



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

(Reference: Annual and financial reports 2006-2007)

Members:

**MR M GENTLEMAN (The Chair)
MR Z SESELJA (The Deputy Chair)
MS M PORTER**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2007

**Secretary to the committee:
Dr H Jaireth (Ph: 6205 0137)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the committee office of the Legislative Assembly (Ph: 6205 0127).

APPEARANCES

ACT Planning and Land Authority	42
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The committee met at 2.33 pm.

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning,
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Minister for Industrial Relations

ACT Planning and Land Authority

Savery, Mr Neil, Chief Planning Executive

Lavis, Ms Jacqui, Deputy Chief Planning Executive

Ponton, Mr Ben, Director, Development Services

Wurfel, Mr Peter, Chief Financial Officer

Meyer, Mr John, Director, Client Services Branch

THE CHAIR: I declare open the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment's inquiry into annual and financial reports, with the Minister for Planning and officials from ACTPLA here today. I will just read the privileges card for you.

The committee has authorised the recording, broadcasting and rebroadcasting of these proceedings in accordance with the rules contained in the resolution agreed by the Assembly on 7 March 2002 concerning the broadcasting of Assembly and committee proceedings. Before the committee commences taking evidence, let me place on record that all witnesses are protected by parliamentary privilege with respect to submissions made to the committee in evidence given before it. Parliamentary privilege means special rights and immunities attach to parliament, its members and others necessary to the discharge of functions of the Assembly without obstruction and without fear of prosecution.

While the committee prefers to hear all evidence in public, if the committee accedes to such a request the committee will take evidence in camera and record that evidence. Should the committee take evidence in this manner, I remind the committee and those present that it is within the power of the committee at a later date to publish or present all or part of that evidence to the Assembly. I should add that any decision regarding publication of in camera evidence or confidential submissions will not be taken by the committee without prior reference to the person whose evidence the committee may consider publishing.

I also record the apologies of Ms Mary Porter MLA, who will not be able to attend today. Minister, would you like to make any opening comments?

Mr Barr: Just very briefly, I thank the committee for the opportunity to appear. It has been just over six months that I have been Minister for Planning. I have enjoyed it thoroughly and would like to put on the record my thanks to the officials who are here—and those who are not—who have assisted in getting me up to speed with the many and varied aspects of the planning portfolio. I also observe that for, I think, all but six weeks of the period that we are covering today in the annual report hearings I was in fact not the Minister for Planning; but I will endeavour to assist where I can with questions that relate to the period before I was minister, and of course the officials will be able to provide further information. So thank you again for the

opportunity to appear and I look forward to the committee's questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I might kick off and just discuss something which has been topical recently and that is land supply. Page 15, paragraph 3 of the report touches on land supply. Minister, would you elaborate a little on what role planning plays in increasing the land supply and making housing more affordable in the ACT?

Mr Barr: There is no doubt that planning has a very important role to play in our overall government response to housing affordability issues. As you would be aware, the Chief Minister recently released the government's response and put in place a range of strategies across a number of departments. But for us in the planning area it is largely around ensuring that we have five years supply of planning-ready land. That means about 11,000 blocks. The planning authority was well placed and already had about 8,000 blocks ready. But the challenge that we have now set through the affordable housing task force and the statement of planning intent is to do some further work to get that to five years supply.

I will get Mr Savery in a minute to give a little bit of detail around each of the initiatives, but you would be aware that we are currently in public consultation on the proposal for north Weston and Molonglo valley. We have commissioned a partnership with the CSIRO for further land release in the East Lake precinct and we have a vast array of new suburbs coming online in Gungahlin, as well as some other specific developments around west Macgregor and Woden east. So it is quite a busy program and keeping the planning authority very busy in preparing concept plans, but again we need to stress that the importance from our end is to do the planning work and get that five years supply, so 11,000 lots. I might get Mr Savery to outline where we are at with some of the developments moving forward.

Mr Savery: In addition to what the minister has outlined, some of the areas that we are going to be focusing our attention on over and above Molonglo and East Lake are the further suburbs that are available in Gungahlin. Our program for the next 18 months will incorporate another three concept plans for that area in terms of Moncrieff, Kenny and Lawson. I think people are familiar with where most of those sit, but what that also indicates is that we are getting to the outer reaches of Gungahlin in terms of the next 10 to 15 years of land in that area will represent some of the last remnants of land for Gungahlin, even though they will, obviously, take some time to be developed and filled. When you add the potential for Molonglo to be added to that, our stockpile is fairly substantial.

One other thing I would add, however, is that at the other end of the spectrum what we have been trying to do is improve some of our processes to speed up the time frames in which estate development plans are being approved. Whilst we have a fairly good stockpile of planning-ready land approved in the form of concept plans, it is critical that the estate development plans that are produced in response to those are not held up unnecessarily through significant delays in the planning process. That does not just incorporate the time that they are inside the planning authority; it also involves a number of other significant government agencies, particularly within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, the Emergency Services Agency and the like.

We are keen to ensure that we can, as best as possible, narrow their focus on the key issues so that we have the potential to reduce the time frame in which those estate development plans are approved and, in light of the fact that the government is now intending to release up to one-third of land through englobo land sales, no longer are we just dealing with the Land Development Agency in respect of those approval processes. Increasingly, private developers will be participating in those processes. So we have introduced, for instance, new estate development plan guidelines so that developers at the start of the process are very clear about what our requirements are and what sort of material has to be submitted which enhances the prospect of those applications being dealt with in a timely manner.

MR SESELJA: What are some of those specific measures that you are putting in place in order to ensure that estate development plans go through more quickly?

Mr Savery: The first thing is to get the referral agencies, as we call them, to identify what their standards and requirements are so that we can document them and articulate what they are up front to developers, as opposed to developers getting into the system, finding out what the requirements are and there is suddenly a delay to the process.

We are making greater use of the coordination role by getting all the agencies in a room together at the start of a process, preferably at a pre-application stage, to identify again what their needs might be and then articulating those to the developers, so that the prospect of them lodging an application that is deficient in information is reduced. Where they do enter the process and a problem emerges, we deal with that problem as quickly as possible. We are ensuring our staff are sufficiently trained and we have set up a unit within the development assessment area specifically to deal with subdivision applications, estate development plans. So again they are treated offline from the mainstream development applications so that we can focus particular effort on any issues that might arise.

MR SESELJA: A couple of things follow on from that. What is an indicative time frame for an estate development plan from start to finish, in particular in relation to, say, west Macgregor and the release there englobo? Was that process finalised, was it cut short or was it modified when the decision was taken to go englobo instead of doing it in the ordinary way?

Mr Savery: The decision as to whether it is englobo or not in the first instance is not our decision, but irrespective of whether it is an englobo land sale or an LDA land sale the processes are equivalent, and that is why the estate development plan guidelines have been prepared to apply equally to the LDA and the private sector. Typically an estate development plan has in the past averaged between 60 and 90 days for approval, bearing in mind they are relatively complex applications.

MR SESELJA: When you say for approval, is that from when it starts, from when ACTPLA starts preparing that estate development plan or when the developer or the LDA—

Mr Savery: That is when an estate development plan is formally lodged with us as a

development application, distinguished between our role in producing a concept plan, which is not an estate development plan—it is a much higher level of strategic design—which informs either the LDA or a private developer on the sorts of things we will be looking for when they lodge their development application and it actually is used by us as a tool to assess whether or not the estate development plan is meeting the broad policy objectives for that area.

So when the estate development plan comes in it is a far more detailed document; it actually identifies the individual lots, road layouts, area of open space et cetera. It is at that point that the time frame that I was indicating on average ticks over, as I say taking into account all the referral processes which include utility agencies, which are not just Actew but other service providers. Those time frames are very favourable compared to other jurisdictions which can take many, many months to process similar sorts of applications.

I think that is one of the benefits of the system that has evolved here where you have concept plans that give a very good indication to developers of what we want, what we expect, what they need to respond to—the estate development plan guidelines now in place again adding a level of detailed information for the sorts of things we want and then once they are in the system we have got a single agency coordination role through the ACT Planning and Land Authority. What we are aiming to do now with those estate development plan guidelines and other measures that I have talked about putting in place is to get below the 60 days. We would expect that the 60 days is likely to be the average.

THE CHAIR: When you develop the concept plans and then have the estate development plans put in as DAs—and this is just in relation to numbers of blocks, for example—do you find that the estate development plans come in with close to the same ratio as your concept plans?

Mr Savery: Yes, relatively so. They sometimes seek variations from that because we have not necessarily calculated the complete amount of development because, for instance, in increasing cases the government is expecting an affordable housing contribution up to 15 per cent in most estates that are being released. Some of the concept plans that were developed maybe five years ago had not taken account of that, so the designs that are coming in are responding to a new government policy objective. But generally we are using the concept plans still to make an assessment against the appropriateness of the block layouts, again the road arrangements—that they connect into future suburbs and existing suburbs—and the location of any open space or local centres that we want.

