman: I will start off by just saying that Canberra, in common with other cities around the globe and across Australia, is faced with challenges about improving economic prosperity, building resilience to climate change, managing urban renewal, and accommodating a growing and changing community. In addition, we face the critical question of how to grow while balancing and protecting Canberra's qualities as a livable city. It is the qualities of being a city in nature, a city in the landscape, mixed with today's urban lifestyles that attract our key knowledge economy workers and give us a competitive edge over other Australian cities.

The refresh of the ACT planning strategy 2018 provided us with an opportunity to consider these challenges and how best to plan for change into the future. The ACT planning strategy 2018 is the government's key strategic document for directing

growth and change in the territory. It sets a vision of Canberra as a sustainable, competitive and equitable city. It considers growth and change in intergenerational terms with a long-term horizon to 2041.

The planning strategy 2018 was a refresh of the 2012 strategy. The 2018 strategy builds on the strong foundations of the 2012 strategy of promoting our compact and efficient city, particularly focusing on new development around key centres and along major transport corridors.

The refresh process was undertaken in close collaboration with community and industry stakeholders. Through an innovative approach, it refreshed the policies we refined and tested throughout that 13-week engagement. Rather than a more traditional approach to a draft strategy or discussion paper being released seeking formal submissions, this approach enabled the refresh process to progress efficiently through concurrent analysis, policy development and community engagement activities. There was overwhelmingly positive and forward-looking sentiment in the community conversations, with government urged to embrace leadership and innovation and make Canberra a groundbreaking city for others to follow.

Major changes have taken place in the ACT since 2012 to accommodate the growing city. The first stage of light rail is nearing completion, urban renewal is transforming parts of our city, and we are committed to net zero emissions in the future. These changes provide an even stronger opportunity to achieve a compact and efficient city.

Canberra's population is growing and changing. We are welcoming well over 7,000 more people every year who are calling Canberra home. Around 100,000 new homes will be required by 2041 to meet future demand from the ACT's population growth. At the same time, we are changing, with approximately half of all Canberra households comprising only one or two people. Preferences for where and how we live are changing as well.

The biggest challenge for the planning strategy refresh was to consider where these people would live, work and stay or shop, and how they might move around the city. We were able to appraise, as part of the refresh of the planning strategy, how the policy settings articulated in the 2012 planning strategy have been progressing. One key target set by the 2012 strategy was the proportion of new housing being delivered through urban intensification of 50 per cent or more. Since then, an average of 63 per cent of all new housing has been delivered through infill development within Canberra's existing urban footprint. Indeed, in the past two years, this proportion has been over 70 per cent. This demonstrates changing household preferences and the success of the urban renewal program in changing the housing mix.

We can see a strong trend, a shift from developing in greenfield areas as the dominant location for growth to a focus on renewed development within the existing areas. Importantly, the high rate of infill aligns with what the Canberra community told us through engagement on the planning strategy refresh.

We heard that Canberrans want to protect the environment and landscape qualities of the city, with a preference for infill development over greenfield expansion as long as it is done well. Maintaining a supply of greenfield housing is important in supporting

housing choice and affordability. Up to 30 per cent of housing will continue to be provided as greenfield development. Current estimates are that there is a potential for approximately 29,000 new homes in existing greenfield areas. If no new greenfield areas are identified, this is sufficient until the second half of the 2030s.

Land supply in Gungahlin will be exhausted by 2021-22 with the exception of high density units in the town centre. Land supply in Molonglo is anticipated to be exhausted by 2030-31. These time frames are expected to be extended until the second half of the 2030s with the release of possible future urban expansion areas in west Belconnen, Ginninderry, CSIRO Ginninderra and brownfield locations such as East Lake. These sites will potentially contribute to the ACT's residential land release program. However, the impact is not fully known at this stage.

Between 1991 and 2016, the ACT's urban land take grew by more than 57 per cent. If the historical density of urban growth were to continue unchanged, Canberra's urban footprint would need to increase by a further 48 per cent by 2041. If Canberra simply keeps expanding outwards, this will put increasing pressure on valued natural resources that surround the city, like our bushland, grasslands and the ecosystems that they support. Continued urban sprawl would also further increase travel distances, transport-related carbon emissions and infrastructure servicing costs.

Opportunities for future greenfield development around the existing Canberra urban area were considered, taking into account the key issues such as the proximity to existing urban areas, jobs and services; environmental qualities; and transport connections. In addition, investigations undertaken to inform the refresh found that infrastructure servicing costs are up to three times greater for new greenfield areas than for urban infill locations.

Potential future greenfield areas, including west Murrumbidgee, western Greenway, central Molonglo and the Kowen plateau, were deferred from consideration in the scope of the 2018 strategy due to the complexity of environmental, landscape and community values. However, these areas remain as opportunities for re-examination in future reviews of the ACT planning strategy.

The strategy includes actions to plan for a future greenfield housing supply by investigating the potential of new residential areas to the west of the city, the western edge investigation area.

The strategy sets the stage for an important conversation in 2019 about the Territory Plan and how it can support better planning and design outcomes that are aligned with the community and government expectations. The Territory Plan review is providing an opportunity to implement a number of the strategies, strategic directions and actions. Other actions are expected to be implemented progressively over the next few years.

To continue to develop as a sustainable, livable city where people have a good quality of life and access to all that is great in the city that we can offer, we need to work together at this time of transformation to recognise that we have to be smart and innovative about how we approach the physical, environmental and economic health of our city and enhance our social and cultural wellbeing. The key to success will be

maintaining the enhancement of the good bones of our city, and protecting the landscape character, heritage values and lifestyle offering that Canberrans value so greatly.

I have in attendance with me representatives from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate who will be able to assist with technical input and answer any questions you may have on the ACT planning strategy 2018. Alongside my colleagues from the directorate, I would be happy to take any questions the committee may have. With that, with your agreement, we might go to that presentation to give you that overall view.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Will you be able to give the committee a copy of the presentation?

Mr Gentleman: We have it here.

THE CHAIR: Is it possible to get an electronic copy?

Mr Ponton: Of course.

Mr Gentleman: As the digital minister for the ACT, I am very happy to provide as much electronic information as possible.

THE CHAIR: Please start.

Ms Cusack: I am the Executive Group Manager for Planning, Land and Building Policy at the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. My colleague Anne Moroney is here; her team led the preparation of the refresh for the strategy. We have a brief presentation that runs through the drivers for the review, the “refreshers” as we knew them, the changes or repackaging of things, and directions from the 2012 strategy. We have a look at some of the bases for the policy that came forward in the 2018 strategy. We will talk about the consultation that was undertaken in preparing the 2018 strategy. Then we will go to work through the strategic directions and themes that are the basis for the refresh strategy. I am going to hand over to my colleague Anne, who will take us through it. We will interject if we have anything further to add.

Ms Moroney: I am the Manager of Strategic Planning and Policy in EPSDD. The presentation we have prepared today is really trying to flesh out and provide some background to the minister’s opening statement and an understanding, as Kathy has mentioned, of the process of the refresh and the basis of how the process was undertaken.

In terms of understanding the planning strategy itself, the Planning and Development Act has a requirement for a planning strategy and it gives us some quite clear guidance about the role of the strategy. It is looking very much into that long-term horizon to promote the orderly and sustainable development of the territory consistent with the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the people of the ACT in accordance with sound financial principles. It is giving us some really clear guidance about the nature of taking a triple bottom line consideration of how Canberra is

growing in a pragmatic understanding of sound financial principles. At the same time as the refresh was happening, there were also reviews of the climate change, transport and housing strategies. We are very keen to consider and align with those policy considerations, drivers and imperatives that are part of that process.

The planning strategy very much builds on the inherent key strategies and strategic directions of the 2012 document. There are two key elements to the 2012 strategy that I would like to draw your attention to. One was that it set up a strategic direction around directing urban intensification around Civic and the town centres, and also key group centres, and along transport corridors. Also, it set a target that at least 50 per cent of all new housing should be delivered through urban intensification. Those key principles we saw as robust and sound policies. When we looked at how things were implemented over the period since 2012, it was very much a process where we could see to build on those key things.

THE CHAIR: You said it was going to be a brief presentation. I am concerned that we actually get a chance to ask questions. Maybe if we aim at 10 o'clock as an end.

Ms Moroney: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: There are a lot of questions that could be asked.

Ms Moroney: Yes, certainly. This particular slide is showing how we went from the nine strategies in 2012 and when we re-examined to see how they were tracking we identified five key things to take forward in 2018.

In terms of the refresh process in 2018, we really looked at four key elements of activity: looking at updating and understanding some of the change drivers since 2012 in terms of research and any of our evidence base, understanding the changing and growing demographics and population changes, how urban renewal was happening across the city, looking at pathways that planning can help support net zero emissions by 2045 and also how to support investment in light rail and other key things. At the same time we also undertook community engagement and we were able, through the process, to test and discuss some of the key strategic directions as we were developing them and also understanding some of the updates and changes that have happened since then.

There are a number of key change drivers and disruptors in the trends that we are very much aware of and, just as highlights here, since you have the slides in front of you, it was really those things about accommodating population growth of an additional 7,000 people a year. The most recent estimate of Canberra's population is now around just under 9,000. The figures here that have been quoted are from the strategy document itself. We know from a point of view of housing that there is a distribution between low density housing about 63 per cent—I think it is the next line that is there—and 65 per cent. In terms of medium density, about 18 per cent of housing stock is medium density, and about 17 is of higher density that is there. We also note that over half the households have one or two people living in them.

In terms of where jobs are and how employment is happening across the city, employment in Canberra is centralising. And I think that is one of the key trends we

found, with over 50 per cent of all jobs being in central Canberra. That includes the city, Fyshwick, Barton, Russell and Acton but, in terms of where people live and the dynamic of how they travel to work, it is quite a growing tension that is there. Of that, at least a third are located in Civic itself. So that is increasing how we look at the connections between renewal and transport choices and other things that are there.

From an urban footprint point of view, one of the things that we have noticed, as the minister mentioned in his opening remarks, is Canberra's urban footprint and that if we continue to grow at the same densities we could increase the size of Canberra by a further 50 per cent, and the implications of that—

Mr Gentleman: Just to touch on that, that would mean that the living urban border of Canberra would extend past our border.

Ms Moroney: And the implications of that in terms of environmental qualities but also in terms of investment in infrastructure, both social and fiscal infrastructure. The other key thing there is tracking how or where urban renewal has been occurring, and just noting that over the last two years the proportion of renewal happening within urban infill areas has been over 50 per cent.

From a community engagement point of view, we ran a concurrent process—and that was quite innovative in terms of large-scale strategic planning—to develop and test policy through engagement. And that was both within government and also externally with key stakeholders and community groups. We held a series of different types of activities and that enabled us to engage in different ways. The key issues that we heard from that process were really those things supporting those unique landscape and brownfield qualities and values that Canberrans really like and respect about Canberra as a place and make it a special place.

How will growth happen? There was a strong preference that came through from the engagements for infill, if it is done well to a high quality level of design, over further expansion for the city.

The role of centres, particularly town centres and the different character of centres, came through very clearly as an active consideration by Canberrans about how those centres could be built on and leveraged on going into the future. And there was a strong motivation to do things with innovation, doing things innovatively, looking at natural and other solutions and how we maintain the diversity within our community and in business and in other aspects as well. That leads us to the 2018 document itself.

We set a vision for the 2018 document, and it is in line obviously with the object that is described under the act. Canberra by 2041 would be a sustainable, competitive and equitable city that respects Canberra's unique legacy as a city in the landscape and as the national capital while we are responsive to future and resilient change. This is also considering the long-term horizon of key metropolitan spatial plans, thinking about those future generations that we are actually planning for and setting the pathways for how to achieve change and deliver things there.

