



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT
AND CITY SERVICES**

(Reference: [Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022](#))

Members:

**MS J CLAY (Chair)
MS S ORR (Deputy Chair)
MR M PARTON**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2022

**Acting secretary to the committee:
Ms M Ikeda (Ph: 620 50199)**

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.

APPEARANCES

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate 108

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 11.30 am.

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

Ponton, Mr Ben, Director-General

Dietz, Mr John, Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency

Gordon, Mr Tom, Executive Director, Development Delivery, Suburban Land Agency

Brady, Dr Erin, Deputy Director-General, Planning and Sustainable Development

Bulless, Mr Neil, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Suburban Land Agency

THE CHAIR: Good morning everyone, welcome to the public hearings for the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services Inquiry into the Annual Reports. The proceedings this morning will examine the annual reports for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge on behalf of the committee that we are meeting on the lands of the Ngunnawal people. We respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Please be aware the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard to be published. We are also being livestreamed and broadcast. When taking a question on notice, if you could say clearly, “I will take that on notice”, as it helps our secretariat to chase down those answers.

Our first session is beginning. We are hearing from the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Ms Yvette Berry. Thank you for coming Minister Berry and thank you officials for joining us today. I will remind everyone of the obligations and privileges accorded in the privilege statement and I might get everyone to confirm verbally for the record, have you all had a chance to read that statement and do you understand and agree with that statement?

Ms Berry: Yes.

Mr Ponton: Yes.

Mr Dietz: Yes.

THE CHAIR: As we are not inviting opening statements we will proceed with questions. Minister, I was really interested to see in the district strategies that we have set a new share of social housing from the current 5.7 per cent to 7 to 10 per cent. I note the ACT Greens are pretty happy about that as we have a 10 per cent policy. Can you tell me what sorts of steps you would see yourself taking to get us to that 7 to 10 per cent now that we have set it in the district strategies?

Ms Berry: I should remind everyone the district strategies are draft strategies. So, they are out for consultation at the moment with the community and once the feedback is received from the community, then those strategies become the plans for those districts as part of the work that Minister Gentleman is doing in that space. We would work with Minister Gentleman in planning around the indicative land release program to understand the land release program and where we could purchase properties from the Suburban Land Agency to be able to meet those targets that are in the district strategy draft releases.

THE CHAIR: Do you see this as meaning there will be a floor on all new land releases? Given that we are tracking much lower than that now and we would be increasing our target, will there be a floor, a minimum amount of—

Ms Berry: Well, it is 15 per cent of community, public and affordable housing across all building developments developed by the Suburban Land Agency in the ACT. So greenfield and brownfield developments have 15 per cent target of community, public and affordable housing.

THE CHAIR: Does that happen across all developments or just SLA developments?

Ms Berry: Just SLA developments.

THE CHAIR: Okay. But the district strategy target would not be just for SLA developments, that would be across the board for developments?

Mr Ponton: This is drifting into, of course, Minister Gentleman's portfolio responsibilities. In terms of the district strategies, there are certain elements of those that we are translating through into the Territory plan pop up. In terms of the detail of that, I suspect it is something that we would need to consider having received the community feedback in relation to district strategies.

THE CHAIR: So it is something that would be considered over the next six to nine months while that process is underway.

Mr Ponton: Indeed, yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, okay. Minister, we have a current pipeline of around 400 additional social housing dwellings and we have a lot more dwellings than that coming. We have tens of thousands of dwellings coming into Canberra which is great because we need more housing. How do you see these targets fitting together to make sure that, across the board, we get a really good proportion of social and affordable housing and we are tracking in line with those targets we have set in that draft district strategy?

Ms Berry: Again, it is a draft strategy, and I think where you would need to look around the goals and the targets are within our housing strategy. That is probably more within the next hearing around the housing and public housing development. But yes, we have a target in the PAGA for the development and increase of 400 new public housing properties in the ACT, delivered by the ACT government. Combined

with that we have targets of another 600 community housing properties, 1,000 growth and renewal and all of those are part of the current *ACT public housing strategy*. I think probably the next session is the place where you could dive into the detail around all of that.