But when someone seeks an increased density as a result of lodging an estate development plan that is different from the concept plan, we will evaluate that having regard to any additional traffic studies that might be required to take account of that, whether or not there is appropriate or adequate open space in terms of walking distance to open space—those sorts of things. So the concept plans are designed in a way that enables a degree of flexibility. I think I have mentioned to this committee before in its guise of the planning and environment committee that the concept plans under the new Planning and Development Act arrangements will actually form precinct codes so will have a much greater status in law to assist the development

assessment officers in providing a policy environment to assess those estate development plans against.

MR SESELJA: Can I just clarify the estates planning, because we were sort of going back and forth in terms of where that part of ACTPLA comes in. Are you saying that the estates planning team is only signing off on estates plans as against both the concept plan and any guidelines that have been developed? Or is there a preliminary process prior to the estate plan being prepared at the developer level before it is then signed off?

Mr Savery: An estate development plan in its rawest form is the development application for subdivisions, so we treat it like we would any other development application, which means you can have pre-application, which is a voluntary measure. We encourage all applicants—whether they are in this case in the form of a government agency, the LDA, or a private developer in the case of west Macgregor—to come and talk to us and identify any issues not only with us but potential referral agencies to minimise the prospect that those development applications when lodged may encounter difficulties. Once they enter the development application process they are treated according to the legislative processes that are in place.

DR FOSKEY: Thank you, chair, for allowing me to ask many questions. But, before I embark on the questions I have already in front of me, I want to take you back to the first thing you said, Mr Savery. You gave a list of areas that are in the pipeline. Did you include Lawson in that list?

Mr Savery: I did.

DR FOSKEY: Is that the same Lawson that is at the moment suffering from overgrazing or where there is some concern about numbers of kangaroos?

Mr Savery: There are two parts to Lawson. The part that we would be concept planning at this stage is already in the hands of the ACT government. As I understand it, that is not subjected to the same issues, but I could—

DR FOSKEY: It is not fenced.

Mr Savery: Yes. I could be corrected on that but—

DR FOSKEY: No, that is all right; I was just checking. In relation to Forde and those other suburbs that are being promoted as environmentally responsible developments and where there are a number of very useful and commendable initiatives, I am aware, Mr Savery, that you have been visited by Derek Wrigley, I think immediately after I was visited by Derek Wrigley, and I am sure he gave you a copy of this publication, *Climate change needs housing change: why is Australian housing unsuitable for the 21st century?* His most prominent criticism is that he believes no consideration was given to solar access of blocks.

For a start I am just wondering how much is the streetscape, the street plan, for Forde set in cement or can it be changed?

His second concern was that the demonstration houses, which I believe are highly

rated in terms of energy efficiency, have problems like colour of roofing, the size of the blocks and the orientation of those houses. Do you take those criticisms on the chin and are you taking steps, so far as ACTPLA can, to address what I see as problems?

Mr Savery: I did meet with Derek Wrigley and Professor John Sandeman on Friday last week and have read the report. We circulated that quite widely within the agency because some of the observations made by both Mr Wrigley and Professor Sandeman concur with our own views. I need to qualify that because the practice that we are implementing at the moment is in accordance with the legislative measures that we have both within the building code of Australia for individual buildings in the case of five star and in respect of subdivision design for the territory plan. We agree and are in the process of talking to the minister about further measures that we can seek to implement.

I have some specific responses to the issues you have raised. We cannot just change the design of the Forde road layout. There is no question that the road layout, and therefore the subdivisional arrangement around it, largely predetermines the ability of many houses to achieve solar orientation. The designs have been approved. They are building in accordance with those designs and we cannot unilaterally go and ask them to make changes to those.

Having said that, the designs that were approved were approved in accordance with our contemporary standards, so it is a question of reviewing our contemporary standards. We believe there is a lot of room to enhance subdivision design in the first instance, and to that end I would make the point that we had endeavoured to make some changes to our subdivision design standards with the restructured territory plan but, because of the policy neutrality issue, we are unable to introduce those at this point in time. Our intention, again in conversation with the minister, would be to move very quickly, once the new territory plan is in place, to revisit the subdivision code—we are working on it right now—to enhance the ability of new suburbs to perform better to enable a greater proportion of houses to achieve solar orientation.

One of the things I said to both Mr Wrigley and Professor Sandeman was that it is interesting that the contemporary designs that we are using for subdivision respond to the new urbanism principles that really came to the fore 10 years ago and became a solid foundation in the design of new suburbs across Australia. That was largely a response to suburbs that were not permeable, were not legible for their communities, were very low density and as a result did not provide the level of connectivity either internal to those suburbs or between them and other suburbs. But as a result of that and the very regimented sort of approach to the grid design of streets it has reduced the ability of suburbs to respond as effectively to solar orientation.

We do not necessarily want to revert to spaghetti junction type suburbs, which is what new urbanism was responding to, and so we need to find a new practice. We are endeavouring to commence a piece of work to do some auditing of the performance of different designs of suburbs and the buildings within them so that when we come back to the minister with a recommended way forward we can actually do it on the basis of a measured approach. We are hoping to do that over the next six months.

MR SESELJA: How many blocks in Forde under the current planning would be capable of a northern orientation?

Mr Savery: I cannot tell you off the top of my head—unless Mr Ponton can. Our intention generally through our subdivision standards is to achieve 75 per cent of blocks with solar orientation, but I suspect we are not achieving that.

MR SESELJA: So there is a broad target but at the moment we do not know what—

Mr Savery: It is a broad target. It is not a mandatory requirement.

MR SESELJA: But at the moment we have got no idea how many are providing a northerly aspect, or capable of?

Mr Savery: It will vary from suburb to suburb because even with the best will in the world if we had the objective of 100 per cent solar orientation there will be issues of topography and some physical layout that would prevent every lot from achieving solar orientation.

Ms Lavis: If I could add to that too, I think there are also issues to do with the relationship, obviously, of house size to the block size, so a simple sort of northern orientation is not necessarily the only criterion. It would depend on the room disposition and also the location of private open space. Some people choose to have private open space located at the front of their dwellings, and there are provisions within the various standards that we use that do allow some blocks to have that provision. So the equation is not necessarily as simple as a simple percentage of numbers of houses with a particular orientation. You can achieve solar access by a number of means.

DR FOSKEY: Just in regard to that problem, I believe Forde is an LDA development.

Mr Savery: It is a joint venture.

DR FOSKEY: Joint venture with whom?

Mr Savery: With CIC and Delfin Lend Lease.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, but assumedly that gives more ability for some guidelines to be laid down. I am just checking how that would compare with an englobo development and how the government would ensure that we have standards—hopefully higher than Forde but at least as good as—in such a development. I guess most of Gungahlin indicates what can happen. How can we plan to make sure that we have the best environmental outcomes in englobo developments?

Mr Barr: We will need to set in place some guidelines in the future. That is clear, and Mr Savery has indicated that work is occurring within the authority. I am expecting a report back with some options for the government to consider in the next six months or so, and we continue in the interim to work with developers—whether they be LDA or any of the joint venture partners, or in the case of englobo releases with, for

example, the Village Building Company—to ensure that we get the best possible outcomes and seek to work cooperatively with them.

However, it may well be that we need to look at some more stringent guidelines into the future if there is a view, and it can be proven—and it may well be that will be the case following Mr Wrigley’s work—that the current arrangements are not working effectively. So I do not disagree with the policy goal that you are seeking to achieve and seeking the planning system to achieve. I think that is a very laudable goal, but the question of course is the best means to achieve it and what the time frame is to do that, and we are taking advice at this point from the planning authority on those issues.

DR FOSKEY: One of the devices that the government has used is the energy efficiency ratings. I just want to explore those if I may. There are some anomalies there—first of all just the equating of five and six-star energy efficiency ratings with actual sustainability. With the way EER is determined at the moment a house can get an EER rating of 5 which is poorly sited and which has loads and loads of electric gadgets, dishwashers et cetera, because the EER does not relate to the performance of a house. I have been told by one architect in the ACT who is well known for building sustainable houses that a lot of his houses would not even get an EER rating even though they practically do not need heating in winter. It just indicates to me that there are anomalies in the star efficiency and I am wondering how we can move beyond that to make sure that we actually do get houses that perform well rather than just meet the criterion of five stars.

Mr Barr: Just a very brief observation: again it was a very laudable policy goal to put in place a star rating system, but it is only as effective as both the people who are undertaking the audits and the flexibility of the system to respond to the range of issues that you have outlined. So just as an opening statement, again, Dr Foskey, I would agree that we can do some further work in this area. Mr Savery has been giving it a lot of thought so I will throw it to him in a moment to discuss some of the more technical aspects, but again from a policy perspective I think Canberrans have got used to and now look for an energy rating and look for houses that seemingly perform well when making their purchase decisions. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that that system is effective and robust and does address some of the issues you have raised, because people are making some significant decisions around home purchase on the basis of what they are led to believe by the energy efficiency system. I will get Mr Savery to outline some more on that approach.

Mr Savery: The whole area of energy efficiency rating is quite a complex one in respect of the built environment because for a start subdivision design does not have an energy rating framework that operates comparable to the AccuRate system that is in the building code of Australia, so we need to make that distinction. The gadgets that you referred to within the house are subject to a completely different system and administration of energy efficiency rating, which is not administered by state and territory governments and do not factor into the evaluation of energy efficiency rating for housing because it is the structure, whether it is an apartment building, an office building or a detached residential dwelling, which is the feature that is being assessed for its energy efficiency.