Ms Cusack: And I think also the time horizon out to 2041 which aligns us with other key government strategies that have been prepared or are being prepared at the

moment, such as climate change for example which is pushing out to a similar time frame.

Ms Moroney: The policy plan is a way that we have tried to encapsulate the strategic directions in the 2018 document. It identifies where urban intensification locations are; they are the areas that are highlighted in purple, and they relate to Civic and the town centres and key group centres and obviously major transport corridors as well.

The policy plan also identifies light rail, city to Woden, as a land use investigation area. It further refines how work that is being considered for employment lands in the eastern broadacre, the areas that are currently under commonwealth review. It also further refines the area for future investigation on the western edge for possible future expansion of the city, subject to a number of studies.

On the next slide we have the 2012 policy plan on the left, and the 2018 one on the right. You can see the continuation of the policies that are there and particularly building on those urban intensification localities. There have been some slight adjustments and two additional group centres have been included in terms of the urban intensification areas. That is clearly a refinement in the eastern broadacre and also in the western edge study.

The other thing which the 2018 strategy does is try to recognise the connections with strategic land use planning and transport and infrastructure planning. We are picking up on some key transport corridors for both freight and also for high speed rail that is there and also recognising some of the key employment clusters which align with the National Capital Plan.

There are five things that we have identified. The majority of this presentation is then going through in some detail on the five things. This might be a good place to pause unless you would like to go through in further detail.

THE CHAIR: Members, I suspect that we would like to ask questions rather than pause at this point. In that case, thank you very much for all of that. My first line of questioning is about the purple bits which you put up there. The first question is: basically, what does it mean? I have asked that and I have been asked that by many people.

Mr Ponton: I might kick off. I hold the statutory position of Chief Planning Executive. I was going to make a comment when Ms Moroney was speaking earlier that, in terms of those purple areas, they are areas that have been identified for potential intensification in terms of where we would first see the increase in terms of the 70 per cent urban infill. The point that I want to make, though, is that just because those areas have been identified as purple does not mean that they are necessarily going to be five, 10-storey buildings all the way through there. I think it is important to note that we need to do some finer-grain work. If we look at the actions within the planning strategy itself, it does identify that more work needs to be done, particularly in relation to some of those areas.

Increasing density can simply be providing for, for example, dual occupancies or triple occupancies. We do need to do that finer-grain work. It may be that in some of

those locations it is not appropriate to change the land use policies, but what we are saying is that if we are going to change the land use policies these are the areas that we need to look at first.

We need to do the finer-grain planning work and then, coming out of that, I would expect some changes to the Territory Plan. And as part of that work we will identify whether it is increased density but lower density, medium density and high density. In terms of some of the commentary that I have heard since this was released, and some of the conversations that we had during the engagement activities on this plan, it was reassuring people that increased density does not mean high density.

THE CHAIR: If you are someone who lives in a purple bit—and I think on the basis of the map I am someone who lives in a purple bit—particularly if you happen to be someone who lives, potentially, in an older place in a purple bit, what does that mean to you? From what you have said, you have been told the rules are going to change but you do not know what the rules are.

Mr Ponton: This being a high level planning document, it is important to note that it is just that. It is identifying the high level strategies. In terms of that finer grain, that is subject to further work and that, in and of itself, will require more detailed community engagement. And I think that is an important point to note.

In terms of the high level principles at the city-wide level, the engagement focused very much on working with the community to understand how the city works as a city in terms of the inner city ecosystem and then, as we settle this work and move into the next phase, we start to do the finer-grain planning. And that, as I said, will also include community engagement.

Mr Gentleman: I think, just to reinforce Mr Ponton's comments there, if you will have a look at the note on page 7 it says:

This map outlines the strategic direction for the development of Canberra over the next 30 years and beyond, and the policy boundaries are not to be regarded as precise, and are intended to inform more detailed planning.

THE CHAIR: I have read that, and the problem is that this is what is worrying people because they feel they know that there is a commitment to change but that is really all they feel they know.

Mr Ponton: If I could, as part of that, also in the strategy itself and in the presentation, when you have time to look through that in more detail, in terms of actions one of the key things that we heard very clearly from the community was that each locality has particular values to that community.

The government has given a commitment to district-level planning, and that would be part of the Territory Plan review that we are currently settling the scope for. Hopefully in the coming months we will be able to have more detailed conversations with the community. But the first step in terms of the next phase is to work with communities to understand what they value about their local area, and from there we can start to do that finer-grain planning.

Ms Cusack: If I could just add too to Mr Ponton's comments, I think that there is something of a precedent for the way the policy plan is expressed, and it started with the 2012 strategy in which the centres and corridors that we have looked at in the 2018 strategy were first introduced.

We had conversations, I understand, in 2012 with the community about the fact that there was an interest in centres and corridors as ideal locations for increased development but not in an overnight manner. There was a program of master plans that was then rolled out across certain centres. Obviously there was extensive community consultation as we went through centres like Woden and Belconnen to look at the development potential and the opportunity for those centres to offer a wider range of services and housing and so on.

I think if there was one thing that the 2012 policy plan illustrates and that I feel we are carrying forward into the 2018 it is the fact that we set a strategic direction in that plan but it does not mean that things immediately change. It means that we go into another process, whether it is master planning or whether it is the review of the Territory Plan. We go into another process then with the community and with stakeholders to work through what might change from the policy plan.

THE CHAIR: If you are a landowner in a purple bit when would you think you would have some certainty as to what your options were?

Ms Cusack: We have commenced a review of the Territory Plan this year, and our intention is that we will be working through the Territory Plan. One of the main things we need to do in the Territory Plan is ensure that it reflects government policy, namely strategies and the planning strategy.

Mr Gentleman: And community vision too.

Ms Cusack: And community vision, absolutely. But that does not mean that all of these purple areas will instantly change within the Territory Plan. We will, similar to the master plan program, go through on a case-by-case basis to look at the areas we have highlighted and to work with the community and stakeholders to understand their potential, if any, for intensification.

MR PARTON: To get to the core of Ms Le Couteur's question, I think it revolves around individual home owners in those areas that have been identified for further urban intensification. It is easy for me to assume because I am not a home owner in one of those areas. But I am assuming that the planning directorate, the government, would be encouraging urban intensification in those areas. If you are an individual, you are living in an older house on a 700 metre block; you are smack bang in one of those purple areas; you like your house; you do not want to move; you do not want to be a part of that intensification. I am assuming that there will be pockets in those areas that do not change. Not every residence in those areas is going to change. Is that correct?

Mr Ponton: That would be correct, yes, and that is the nature of planning. In terms—

THE CHAIR: That is part of it. I used to live in Downer. Downer has a lot of houses that are reaching the stage where they are either going to be significantly renovated or rebuilt. I know my former neighbours. There are quite a few who do not want to make a decision about spending an awful lot of money until they know what the options are. They are not necessarily saying that that they want to stay in what they have got. For some people, that is what they are saying, but not for everybody.

A lot of people would quite like to see some sort of change and, if that happens, to be part of it rather than saying, “Okay, nothing is actually going to happen. I will do the new bathroom. I will put the ramps in,” and then find a year later that their options were considerably different. They could do a dual occupancy and that sort of thing might well be attractive. But they are in limbo because they have been told it is going to change but they do not have an idea—

Mr Ponton: I think the important thing to note—it is just an observation, and the minister mentioned this earlier—is that this is a long-term plan. That is the nature of a high-level strategic plan. It is giving an indication and it identifies the further work that needs to be done. Just as an example, a body of work was done in the late 90s that resulted in RZ2 zoning in the city, which was brought in around 2003.

We have areas in the city that we rezoned in 2003 where no RZ2 development is occurring, because the market simply is saying that it is not ready for that. We are starting to see some of that development in places like Hawker. People are starting to see these developments and are raising concerns with the type of development. But the policies have been in place since around 2003. Those conversations that I have been having with those residents have reinforced what we heard at the planning strategy, which is that we do not propose increased density but what we want is high quality development.

This is why there is a whole range of other activities—identified in the planning strategy and work that the government is investing in through design review panels, for example—to make sure that we are delivering on that expectation of the community that if we provide for this housing choice, it needs to be of high quality.

But going back to that point, just because it is identified in purple on this plan does not mean that there is going to be a change within the next one, two, three, five or 10 years. We will need to prioritise those areas in terms of the further fine grain work that needs to be done. The first step, though, will be through the district level planning as part of the Territory Plan review, which is foreshadowed in the planning strategy. So it is iterative.

MS ORR: Mr Ponton, what has changed in those intensification areas between 2012 and 2018?

Mr Ponton: In terms of policies that have changed since?

MS ORR: No, as in terms of areas.

THE CHAIR: In terms of the map.

Mr Ponton: The areas covered—there is not a significant change.

Ms Cusack: The corridor has increased as you head northwards to Gungahlin.

MS ORR: So it has taken in parts of Gungahlin.

Ms Cusack: Yes, and we have identified, as Ms Moroney said in her earlier presentation, city to Woden as an investigation area.

Mr Ponton: In terms of the areas—

THE CHAIR: It is generally, I think, wider if the map—

Ms Cusack: Two additional centres have been added.

MS ORR: Is it actually wider because—

Mr Ponton: That was a comment I was going to make.

MS ORR: spatially they look actually like they are similar proportions.

Mr Ponton: Ms Moroney can confirm but my understanding is that we did have our mapping people, as best they can, correlate to make sure that those existing areas were essentially the same. In fact, during some discussions with the Inner South Canberra Community Council we identified that, in fact, we had inadvertently increased an area around Manuka.

MS ORR: Can you repeat that, sorry?

Mr Ponton: I was saying that in settling this, we did test these maps with our mapping area. We asked them, in terms of the data that sits below, to make sure that those areas were essentially aligned with what was in the 2012 strategy. We did identify through that process, and also in talking with the Inner South Canberra Community Council and other community councils, one area that had inadvertently expanded. So we brought that back.

I will ask Ms Moroney to confirm that, but my understanding is that we did do that exercise. There are different scales; so it does look wider. But my understanding is that it is, effectively, the same. Intentionally, it has a rather loose edge. That is because we did not want to identify that this block is in and this block is out, because that in and of itself can cause concern to residents.

So it is about, as we do the finer grain, working out what the best boundary is for a particular locality, because at this city-wide scale it is very difficult to set those boundaries without having those detailed conversations.

MS ORR: Ms Moroney, could you also confirm whether Belconnen has remained the same and is more defined rather than being a blob? Again, Belconnen also has what looked to be some imprecise borders. I am interested to know whether that is just a feature of the mapping tool or whether these kinds of areas of Page and Florey are

within it.

Ms Moroney: There are some changes. The areas that are covered by the 2012 are included in the 2018. Then there are some additional areas. The basis of our drawing the new boundaries for the 2018 was very much based on walkable catchments—looking at, say, 800 metres or a 10 to 15 minute walk for an average person from a town centre and then comparable distances from group centres, from the light rail corridor and from the Rapid public transport as well. In respect of the additional areas, the area around Belconnen has expanded. It now includes Jamison and also the other additional group centre that has been included is Casey.

MS ORR: Casey is in Gungahlin.

Ms Moroney: Yes, Casey is in Gungahlin; that is correct.

THE CHAIR: I have a question about Northbourne Avenue. Of course, the city and gateway plan amendment also covers this. I realise that the NCA trumps what the ACT government may do. But it appears that the NCA is now going for three storeys on each side of Northbourne Avenue. Previously, as we would all be aware, there were considerable plans given that some of the light rail corridor, but in particular Canberra—I am referring to the vineyard there.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Basically, I also understand that the people who are living on the eastern side of Northbourne Avenue, while they have concerns about what is happening in their local environment in general, have been recently supportive of further densification on the other side of Northbourne. What is the ACT government's attitude on development on the western side? Is symmetry important in densification?