MR PARTON: Minister, you have referred again to this overarching target of 15 per cent of social and affordable dwellings. I wonder if you or officials could give us an outcome, say, in the last 12 months in terms of the target was 15 per cent, what was actually delivered to market in terms of social and affordable dwellings?

Ms Berry: It is in the annual report, not that one.

Mr Dietz: Page 191.

Ms Berry: We can take—yes—

MR PARTON: Take it on notice, and I guess—

Ms Berry: No, we can answer it now.

MR PARTON: You can. When I say delivered to market, I do not just mean delivered to market in a brochure; I mean actually fulfilled.

Mr Dietz: Yes, so there are probably two answers to that because there is the release of the land which we are responsible for under the notifiable—

MR PARTON: Yes.

Mr Dietz: I have read the privilege statement. There are two answers. The first is that under the notifiable instrument, we are required to release land which has the affordable requirement on it. This particular year for affordable housing, the target was 182 and we delivered 192 actually released. Sorry, 196 were released. So we were able to release more than the actual target was. The second part of the answer is—you said when they are actually delivered?

MR PARTON: Yes.

Mr Dietz: That is where we work with builders and our eligible database to ensure people on the database are connected with builders and builders, under their contractual requirements, are able to then find someone on the database who is keen to take that. Now that can take quite some time because after our release, they go through their planning approval process, their building construction process, their sales process before they can actually settle on the completed form. What we have done over the last five years, so you can appreciate that can sometimes take two or three years—

MR PARTON: Yes.

Mr Dietz: So from the time we release it, over the last five years, and I will hand to Nicholas Holt to give a little bit more detail, but over those five years when you

compare the actual releases and then who bought it, we have been in excess of the requirement in nearly all but one year which, I think, is really good. In this aggregation we have been greater than the requirement. When we look then at the houses that were completed and sold to someone on the database in the last year, roughly 96 per cent of all houses delivered by builders under the affordable housing scheme ended up with someone on the database receiving that house. Which I think is really highly successful for the program.

MR PARTON: All right, thanks, Mr Dietz. I think that is enough detail for me but can I just add in, I note that the affordable home purchase scheme website states at the moment, “if you are interested in house and land packages, please note, there are no scheduled releases in the 2022-23 financial year.” Can you confirm that that statement on the website is correct?

Mr Dietz: Yes, I can confirm, that is correct.

MR PARTON: So talk me through that then because it appears from the outside looking in, that despite housing affordability in the ACT being a serious problem, it appears the government has abandoned that program. Is that correct?

Mr Dietz: No, no, that is not correct. The type of housing that we look to provide within the affordable housing scheme is that that best meets, as close as possible, the market valuation of an affordable house. Now we cannot always do that but in many cases it may bend it towards a multiunit product, as opposed to a detached housing product. The quote you are reading there relates to detached housing as opposed to multiunit products. So—

MR PARTON: So you have abandoned it in the detached housing space?

Mr Dietz: It is not abandoned but in the year coming forward, in the notifiable instrument, there is no detached housing. I note in the year that has just passed, there was a significant amount of detached housing. So it does depend on the product which is to be released in that particular year as to whether it is reflected in the notifiable instrument.

MR PARTON: And so, just finally, you are telling me that there will be no detached house purchasers in the affordable loan purchase scheme in the financial year 2022-23?

Mr Dietz: I will be quite specific. There will be no releases of land which would require a detached house to be built and sold in future years. That land will not be released in this year. Now there is still land that may have detached housing requirements that is being built and going through a sales process for affordable people on the database. But this particular year coming forward, there is no land which would lend itself to a detached product being built for this year.

MR PARTON: Thank you.

MS ORR: In the context of the national crisis when it comes to housing affordability, because we are seeing pressures across every state and territory, can you provide an

update on the ACT housing strategy and the actions being undertaken and investigated to address this national crisis here in the ACT?

Ms Berry: Yes, we can, thank you. Is it this session or maybe the next one? I suppose we could probably talk a little bit about that in this hearing.

MS ORR: I can ask a different question if you would like me to hold.

Ms Berry: Yes, it is probably better in the next session.

MS ORR: Can you provide an update on the Gungahlin East Town Centre engagement process?

Ms Berry: Yes, we can. Mr Dietz.