The whole energy rating system for buildings was established only about 10 years ago and is relatively unsophisticated, and since then there has been a proliferation of tools that are applied by different jurisdictions to different circumstances. In the ACT we went initially with ACTHERS and now more recently in going to five stars we have adopted AccuRate as the most sophisticated system that is currently available aside BASIX; but BASIX performs in a completely different way to AccuRate.

As a result of all of that there is no common denominator in terms of establishing what is the minimum measure across the country because, as I have said on occasions in this forum previously, governments regulate for minimum performance not maximum performance and to that end I think that what needs to happen, and I think you will see happen in the very near future, is a shift away from a sort of utilitarian rating device to a performance measure form of assessment, and that will enable us to set performance measures still at a minimum level but at a higher level, because you will actually have a tangible way of determining what the minimum is.

But what is critical for that is the setting of targets. At the moment we do not have a national target but increasingly we have jurisdictions, including the ACT, that are setting targets, and so what we are working on nationally both between planning and building regulators is identifying which part of a building belongs under planning regulation, which part of it belongs under building regulation, setting national performance measures against targets but recognising that those performance measures will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, because until we have a national target the jurisdictions have not necessarily got the same targets in mind.

For instance, in the Northern Territory it is unlikely they are going to set the same minimum water targets as the ACT, because they do not have the same issue, and so the measures will vary from state to state. But we can still come up with a framework that is uniform across the country and is modelled on performance measures rather than something arbitrary: you get five stars if you achieve X, Y, and Z.

On your observation about the architects, the anomaly has always been that an architect's designed building as opposed to a building designer's building is typically more innovative; it is not a mass-produced product. The building code of Australia, which is the mechanism through which energy efficiency rating is established, deals with the mass production product because it is the tooling that is required for the development of the trusses and the hinges and everything else that goes into the framework of the building. They are dealing with the 90 per cent mass-produced market as opposed to the 10 per cent designed by architects which are customised buildings, and that means the energy efficiency rating scheme does not work well for the architects and they do find anomalies; typically, because it is a performance-based code, they can find ways around it.

THE CHAIR: Touching on the subject of, I guess, environmental sustainability, on page 18 paragraph 4 talks about East Lake and how it will set a new benchmark for sustainable communities. Could you tell the committee more about the East Lake project and what it hopes to achieve in these areas of sustainability?

Mr Barr: Sure, thank you. Yes, we did identify the East Lake precinct as part of the spatial plan process, back in 2004, so it does encompass an area that includes the

Causeway, the Kingston railway station, Jerrabomberra wetlands and extends down to Fyshwick and effectively up to the border of the Kingston foreshore development. We have a very successful partnership with the CSIRO, which has commenced, in relation to our overall objectives for that area.

In terms of numbers, we are looking at around 90,000 residents for the area, 3,000 jobs and a view to have effectively a carbon-neutral outcome for that community, with a mixture of public, community and private housing and the opportunity to look at perhaps the relocation of the railway station, although again that is a matter for some study. We also need to look at future education provision within the precinct. There is opportunity there to look at perhaps what we might do for senior secondary years in that area. We will be looking at all of those issues.

With my tourism minister's hat on, I am also keen to investigate the possibility of a permanent site for Floriade as part of the overall precinct. So there is a range of things that we can look at in terms of what will occur in that area, but the overall goals are an environmentally and socially sustainable community, with a mixture of housing types, but I will get Mr Savery to outline a little of the partnership with the CSIRO and some of the more technical aspects of the work there.

Mr Savery: It is an interesting evolution because I think about three years ago we first came to the annual reports hearings and talked about our partnership with One Planet Living, or BioRegional, which was an English establishment which is now heavily involved in the London Olympics design. We engaged them to identify a site within Canberra that had the best prospect of exhibiting a carbon neutral community. They identified East Lake, which coincided with Canberra's spatial plan also identifying the site as a significant infill development opportunity for the ACT.

Beyond that project, we then commenced the work of a planning study where we undertook some initial consultation with key stakeholders in the area. Towards the end of that exercise the CSIRO identified us as a possible partner for their sustainable communities initiative. They were looking for 10 pilot projects across the country and they were very keen to do one in Canberra as a demonstration project. They are not all of this type, but this was one that they were particularly interested in. After exploring what each party could offer the other, it was determined that there was a very significant synergy between our respective objectives.

As a result of that, the minister and the Chief Minister have now entered into a formal agreement with the CSIRO as project partners, which means we are both putting considerable resources into this exercise, as well as some finances, to bring it to the point where we could come to the government and put forward a proposal for how you would build a sustainable community. In that sense, the work of the CSIRO and our work is not just about building buildings that reduce the carbon emissions and the impact on the environment but the way that the community will behave within that setting to reduce its carbon emissions through reduced car travel, shopping locally, going to local education facilities and access to the lake for sport and recreation opportunities, so again reducing the need to constantly move elsewhere within the city to undertake their normal leisure and work activities. The minister mentioned that part of the aim is to get a mixed-use development with perhaps 3,000 local jobs and that would provide an opportunity for people to work and live in the one community.

There are two important aspects of the CSIRO project. The first is the method by which we tender for project partners in the future, because it will not be ACTPLA or the CSIRO that actually build this. The government may want to continue to have some equity in the project. Likewise, one would imagine it wants to attract some private sector equity in the project, but it would not necessarily follow a traditional path. It might be, for instance, an alliance type model where all project partners share in the risks and the rewards, because this is a fairly novel and unique exercise. Key to this is to try and ensure that it can be mainstreamed—in other words, that you can demonstrate that this is an economically viable project as well as an ecologically sustainable project, so that it can be repeated in other communities. There is no point in just building a world's best practice demonstration project that no one repeats because it is not cost effective.

The second key aspect is that the technology that can be used in this itself can be developed locally. The CSIRO are producing for us what they call an assessment tool which will have a number of metrics. One of the key components to that is to see if you can source your product locally so that there is value adding into the local economy, whether it is directly through jobs that are created or through a value adding process that is created in the ACT and then reproduced elsewhere. That assessment tool would then be also equally applicable to other projects. So, coming back to some of Dr Foskey's earlier comments, we could see that some aspects of this project would find their way into new standards in the territory plan in the future, that would form part of our assessment tools for future developments.

MR SESELJA: Just following on from that, and I apologise for asking you to repeat yourself, but when are we expecting that people will be moving in to the first blocks or the first houses in East Lake?

Mr Savery: I do not believe the government has made any announcement about that, but I think I am on fairly safe ground saying it is unlikely to occur before 2011.

DR FOSKEY: What happened to ANSI, the Australian National Sustainability Initiative, their role in the development of East Lake? I have a submission that they wrote. I believe that they were consulted and talked to by CSIRO and they did have some very strong, interesting and innovative proposals for that site. I am just wondering if they might be feeling a little marginalised now. Are you aware of that?

Mr Barr: "Marginalised" is a little harsh. They had a proposal; they have put that forward. A lot of the economics of the proposal, though, required the government to effectively transfer large sections of land to them, at no cost, to enable them to finance aspects of their proposal, so it really would have been a significant gift of land to an organisation. So the business model was not entirely supportable in the form that they first presented it to government. I still understand that there is an open dialogue with the Chief Minister and the minister for the environment in relation to the project, but the specific proposal that they put forward, that I have seen, largely involved the territory gifting a significant amount of land in order to effectively finance the aspects of their proposal. That is a big decision for the government to make—to hand over millions of dollars of land to an organisation in order to finance a proposal—so the biggest issue really was the problem with the business model that they put forward.

DR FOSKEY: I suppose that is certainly a consideration—one I hope that you have communicated to them—but I notice they were not acknowledged in the document that was produced on East Lake and it does look as though some of their ideas are incorporated. I just make that point.

Mr Savery: Certainly we continue our communication with ANSI and we have never excluded them from the ongoing process of developing the concept for East Lake. What we have made clear to them is that their project, as the minister has pointed out, is not the project that we are working on, and any material that appears to correspond with their ideas is simply the result of the fact that we have corresponding views on these issues. But we are not proposing at this stage that their project takes the shape of East Lake. We have provided the opportunity still within the East Lake report that has been put out for public consultation for a site to be made available for the building of the ANSI institute, if that business case can be demonstrated to government, and we have included them as—

DR FOSKEY: Does that include only one bottom line or three, the business case?

Mr Savery: The business case would be triple bottom line, yes. But the business case that they have presented to us to date—and to respond to one of your comments, we have corresponded with them on the business case, twice—I have written to them saying it is not adequate. It does not, in my opinion, provide an appropriate case to government that would justify support. Of course government may take a different view at some point, but what we have done is continue to ensure that a site would be available for the building of their actual institute, as opposed to handing over a significant tract of land for residential development to fund the building of the institute, and we continue to incorporate them or include them as a key interest group in the consultation. So, for instance, they were invited to participate in the CSIRO consultation which commenced a couple of weeks ago. I am not sure, Ms Lavis, whether or not they attended.