Mr Gentleman: In a planning context, symmetry is important. You would see some of the criteria in the National Capital Plan also calling for symmetry. We have talked previously about gateway buildings, for example—entrances to the city and that sort of thing. But going back to your original comment, of course in our planning context we cannot be inconsistent with the National Capital Plan. That is why we work with them as best as possible to achieve an outcome that suits both a planning sense but also the community's wants and wishes.

THE CHAIR: So are you happy with the reduced densification on the western side? Given that it is the light rail corridor, given its location and lack of immediate neighbours on the light rail corridor, it seems the rather more obvious process.

Mr Ponton: The ACT government's position, in terms of the government and the planning authority as its advisers—the earlier version of the framework did show increased heights in that location. We worked with our colleagues in the National Capital Authority, who had interviews in terms of that particular site. Given that it was a joint policy document, it was important that we needed to arrive at a position of compromise. Often that is the case in planning where you have different positions and viewpoints. You might have different views within communities and between community and industry. Through that exercise of negotiation with our colleagues in

the National Capital Authority, the policy was settled as the three stories.

Certainly, as chief planner my personal view is that there is greater opportunity for density. In fact, I think that if there were opportunity for increased height on that site you might actually end up with better public space if it were done well. Having said that, I know that that particular issue has been raised during the consultation on the draft amendment No 91.

The National Capital Authority is considering whether there is an opportunity still to maintain the National Capital Plan's principle of symmetry but also to provide for increased height on parts of that site. But we will not know for certain until that is settled. However, I know that there has been a series of discussions occurring.

MS CHEYNE: I appreciate, Mr Ponton, your comments, that this is a high-level, strategic document and that there is finer grain detail about some of this urban intensification, and further consultation with the community. For me, in Belconnen, as noted, the sites have largely stayed the same. It is a market where that intensification is already happening, particularly in Macquarie and Weetangera.

The feedback that I am getting from the community is that we are getting infill, which people are not necessarily opposed to, but they are opposed to infill that is not achieving high quality design and design that fits in with the character of the suburb, which is well loved. It was one of the first in Belco. I know it is a broader policy objective to have infill with high quality design. Where this work is already happening in these purple areas—I am sure it is not happening just in Belconnen—how can we make sure that we are achieving better design outcomes and properties that people actually want to live in?

Mr Ponton: In terms of those areas that are already zoned for increased density, we have the current Territory Plan provisions, and that is what people are currently designing and building to. It has been made clear by me in this and other forums, and the minister has also made the observation, that the current Territory Plan does not necessarily deliver what we and the community, and the industry for that matter, are expecting.

That is largely due to a range of things, including the overall structure of the Territory Plan, which is very rules based. You have heard me talk before about the fact that we have some 2,300 pages of rules. There are some opportunities to depart from them through criteria, but there are a lot of mandatory rules. Therefore we do not necessarily focus on the outcome that we are looking for, because people say, "I just need to comply with each of these rules."

For a multi-unit development, there are 237 rules that you need to comply with. Once you start looking at each of those rules, and you are not thinking about, "Let me think about the site and what I want for this site," you are going straight to the rules. You almost guarantee that you are not going to get the best possible outcome. That is why the Territory Plan review is very much outcomes focused. I have talked in various forums about my desire to see, and the minister has made the point to me that he would like to see, improved design quality and outcomes, in terms of what the planning system can deliver.

That is a long way of saying that we acknowledge that the plan needs to change to achieve those higher quality outcomes. We need to be less focused on the multitude of rules and start to get people to think about what we as a community want for our local area. That brings me back to district-level planning, and the body of work that needs to be done. We need to think about what is important about our local community, and how the plan can help us to deliver on that. We have other tools to support that as well, such as the pre-DA design guidelines which we implemented a year or so ago—currently under review after the first year of operation—and the design review panel.

There is a range of things that we are doing now to improve design quality. In addition to that we are looking at the policy work, the finer grain, in terms of the Territory Plan itself. It is an important step to improve design quality for those areas that are already experiencing growth.

MS CHEYNE: I know that this work is complex and big. With the Territory Plan, the minister has said before that if you printed it all out, you would probably need a truck. It appears that the proper consultation, at least on this review into the Territory Plan, has not started. That outcomes-focused achievement is commendable, and I am grateful that the government realises this, but it will not be in place for a while. There is this other ongoing work, but development is also ongoing. I do not want to freak out developers, but is there a moratorium or something that could be put in place?

Mr Ponton: The short answer to that is that it would be impossible to have a moratorium on development. If we put a moratorium on development until this work is done, you would be looking at, I would think, at least a year, and there would be no development. We have growth in the city; how would we manage that growth? Where would people live?

With respect to the short answer to that—of course, that is ultimately a decision for the government—my advice to government would be that, no, we should not have a moratorium on development. We need to work with the system that we have and put tools in place to improve design quality whilst that other work is running concurrently.

Again I come back to the design review panel that has been interim for the past 12 months. The government has committed funds for us to make it a permanent design review panel. We are already starting to see improvements and we are testing that on very large developments in the city and the Northbourne Avenue corridor. As that settles in, we will start to expand that further.

MS CHEYNE: Expand it to RZ2?

Mr Ponton: Potentially. We will need to let that run for larger developments at this point. As we are doing with the pre-DA design guidelines, we will review its operation after 12 months, after it has been in place for a reasonable period, to see how it has been operating and to see whether or not we need to expand the criteria to capture other developments.

With the pre-DA consultation guidelines, through the review I expect that we will be looking at changing the thresholds there as well, based on feedback that we have been

receiving. That reinforces to the committee that they will have a say before the proponent starts designing their development. Often a proponent will go to the Territory Plan, design their concept and then go and talk to the community. By then a lot of investment has been made. We are trying to push it back further and further and to say, “We’ve got this block. Here are our givens. We want to achieve a residential development or a mixed-use development.” We would then start to have the conversation about how that might work for the local community.

Unfortunately, we have a system that is very complex. We want to move to a more outcomes-based system that is simpler. But there will be a period in between where we have to work with what we have got and apply some non-statutory tools or, in the case of the design review panel, move to make that a statutory tool. That can be done through the Legislative Assembly. We are proposing—and there is no secret about this—as part of the implementation of the permanent design review panel to ask the minister to bring forward legislation to amend the Planning and Development Act to make it a mandatory referral in certain circumstances.

MS CHEYNE: In terms of non-statutory measures, particularly in RZ2 zones where the character of the suburb does, in some developments, seem to be quite inconsistent, does the directorate have capacity to turn up to sites and look at the plan, look at the site, and say, “This is probably not going to be right”?

Mr Ponton: This comes back to the structure of the Territory Plan. If every rule as drafted is complied with then there is no choice under the legislation but to approve.

Having said that, we have tested that. There is a provision in the act—I think it is section 120—that talks about suitability of the site. We have refused some development applications based on that. It is a much more difficult argument to make in the courts. My preference would be to have a planning scheme that gave the ability to the planning authority to make those decisions.

Going back to the point of timing, certainly we could do this much faster, but it is important that we scope the project well. We are spending a lot of time scoping this project. We are also spending a lot of time scoping the engagement side of things. Whilst we could do this in four or five months, if it was just left to Ms Cusack and her team, that would mean we are not engaging with the community, and those conversations take time. It is really important that we have conversations, that we do not just have one conversation but that we go back and test. We are expecting that it will take a good 12 months to complete this review because we are factoring in significant community engagement. Even before then, we are putting a lot of thought into how we do that.

We have already started testing with community councils and other interested parties the best way of engaging with those communities. Before we go out more broadly to the broader community, we are testing with community groups how they would like us to talk to them, and that takes time. As I said, I am rather impatient when it comes to the Territory Plan review. I would like to have had it done six months ago, but good foundations mean we will get a good result.

THE CHAIR: The purple bits are all around the transport corridors. Obviously the

purple bits will mean that there are more people, and in Canberra there is a possibility that that is going to mean that there are more cars. This is also where the rapid public transport needs to be. What are we doing to ensure that the public transport does not get clogged up by the additional cars from the additional people?

Mr Gentleman: You have described exactly what transport-orientated design is about. It is about using transport corridors for opportunities for better public transport as well as intensification along the routes at the same time. We have learnt by looking at a number of other jurisdictions where this has turned out to be a very good way of planning, both planning for living and planning in the transport area. We have seen in Vancouver, for example, and in areas in the US where they have used transport-orientated design to ensure that you provide good public transport and you have the effect of being able to deal with the increase, if there is an increase, in vehicle movements, and trying to entice people to use public transport rather than vehicular movements.

Mr Ponton: If we did not look at providing for greater infill along those corridors and we just allowed the city to spread in terms of greenfield development, I would argue that we would see a lot more people in cars. As Ms Moroney said earlier, 50 per cent of employment is in the city centre, so I would expect that most of those people would look to drive. So in fact you would end up with serious congestion with all those people looking to drive in, as opposed—

MS ORR: Mr Ponton, I think it was Ms Moroney who said earlier—but I could be mistaken—that the intensification areas are based on walking catchments. Is that correct?

Mr Ponton: Walking catchments to the town centres but also to the transport corridors where the public transport rapid services will be.

MS ORR: In those areas where you already have intensification, say within the inner city area, what are you seeing as the behavioural uptake at the moment from people who are already there? I am thinking along the lines of the journey to work data that comes from the ABS.

Mr Ponton: In terms of journey to work, the data from the ABS is, to be frank, not as useful as it could be, primarily because it is—

MS ORR: It is triangulated in a particular way.

Mr Ponton: And in the timing. The government did invest about a year ago in its own journey to work surveys so that we got a better picture of what was happening. The expectation is that that will continue so that we start to build up a good dataset.

MS ORR: Are you finding that people who are living in those intensification areas are using forms other than cars to get to work?

Mr Ponton: Yes.

Mr Gentleman: To go back to my earlier comment on Vancouver, the stark change

there is that the demographic of people 23 years and younger that are choosing to get a driver's licence is less than 50 per cent. It has made such a change. By providing really good public transport, they are changing their lifestyles completely. That gives them the opportunity, instead of spending money on a car, to spend money on their lifestyle or perhaps to move into purchasing a property.

MS CHEYNE: Cycleways and pedestrian—

Mr Gentleman: Yes, that is right.

THE CHAIR: One of the things I was trying to get to with this question was that we do not necessarily have to have congestion for public transport. I was hoping you might say something about protecting public transport from possible congestion, particularly given that, as we talked about earlier, Canberra is quite big. If you are going from Gungahlin to the city or Tuggeranong to the city, you are talking about a trip which, even without congestion, takes time. So, given that our public transport is used for long distances as well as short distances, I was wondering whether you were going to be looking at protecting some dedicated space for public transport so that the public transport does not get slower.

Mr Ponton: Dedicated space is work that would be done with our colleagues in Transport Canberra and City Services in terms of the transport strategy. But the planning strategy, which does link into the transport work and the policy map, essentially achieves that by virtue of getting people out of cars. If we get people out of cars and get them walking, cycling or catching public transport, then, as more people use public transport and more people use cycleways, there is likely to be greater investment in those. As I said earlier, if we spread the city out and everyone gets in their car and comes into the city, that is when you are going to start to see that conflict.

Hearing suspended from 10.37 to 10.50 am.

MS ORR: Can you elaborate on the opportunities you see for district planning?