Mr Dietz: Yes, thank you. I reflect on the request from government for us to become very much involved in a deep engagement with community and stakeholders in Gungahlin. We worked very closely with EPSDD to derive a panel of appropriate people who could become part of that community consultation. That panel includes people with all sorts of skills and backgrounds to ensure we have a good diversity of people available to be part of that process. When we go through a placemaking process, it really is around working with all of the stakeholders to fully understand the history of the site, the rich history of Canberra sites, the current uses of the site and then to work with the community around what success in that site is going to look like in the future.

Now that is quite a significant process. It is a process of education with all people involved because in the end, it is the community panel that works with us to define what success will look like. Now that the panel is in place, we have just kicked off on the education process with community. I was a part of a group of presentations to people on the panel which included an eclectic mix of different presentations to start the education process of really thinking big about what the future of the sites within the Gungahlin Town Centre can be.

MS ORR: What were the themes then for those presentations you said that were part of this initial education phase?

Mr Dietz: I beg your pardon, what was—

MS ORR: What were the themes then of those presentations?

Mr Dietz: They came from all different aspects, so there was a theme of Indigenous history and background provided by Richie Allen. There was a theme of demographics and town planning. There was a theme of thinking outside the square and observing what successful communities would look like in other parts of the world. There was a theme of using big data to understand the community uses of places in the current Gungahlin Town Centre. So they all came from slightly different angles but the consistent message was there is a massive opportunity here right now, let us work together with all stakeholders to fully define what success can look like

here. That is then going to help us understand what is the best methodology to release the land that is on the ILRP coming up.

MS ORR: You said there is the panel with a range of people. Can you run us through what that panel makeup looks like in a bit more detail please?

Mr Dietz: Yes, I can. I am probably going to hand that to Tom Gordon, if you are able to provide a bit of detail on that, that would be great. If not, Tom, we are happy to take that on notice.

Mr Gordon: Yes, I think we might take the specific details on notice.

Ms Berry: Ms Orr, sorry, I apologise but this is the housing strategy session, my fault.

MS ORR: How many people are on the panel, can you answer that today?

Mr Dietz: Yes, it is actually a panel that is made up of many subgroups and I understand it is close to 100 people that are across all of those different subgroups.

MS ORR: Sorry, I have just lost my train of thought a little bit so you—

Mr Dietz: That is all right. I might just add a little bit to that answer. The reason it is a relatively large panel with different subgroups is that the use for the SLA is not the only use. So we have worked with EPSDD to make sure that some of their immediate and medium term engagement in the area can also make use of that same panel.

MS ORR: So with the panel and with this process of education and looking at the opportunities, you said you were going to take those to inform how you released the blocks of land for sale, is that correct? So could you just run through a little bit more as to the options that you could be looking at that this could fit into?

Mr Dietz: Yes, so the outcomes from the engagement involve two artefacts. I will probably get the names wrong but a place ambition brief and the next is more a detailed, when you bring in the planning requirements, what could the design solution look like. That then can identify if there are certain blocks where our further work can add value to the existing territory plan and then we would look for a methodology which allows us to enforce that value in the final product.

That would mean possibly ensuring certain outcomes from the community were reflected in a tender response that could then be delivered on. Now that takes us more towards the two stage type tender. Noting there are significant releases in the Gungahlin town centre over the next three, four, five years, there may be certain blocks that our ability to add value beyond that reflected in the Territory plan is minimal. We may focus on some of the add value on certain strategic areas and other areas may not require our further guidance and control. Now that lends itself to a methodology which is much less imposing and perhaps even to an auction. An auction would allow an industry participant to purchase a block of land and their requirement is to meet the territory plan.

Now that does not necessarily give us any ability to add value beyond that requirement. There is almost a continuum of methods in between; we can go to auction, we can have a pre-qualified auction, which ensures that only particular people are allowed in the auction, through to a one stage tender through to a two stage tender who has an expression of interest. All of these are along the continuum of us adding and controlling a greater value outcome which we would use in the appropriate strategic circumstances.

MS ORR: So if I have understood correctly, the consultation that is currently underway will inform which blocks need which treatment and those are the range of options in place.

Mr Dietz: Yes. It would be very much a part of that process.

MS ORR: Where does the development and progression of the linear park fit into the overall process that is currently going on?