Ms Lavis: They have had meetings with CSIRO as one of the stakeholders in the consultation process and their interests continue to be discussed at the steering committee that meets in relation to the East Lake project. I think it would be fair to say from that commentary that has just been made that certainly their interest is well known to the project partners and is being respectfully dealt with.

Mr Barr: My office has also had meetings with them, so I do not think it is fair to say they have been excluded, but I just—

DR FOSKEY: No, I did not say excluded.

Mr Barr: reiterate the point, though, that for the government to consider effectively financing their particular project by giving them land for them to then sell for residential is not the best business model going forward.

DR FOSKEY: No, but I am sure that there are other ideas that you will appreciate—

Mr Barr: Indeed, absolutely, and we would look forward to receiving those.

DR FOSKEY: I do want to go back to EER at some point, chair.

THE CHAIR: Sure.

MR SESELJA: Minister, what is the status of planning for a release of a suitable block of land for a pool in Gungahlin?

Mr Barr: The opportunity through the precinct that includes the college, the sport and recreation facility—I have announced today some additional money for forward design not only—

MR SESELJA: For the pool?

Mr Barr: No, no, for the college precinct, and including some further work that ACTPLA will undertake, and the indoor sport and recreation facility is part of that entire block. So we are progressing that work. The question, of course, is the appropriate model of delivery. There is a range of options, whether it be that the government would entirely finance the pool and then put it out to tender for management, like we do with Civic and Dickson pools, for example, or whether you would look at involving a private operator along not necessarily exactly the same model but a similar model to CISAC in Belconnen.

The important thing is to undertake the further forward design work. The site that has been identified is also subject to some other sport and recreation needs—an enclosed oval and the associated sporting facilities that will go with Gungahlin college. So we have a \$61 million budget for Gungahlin college. We have also announced some additional funding today for the work on the stormwater retention issues on the site and also the Gungahlin town park. That is coming together. I have indicated that I would like to see the precinct completed in large part by the end of 2011, but we will need to undertake some further work in relation to the best delivery mechanism for the sport and recreation facility on the site.

MR SESELJA: Okay, a couple of follow-ons: is there at this stage likely to be sufficient land as part of that package for a 50-metre pool or is it only a 25-metre pool? And are you anticipating that as part of that precinct there would be enough space or capacity for both the pool and an enclosed oval?

Mr Barr: Certainly there is room for both the pool and an enclosed oval. The size of the pool is a matter for some further discussion and it would come, of course, with a—

MR SESELJA: And on the funding model I imagine, too.

Mr Barr: Indeed, yes. I think it would be desirable for a 50-metre pool to be available but it would depend a little bit on the particular needs of the Gungahlin community in relation to lap swimming versus recreational—whether you would want a kids wading pool, for example, and a range of others. So there might be multiple pools that could be provided. That level of detail we are still a little bit away from, but that is work that my sport and recreation department are currently undertaking. But from the planning

perspective the sites have been identified and we have made available some additional resources to undertake the further planning work that needs to be done.

THE CHAIR: Dr Foskey, you wanted to ask about the oval?

DR FOSKEY: Yes. What does “enclosed oval” mean?

Mr Barr: As in an oval that has a fence around it.

DR FOSKEY: Right, not a DUBY dome?

Mr Barr: No.

DR FOSKEY: Okay. I thought we might be worried about UV.

Mr Barr: No, no, not a docklands. Think Phillip oval, think Greenway, think Manuka—an oval that is of sufficient quality for first grade, be it AFL, cricket, soccer, rugby league, rugby union. We can also have grandstands and facilities for players, so a small pavilion et cetera—so not your average suburban oval.

DR FOSKEY: Back to EER, if I may, and a couple of things that I would like explained, or do you want to finish your line of questioning?

MR SESELJA: The chair has just reminded me about netball courts but—

DR FOSKEY: You can go there.

MR SESELJA: Is that part of the plan as well?

Mr Barr: The plans I have seen for the Gungahlin college include a range of basketball, netball, tennis—

MR SESELJA: Obviously there is netball for a school but are there netball facilities sufficient for regular district use?

Mr Barr: I do not have the map in front of me but I certainly can report being pleased by the number of courts that will be available. They will, I imagine, incorporate the flexibility to be basketball or netball, as we have the ability now to construct the courts in such a way that they can be adaptable for either sport. So it is quite a significant sport and recreation precinct.

DR FOSKEY: With EER ratings, at the moment there is a lower EER rating for multi-unit developments than for detached houses. Given that it should be easier to achieve a higher rating in multi-unit developments due to the efficiencies of shared walls and shared heating and all that sort of stuff, I am just interested in why that is the case.

Mr Savery: Again, we are working within the framework of the building code of Australia and the building codes board when it went to five star green star, which was still available for individual jurisdictions to elect to adopt, went for minimum

performance measures for commercial buildings and apartment buildings. In part that was because they had not completed the regulatory impact statement for apartment buildings as they had for individual residential buildings and because there was the residual issue of common areas. I think you would appreciate that there is still a body of work to be completed about how we deal with the common areas, which account for a significant amount of inefficient lighting, heating and cooling which is not really used—

DR FOSKEY: You mean hallways, vestibules and that stuff?

Mr Savery: Hallways, all the lifts—it is all lit up at night, some of it for security reasons, occupational health and safety reasons, for people moving about—but—

DR FOSKEY: They could have timing switches on those.

Mr Savery: Yes, of course, all of that. I am not disagreeing with you, but it is because of that that it was not resolved. The territory adopted the new minimum standard as of 1 July 2006 and we have already flagged with the building codes board that we intend to request that five star for apartment buildings is on the work program for the next financial year for the building codes board.

DR FOSKEY: I was just reading an article in the *Age* yesterday which argues that the Victorian similar code was highly influenced by lobbying from the HIA.

Mr Savery: I just happen to have that article in front of me.

DR FOSKEY: You do? That is interesting because I wanted to ask you about the influence here.

Mr Savery: Yes, I think Mr Wrigley might have just sent it through.

DR FOSKEY: I sent it to him, so it goes around.

Mr Savery: I have read it. Sorry, what was the question?

DR FOSKEY: I am interested in whether you think that is likely to be the case in Victoria and whether that has been the case here too.

Mr Barr: Perhaps I will step in and answer that. I am not going to comment on Victoria; that is a matter for them. But I think it is important that the government hears from all stakeholders so HIA is perfectly entitled to put a view. I am not going to give a running commentary on my views on the lobbying ability of various industry groups, but I would not be concerned, Dr Foskey, that the HIA will write the rules for the ACT. They have a valuable input to make and we always look to engage constructively with them, but they do not write policy for the ACT government.

DR FOSKEY: No, and I am sure that they could save you a lot of money if you allowed them to. The final anomaly that I want to point out is that the energy rating required for new planning approvals was four star but the energy rating for building approvals was five star. Does ACTPLA plan to increase the starred requirement for

planning approvals?

Mr Ponton: Dr Foskey, you are quite correct in that in the territory plan there is a four-star rating. However, with the introduction of five star in the building code of Australia the four star became redundant so we are requiring five star for the planning approvals and that will be rectified in the new territory plan. So what we are saying to applicants is that, whilst the territory plan does identify four star, you will not be able to get your building approval unless you can demonstrate five star. So that is actually bringing the rating earlier.

DR FOSKEY: Thank you.

MR SESELJA: Minister, the press release from Jon Stanhope in August 2007 in relation to a number of land releases being brought forward talks about final design parameters for section 63 being discussed between ACTPLA and the NCA. Are you able to talk us through where that process is up to and how detailed the design parameters will be from ACTPLA's point of view, the restrictions that are in place?

Mr Barr: I will get Mr Savery, as he has been doing those negotiations, to provide the information.

Mr Savery: Perhaps it is useful just to point out from the start that the National Capital Authority will be the development approving agency. So the detailed guidelines that you are referring to are their document because that is the tool that they will use to assess any development application against. We have participated in the development of those guidelines from the outset, which commenced some three or four months ago in earnest, and that document has now been completed. I understand it has been presented to the National Capital Authority board and approved, so they have that document sitting there ready to use to assist them in any development application that is received.

There are two important things also to bear in mind in relation to that. One is that those guidelines have been heavily informed by the principles that were contained in the Canberra Central Taskforce final report where there were 11 key principles for our aspirations for the city centre—things like pedestrian movement, overshadowing or avoiding overshadowing, traffic movement, addresses to the street, active street edges, all of those sorts of things, as well as the material that was contained in the amendments to the national capital plan under the Griffin legacy amendments.

The second thing is that the deed of development that the ACT Planning and Land Authority puts together for the purposes of the sale of the land, which informs potential purchasers of what the government wants to achieve in selling the land in terms of development yield, car parking requirements et cetera, has also been developed in tandem with those guidelines so that as best as possible they are talking to each other; an example being that, for instance, the deed says we want to achieve a certain quality of public finish with street trees, urban furniture, paving, but because it is the National Capital Authority that will actually set the standards, we have been working closely with the NCA to ensure that they do not set a standard that is over and above the standard we are seeking in the development deed. So there is an interplay between a number of documents here.