Mr Ponton: The really exciting thing about district-level planning is that it is an acknowledgement that one size does not fit all. I think that that is important. The current Territory Plan does essentially do that. There is a code for multi-unit housing and the same rules apply—it is interesting—no matter where you are in the city. There were some additional provisions for certain suburbs, but understanding what is important about a particular locality is not captured in the current Territory Plan. So I am quite excited about the opportunity of talking with community groups, first of all, to help us define the districts. That is important because it is not going to be as simple as just saying “the Belconnen district”, because pockets within the Belconnen district might have particular characteristics that are particularly important to that local community—picking up on Ms Cheyne’s comments earlier. In terms of the opportunities there, it is quite exciting to go in and understand what is important and then start to frame provisions that respect those important features of those localities.

Ms Cusack: I am relatively new to Canberra. What struck me when I got here was that the RZ1 zone covers around 82 per cent of our urban area but an RZ1 block in Yarralumla might be 1,200 square meters and in Molonglo it is going to be more like 350 or 400. So you have the same broad land use zoning that the Territory Plan will roll out across all of those areas but you have vastly different character. Character is what we need to capture in the district planning. As Mr Ponton said, character will not be universal across the districts; there will be pockets and changes within suburbs and centres. But district planning is the opportunity for us to start to add some differentiation to the plan based on place, based on character and based on emerging and desired future character. I think it will add a really important layer to allow us to plan in a more refined way for different locations.

MS ORR: What is the intention for developing the district plans, in the sense of the timeline? When does this work, do you think?

Mr Ponton: On the timeline it is difficult for me to say because, as I said earlier, we are currently scoping up the project in terms of the Territory Plan review. Part of that scope picks up the component of district level planning. So I am talking in general terms. But in terms of specifics it is a matter that we are hoping to take to government very soon. It is subject to the decision of government, so—

MS ORR: So the district planning is sitting in the Territory Plan review work? Have I understood that correctly?

Mr Ponton: What we are proposing is that there will be a review of the Territory Plan which is around the structure and the things that need to change and looking at the legislation. I am even moving towards a planning system review. That might make the minister nervous but I think it is needed. Many of the issues we have with the Territory Plan relate to the structure and that is set by the legislation. There is work that we need to do there. I think that work needs to be complete before we move into the district-level planning. We can work on the structure and how the district-level planning will fit into the structure, so parts will be concurrent but those community engagement activities will be sequential to the review, because we need to talk to the

community about the fundamentals first before we get to the district-level planning.

MS ORR: That is essentially my next question. I think you have partly answered it. What gives you the view that you have to do one bit before the other and not concurrently? You said there is a bit of work we have to do before we do other stuff. Why can we not just rush forward in the interests of sanity to do everything? I think you have somewhat answered that question.

Mr Ponton: There are two parts to that. One is it would be too much to do in one hit, and linking that to the engagement activities we would be wanting to do could overload the community. We need be mindful that we do not ask too much of those people who are engaged in this work. As I said, we would need to work on the fundamentals in terms of the structure and how district-level planning will fit before we do that work. I am particularly mindful of feedback that we have received through a range of our engagement activities that we need to be very careful about not overloading those people who are wanting to engage in this work.

MS ORR: You said you are looking to have a proposal to government shortly. So, depending on how long government takes to make a decision, we could start to see these next steps happening?

Mr Ponton: Absolutely. We have already explored some concepts with the minister and government. We are just refining that. That is with us. I would like to think that in a matter of weeks or—

Ms Cusack: It will be weeks.

Mr Ponton: Again, I am impatient about this work. I want to get it started.

MR PARTON: It is a target-rich environment. I do not know where to start. The plan states:

Urban growth should be located to best meet the needs of current and future
Canberrans while upholding the qualities of the city we value such as our green
spaces and unique neighbourhoods.

I think we would all agree on that. But I know that there is concern in the south of Canberra over the fact that this planning strategy, among other things, forecasts that the population of Tuggeranong, for argument's sake, will fall 29 per cent between now and 2041. Twenty per cent of Canberra's workforce lives in the valley now and has to commute north for work.

I would have thought, looking at the overarching themes of the planning strategy, that creating employment in the valley would be required to underpin the urban renewal that must take place there if we are rolling out 70 per cent of urban infill. But I do not see that happening. I, among many others in the south, am extremely worried about where that ends for a number of communities in Tuggeranong, because if it rolls out the way that it is planned in this strategy we would see some medium-term outcomes including mortgage stress, social issues, crime problems, rising youth unemployment and migration away from the valley. That is not a good picture.

Mr Gentleman: The projection of decline is based on statistics from previous years. What it does not show is some recent growth in the valley. You would have seen, particularly around Greenway, new developments there that have brought some more population into Tuggeranong, which is a good thing. It is a large employment area. There are a number of federal public service employment hubs in Tuggeranong. When you are commuting, as I do and as you do yourself, from Tuggeranong into the city, you do see commuters coming from the north side of town and from the centre to work in Tuggeranong. The opportunity for employment is there and one would imagine it will grow, because more people are needed to develop and roll out federal government policy and actions and, of course, we look at what opportunities we have. We have done CIT, for example, down at Tuggeranong to provide some employment at the same time. So I think you will see those figures fluctuate somewhat over the forward period.

Ms Moroney: One of the things the planning strategy does is acknowledge that Tuggeranong plays a key role in employment and employment distribution. One of the things that it acknowledges is that Tuggeranong is one of the top 10 employment clusters within the territory. If you can bear with me, I will find out where it is in terms of the numbers. The other thing is that we can see that the life cycle of Canberra's suburbs is very pronounced in terms of the number of people who live in houses as people age, children grow up and leave and all those sorts of things. The generational change that happens in Canberra is very pronounced as the waves of development have happened. Tuggeranong is one of the places, as with Weston Creek, where you can see that generational change coming through.

MS ORR: When you say generational change, do you mean in the sense that the people who bought there and raised their families have now become empty-nesters? Is that what we are seeing?

Ms Moroney: Yes, and then we are seeing new people coming in with younger children, and also those people who have come in when the areas were established and raised families staying on as well. A lot about the strategy is looking at providing housing options and alternatives for people to age in place and remain in those communities they have been in, but also for other families to come in and to see the whole generational shift that is happening there.

THE CHAIR: On page 26 you say:

Most new greenfield development has occurred to the north and west of the city, leading to a growing distance between residential areas and Canberra's major employment locations in the centre and east.

That is reality. What are you doing about it?

MR PARTON: It appears to many that the planning strategy looks at Tuggeranong and just says, "Well, it's just going to wither on the vine now. Sorry, folks. We're moving on to the north."

MS LE COUTEUR: The people of Woden do not feel it quite as strongly but they

feel it also.

Mr Ponton: It is identified as an employment area. The strategy is acknowledging that there has been decline. That is just a fact and we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that. The policy map does show the town centre as a centre and an employment hub but also identifies opportunities in that centre for urban intensification, so to suggest that the planning strategy is essentially saying it can just wither on the vine—I would not agree with that.

Ms Cusack: I note that we have added in the 2018 policy plan additional centres within the Tuggeranong district.

MS ORR: I think it is Kambah and—

Mr Ponton: Kambah, Wanniasa and Calwell.

Ms Cusack: I think that shows a commitment to investing in the Tuggeranong district in more detail. Ms Moroney, I am not sure which page you are looking for but it might be page 54, where we look at the diversity and resilience of our centres. If there is one thing the planning strategy is doing, it is acknowledging that we have had a very strong hierarchy of centres. That has served Canberra very well as it has grown to this point, but the centres are changing and the nature of how the centres function, what they offer and how people interact with them is growing and changing. We want to be able, in the strategy, to support the needs of the community and support economic viability within those centres as they grow and change within the next five-year period of the planning strategy.

MR PARTON: There is a focus on 70 per cent of new housing being built within our existing urban footprint, and urban infill in Tuggeranong is difficult. I refer to the CURF report of 2016: the spatial structuring, the road network and the use of cul-de-sac block layouts. I would have thought it is going to make that 70 per cent urban infill extremely difficult in a large number of Tuggeranong suburbs. Can I get some feedback from someone on that?

Mr Gentleman: They are certainly challenging, but you would have seen recent developments in Tuggeranong be incredibly successful, particularly for older persons accommodation, that is, people wanting to downsize into smaller residential plots but within a group. It has happened right around our suburb in Calwell and Isabella Plains. It has not yet happened in your area of Theodore, but I imagine that at some point there might be an opportunity. So where we have done this is where there has been an opportunity to use land—

MR PARTON: How could there possibly be an opportunity in Theodore?

Mr Gentleman: There is quite a bit on the main road up the centre of Theodore that we used to use for ACTION bus layovers, for example. There could be an opportunity to do it there. It is a similar size area as those in Calwell and Isabella Plains so it has occurred on occasions in that space.

Mr Ponton: The only point I add to what the minister says is again coming back to

the fact that this is a long-term plan. We need to do some finer grain work to pick up on some of the points you have identified.

MS ORR: Would that include the district planning work?

Mr Ponton: Indeed, yes.

MS ORR: Can you go through some of the opportunities presented by the district planning work where concerns such as those raised by Mr Parton could be addressed.

Mr Ponton: Ms Cusack has been doing work on the scoping, so I will hand over to her.

Ms Cusack: It is hard to answer specifically because at this point we are working up a generic scope for district planning. But the reference I made earlier to the RZ1 zone gives the example of how different that zone is in its function and how it applies in different physical locations. The opportunity of district planning gives us a chance to look at districts and look at the nature of the subdivision planning and look at the opportunities that may exist within those districts for potential intensification.

Without actually looking at the physical layout and starting to do some testing it is hard to say. Each district is different. We know that, but it is not enough. We need to know more about how they are different and what the community is expecting in the way of how they are going to grow and change as we go forward. That will help inform the spatial urban analysis that we can do to understand better what is possible. I know that is a very broad answer.

Mr Ponton: If your concern also is in relation to matters such as traffic and infrastructure, another important point to note—I am not talking about specific parts of Tuggeranong but Canberra more generally, and Ms Moroney might be able to provide some more details in terms of specific numbers—is that we have identified through our analysis the changing composition of households. Whilst the numbers of houses has not changed in suburbs that had quite large numbers when they were first established the population has decreased. Therefore, if you have higher density the roads and infrastructure—water, sewerage and the like—can cater for that. Again, we need to do the finer grain planning to understand the infrastructure requirements for intensification in certain areas.

Ms Cusack: Through the process we have been through we received a recommendation from the housing choices committee that they wanted to see the potential for separate titling of dual occupancies in the RZ1 zone. That was recommendation 12. That is an example of a lot of work we need to do at a district level basis. We cannot say that that could work across the entirety of the RZ1 zones in Canberra.

So one of the key things we will be taking forward in the district planning is what that recommendation means in all the different districts. When you think about plot sizes, infrastructure, transport capacity, slope of land and so on, what is possible?

MR PARTON: I know we are trying to simplify some major planning documents,

but you just about need a zone between RZ1 and RZ2, which I dare say we will not be doing. But it is difficult to categorise them all in the one.

Ms Cusack: We might not if we can start to nuance the RZ1 on a district-by-district basis. I think zones can sometimes be quite blunt in the way they apply because they have to apply across broad areas; you cannot create an individual zone for every circumstance. As it stands, in the Territory Plan we have 23 zones already plus 14 or 15 separate overlays. It is quite complex and, philosophically, it is good where possible to simplify a zone and then nuance it based on what the districts are telling us is appropriate.

THE CHAIR: We have housing growth in the west and employment growth in the east. Why did we stop looking at Kowen?

Mr Gentleman: There is a very detailed answer to that.

THE CHAIR: The obvious answer is because of the LDA.

Mr Ponton: No, it essentially relates to costs of servicing that land. That is the primary reason. I will hand over to our colleague Mr Paynter.