Mr Dietz: Yes, I think it is very much integrated into that whole process of understanding what this town centre can be. It is actually close to a third of the whole town centre, that area, so it is really important we get it right and the linear park, which is defined there, is very much critical in getting that whole area right.

MS ORR: Where is the development up to on the linear park? What is the process we are looking at with that one?

Mr Dietz: We might need to take that on notice, but I think it is essentially running in parallel with this community engagement outcome.

MR PARTON: I am in Taylor and referring to the affordable home purchase scheme in Taylor Stage 1B. I want to ask why has it taken almost two years to award tenders for the sale of lots in Taylor Stage 1B in that affordable home purchase scheme?

Mr Dietz: Could you just be a little bit more specific? Is that the sale of the end product via a developer or is it the sale of SLA land lots to—

MR PARTON: No, I think it is the first one that you suggested, that is my understanding.

Mr Dietz: Okay. I think a two year period in my view, does not seem extensive, if it is the period after we have released to a builder. A builder then needs to go through the process of designing their built form and then go through the development approvals for that built form. Perhaps in parallel they can go into a marketing engagement process with ourselves to understand who on the eligibility database is able to purchase that built form before they can finally settle. So it is a—

MR PARTON: So Mr Dietz, just confirming, my question does pertain to the sale of land lots by the SLA to builders.

Mr Dietz: Yes, okay, well that is a slightly different answer. If I understand rightly, there are 59 blocks of land in the area that in our original release we had identified as

community housing providers to be able to purchase those. We were very much looking for an innovative solution there to work with community housing providers so we did go through, firstly, a two stage process to understand which community housing providers could be part of a more innovative solution to that type of housing. Sometimes when you go through such a process, it does take a little bit longer. As part of that process, it got to an end without a solution. So we were unable to work with any community housing provider that could make the situation work in a way that was beneficial for them and appropriate under our legislation. Since that point in time, we have continued to look at possible outcomes. There is not yet an outcome that is to the point where we think great, that is the solution. But I can say we continue to look for solutions. Some might even be working with commonwealth government on some of the initiatives commonwealth have that they are looking for land ready blocks that are open and willing for a solution such as this.

MR PARTON: You mentioned a number. I thought we were talking about 160-odd blocks; it is not as many as that?

Mr Dietz: Not that are identified as the community housing provider blocks, no.

MR PARTON: It seems to me that that is a hell of a lot of messing around over two years, at the height of a housing affordability crisis. It sounds a bit like fiddling while Rome burns. Those blocks really should have got to market in some way, in an affordable form. Did any builders hand back blocks due to the increase in building costs over the two-year period that it took the agency to award the tenders?

Mr Dietz: I might need to take the specifics of that on notice. I assume that your question there is all-encompassing, not just related to the ones in Taylor.

MR PARTON: Yes.

Mr Dietz: We are definitely cognisant of some of the struggles that our builders are facing. When we go through a process of a “put and call”, working with our display village builders, there may be some that have not taken on a final part of that contract because of their concern about where the market is currently at. But I can take that on notice.

MR PARTON: Okay; on notice, on a broad basis, is fine, but Taylor 1B is what I am looking for. I am assuming, in closing, that the agency has undertaken some sort of post-implementation review to ascertain why such good ideas on paper did not actually play out.

Mr Dietz: Absolutely. That has actually encompassed an options analysis for steps going forward.

Ms Berry: Mr Parton, on the 59 particular blocks for community housing, they were released as part of the ACT government’s commitment to provide 15 per cent in greenfield and brownfield of community, affordable and social housing. The last couple of years have been quite challenging for everybody to build and purchase, including community housing providers.

I asked the SLA, rather than putting those blocks on the market, for anybody else to buy, to hold them, to continue to work with the government and with other community housing providers, and now with a new government that has made commitments around partnering with community housing providers and other third parties, so that we would have the chance to do something innovative that will work for people who need homes.

Yes, we are working on understanding, obviously, what we can do better in that space, but now we have an opportunity, as there is a federal government that has made the commitment to put funding into projects like this one, to work closely with community housing providers to meet that end result. That is one of the reasons why those 59 blocks have not been sold to market but are still being held, in order to work on a partnership with community housing providers, and with the real opportunities that the federal government has provided around funding for those as well.