MR SESELJA: So at that level, that process whereby you worked with the NCA, you are now comfortable with the final product that the NCA is taking forward?

Mr Savery: As comfortable as we can be. At the end of the day—

MR SESELJA: Obviously it is not your decision, but obviously—

Mr Savery: the decision is in their hands.

MR SESELJA: ACTPLA would have a view as to whether it is in keeping or not.

Mr Savery: Yes. I think we are comfortable with the final product. We had the opportunity to comment; we passed comment. The NCA made some changes as a result. There is some detail there that we would probably do differently but we are not the development approval agency. It is their document.

MR SESELJA: Sure. What are some of those details that you would do differently?

Mr Savery: For instance, on some of the pedestrian movement corridors we would have a different view to the over-elaboration of pedestrian movement opportunity within the site. I would just like to have the finishes further bedded down than is necessarily the case now. There is still some opportunity for different interpretations on where car parking might be provided. I would like to pretty much have that nailed down, but to the extent that you can work these things through with two completely different systems where we can only influence to the extent that we can through the selling of the land and then their role is to assess it with a completely different set of instruments, we have done a pretty good job of coordinating our respective efforts. I would be pretty confident we are going to get a good result out of it. There is a lot of goodwill between the two agencies on it.

Meeting adjourned from 3.33 to 3.46 pm.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to the planning and environment committee's inquiry into annual reports. I might just go back to something Mr Savery commented on earlier on in regard to sustainability targets. On the bottom of page 17, the last paragraph talks about the authority's role in implementing the government's climate change strategy. Could you outline some of the practical examples of the sorts of things ACTPLA is doing to decrease emissions and make residential and other buildings in the ACT more sustainable?

Mr Savery: I make the initial observation that the climate change strategy has only just come in, so the work that we will be doing on the climate change strategy is new work. Some of the things that we have already talked about earlier in the hearing are measures that the authority has been involved in with government direction in terms of setting new standards, albeit minimum standards, for new housing, new commercial buildings et cetera. Some of the areas that we are looking to in the future, again at this stage advising the minister on possible options, would obviously be to lobby some of those national forums for higher standards to be set, be that with the support of groups like the green building council, with other jurisdictions, with work

that we are doing in partnership, for instance, with the CSIRO and the ANU. We recently participated in a workshop with the ANU, who are looking at measures to improve the adaptation of the built environment for the ACT, and so we need to see some of the measures that are coming out of that work to determine where certain standards should be established.

Some of the other things that the government has asked us to look at are around education and subsidies, incentives, so it is not all about setting regulations. What are some of the other drivers that can influence change? Another mechanism outside our control that will influence change is, obviously, pricing—pricing of water, pricing of energy—not that that is a tool that the government is in any way advocating, but it is obviously something that does have an impact.

We are involved still in a range of national projects that will have some influence on the measures that we adopt for the climate change strategy, one of which is looking at the most effective hot water systems. You will recall that the climate change strategy talks about solar hot water systems for the ACT. There is a national project occurring with the National Plumbing Regulators Forum, with the Australian Greenhouse Office, looking at different hot water systems, because simply putting a solar hot water unit on the roof does not necessarily mean it is the most efficient system around. They cost money to service. They cost money to install. Can they deliver at the time that you need it, in terms of need for back-up systems? All of that is being investigated so that when we go to government in response to that recommendation we can say, “On the most informed scientific assessment at the time, this is the advice we would give you.”

There is another one in the climate change strategy that picks up on another matter that Dr Foskey mentioned. It was around the appliances in houses—fridges, washing machines, dishwashers etcetera. I made mention that many of those are regulated through national standards administered by the Australian Greenhouse Office. Nonetheless, the ACT government has indicated through the climate change strategy that it has got a keen interest to pursue more rigorous standards for those devices and we have to give some level of analysis back to the government on the best way to manage that: is it at point of sale, is it at point of installation, which brings in issues of compliance and monitoring and auditing and all of those sorts of issues.

The other one that I think will interest you is that for the last 12 months we have been working with the Australian Greenhouse Office, examining or reviewing the energy efficiency rating point of sale requirement, which is mandatory in the ACT and we are the only jurisdiction that has it. We expect within the next four weeks there will be a report coming to the minister. It is actually for the Australian Greenhouse Office to make the final decisions in terms of whether or not this is something that has greater national application but, out of courtesy, because we have been involved in the project, the government will be informed first of the findings. I think you will find that there is some very positive material coming out of that work. So all of that is going into the melting pot to enable us to present a piece of consolidated advice to the minister on where you can achieve best value for money.

Mr Barr: I would just add that the question will always arise for the planning authority around where to focus its resources. We recognise we have finite resources

available to us. Three of the key priorities I outlined in the statement of planning intent responding to climate change as the key aspect of the authority's work moving ahead, along with some of the issues we have discussed already around affordable housing and services in Gungahlin, combined with the planning system reform project, encompass a very broad range of work for the authority. But I am according a very high priority to the climate change strategy and to the active involvement of the authority in moving forward to implementation.

I have just one other policy measure to bring to the committee's attention—the water sensitive urban design guidelines that I released earlier in the year and the requirement there for a 40 per cent reduction in mains water usage. That is another significant example of government drawing a line in the sand, if you like, on future water usage in new residential developments and also for commercial buildings. So we are very active in this area. For a jurisdiction of our size and given the available resources we play a large part in the national debate, also I believe as the leading jurisdiction in Australia in terms of our own individual response locally, but we always intend to build on that and that is why we have accorded it such priority in the statement of planning intent.

THE CHAIR: Good. I will look forward to that report coming in.

MR SESELJA: Minister, what is the status of the A10 guidelines?

Mr Barr: As you would be aware, I made a ministerial statement on that to the Assembly, so I would draw your attention to *Hansard*.

MR SESELJA: I am aware of the ministerial statement.

Mr Barr: We will bring forward some suggestions and the report will be available to me in the near future in relation to some modifications. The largest aspect of the review, the main point, was to say that the provisions have worked effectively. There are a couple of areas that I think we can perhaps look to address community concerns in relation to developments in cul-de-sacs and where there are narrow street frontages, but by and large the regulations have worked very effectively to concentrate development and residential intensification in areas close to public transport and to services and have provided protection for about 85 per cent of Canberra suburbs from ad hoc development that was occurring prior to the introduction of the guidelines.

MR SESELJA: No. The guidelines have not been introduced. I am asking about the A10 guidelines, as in design guidelines that were promised by the previous minister.

Mr Barr: Character guidelines; sorry, I misunderstood the question. I think Mr Savery may be able to give us some further information.

Mr Savery: The response to the minister's direction to identify character guidelines for inner north and inner south of Canberra, as a result of the neighbourhood planning process that occurred a couple years ago: that work has been completed and we intend to post some information guidelines or practice notes on our website towards the middle to end of November so they would be available for use. Our intention is to use them primarily as an education tool for designers, for assessment officers, to assist

them in providing more compatible or complementary design for buildings.

MR SESELJA: Would that significantly change the arrangements that are in place now? You said they apply to north and south Canberra, so presumably in places like Holder, where there are concerns at the moment, they will not be applying to A10 development in Holder?

Mr Savery: The way that they are being used, or will be used, means that they can be available for anyone to adopt as a design standard, but bearing in mind that, because the direction was specifically a complementary design for inner north and inner south Canberra, our analysis was about the characteristics of those inner city suburbs and therefore some of the design features that lend themselves to compatibility or complementarity are not necessarily appropriate for Holder, Duffy or other outer suburbs. It does not preclude someone from wanting to use them, but they would not have the same level of application in those suburbs. They are just not as applicable as they are to the inner suburbs.

Ms Lavis: If I could add to that, minister: picking up on the point that has been made, one of the points that has been subject to a slight adjustment in the territory plan material that will go out on exhibition shortly has been a referencing of a reworded merit criterion in response to some of the submissions that have been made on the territory plan. So in fact a criterion has been reintroduced which reflects the need to respect neighbourhood character broadly, so, as Mr Savery has indicated, not indicating that inner north and inner south character is necessarily something that would be replicated in other suburbs but there is a need to have general regard to neighbourhood character in terms of the design of A10 developments.

DR FOSKEY: On page 15, under “Highlights” it says that budget cuts—I assume—mean that ACTPLA cannot respond quickly to government policy needs. As that is one of their few discretionary functions where resources can be moved, perhaps without being so obviously noticed, could you indicate which policy responses have suffered from lack of resources or how you have otherwise responded?

Mr Barr: As I indicated in answer to a previous question from Mr Gentleman, it has of course meant that we have had to focus our efforts in particular areas. I indicated the statement of planning intent forms the core of government policy priorities. What it does provide is perhaps an indication and some guidance to government also around just the extent of policy demands that we place on our agencies. So, whilst it is always tempting when you are a minister to say, “I would like all of this work done and I would like it all done now,” you have to be realistic about what is achievable in a small government, so that is why I have set the priorities I have, upon taking the portfolio, and seek to focus the authority’s work in those areas.