Mr Paynter: I manage the infrastructure planning section. I work closely with Ms Moroney and am part of Kathy Cusack's team. We looked at Kowen much earlier on in 2004 and 2005 when the Canberra spatial plan was underway. The early work we identified showed that the cost of infrastructure, trunk infrastructure particularly, was very significant. It would be like developing a completely new town on a plateau.

There were a number of topographic challenges. There were challenges with water supply, sewerage, storm water management and the like. At the time we discounted it because of those rather significant costs in favour of Molonglo, which has a lot of transport infrastructure around it, not within it. It also has reasonable proximity to major sewers and waters supply infrastructure. From a trunk infrastructure perspective Kowen was significantly more expensive. I do not have the numbers, but I could probably drag them out as a comparison.

Mr Gentleman: The other thing in the back of our mind too is the recreational use of Kowen; there are a number of users. It also has an ability to, if you like, wash its own face by harvesting and tree growth in the forested area. It can go into many more years for current recreational users, and perhaps even more, because it looks after itself too.

Ms Cusack: If I could add to the minister's comment and also reference the opening statement he made, it is important to think about these things as long-term plans and that they are a continuum of planning. Whilst we are not proposing to progress with Kowen now because a number of different factors mean that it is simply not viable, it does not mean that in future reviews we would not reconsider it and use those same tests—looking at location, physical attributes and infrastructure—to guide us on whether it might be appropriate to look at development there in the future.

THE CHAIR: You were talking about a comparison of end costs between Kowen

and Molonglo. Obviously the decision on Molonglo has been made so I guess now the comparison is between Kowen and the western side, the LDA purchased areas. Have you got information about the cost differential for those two, particularly as the minister was suggesting it cost three times as much for greenfields as infill? Are you saying Kowen is considerably more than that? Have you got some sort of analysis, if it was a financial decision?

Mr Paynter: We do not have detailed analysis at this stage. We are hoping to embark in future years on the western edge and to look at those. We have very little data on both sides; it is exceedingly high level. Issues other than infrastructure were environmental and other ecological values. We know that the western edge has some areas with some challenges whereas Kowen has some but maybe not as many.

We are still yet to bed down the comparison of those values as well as infrastructure costs and other planning issues: proximity to employment and availability of social and community services. That work is really on the table. The work we had done previously which discounted Kowen for a period was, as I said, about ten years or so ago.

Mr Ponton: I reinforce the point that Ms Cusack made that this is a long-term planning document. Every five years there is an opportunity to review. The government makes a decision as to whether it needs to review. We look at all the various inputs. In that time we will have undertaken further work in the investigation area for the west, and that then might help us reconsider Kowen. But this is long-term. Every five years we review. It is not saying it will never be looked at; it is simply saying that in terms of current constraints and the high-level work that has been done in relation to costs of servicing the infrastructure it is not for now.

MS ORR: What are the next steps for the western edge investigation?

Mr Ponton: A significant body of work needs to be done. The reason it is identified for investigation is that whilst some due diligence was done by the then Land Development Agency in terms of purchase that was not planning work. We now need to embark on the detailed planning work. That is of course subject to government consideration through the budget process and also the land release program in the longer term. But we need to do a range of detailed studies in relation to environment, infrastructure and topography. For an area like that it could take five to 10 years.

Ms Cusack: Probably eight to 10 years is realistic. The initial assessment under the commonwealth's Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act is a minimum of three to four years. We would need to do that first to understand if there is even land that is potentially suitable for urban development.

MS ORR: If it was not suitable for urban development you could use it for offsets?

Mr Ponton: Potentially, yes.

THE CHAIR: Getting back to Mr Parton's point about Tuggeranong but a bit more widely—there is also Ginninderry, which is way out on the fringe and certainly does not have any employment at this point—are we basically creating dormitory suburbs?

Are you suggesting that in Tuggeranong the only expansion is likely to be in aged care?

Mr Gentleman: No, I would not say just aged care. I was giving aged care as an example of what has already occurred. There are a number of other opportunities for Tuggeranong, I think, into the future too but I would not say it is certainly dormitory. We have talked about the employment hub in Tuggeranong. I think it is an active area of Canberra and I think it will continue to grow. That change we have seen where we have provided some opportunity in Greenway or along Anketell Street has made, I think, a change to the way people think about densification in Tuggeranong itself. There are a number of people living there who absolutely love it and the amenity, and the renewal of the area in a social sense has been fantastic.

MR PARTON: Minister, you have suggested that it is going to continue to grow but this planning strategy document, based on historical figures, is forecasting a massive drop in population. I do not understand how you can sit here as minister and say, “I think it will continue to grow,” because there is nothing in the documentation that we have got that points in that direction and it certainly does not look as though there is going to be any great activation outside of what is going on in every suburb in every area around the city. I do not fully understand how you can suggest that.

Mr Gentleman: I will reinforce what I said earlier, and that is: the statistics that you see in this document are historical statistics where growth was reducing and it is projected out into the future. We have had a change from that, in that we have had some renewal along Anketell Street, and we have seen more people come into the centre and that will be reflected, I think, in new statistics when they come out.

THE CHAIR: Can I just add to Mr Parton’s question. In terms of history, certainly Weston Creek was expected to go down a lot; it was expected to fall by 42 per cent in the previous population forecast. Now you have got it growing by 10,000 people or 44 per cent. It would appear that you are not just looking at historical trends and that you actually have looked at and think Tuggeranong is going down. For Weston you have put out quite different figures from what was used before.

Mr Ponton: It is just providing the facts of the matter, which show there has been a decline. But in regard to the planning strategy, again I come back to the fact that this is a high-level document. It identifies the opportunities in Tuggeranong—in the district, not just the town centre—and then as we undertake the further finer-grained planning work we will continue to identify the opportunities for investment and potential for investment in not only the public sector but also the private sector.

But it is not the role of this document to say that in this strategy x, y, z will provide for increased growth in Tuggeranong. What this is doing is saying that there are opportunities in Tuggeranong, in the broader district. It is identifying, through the five themes, which we can talk through shortly—for example, in diverse Canberra—as we start to do the further detailed work we will see those opportunities become more apparent.

THE CHAIR: These numbers are not a target; they are not historical. What is the status of these numbers?

Mr Ponton: It is certainly not that we would be targeting a declining population in a district, not at all. This is just the facts of the matter.

THE CHAIR: They are your forecasts?

Mr Ponton: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I am just working out what they are.

Mr Ponton: Correct.

MS ORR: Are these based on the ABS population figures?

Mr Ponton: Correct.

MS ORR: It is a trend forecast by the ABS?

Mr Ponton: It is a trend forecast and what we are saying is that, without any intervention, this is what we are going to see. This planning strategy helps with the intervention.

THE CHAIR: Hang on, you are saying different things. Sorry, you said a trend forecast and then you said—

Mr Ponton: It is based on the facts. The facts are: this is what we have seen historically; therefore we project out. If we do not do anything this is what we are going to see. Therefore, if we have a planning strategy, which is what planning is all about, we can start to make interventions to achieve other policy outcomes.

MS ORR: Mr Ponton, with the population climate which is happening in those suburbs, particularly around the area of Tuggeranong—and I think Belconnen would roughly have areas that correlate to the same time period as well—is there something with the demographics, a trend there that you are seeing? I am thinking along the lines of a lot of family homes where the kids have grown up and they have moved out. You have made that observation there. It is empty-nesters. Is there something then within the planning strategy looking at that and revitalising it?

I think Mr Parton looked at making sure that there were jobs, observing that there is already quite a decent job area down there. I am thinking more of housing and making sure that there are opportunities for those people—those younger populations that are growing up, in particular—and diversifying the housing stock. Can you run us through some of the thinking behind that and how it all starts to fit together into revitalising an area such as Tuggeranong, given the position that it is currently in with its cycle?

Mr Ponton: I will ask Ms Moroney to answer that question.

Ms Moroney: Certainly. At the rear part of the document we have captured some key statistical characteristics of different districts; this lot at the back. Shown there is the

population in 2017. Obviously we have just recently had the next release of the estimated residential population in Canberra. We also have forecast populations and some work that we did as part of the refresh process through to 2041. Embedded in those is looking at: if change is happening within particularly some of the urban intensification areas and also looking at a portion of change through the household composition and mix, then what sort of population would we be looking at for those districts in that time scale? The strategy at the moment is suggesting that the population for Tuggeranong would actually increase, based on that generational change that was happening there.

Mr Gentleman: If you look at page 96, the demographic is there.

MS ORR: Is it fair then to say that if you are starting to apply some of these things and some of the changes you can see—for example, picking up on the minister's idea if you are providing age-suitable accommodation for people who are getting into their older years they will move out of the family home but they are wanting to stay within community; therefore they can because that option is there which opens their home up for, say, a new family coming in with younger kids who want to then go through that part; we start to see that cycle—that that is what is you are looking at for Tuggeranong? Is it how you can support regeneration by providing appropriate housing?

Ms Moroney: Yes, and also some of the attributes that places like Tuggeranong have which the CERF report, which Mr Parton referred to, identified in terms of having larger blocks which have well-established gardens and have the infrastructures already there and the infrastructure may have capacity for change. It is providing those opportunities for some change to occur and some different types of housing to go in as well.

Mr Gentleman: I have actually seen it starting to happen on the ground. On my morning walks up Calwell Hill I notice the changes in houses that have been sold. Older people have moved out of the area and younger people with children are moving in. It is quite rapid. I have seen in one particular street six or seven houses—and it is simply a loop street—in the past 12 months have changed hands, and younger people with children have moved into those.

MS ORR: But I guess the catch in that is that the people who are moving out need to have somewhere to move to.

Mr Gentleman: Yes, they are moving into older person's accommodation usually, smaller accommodation.

THE CHAIR: Can we just look at Weston Creek for a change, given that it is a part of my electorate, because that is where the population was expected to fall by 42 per cent. Now the figures say it is going to increase by 44 per cent. Has it purely been the generational change? In places Weston Creek is not quite as old as Tuggeranong but in places it is the same. That has certainly started to happen in Weston Creek. Is that it or are you thinking something else?

Ms Moroney: There is obviously the generational change that is happening there.

There is also land that has been released through the land release program and also other sites which will be available in addition over time, which is part of the thinking, and the opportunities for the Weston groups that the master plan would provide also for renewal.

THE CHAIR: I was just thinking that there is not an awful lot in Cooleman Court. We did that recently. I actually remember that there are only a couple of towers. It is primarily just business as usual, population turnover. There are no assumptions about there being large blocks, dual occupancies, or anything like that driving it.

Ms Moroney: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You talked about this a bit earlier with the district planning. I think it was Ms Orr's question. Do you actually have an estimate of the infill potential for the different districts? And if you do not, is that going to be something that you will achieve as part of the district planning?

Mr Gentleman: I think that that is ongoing work, yes. I do not think we will ever get to a stop position because Canberra is growing all the time. There is a lot of opportunity to work with the community on that ongoing work.

THE CHAIR: I am sure that it will not get to a stop but my question really is: how do we get to the start? I would like to know about the start position.

Mr Ponton: In terms of the extent of infill within particular districts then, yes, I would expect that that would fall out of district-level planning and any changes that might arise in the analysis that would be undertaken as part of that work.

MR PARTON: It is estimated that by 2031 there are going to be 33,500 commuters coming from Queanbeyan alone into the ACT each day. There is a chart on page 29. What is the estimate of total daily New South Wales commuters into the ACT by 2031? Page 29 shows percentages but not the actual numbers. The estimate for Queanbeyan is 33,500. Are there any clearer numbers on that in terms of daily total New South Wales commuters into the ACT?

Mr Gentleman: We do have a number; I am just trying to find it.

Ms Cusack: Ms Moroney, would you like to comment?

Mr Ponton: Ms Moroney is just saying to me that she does not have the figure off the top of her head, but we certainly would have that number to arrive at a percentage.