THE CHAIR: Minister, we are in the middle of this fairly major planning review, with the bill currently under inquiry, and the district strategies and the Territory Plan having been released for consultation. Can you tell me how you have engaged with that planning review, in your capacity as the minister with responsibility for the Housing Strategy?

Ms Berry: It is a draft. I keep saying that because it needs to be clear that it is a draft. The planning minister and the planning directorate worked across government agencies to ensure that there was feedback from all agencies around the development of the draft strategy, and through cabinet as well.

THE CHAIR: Were you involved in setting the seven to 10 per cent target? Has that come from your Housing Strategy agencies?

Dr Brady: Housing policy and strategy sit in my area, as well as planning. As the minister said, the district strategies that are out there are in draft form. We have put initiatives and proposals in there, and that is one of the proposals. If we were to pursue some of the ideas in some of those draft district strategies, we could possibly then have availability of development and options that might present more availability for social and community housing.

It is a proposal that does marry across the Housing Strategy and the district strategies. We are usually quite clear in saying that, with a lot of the work we are doing, we do look at and consider all of the government policies and strategies, and how they work together.

Mr Ponton: I want to reinforce what the minister said. In addition to looking at all of those government policies, we then work, and have been working, very closely with colleagues across the ACT public service to make sure that proposals that are contained in those draft district strategies are either informed by, or the agencies are comfortable with, those propositions.

THE CHAIR: We have not had a lot of time to look at the district strategies and Territory Plan. They are quite large, and they have only just come out. But it looks to us like that goal of seven to 10 per cent across the whole housing stock is quite a big

increase on where we are now. Have we got that right?

Dr Brady: One of the goals of the Housing Strategy is around an equitable supply of housing for all. There is a focus around particular quintiles, addressing homelessness and providing housing for certain cohorts.

Through the planning, without venturing too much into the planning area, we are trying to pick up on those goals and to see how we can address them through provision of different types of housing across all sectors. We are trying to implement a housing strategy and planning that provide housing for all in the ACT.

THE CHAIR: Without straying into the planning area—I will probably step it back to a more general question—one of the goals of the planning review is to make sure we have enough affordable, community and public housing for Canberra to cover our needs. Do you think your Housing Strategy has been integrated well enough into that planning review to deliver that? It is in draft form, but we have targets and—

Ms Berry: You are asking for an opinion. We are working together with the planning minister to ensure that future government planning processes meet the needs of everybody in our community, including public housing and people who need to live in affordable or community housing. It is about making sure that all of that is considered as part of the plans, as part of the work that the planning minister does in engaging with agencies. It is a draft plan, so we will get feedback, I am sure, and we will adjust it appropriately.

Dr Brady: Planning is one way of delivering that, and that is what the housing strategy identifies. Planning is one way; there are lots of other mechanisms and lots of other agencies involved in delivering housing for everyone in Canberra.

MS ORR: In the context of the national housing crisis, what are we doing through the ACT Housing Strategy, and what actions are being undertaken and investigated to address how Canberra can respond to this national issue?

Ms Berry: Under the ACT housing strategic plan, we report to the Assembly every 12 months on progress within the implementation of the strategy. It is the ACT Housing Strategy report card. We have been progressing through the years of implementation of the strategy. Next year will be the fifth year. We will be looking at how the strategy has been going and ways that we might review that, with feedback from the community. There has been a bit of a change regarding what we would see as ordinary years, with the impact of COVID, and with a new federal government that has made significant commitments around partnering and funding housing across the country, which had never been the case previously. That is something that works really well with the implementation of our strategy.

We are currently in the process of developing our year 4 report card. With respect to some of the highlights—I think this is where Mr Dietz was going to before, around affordable home purchases—in Whitlam and Taylor, we have the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme, with around 180 houses. We have strategic planning partnerships with the specialist homelessness sector, to understand how we can support people with lived experience of homelessness, including a range of workshops to design and

improve service models. We worked really closely with them through the COVID international health pandemic on doing things differently. That has certainly changed the way that we approach what can often be a very complex issue.