I am aware that additional demands that I may place on the authority for response will come potentially at the cost of some other government priorities, and so that is a judgement call that I will have to make from time to time as planning minister. But we have got to live within our means and work within our budget and the capability of the organisation, and I am very confident in the team that we have at ACTPLA. As I indicated in my opening statements, I have certainly appreciated their support in assisting me through the steep learning curve within the planning portfolio in those

early months and I look forward to continuing to work with them on the agreed priorities of government and, as I have indicated, the affordable housing priority, planning system reform, responding to climate change and providing for the needs of Gungahlin, which are the key priorities that I have set for the authority.

MR SESELJA: Following on from that, perhaps Mr Savery in his independent role might assist the committee and let us know what areas ACTPLA is struggling to respond to as a result of these cutbacks.

Mr Savery: It is more in the area of discrete incremental projects that have not necessarily been anticipated in the course of developing annual programs, and a good example, for instance, is where whole-of-government responses are sought and we simply have not got a resource that we can quickly turn on to those exercises. So it is not to say that the authority will not make a comment, but it cannot put the level of policy grunt into the exercise that it might have been able to in the past. Instead, in agreement with the minister, our forward program has enabled us to focus our resources on the priority areas of climate change, affordable housing and serving Gungahlin. So it is things that you do not necessarily anticipate are going to come up in the course of the year. Likewise, we do not have the same capacity as we used to to get as heavily involved in all of the national projects as we used to.

MR SESELJA: Page 11 talks about 36 staff being cut and I understand, and you might clarify this, that part of that was moved to shared services and others were given redundancies. Are you comfortable now, minister, with the level of resources in ACTPLA and do you anticipate any further cutbacks?

Mr Barr: Certainly there is no anticipation of further cutbacks. ACTPLA, like a range of government agencies, have some vacant positions and so we would very much like to be able to fill all of the positions that they currently have. That is not the case at the moment; there are some vacancies being carried and the authority is undergoing an extensive process of seeking to recruit to those vacancies.

MR SESELJA: Are you able to, on notice, provide us with detail of where there are vacancies in ACTPLA?

Mr Barr: Yes certainly. That information is available and I have got no issues there, and we are of course undertaking active recruitment programs.

MR SESELJA: Approximately how many positions, Mr Savery? Do you know?

Mr Savery: Twenty-five.

Mr Barr: And we of course continue to work within the resources that we have. But, as I indicated, it does place some limits on the ability to engage in a particularly diverse program and particularly at a national level. However, like all small jurisdictions, we have to be strategic about which areas we will focus our resources and efforts in. Nonetheless, the core business of the authority and the important work that needs to be undertaken is being undertaken and we work in accordance with the statement of planning intent in terms of the broader policy guidelines.

THE CHAIR: Minister, can I just bring you back to the “Highlights” on page 15 that Dr Foskey was talking about. The second last paragraph mentions the electronic development assessment and building system and other online e-business applications that ACTPLA have introduced over the past year. Can you give us an overview of some of those applications and any efficiencies they bring?

Mr Barr: Certainly. This is a range of exciting initiatives, and John Meyer in a minute can give you some real detail on how it will work. The reductions in red tape are in the order of 40 per cent for the authority, so this is a significant investment in new technology. We have been able to get some funds from the commonwealth in order to assist in this process, so we welcome and acknowledge that, but the ACT government has also invested. I will get John to outline some of the detail of each of the individual initiatives.

Mr Meyer: The amount of investment now in electronic service delivery in the authority is quite significant. What we have been able to do under the commonwealth’s regulation reduction incentive fund is to establish a platform by which we can now build a series of modules for electronic service delivery. So, for example, what we are doing now is starting to work end to end with the submission of electronic development applications right through to the issue of the final certificate of occupancy. We have got an electronic development application form which we have been trialling that, along with the planning systems reform project, will be introduced at the end of March. That will then extend to a series of capabilities whereby builders, developers, architects and others will be able to access their own websites, track projects and see how they are progressing through the system towards final approvals.

The government’s investment over the next three financial years, building on what the commonwealth has done, will effectively remove what we call our legacy systems—our development application tracking system, our building registration system and so forth are going to be rebuilt on this new platform. So effectively it takes away those fairly much what we call band-aid legacy systems which are not serving us well and it provides a seamless platform. So within the next three years we will have, I think, one of the leading-edge building and development systems.

One of the other major projects which we have implemented—it is available publicly and we are actually building on it at the moment—is ACTMAPi, web-based mapping capabilities. That is proving valuable in terms of the layering of information that we are able to put on that from a range of agencies around the ACT government and in response to community requests for information. It provides a powerful tool both internally to the organisation for planning purposes as well as to the general community for access to information. So effectively our vision, I suppose, for the next three years is that very few transactions will need to be undertaken through our customer services centre as such. Much of the information will be available electronically through lodgement, through getting certificates, getting approvals, getting documents online and available 24/7, as it were.

THE CHAIR: So the process now for a builder, for example, wanting to check on the progress of a development application: how long would it take them to contact, I guess, the call centre operations and find out where their application is?

Mr Meyer: Probably about 50 to 60 per cent of our customer service staff as well as development applications processing staff are taken up in talking with applicants about the progress of their applications. A lot of that is by phone. Equally we get a large number of developers coming in through the door making those sorts of inquiries, so you can imagine the travel time that is taken up with that—the time on the phone, just generally tracking around trying to find that information and getting back to people and then providing them with other documents that they might need is a substantial amount of time for staff involved in those activities. We are looking at, I think conservatively, figures of around \$4 million a year in savings and that is based on travel time, contact by phone and various other commitments that developers have to take at the moment.

Mr Barr: Just to clarify: the savings are estimated at around \$4 million per annum and it has resulted in about a 40 per cent reduction in interactions at the Dickson front office. So, to clarify my earlier statement, there has been about a 40 per cent reduction there.

THE CHAIR: That is good.

DR FOSKEY: Just as a follow-up, will it be reviewed at some point just to find out if there are losses as well as an economic gain in terms of less face-to-face interaction?

Mr Meyer: The system itself is being developed very closely in contact with our customers. The thing we are doing through trial and change iteratively is to make sure that that system meets the needs of small business as well as ensure that we get processing times effective and efficient and keep those at the sort of levels that we want. So all of those systems are or will continue to be evaluated to make sure that we finetune them, to ensure that they deliver the best outcomes.

Mr Savery: We are also not proposing to remove the ability for people to have face-to-face contact because the way that we operate our customer service centre enables people to be brought down on call so that when the contact is not there they can be back in their office working. So if over time we see a transition to more and more people using the electronic systems, it just means those individuals can spend more time in their office. We know through our own surveys that there is a reasonable proportion of customers who either do not want to or do not have access to some of those electronic systems and therefore we have to continue to provide some of that face-to-face service.

Mr Meyer: A lot of people are saying to us that they want that time to be more productive in terms of discussing the detail of the applications or the building development or whatever it might be, rather than the administration, the mechanics of getting the documents in and signed off and processed and having to check on progress and so forth. So I think that is where the big time savings are going to be made.

Mr Savery: I do not know if Mr Meyer mentioned it, but one of the other useful applications is for our compliance officers and land regulation officers with the potential to take portable laptops, wireless laptops, out onto site, access ACTMAPi

and other information that we have available through these new business systems so that not only do they not have to carry manual files around with them but they are able to go onto site and be with the developers, electricians or plumbers and tell them where they are going wrong or something else and actually discuss it on the screen in front of them. So there is a host of applications that we have not really fully explored or taken full advantage of yet.

Mr Meyer: Certainly the plumbers are taking information out into the field in terms of ties to water mains, sewer mains and so forth. They have given feedback that that has saved them an enormous amount of time so they can prepare their work the night before and take that out into the field. Similarly, most recently we have back-scanned all of the historical survey information in books, so that now is available online. So surveyors are able to access that information without coming into the office or making telephone inquiries to set themselves up for particular surveys and get background information. So increasingly the information that we hold is being made more readily available.

Mr Savery: It might reduce the risk of someone severing a broadband cable in the middle of the city centre.

THE CHAIR: I was going to ask that question next.

DR FOSKEY: Someone who probably had a development approval from ACTPLA.

Mr Savery: Probably not to do that.

DR FOSKEY: No. On pages 16 and 18 there are references to transport planning. What has happened since the 2006 budget is that transport has been put into TAMS. One of the strengths, I thought, was that planning and transport were integrated under the one minister previously. I am not sure how much more than that they were integrated. I was just wondering how you are finding that. I am not sure whether this is a kind of a code, but it says:

... it has been important to establish a seamless interface with the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to ensure that strategic transport planning services are available to the Authority in undertaking a range of land use planning exercises.

What are the problems that you have come up against, if any, since the separation and how important do you believe it is that transport and planning are integrated?

Mr Barr: We are, of course, one very happy and coordinated government that works very effectively across agencies and across ministerial portfolios, so we have regular dialogue with all of the key players in this area. I take a particular interest in aspects of transport and seek to put my views to Minister Hargreaves at a ministerial level and in cabinet level discussions, as indeed the authority does with the Department of Territory and Municipal Services. So, whilst it is always difficult to adjust to changes, we do seek to maintain very strong relationships with other agencies and other ministers and will continue to do so.