MR PARTON: In regard to that number, if and when we arrive at it, what proportion of those are expected to travel by private car—I am assuming it is quite high—and what proportion by some form of public transport?

Ms Cusack: We would need to check that, Mr Parton.

Mr Ponton: We would need to take that on notice and come back to you.

MR PARTON: What plans have been developed and are being developed to cater for the associated demand, on road capacity and on parking space? The plan does not shy away from estimating that there will be a massive increase in those commuting from New South Wales.

Mr Ponton: Which is why it is important that this work is linked to the transport strategy. We will continue to work very closely with our colleagues in Transport Canberra and City Services who are responsible for transport planning. Our teams work very closely together in terms of land use planning and transport planning.

MR PARTON: The strategy says that transport is going to produce 60 per cent of ACT greenhouse emissions once the electricity supplies reach the 100 per cent renewable level.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

MR PARTON: The strategy then says that the consequence of this will be that we will have to reduce our dependency on car travel. Understanding that that strays into areas that are outside your remit, there must have been, as you have said, some consultation between the two directorates. What is a summary of how we are going to reduce our dependency on car travel? How are we going to do that?

Mr Gentleman: Can I firstly say that, whilst we will reach the target of 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2020, the challenge will be then the transport sector, and gas users as well. The transport sector will be the major challenge for us. We need to ensure that we give the ability for people to change their transport choices to ensure that they can use non-emission transport, electric vehicles. We are working through that process now.

It is not just us working through this process; the world is. Indeed, manufacturers are moving well in front of some countries across the world. A number of the vehicle manufacturers now are saying that they will not be producing ICEs, internal combustion engines, from the next couple of years onwards. They have made that economic and social decision already. So you will see the change in our fleet come through both from the incentives that we want to provide and also from the change in thinking by manufacturers.

MR PARTON: You have used the word incentive, but there will probably be more than just incentive. I am trying to get my head around how the government—bear in mind that we are talking about other directorates—are going to encourage people to get out of their cars. How are we going to do that?

Mr Ponton: Within my remit is the climate change strategy. That team works very closely with both planning and transport. There is a series of strategies being developed as part of that work in terms of the climate change strategy that will link in very neatly with the transport. It will set targets and actions for transport. It is challenging, because whilst that is within my remit, within my directorate, it is with another minister and not yet endorsed by government. Making announcements in this forum might get me into a bit of strife with another minister. I can just say to you that the work is being done. There will be, I expect, announcements in a very short period

of time in relation to that.

MR PARTON: I just wonder how those strategies will affect those commuting from New South Wales by private car. We know that there is a whole town centre growing at Googong and there is a bunch of people that have just moved across the border for whatever reason. How are we going to factor those people in? They are clearly not riding the bike.

Mr Ponton: You would be surprised; I do know some people who ride from Yass on a pushbike. But, that aside, yes, indeed. That aside, there are opportunities in terms of what we can do. For example, if people drive to the border or just over the border, we can provide opportunities for them to safely park their vehicle and get onto public transport. There are those opportunities. People already do that. Again, I know people who drive their vehicles to Southwell Park, for example, and then, rather than pay for parking in the city, jump on a bus and come into the city.

MR PARTON: Or, soon, a tram.

Mr Ponton: And soon the tram. Certainly there are strategies that we will be looking at as part of the climate change strategy which will be more comprehensive than those that I have just talked about, and then it will be linking that in with the transport strategy. Rest assured that we are definitely doing that thinking.

THE CHAIR: I have a bit more on the purple bits. One of the purple bits appears to be the CSIRO Ginninderra field station. I know the ACT government does not—

MS ORR: It is actually blue, Caroline.

Mr Ponton: It is blue, yes. I could pre-empt the question by saying that it is marked there because we know that there is an intention to do something, and therefore it would be remiss of us not to include that in our planning.

THE CHAIR: Do you know anything more than that, really?

Mr Ponton: No, I do not. We were having this conversation earlier.

MS ORR: We had a good chat in the break about it.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Have you started doing transport planning for it? Even if you do not know what they are actually going to do inside it, you can assume that there will need to be significant transport connections to it. They are not going to spend their entire lives—

Mr Ponton: From a planning perspective, we are certainly considering it as we undertake further finer grained work, including with respect to infrastructure, looking at community facilities, schools and the like. We have this in our thinking. With transport planning, as I said earlier, that is Transport Canberra and City Services, but we work very closely with our colleagues in that organisation.

We have not had contact for quite some time with CSIRO in relation to their plans and the timing for that site. From time to time, we check in to see whether there is any progress. At this stage, we do not have anything more that we can offer. We keep that in our thinking because it is clearly permitted under the national capital plan and we know that there are intentions to develop that land.

THE CHAIR: It is my understanding—I could well be wrong; you can tell me if I am—that it is currently under the development control of the NCA and that the intention would be to—I am not quite sure what the technical word is—give it to the ACT government’s control for planning. Is that correct?

Mr Ponton: That is yet to be settled. As it currently stands, it is national land. That means that the National Capital Authority would have planning control for that site. There are opportunities at various steps along the way for that to be, as it is called, de-gazetted as national land. At that point, it would fall within the territory’s jurisdiction. At this point in time, it is not within the territory’s jurisdiction. We need to recognise it as a potential development area. As I said earlier, we will continue to factor that into our thinking in terms of infrastructure and services.

MS ORR: Is it fair to say that it is largely at the discretion of the federal government if that did come into the jurisdiction?

Mr Ponton: Entirely.

THE CHAIR: Continuing on with the purple concept, on page 39 it says that areas closer to local centres—that is, 400 metres, an average five minutes walk—could be suited to medium density development, and that this could apply to the RZ2 zone under the Territory Plan. That has been interpreted by some people as saying the RZ2 area will go out to 400 metres. Also, you have been talking here about 800 metres.

Mr Ponton: The RZ2 is already 400 metres. That is the basis of the RZ2 zoning.

THE CHAIR: This is 800—

Mr Ponton: Are you asking whether we are looking to change RZ2 and to extend it to 800? No.

THE CHAIR: That was basically the question I was asking.

Mr Ponton: Unless, of course, a community, through district-level planning, says that is something they are very keen to see, in which case it is certainly something that could be explored. But we do not have an intention to do that.

THE CHAIR: Basically, the purple bits are not going to be intensified by changing to a higher zoning in general?

Mr Ponton: On the transport corridors, yes, but you were talking about group centres, weren’t you?

THE CHAIR: I was talking about group centres, but I thought we had some RZ2 that was connected to transport. But most of them are—

Mr Ponton: Most of those areas are currently RZ4, RZ5 and CZ5.

THE CHAIR: Some of them are. When you go 800 metres out, they are higher zone close to the city and close to Northbourne Avenue—as you get away from Northbourne Avenue and further away from the city.

Mr Ponton: It comes back to the comment I made at the very beginning that—

THE CHAIR: I am thinking about the bits here and here.

Mr Ponton: But in those—

MS ORR: I can see that. I am not sure that everyone else can see what “here and here” is.

THE CHAIR: Of course they can’t. Along here, there are lots of—

Mr Ponton: At Northbourne Avenue?

THE CHAIR: Yes. I tried to show the outside of it.

MS ORR: From MacArthur to the top of EPIC; is that what you are thinking?

THE CHAIR: Yes, and not directly on Northbourne. The streets back—

Mr Ponton: Sure.

THE CHAIR: There is lots of RZ1, particularly once you go north.

Mr Ponton: Yes. That comes back to that finer grain planning that I have been talking about, and the housing choices work. As Ms Cusack was saying earlier, we heard there was a recommendation coming out of the work in that collaboration hub, that we should be looking at unit titling dual occupancies. In terms of increased density, it does not necessarily mean what you are seeing on Northbourne Avenue proper.

THE CHAIR: No, I do not think anyone is thinking about that. Everyone is assuming that Northbourne Avenue proper will be a lot higher. They are trying to work out, given that they are not on Northbourne, if they are a street or two in, they are purple—

Mr Ponton: I cannot answer that at this point in time because we need to do the finer grain work.

THE CHAIR: With the non-purple but close to purple—blue—that is, the investigation into the light rail, what sort of time frame is this likely to be?

Mr Ponton: We need to scope that work. Again it is challenging for me to talk about this in this forum. Obviously, we will need to seek funding from government to undertake that work. All of these actions are subject to budget funding, and that is made clear in the document itself. We would like to get that work started as soon as reasonably possible, but that is dependent on a series of other decisions. To give you an idea of what it might look like, it would be similar to the city and gateway framework.

THE CHAIR: In terms of the particular commentary, most of the city and gateway is under the CRA's control. There have been comments at various stages around it effectively being a higher quality of development. Would you also be anticipating that for the blue bit?

Mr Ponton: Going back to my earlier comments, the City Renewal Authority is responsible for delivery. The policy remains with the planning authority. The planning authority, through its work around the Territory Plan review, the apartment guidelines that we are developing and the design review panel, is looking to lift that quality. As chief planner, I see that that should not apply just to the city and Northbourne; again, linking back to earlier comments, it needs to relate to the entire city, and that is our aim: to lift the design quality across the city.

MR PARTON: On page 26 the strategy says that there is capacity—and you referred to it earlier, minister—for 29,000 new homes in existing greenfield areas, and that that is sufficient until the second half of the 2030s. Does that refer to capacity for stand-alone or detached dwellings or for a mix? When we say 29,000 homes, what do we actually mean?

Mr Gentleman: We are looking at a mix. We have seen a need for what we have been calling the missing middle; that is, townhouse-style development across the ACT. A number of years ago, you would have seen a good rollout of townhouses. That has changed quite a bit to single dwellings and apartment complexes. We are encouraging the community, and of course industry, to come on board with that missing middle.

Mr Ponton: Keep in mind that greenfields could include, for example, the vacant land that is in the Gungahlin town centre. You would not necessarily want to see stand-alone housing in the town centre.

MR PARTON: No, definitely not. But that figure is quite specific at 29,000. I am assuming that you have a rough idea of how much of that would be single dwelling blocks, how much would be townhouse style—you are saying very little—and how much would be multistorey apartments. There must be some consideration of what the mix is to arrive at a number of 29,000.

Mr Ponton: Analysis has been undertaken; absolutely, yes. Of course, as we develop the land release program, that number could shift in terms of the overall mix. Assumptions have been made to arrive at that at a high level, based on the zoning.

MR PARTON: Could I assume that, broadly speaking, when we are talking about existing development, we would be talking about stand-alone dwellings being very

much at the lower end of that 29,000?

Mr Ponton: Not necessarily. There are only a few areas remaining, for example, Taylor. If you look at what is zoned RZ1, there are large areas that are zoned RZ1. That is single residential.

MS ORR: You have stage 2 of Jacka.

Mr Ponton: Stage 2 of Jacka. You would see more townhouse-type development in RZ2 zoning. You also see RZ3, 4 and 5 in the commercial zones that allow for residential development. The high density—

MS ORR: Will we see a mix of those? I was thinking of Taylor; it is in my electorate, so I am a bit more familiar with it. It has a hierarchy within the form there—

Mr Ponton: Yes, it does.

MS ORR: where it allows for different types of mixing. Certainly, spatially the largest mix in that is the RZ1, if not in volume.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

MS ORR: Is that a trend that you are looking to continue across all of Canberra, providing that variety?

Mr Ponton: Variety in the hierarchy, yes.

MS ORR: In greenfields, yes.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

MR PARTON: You mentioned Taylor. I am trying to find a link so that I can move to a different question. Of course, it is quite close to the border. Page 26 refers to the need for a natural buffer between the ACT—

MS ORR: You are trying to sneak in more questions!

MR PARTON: and surrounding areas of New South Wales. What areas within the territory border have been quarantined as natural buffer zones?