We have delivered the third Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older persons complex. We have completed Common Ground Dickson. Individuals have now moved in and settled into their new homes. We have developed a model social landlord framework within Housing ACT to ensure that we have organisational capabilities to understand some of the objectives in the delivery of services and projects—making sure that we are a good social landlord.

We have demonstrated our commitment to housing choice and diversity through the Territory Plan variations, as well as with the work that planning has been doing around the district plan draft strategies. We are continuing to work on meeting our targets in the PAGA of 400 additional public housing dwellings, and 1,000 under the growth and renewal program.

We are also working closely with community housing on opportunities like the blocks at Taylor, as well as across the city. We are encouraging other investors to do different kinds of innovative projects, like build to rent or build to rent to buy, which is another project that we are working on with Ginninderry, community housing providers and the federal government, through their funding initiatives. There is also the government prospectus around build to rents, and inviting members of the community, investors like superannuation funds, to invest in rental properties in the ACT.

We are looking at every square and corner. We are looking outside the box at different ways we can approach this, because we know that there is a crisis and that we need continually to be looking at ways to do things to meet the needs of people within our community. We are not here on our own; at least now we have a partnership with a federal government that gives us a little bit more capacity than we had previously.

MR PARTON: Minister, you have alluded to the National Housing Accord and the positive noises that are coming from the Albanese government in this space. I am sure that privately you may agree—I do not know—that some of this stuff looks a little vague. I am hoping that you are able to provide more detail on your understanding of what the accord tangibly will provide. Are you able to suggest any figure regarding extra dwellings that this may lead to in the ACT?

Ms Berry: I cannot give an exact number yet. We have a housing ministers meeting in December, to go into more detail around the accord. I am very hopeful that, on that kind of detail, we will work towards that with the federal government. There is a commitment to one million new homes nationally. If that was on a per capita basis, we would get our share. As to whether or not we should be getting more of that because we have been left out in the past, those are the kinds of calls that we have been making to the federal government and the federal housing minister.

I would say that, yes, it is hopeful. They have only been in government for five or six months. There are legislative changes, I understand, that they need to make to get the

funding through government and get the budget passed. Once that occurs, we can start to nail down where the funding goes and what share of that we would get in the ACT.

We also have, through this federal government, a ministerial council for housing ministers, which has not occurred previously. Again, I think everybody understands the importance of this issue and the different approaches that we need to take. That investment from the federal government has been the part that has been missing. We will continue working with them on a national housing strategy and on the accord. We will work, obviously, with people within the ACT, our community housing providers and others, to meet the needs here in the ACT.

MR PARTON: I can imagine that, in the context of that bright new framework that you have discussed, you will be bringing up the ACT's long-term commonwealth housing debt?

Ms Berry: We continually raise that with our federal government colleagues. Whilst it is not in this budget, that does not mean the door has been shut on discussions with the federal government about what that might look like.

THE CHAIR: Minister, can I have a breakdown of the 2021-22 affordable housing sales for new public housing and new community housing in SLA releases—the types of housing within the target? Have we got a breakdown of that?

Mr Dietz: We will take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: That would be fine.

MS ORR: Can I get an update on the Jacka community battery and the next steps in the process?

Mr Dietz: We have been through a market sounding process. The Jacka community battery is actually part of our road map to a net zero suburb, which started in the Ginninderry joint venture, it went through Whitlam and it is now in Jacka, with its Jacka battery. We went through a market sounding process to understand some of the challenges that industry and the community might face, and the governance models that might be appropriate for that Jacka battery. We are now going through a two-stage process with industry to see what sort of solutions can be provided. I might look to Neil Bulless to provide a little more detail.

Mr Bulless: As Mr Dietz indicated, we went through a market sounding process. That report is actually on our website. We have been working with our procurement team to formulate the tender documents. We issued last week the advance tender notification to industry and, hopefully within the next week or so, we will be issuing the tender pack.

MS ORR: Can you state what the community battery is? What does the project actually take in?

Mr Bulless: I will take the technical details on the size of the battery. Essentially, it is a battery that will service the community needs of new Jacka, the new releases in

Jacka. It will be situated within the suburb. The intention, as you are probably well aware, is for people contribute to it. The actual model of operating the battery will be part of the tender response. The degree to which SLA has any ongoing role once the battery is built and operating will be part of that assessment.