MR SESELJA: How often are officials from the two agencies meeting in relation to transport planning? Is that on a weekly basis or less regular than that?

Mr Savery: It depends on the nature of the project, so if it is a piece of forward strategic planning it would be relatively infrequent; it would be during milestones and there may be project officers that are being assigned to some sort of overarching coordination team. If it is to do with an individual development application, they will be engaged in potentially pre-application meetings as well as during referral stages of a development application, and then more regularly the Department of Territory and Municipal Services and we meet every four to six weeks and we have a prearranged agenda so that we can list issues that we both feel need to be addressed during those meetings, and again there may be follow-up action that arises as a result of that.

From an operational point of view there is no question that it would be nice to have transport planning with land use planning but, as the minister has indicated, we are one government. We are relatively small agencies that find it quite easy to meet whenever we need to or correspond by email et cetera. The issue for me is to ensure that you do not get the potential for silos to emerge and that means constant dialogue. You run the risk of silos emerging within your own agencies between various branches and I think it is a constant piece of work for management to ensure that appropriate communication and dialogue is occurring within your department and between departments so that you do not get these cultural silos emerging.

MR SESELJA: Minister, is the government still committed to the implementation of the sustainable transport plan?

Mr Barr: This question will of course be best directed to the minister for transport but from my perspective as Minister for Planning I have regular meetings with Minister Hargreaves in relation to a number of issues that cross over portfolio areas, but I will not be making comments in other ministers' portfolio areas.

DR FOSKEY: In relation to TAMS and ACTPLA, again on page 19 in the bottom paragraph it says:

Following the Government's 2006/07 budget decisions, it was intended—
assumedly by the government—

that the Land Rent function administered by ACTPLA would transfer to the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TaMS). After a review of the logistics ... Treasury agreed that a submission be prepared for Government putting the case for a reversal of the decision.

There is obviously a lot in there, a lot that could be unpacked. It says the submission is being put on hold, and I am just wondering where it is at now and what is ACTPLA's view on who should perform the land rent function.

Mr Savery: It is still in a hiatus. It has been a bit of a moving feast, certainly when it was first put forward, and the transfer in the sense of personnel has effectively occurred. But the budget arrangements still remain as they were before, so there is an unfortunate administrative arrangement occurring that we would like to tidy up.

Since we prepared the initial cabinet submission that would seek a reversal of that decision, which at the time did have the support of TAMS and Treasury, there has been some further thinking that we feel probably needs some bedding down to see if in fact it does not work better under the arrangements that have taken place which would simply mean that we have to follow through on transferring the budget arrangements so that you have not got a situation where the staff are in one department performing a function but another department is paying for their salaries, which is what we have got at the moment. We want to sort that out, but rather than rush in we are reviewing our initial thoughts on whether in fact it would be appropriate to reverse the decision.

DR FOSKEY: Is there any relationship between that and the fact that land rent has declined by \$2 million in 2006-07? Why might that be?

Mr Wurfel: I do not believe that that would be the case. I will just have a quick look at what the land rents show. There should have been only a marginal change, if anything, and that would have reflected the pricing changes.

DR FOSKEY: That is on page 91.

Mr Wurfel: Yes. I can have a look at that and establish what the reasons for that were. I would not have thought that it would have been because of the fact that there was still a matter to be resolved about the transfer of that function, but I can have a look at that and establish the reasons for that for you.

Mr Savery: To come back to the member's original question—and I think it also goes in part to illustrating that it is not a function of reduced revenue on this issue—the two main reasons why we potentially want to reconsider our initial thoughts on this are that, as a result of the government's affordable housing action plan, you would be aware that the government is intending to introduce a land rent scheme, and it would be intended that the land rent scheme be administered by the ACT Revenue Office, which means that the skills that we have currently in the land rent area would be more applicable in the revenue office. So that would be a reason why you would not necessarily want to retain what will be a fairly scarce resource within government within one agency when the majority of their functions are occurring elsewhere.

The other thing is that I am informed that a large part of our portfolio, the rental portfolio, is coming up for possible repairs and maintenance to buildings. Because we do not have an expenditure capacity in this area—we collect the revenue but we do not have an expenditure capacity—it could well be that Property ACT is in fact in a better position to collect the revenue but also has the expenditure capacity. So it is the mixture of all of that that warrants a broader review of where is the best place to locate this within the ACT administration.

DR FOSKEY: And how will that be resolved, Mr Savery, or Mr Barr?

Mr Savery: Between the various agencies. We are in those conversations now with TAMS, with Treasury, with the revenue office, and then we will put a position to government. If as a result of that the decision or the recommendation is to leave it in

TAMS as the changes have occurred, it is simply a case of transferring the budget so that it is all in one administration. If it is that it should all go over to the revenue office, there is another set of recommendations that arise as a result of that, but it will be an administration discussion with a recommendation to government unless it is the status quo.

DR FOSKEY: And will that be reflected in the next budget, or prior to that, do you think?

Mr Savery: I would imagine this would all be completed before the end of this financial year.

MR SESELJA: Minister, there was a recent HIA forum that you and I attended and you were asked how many blocks of land were available in the ACT at the present time, and you answered 3,200. Is that correct?

Mr Barr: That is the forward program for land release but if you want more detail on land release you will need to raise that with the responsible minister.

MR SESELJA: I have and that is why I was a little bit confused, because you were certainly asked what land was available, because the builders in the room were certainly very keen to know what was available, and you said 3,200 and then—

Mr Barr: I think you are perhaps not correctly quoting what I said.

MR SESELJA: No, I believe I am.

Mr Barr: I said that I did not have the figure of the number of blocks available at the moment the question was asked but that the program for the financial year was the 3,200 figure I referred to.

MR SESELJA: We asked the minister responsible last week. David Dawes asked, “Can a builder buy a block of land today to build a house today?” and the answer was no, and then the acting CEO of the LDA clarified that there are 80 blocks available. Does that sort of suggest that the land supply strategy is not really working?

Mr Barr: It suggests that there is a pipeline of supply and that it is not possible to immediately make 3,200 blocks available just by a minister decreeing that that will occur. There is a forward land release strategy and you have obviously asked the questions of the responsible minister, but from the planning perspective our job is to ensure that there is a five-year supply of planning-ready land and we are building towards that. As I indicated in response to an earlier question, we have about 8,000 blocks, I understand, of planning-ready land and it then passes through the processes either for englobo release or release through the LDA, and the program for this financial year is for the 3,200 or thereabouts blocks to be made available. But the detail of your question really sits with the Chief Minister, not with me.

MR SESELJA: When you talk about planning-ready land, what is the time frame from when you deem it to be planning ready to when someone is able to build a house on it?

Mr Barr: It would depend a little on the release—

MR SESELJA: What would be the minimum and what would be the average?

Mr Savery: It is simply a case of when the Land Development Agency, through the agreed land release program, requires or wants that land available. Once the concept plan is complete and approved by the planning authority it is available for release either through englobo land sale or through LDA joint venture or its own development purposes. In some cases that land option is not taken up maybe for years. We have got some concept plans that have probably been around for five years, whereas another concept plan becomes very appealing because of its position in the market, ease of providing infrastructure, it is part of the logical sequence of development in terms of the rolling development front, and that land is called up immediately and put on to the market, which is literally a space of weeks. It is the time between the concept plan having been approved and the developer or the LDA being able to produce an estate development plan after its release.

MR SESELJA: So if it can be done in weeks, and we have identified for the last couple of years that there has been a significant spike in demand, is there a reason why there are still only 80 blocks available at the moment? Is that the LDA slowing things down?

Mr Savery: I would not say it is the LDA slowing things down. I am not in a position to make a comment on that, but I think there is an issue of pent-up demand and there is no question that there was a particular period—I think we are going back some 12, maybe 18 months—when everyone, including the development industry, had anticipated that there would be some letting off on the demand for residential and all of a sudden the commonwealth put in a significant budget with the expectation that there were going to be between 3,000 and 5,000 additional employees. The push was on to get more land out to the market, which is why we have gone from just around 2,000 lots to 3,200 lots this year, to try and recover that situation. So at the moment I think we, the government, in terms of the LDA, Chief Minister's Department and the ACT Planning and Land Authority, are trying to keep pace with demand. So, even though the concept plans are there, it is difficult just with the resources available to stay one foot in front.

DR FOSKEY: I have been to a couple of the consultations that ACTPLA is doing with community councils on Molonglo and certainly the person presenting this indicates that ACTPLA has already a quiet preference for a dam on the river. We are in a period of consultation and you would be aware that there is concern amongst ecologists and environmental design experts that a series of shallow settling ponds would result in far better water quality and other environmental outcomes. But on page 17 of the report you say that you are expecting new standards in sustainable design and higher quality stormwater management. I am just interested in what you mean by that.

Mr Savery: I will make an initial comment and then I might ask Ms Lavis to comment on the consultation observations that you have made. The stormwater quality management is a statement of fact that we expect that Molonglo will

demonstrate the highest standards of stormwater management and to that end the reason why our initial investigations have indicated that a dam is certainly worthy of consideration is purely in response to stormwater management. There is this expectation that we have put forward a dam as an option—and I stress it is an option—for either purely recreational purposes or because it will increase land value.