Mr Ponton: I would need to—

Mr Gentleman: The whole of Namadgi would be a good example.

Mr Ponton: Yes. If you look at that map, up at the top there, I would suggest—and Ms Cusack can correct me—those green areas.

Ms Cusack: I may have a better map.

Mr Ponton: Fantastic. Keep in mind, of course, that we are investigating the western

area as an action out of the planning strategy, but within that work we will be looking at those buffers.

MR PARTON: What arrangements are in place or are being worked on to create buffer zones on the New South Wales side?

Mr Ponton: There is work being undertaken. The Yass Valley Council has just released, I believe, its settlement strategy. That received some media, so you might be aware of that. I know that that work is ongoing with the Yass Valley Council and the New South Wales department of planning. I had a very brief conversation yesterday with representatives of both those organisations and my understanding is that they are looking to finalise that work very soon.

MR PARTON: Is this being managed by councils or by the New South Wales government, or both?

Mr Ponton: The way the system works in New South Wales, the planning work is being done by the Yass Valley Council but it requires the consent of the state government.

MR PARTON: I was in a public meeting about that very thing just over the border, and the point was made that that whole natural buffer does not seem to correlate with Ginninderry at all; that Ginninderry seems to absolutely fly in the face of that. I wonder if I could seek some comment from either the minister or you, Mr Ponton, on that.

Mr Ponton: I would just refer to previous decisions of government.

Mr Gentleman: That is correct.

MR PARTON: Is there any reason other than the commercial aspect of that development why we are just disregarding that principle when it comes to—

Mr Ponton: To be fair, we are here to talk about the planning strategy. It recognises existing decisions that have been made. For example, we have reduced the Weston study area based on recent decisions of government. It also excludes the central Molonglo area. The planning strategy, which we are here to talk about today, recognises those previous decisions of government. As to the rationale behind them, I would have to go back and look at the public record to determine that. I was not actively involved in those decisions, so I cannot answer that.

MR PARTON: From, say, the Ginninderry proposal as it is laid out and supposed to unfold over the coming years and decades, how much has that experience led us to work on this need for a natural buffer between the ACT and New South Wales?

Mr Ponton: It is an ACT planning principle. On Ginninderry, I would make the observation that its environmental credentials are very strong in terms of what it is doing with the river corridor, the trust that is being established. So I would argue that it has strong environmental credentials.

Mr Gentleman: In the Ginninderry proposal, their statement of environment says that more than a third of the land in Ginninderry is being set aside as a conservation corridor. The corridor will total 577 hectares and will include the land adjacent to the Murrumbidgee River and the Ginninderry Creek. The size boundaries of the corridor were determined scientifically to protect endangered species and the natural properties of the landscape.

MR PARTON: Mr Ponton has just stated that it is a basic planning principle, that whole natural buffer zone between the two entities.

Mr Ponton: Not between the two entities per se, but to consider appropriate buffers adjacent to residential development. In the case of Ginninderry, as I said, its credentials are strong in terms of the river corridor. When you look at that map, we need to keep in mind that it extends beyond the border, and on the other side it has been done in terms of appropriate buffers to that residential development.

MR PARTON: Can we ascertain, though, from your comments about the environmental credentials of the Ginninderry development that, despite the call for a need for a natural buffer between the ACT and surrounding areas of New South Wales, if developments were put forward that included the same environmental credentials as Ginninderry they would be considered? Or would they just be ruled out because of the buffer zone?

Mr Gentleman: I think that you would have to look at individual ones. We do certainly have in this plan a buffer zone between the areas. Indeed, the majority of the ACT is nature park, something like 70 per cent, which is an important—

MS ORR: Mr Parton, are you talking about proposals across the border in New South Wales?

MR PARTON: Well—

Mr Ponton: What we heard during the engagement activities on this and previous planning work is that people were supportive of urban infill of a high quality design, in recognition of the fact that what they valued about this city was what they see in terms of the hills, which is buffers and those environmental areas. So that is what we are trying to incorporate in our planning work. In terms of the decisions of the Yass Valley Council and the New South Wales state government, yes, we work closely with them, but they are not our decisions to make.

Mr Gentleman: It would be difficult for us in some circumstances. Looking at the boundary on the eastern side, it is only 80 metres between Hume and the railway line. In areas like that where it has historically been planned, it would be difficult to gauge a bigger buffer there.

Ms Moroney: In the policy plan that is in the 2018 strategy, we very much recognise those buffers in terms of the hills, ridges and other spaces and, in addition, the environmental offset areas. So they are actually reflected in the plan as part of the basis of talking about how the city can grow. They are a given as one of the elements of Canberra. They are identified in the green areas, and the more vivid green is the

offset areas.

THE CHAIR: I might go to some much less airy-fairy questions. Going to page 103, which is your implementation section, I was wondering particularly whether you could tell me, for 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, whether they are funded, whether they have started and what their status is.

MS ORR: We have started on renewable energy?

THE CHAIR: I believe we have, yes, but it is not the only thing here. There may be some other things, maybe taking some action to look at net zero buildings. It is not impossible.

Mr Ponton: I will start; then I will ask my colleagues. Each of these specific actions relating to the strategic directions relate to the environmental side and emission side and how the planning system can contribute to that. Having been released only late last year, the next phase is to commence that work. Some of this work will be done through the Territory Plan review; other work will be the subject of separate bids to government; and others will be prioritised within our existing resources. That work is happening in terms of working out the work program and how we prioritise all of the actions.

I would just note that in terms of the living infrastructure, I anticipate—it is part of the climate change strategy—that there will be a living infrastructure plan. That work is well underway.

THE CHAIR: So 3.3.1 is happening?

Mr Ponton: In terms of planning policy and statutory mechanisms to encourage the development of net zero emission buildings, precincts and suburbs, that would be, I think, part of the Territory Planning review.

THE CHAIR: So 3.1.1 is the Territory Plan review?

Mr Ponton: Yes. Action 3.2.1 would be part of the Territory Plan review, and the estate development code in particular, I would suggest. Action 3.3.1 will be linked to the climate change work that is currently underway.

THE CHAIR: So that will be progressed after the climate change strategy, which we anticipate soon.

MS ORR: Mr Ponton, can I just clarify that these actions are indicative of what is needed to implement the strategy but the responsibility for all these actions would not necessarily lie with the planning directorate alone.

Mr Ponton: Correct. For those particular ones, we are the lead agency, but we have identified partner agencies.

MS ORR: The point I was getting to was that things like the living infrastructure policy, as I think you alluded to earlier, sit with a different minister?

Mr Ponton: A different minister within my directorate, yes.

MS ORR: So it is also getting direction from the responsible minister?

Mr Ponton: Correct. We have those partnered agencies, but that also means partnered ministers.

THE CHAIR: If we turn over the page, 4.1.3 talks about concessional leases. That is something which has been an ongoing source of interest and public concern for a few decades. What is happening with that?

Mr Ponton: Again, I note that the strategy was released in 2018 and the intention was not that we would commence and complete all of these actions in the first three months.

THE CHAIR: I am not saying that. I am asking about the intention and timing for it.

Mr Ponton: We have started some initial internal work in relation to concessional leases, but more in the context of some particular proposals that we have received around de-concessionalisation and the development of restricted public open space, particularly golf courses. But that is just internal thinking at the moment. In terms of a formal work program, we have not established that at this point in time. Our focus has been on what we see as the key action, particularly what we promised the community, which was a Territory Plan review falling out of the planning strategy. We will, over the next six to 12 months, prioritise all of this work. It will be a multiple year work program. You can see quite a number of actions within the planning strategy. It is a long-term strategy; we will not be completing all of these in the 12 months.

Mr Gentleman: There are 65 actions to come out of the strategies.

Mr Ponton: I would expect that at the very least you are looking at five years worth of work to get things underway, which will be the next review. Then we will start to report against that. Some of those might move into the five to 10-year range.

THE CHAIR: One I am hoping is not going to be quite so long term you have under 4.4. Part of that would appear to be building upon the housing choices consultation.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

THE CHAIR: How is that going? What is the time line for any results out of that? You have a number of possible results: medium density, dual occupancies and affordable housing.

Mr Ponton: I will ask Ms Cusack to respond to that question.

Ms Cusack: Again, that work will be progressed through the Territory Plan review. That goes back to some of the earlier comments I made about the outcomes of the housing choices processes, the recommendations particularly around dual occupancies. We want the opportunity to investigate recommendation 12 in more detail as we do

the district planning and as we come to understand context and nature in each of the districts.

THE CHAIR: I had the impression that there were going to be some physical planning outcomes from housing choices comparatively soon, whereas the Territory Plan review, I understand, is about a three-year project. Are you suggesting nothing for three years?

Ms Cusack: There will be some outcomes. Recommendations 5 and 7—I am just struggling to remember what they are—will both proceed in a Territory Plan variation which is being prepared at the moment. One is living infrastructure.

Ms Moroney: One is living infrastructure. The other is addressing the diversity of dwelling types.

Mr Ponton: The short answer is that some work will progress; other aspects will be folded into the Territory Plan review—that is just an efficient use of resources—and some of the more controversial proposals can then be tested further with the Canberra community.

THE CHAIR: Particularly 4.4.4, which is the dual occupancies in RZ1 and RZ2. I had the impression that that was likely to be happening comparatively soon. Is that incorrect?

Ms Cusack: Again, that is recommendation 12, and it is quite complex. What is possible will differ depending on the nature of RZ1 and RZ2 zones across the ACT. That is why it has been identified as part of the Territory Plan review rather than proceeding earlier.

THE CHAIR: Action 4.4.5 is affordable housing. Is that, unfortunately, also going to be not progressing apart from part of the Territory Plan review? Certainly Canberra has a need for more affordable housing.

Mr Gentleman: It is ongoing affordable housing planning.

THE CHAIR: Action 4.4.5 says:

Investigate planning provisions to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing across the spectrum of community needs.

I am just asking: what is the status of that?

Mr Ponton: Again, given that it is only three months or so since the strategy was released, we need to scope all of these out. That work is still underway, so I do not have a specific answer for that one. I know, of course, that we have responsibility for the housing strategy, so we would be looking at how we can link in work there. We have the demonstration housing project which can start to test some of this. There will be potentially a Territory Plan variation that will fall out of that work.

I am not specifically answering the question but, as the minister said, there are some

65 actions and this is a relatively new document. We have focused very much on actioning the Territory Plan review and getting that work underway. Then we need to go through and work out the exact strategy to address each and every one of these actions. Three months in is probably a little premature at this point in time.

MS ORR: Affordable housing strategies are not new to the government. We recently had the minister for housing put out an affordable housing strategy.

Mr Ponton: That was a housing strategy that incorporated much more than just affordable housing.

MS ORR: Yes, that is true. Thank you. Without having flicked through the 2012 one in detail, I am sure we had information on having affordable housing strategies within the 2012 strategy.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

MS ORR: Is it fair to say that this action is a continuation of what we have been doing in looking for increased opportunities?

Mr Ponton: Absolutely. There is the housing strategy work that then informs the land release program and how land is released and links into targets in relation to affordable housing. There is a whole range of aspects. What we are saying here is: how can the planning system help to facilitate and deliver on those actions in those other strategies?

MS ORR: In addition to what is already going on?

Mr Ponton: In addition to what is already happening, absolutely.

MR PARTON: Page 46 refers to infrastructure issues. Will the directorate or some other agency be publishing infrastructure plans, projections and cost estimates in relation to this strategy?