MS ORR: There is no potential at the moment for the existing part of Jacka to be fed into that battery?

Mr Bulless: In our current planning, no, but we are aware that the commonwealth is looking at a battery in Casey, and we are exploring other options with the big battery team. We work very closely with that team. We will look at the outcomes from this process and see how they can be broadened, if possible.

MS ORR: Is that just down to the challenges of putting existing infrastructure into this new infrastructure project and making the two talk to each other?

Mr Bulless: Yes. Part of the issue that we will have to deal with is that the battery is being designed to go into the new suburb, so the connectivity to the new houses and dwellings is being planned. To retrofit that to other existing dwellings does have some technical issues that we would have to work through.

MS ORR: The battery, if I understand correctly, will allow the houses that are there to feed in any surplus energy generated, to store until a later time, so that it gets around these peaks?

Mr Bulless: Correct.

MS ORR: What other things are you looking at within the next stage of Jacka that would complement that, such as solar panels and other energy generating parts within a house?

Mr Bulless: It is very much like Whitlam; there is a no-gas approach to the new development in Jacka. We are encouraging, as we have done with Whitlam, with our rebate, the take-up of solar—light-coloured roofs, the provision of EV charging, solar batteries, solar heating, and all-electric cooking. There are the same sorts of principles that we have in Whitlam. We are very keen to promote that as a new way of developing our suburbs, so this is the standard way that we will do it going forward.

MS ORR: I understand that Whitlam has gone through a green certification process. Can you run me through what that is and how you would look to take up that process in Jacka?

Ms Berry: We heard some good news this morning about a—

Mr Dietz: We did. Could you repeat the question?

MS ORR: On the points that were being made about Whitlam, I understand Whitlam has just gone through a green certification process. What is that and how would it apply to Jacka stage 2 and fit into the battery work? How will all of the bits start to come together?

Mr Dietz: A little more broadly, out at Whitlam we have a display village. The

builders within that display village have gone through the HIA GreenSmart certification process. The real benefit of a display village for ourselves and the community is around education. It is education about how we can move towards a greener, more sustainable future, both environmentally and socially. You are right; the GreenSmart certification is one way of ensuring a regulated approach to ensuring you are meeting very specific standards.

In Whitlam we also have the rebate system. For people who do not connect to gas and who do have certain requirements of their electricity use, it means they get a \$10,000 rebate. Our display village educates people about how things can operate in that particular space. That has been really successful in educating people.

The social aspect of Whitlam has also been really good. I could talk about that for quite a while. It ensures that we are educating people about co-generational living, which, again, has an environmental sustainability outcome as well. We are educating people about the importance of Ngunnawal history as part of our culture, as part of that social outcome. There is also the importance of the arts. When you walk through our display village, there are a lot of local artists who have had the opportunity to work with us and display their art.

Only two nights ago, we won a Planning Institute of Australia award for environmental resilience. Essentially, it was the sustainable environment outcome planning excellence award for the ACT. It is very beneficial.

MS ORR: Congratulations. I think I got the email.

Mr Dietz: That was not the only award we won.

MS ORR: Yes, I noticed there were a few. With the community batteries, Mr Bulless noted that this is what you are hoping to do going forward with future releases. I have a local member's question: what is left of Gungahlin to be delivered? Will we start to see more of this? We have heard about Jacka; I believe Kenny is still to come online. We do not have much more left in Gungahlin, surprisingly enough.

Mr Dietz: Yes. Part of our role is to help educate industry and community on what can be done. The Jacka battery is an innovative approach in that we are looking for solutions. Certainly, if we are able to provide something which is beneficial, that does become part of what we do in future suburbs. There is the example of Whitlam, where we have had the rebate and a lot of environmental initiatives that have been very successful. They are now part of the business-as-usual approach for the SLA. Depending on the outcome of the Jacka 2 battery solution, it could become part of business as usual as we move forward in other suburbs.

THE CHAIR: We have come to the end of our time today. On behalf of the committee, Minister, thank you, and officials, for coming. There were some questions taken on notice. Could we have the answers lodged within five working days? That will assist us with our report writing. If any member would like to lodge a question on notice, please do so within five working days. The hearing is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 12.15 pm.