Mr Ponton: There is an infrastructure plan under development. That is being led by our colleagues in Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate. We are taking an active and, I would suggest, lead role in assisting our colleagues in that work. There is an infrastructure planning advisory committee that consists of most directors-general. The work had been delayed slightly to allow this planning strategy to be finalised. In fact there was a full-day workshop only a month or so ago to progress that work. So the short answer is yes, there will be an infrastructure plan. It will be this year, but that is probably a question better asked of our colleagues in the treasury component of Chief Minister's.

MR PARTON: In that infrastructure space, is there any sense of a ballpark cost projection for coping with the additional 93,000 people expected by 2030? Further to that, what are the infrastructure priorities, the top five, if we are able to articulate those?

Mr Ponton: In terms of the infrastructure priorities, that is part of the infrastructure

plan, which will be a decision for government. I am not going to speculate on what those priorities will be. That is a decision for the government, not for us. I am sure our infrastructure expert would love to talk for the next few minutes about infrastructure.

Mr Paynter: As part of the implementation work, we are doing a very focused but high-level study of the infrastructure requirements for the urban intensification areas. It goes partly to your point. It is too early to come up with costs because we have to have an idea about what infrastructure capacities and likely infrastructure upgrades would be required.

We are doing a high-level study looking at a broad range of essentially trunk infrastructure: roads, primarily, and other transport infrastructure such as stormwater, water supply and sewerage. All of those services, basically, make a city run. We are looking at eight of the urban intensification areas, which are basically the key purple areas on that map, the transport corridor between the city and Woden. We will not be looking at business as usual, but we will be looking at what is already in the Canberra strategic transport model, working very closely with our colleagues in TCCS. We will then be looking at a further projection scenario involving what we need to tweak in order to achieve the 70 per cent target. We may be pleasantly surprised to find that the existing CSTM comes quite close to that 70 per cent target. We do not know yet because we have not done the work.

The outcome of that will be to identify infrastructure capacities in broad terms and infrastructure requirements for all of those districts, which is very important because infrastructure is very expensive. We certainly know, from a recently completed study which was done as part of the planning strategy, that the infrastructure requirements for greenfields developments are far more significant in cost terms than the infrastructure required to upgrade services and facilities in infill and redevelopment areas.

MR PARTON: While you are here with your infrastructure hat on, pages 49 and 50 refer to the cross-border infrastructure funding model. What exactly is the cross-border infrastructure funding model? When did it commence? Does it have a budget? What jurisdictions have contributed to that budget?

Mr Paynter: I am not familiar with that. I am familiar with some portions of it specific to water supply and transport, but I might have to defer to somebody else.

Mr Gentleman: We might take that on notice, Mr Parton, and come back to you with the details.

MR PARTON: Okay. In regard to that, on notice, I am keen to know what the size of this budget is in 2018-19 and for each of the forward estimates years. How much has the ACT contributed to this budget in 2018-19 and how does it plan to contribute as we move forward?

Mr Gentleman: Sure.

THE CHAIR: A couple of times you have referred to the cost being three times more for greenfields, and Mr Paynter suggested that there was a study done as part of this.

Would we be able to have a copy of that, on notice?

Mr Gentleman: Yes, we will certainly have a look at that for you.

THE CHAIR: I do not expect you to have it here. Thank you.

MR PARTON: Page 53 refers to cultural, linguistic, age and gender diversity. In relation to those facets of our social fabric, what are the infrastructure and urban design requirements that are associated with this diversity? The first thing that leaps out at you is aged citizens. What provisions does this strategy make to ensure that our aged citizens will be catered for?

Mr Gentleman: It is a very important point. Can I talk about two demographics there: our younger people and people who are ageing, and the opportunity for those people to age in place as well? The government has used some economic levers to look at those people who want to downsize within their community and offer incentives in regard to stamp duty, for example, for those ageing in place.

For the younger demographic, I want to hark back quickly to the statement of planning intent workshops. We held workshops with different demographic groups and different regional groups across the territory, including community councils and leaders. One of the starkest groups that we met with was the demographic aged 21 and younger. On a Friday night, across the road in the North Building, almost 100 people turned up to tell us how they wanted to live into the future. It was not as specific as what we have been discussing here about rules and boundaries; it was about how they conceptually want to see themselves living in the future.

They want to live close to their workplace. They want to live close to open space, to recreational space. They do not mind living in a denser environment as long as the amenity is quite good. It was quite refreshing to hear their views on how they want to live into the future. We have taken that on board, and it was noted within my statement of planning intent. That, of course, underlies this planning strategy as well.

Ms Moroney: This particular direction is really about Canberrans and thinking about the attributes that they bring, particularly to the community as well as to the economy; thinking about knowledge economy workers, the human capital capacity that is in there. The direction is talking about us understanding and continuing on with our evidence base and doing the level of demographic analysis that we need to do to be able to understand the attributes and the geographic distribution across the city.

It is also about how we engage with the community, recognising and valuing the contribution it makes, and empowering the planning process. It is looking at how we can bring those attributes forward and take a district-level planning approach to things. It relates fairly strongly to some of the directions that are identified in livable Canberra, in terms of looking at community facility provision, open space, recreation facilities and those other facilities.

MR PARTON: Can we touch briefly on the existing industrial service trade areas? I am focusing on Hume and Fyshwick. I think that we would all agree that Fyshwick in particular has morphed into something different from what it was 30 or 40 years ago,

and it continues to change. The strategy mentions the importance of Hume in this regard. I know it is a very broad question, but can I ask the minister: what is your broader, long-term vision for Fyshwick? How do you see it changing and evolving over the next 20 years?

Mr Gentleman: I think industry is driving the change in Fyshwick. Particularly in the new parts of Fyshwick, you will see industry move from a traditional, old service style to a much more contemporary way of providing services for Canberrans, and beyond Canberra as well. If you look at the changes in building quality, for example, in the presentation of the new suburb of Beard, which is just to the east of Fyshwick, and part of the extension of Fyshwick, you will see a dramatic change in the way they want to provide services for Canberrans. I would imagine that you will see changes in the older part of Fyshwick once Beard starts to fill up.

There has been incredible change in Hume in the same vein, from traditional, old ways of servicing a commercial industrial zone to new ways of servicing Canberrans. You see big furniture retailers and constructors offering up a new experience for Canberrans going into the areas. I think you will see the older parts of Hume start to change as well.

MR PARTON: I think we do sense, in parts, a clash between certain uses of land in Fyshwick, in that there are some operators who believe that they are being compromised by the arrival of other completely different land uses around them. I do not know how, as planners, you deal with that. It does strike me as being a growing problem.

Mr Gentleman: Business competition is the way that I see it. We have seen competition amongst business in Canberra for as long as I have lived here. You tend to see that.

MR PARTON: That is not specifically what I am talking about. I am talking about entirely different uses for zones. Do you have something to add to that?

Ms Moroney: Absolutely. One of the things that the 2018 strategy is doing is recognising, valuing and protecting those areas as employment lands, so that they are able to do the types of uses that we are talking about, and grow, change and respond to more innovative sectors, more freight and logistics or whatever else it is that industry needs to move to.

This was very much a first step in the process, to value industrial land and service trades areas. Rather than seeing them as a land bank for something else, see them as genuine, long-term uses in those locations, and see them as engine rooms for the city. The strategy flags that we need to do more work. We need to understand better about how contemporary employment lands are evolving. It will be picked up in the Territory Plan review about what sorts of zones and other mixes of land uses should be there, to be able to protect the economic value of those places going forward, and enable mixed use, variety and more innovative places that are critical for the city, for that level of investment to happen.

THE CHAIR: While I appreciate that some consultation was done, usually what

happens with something like this is that it goes out as a draft and you get comments on it. That did not occur in this instance. Was there a reason for that?

Mr Ponton: Yes there was. What you have described is a very traditional way of engaging with the community. You have heard me talk in this committee and hopefully in other forums about my desire to try new things. Depending on the particular policy work or project, we are starting at the very beginning of that and thinking about what might be the best way to engage with the Canberra community. Going back to the Territory Plan review, we are actually spending quite a lot of time scoping that and talking to people about what is the best way to engage.

In relation to this particular document, given that it was a refresh, our analysis and our recommendation to the government was that the basic bones, the basic principles, were sound; it was consistent with what the minister had heard through the development of his statement of planning intent. To simply prepare a document—as you can see, it is quite a lengthy document—and then to just put it out and say, “What do you think?”, probably would not have got us the best outcome. We would have just got a small handful of people who would have provided comment.

What we thought we would do is take a different approach. The first thing that we did was undertake the speaker series—and that was separate from government and the bureaucracy—and get experts in from all over the country. In fact, we had somebody from Vancouver as well who participated through video link. It was setting the scene in terms of why we need to be interested in strategic planning at the city-wide level. And that was the purpose of that speaker series. We got over 100 people attend that speaker series. That is because we are wanting to do more and more to engage with more and more, what I call, the missing voices, the people who do not ordinarily engage with us. And this helped us to do that.

The first bit was building momentum. We are doing this refresh, pointing out that we think the bones are good; we need a few inputs since 2012. For example, light rail is just about operational and that was not reflected in the 2012 strategy.

We then thought that we wanted it to be more of a collaborative process, but not the same process as we use for housing choices, which was a small group of people, 30-something people who had been randomly selected to represent the community. We thought we would try something different. We then started to develop the content through a series of workshops. And we found that particularly useful. Rather than us write it and put it out and consult, we developed it. That is why we took this approach.

MS ORR: Was it much more of an iterative process?

Mr Ponton: Absolutely, yes. Yes. In terms of the workshops that were held, there were papers that were prepared. There was a whole lot of pre-reading that people needed to do. And then at those workshops people were very engaged. It was quite diverse. We mixed community reps with industry reps, with professional associations. We got a really good mix of views. We would listen to that, go away, do some more work, come back. And that process ran for some 13 or 14 weeks, I think it was. We are always happy to receive feedback.

As I said, I do not shy away from the fact that I will not always consult in the way we used to in 1984. I think that we can do much better than that. I think that we should be exploring new ways. I will always try new opportunities for different projects. If it does not quite work, I will receive the feedback and then we will feed that into the next round. But this was something that, given the fact that it was a refresh, was not a completely new policy. We felt as though that iterative, collaborative process would work best over that 13-week period.

We were criticised for the quick poll. People thought that that was our engagement with the thumbs up, thumbs down online, you might recall. That was really just, again, getting the message out that we are going to do this work. This is what we have heard over the past five years of consultation, “Does it still resonate with you?” And that was really just to give us a steer as to where we need to focus our energies in terms of the next phase of the engagement.

We had the quick poll, we had the speaker series, we had the workshops, we had planners in the pub with young people coming along. And we had some MLAs join us to help facilitate some of those. That session was not actually run by the government; that was run by the young planners through the Planning Institute of Australia, again trying to tap into a whole range of different voices.

Since I have taken on the role of Chief Planner we have tried, with the minister’s indulgence, for each project a different way of engaging. Out of that we are continuously improving on how we capture those voices.

MR PARTON: Do you find though that in so many cases you are damned if you do and damned if you do not? There will be those sitting on the sidelines who will always believe that there is a better way to consult. It is quite obvious to all that there are many varied and different ways of consultation that are being examined and I think that that should be applauded.

Mr Ponton: Thank you. There is no one size fits all. I think, in the past, bureaucracies have applied that model and it does not work. We tend to hear from the same voices. And whilst those voices are important it is important that we capture those people who ordinarily would not engage but will have an interest. They may not engage in the policy development, but when the building is going up next door they will have an interest. Let us try to get them early.

THE CHAIR: This concludes the committee’s proceedings for today. On behalf of the committee can I thank you all for attending here today. You did take a number of questions on notice, and please could we have the answers to them within five business days of the proof transcript being made available to you by the committee’s secretary. The hearing for today is adjourned. Thank you one and all and thank you audience.

The committee adjourned at 12.21 pm.