First and foremost, we have put it forward because our initial analysis, and there is a lot more to be done, indicates that it is probably one of the most effective stormwater management approaches that we can adopt. Also bear in mind that it has to be linked into our consideration for how we treat what is currently untreated stormwater management coming out of the Weston Creek, Holder, Duffy area, which is one of the worst areas that we have left in Canberra compared to other parts. But we have made it absolutely clear that for us to satisfy government, whether it is the dam or any alternative, we have got to do a full EIS around this process and that is our expectation. But Ms Lavis is more intimate with some of these matters.

Ms Lavis: I have personally attended a number of the consultation meetings, and the presentation that is made indicates that on the basis of the research and investigations to date, as Mr Savery has indicated, the construction of a lake does provide significant advantages both in terms of the management of stormwater, as has been described, and the ability to protect the new suburbs from the potential incursion of fire as it might move up the valley in a period of adverse climatic and weather conditions.

There is also a consideration regarding the future management of the land that would form the basis of a corridor and the urban management of that land if it were kept in a condition whereby there were a chain of ponds. But, as Mr Savery has indicated, the presentation also indicates that a full EIS will be conducted on the options around the management of stormwater and water flows in the Molonglo valley, and there is certainly a clear dialogue on that in the context of the presentation.

So I think it is a question of being fair and open with the community about the work that has been done to date and the material that is referenced in the preliminary assessment document that is available as part of the consultation package so that it is clear that that material is available for people to review and that people should be making their observations known now and be making their observations into the future in the event that an EIS proceeds. But government is yet to make a decision on whether or not it directs the pursuit of an EIS and that will be something that will be going back to government in forthcoming months.

THE CHAIR: Dr Foskey raised the community councils. I think we went to one together, the Woden Community Council, where the presentation was done. I was very impressed, by the way, with the concept, the videos, that ACTPLA produced. I just wanted to bring you to a finance question. On page 140, there are two tables on community grants/assistance/sponsorships. What do you think the territory receives back for this expenditure from these community groups?

Mr Savery: This was a program that was established a couple of years ago in part response to an inquiry that was undertaken on our behalf and for the Minister for Planning in relation to community consultation processes and also in respect of the government not proceeding with the implementation of some broader community

exercises across the territory. In providing financial assistance to these community councils, we have a relatively informal agreement with them whereby they undertake to assist us in providing a network into their broader communities for our consultation processes.

A case in point is what has just been discussed, where we have been able to engage with the community councils for a major exercise like Molonglo and seek their assistance in broadly advertising those meetings. That is just an example. We also obtained their assistance in the distribution of material that we might produce, like water sensitive urban design guidelines, so that they can then include that in their newsletters. They also participate on our planning and development forum and they also receive development applications over a certain threshold that are consistent with the thresholds that we used when the planning and land council existed. Developments over a certain height or a certain density of units are automatically referred to those community councils, so, rather than them having to monitor our public register and look for those applications, they are alerted to them and have the opportunity then to make contact with us to indicate whether or not they have any issues.

The money also has developed a significant degree of goodwill between the community councils and us, to the extent that they are far more relaxed about the level of involvement that they have in our planning processes. In return—and I think we see the benefit of this as well—they have been able to use some of that money for the production of their newsletters. I know that that is the case in Gungahlin, so it means the information is getting out to the broader community. They have also used it to acquire electronics hardware so that they can access some of our web-based systems that Mr Meyer referred to before. Again, we see the benefit of that because they are accessing the systems that we have developed, so I think it has been a mutually beneficial relationship.

DR FOSKEY: I have some follow-ups to that. First of all, do you employ a community development officer, or somebody within ACTPLA who specifically works with those community councils, to assist them, to advise them and to act as a conduit between them? Secondly, page 156 refers to the response to a report of the planning and environment committee, this very committee, regarding the formation of an inner south community council. How is that going? I am personally interested in that because I know a number of the residents groups are interested in such an entity because they will have better communication. Here I am also putting a suggestion that a community development person whose job is to liaise and work with community councils could work with the many residents groups that exist at the moment but do not even really talk to each other, to set up an inner south or central Canberra community council.

Mr Barr: Yes. There was a central Canberra council.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, I know all about that.

Mr Barr: It was there briefly.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, I know why it died too.

Mr Barr: These are like some of the issues that we are confronted with: even with the best will in the world from government, the success of the community councils largely depends on people within the local community wanting to volunteer their time to participate. Nonetheless, whilst there are individual suburb residential groups, there is not an overarching council for the inner south and I do acknowledge that that is a problem. But, again, you cannot make people come together and talk, but you certainly can insist—

DR FOSKEY: But you can assist them, especially when it is their stated desire.

Mr Savery: Responding specifically to the questions: no, we do not employ a community development officer within the planning and land authority. We simply do not have the luxury of that resource. What we do have in our government services area is in the shape of both the manager and another employee who allocate quite a considerable portion of their time to liaising with community councils and other members of the public in a way that I would describe as a gatekeeper. So what we have done is try to identify a person within the authority who can be a first point of contact for those individuals, either to raise issues with us or that we would then, as an organisation, identify as the source for where we are going to distribute our material from, so that it creates a rapport and a relationship with those groups. But we simply do not have a capacity to undertake the cultivation of a community council and nor is it our direct responsibility.

The community councils come under the responsibility of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services and we play an adjunct role to that where we have cultivated this particular relationship for the purposes of improving the community's understanding of planning and improving our understanding of community needs as a result of the feedback we get from those community councils. We have consistently supported the establishment of a south Canberra community council. It would certainly make our life a lot easier if we had a focal point in that community, and we are concerned from time to time that that community does not get the same level of access to information as do others that have community councils. We find it harder to make contact with groups in that area, so, if there are people who are willing, we would certainly lend our weight and support to the establishment of that, but we do not have a direct capacity to undertake the establishment of that group.

Mr Barr: Just very quickly, Dr Foskey, in addition to the work that is undertaken by officers within ACTPLA, I would also put forward that both the departmental liaison officer and the planning adviser within my office have extensive contact with the community councils and undertake a lot of work in that area. So, whilst we do not have a dedicated position within the authority, there is certainly a considerable amount of time and effort put into that consultation, both within my office and within the authority.

DR FOSKEY: I note Mr Savery did say it would make ACTPLA's life a lot easier if there was an inner south or central Canberra community council and therefore I am wondering if there has been consideration of employing a short-term consultant to work with those residents organisations to develop such an entity, given that it may, in the end, be cost saving.

Mr Barr: Not within the planning portfolio. However I am happy to raise this issue with the minister for community services, through DHCS, and as the area is within our joint electorate of Molonglo I am very happy as a local member to continue to pursue this issue but I do not believe the planning authority should be employing consultants to set up community councils. That is not core business for the planning authority.

MR SESELJA: Minister, just going back to East Lake, how much of that do you expect will be affordable housing?

Mr Barr: That is part of the work that the planning study will look at. We have within the precinct a significant public housing estate.

MR SESELJA: I mean sort of separate from public housing, obviously.

Mr Barr: Sure. I would envisage, within the broad guidelines that we have been setting for new developments, in the order of 15 per cent, but I would like to see a mixture of housing types and different housing providers. Affordable housing can take many forms and through the provision of public housing, community housing and low-cost private housing I think we can easily meet that 15 per cent target, but—

MR SESELJA: It seems pretty unlikely we would have low-cost private housing in East Lake, though, doesn't it, given what was going around the corner in the foreshores?

Mr Barr: Again that depends a little on the nature of the development. It depends again on what your definition of affordable is, but across the spectrum of public, community and low-cost private housing I think there is room within that development for a variety of housing types. I would expect the private sector to want to supply some affordable product. I do not expect it will be 100 per cent of the private sector housing but it will be a component thereof. Equally, I think it is important we engage, as I say, community housing providers and that there is a continued presence of public housing. That is a position that I have put very strongly and a view that I will follow through with the Minister for Housing.

Mr Savery: Could I just add that, obviously, as a sustainable community one of the objectives is to ensure a mix of houses, so we are certainly not anticipating that East Lake is a continuation or a repetition of Kingston foreshore, so, whilst that does not rule out the possibility that there may be some high-end residential contained within the development, it would not be the predominant or only type of housing. From the outset we have maintained that there will be both public housing and affordable housing product within the development, as well as mixed-use retailing, light industry, service trades and the like. So it is simply not a continuation of Kingston foreshore.

Ms Lavis: The advantage of the CSIRO partnership is that, in addition to the technical expertise that CSIRO bring to the table, they also bring a broader group of stakeholders, so a high-level group that they use as a peer review group. Some of the membership of that is from the banking and finance industry, and at their recent

inaugural meeting they were presented with material in relation to the project. A couple of the people from that sector have indicated interest, in terms of the government's affordable housing strategy, in following up some practical measures that they can bring to the table from the perspective of their own institutional interests. So already at this early stage of the partnership we have, I think, the expectation of some significant benefit that would accrue to the territory in terms of affordable and social housing provision.

DR FOSKEY: In relation to East Lake, we have heard a bit recently about the possibility of developing Fyshwick as a retail area to service that expanding population. I am interested in the view that ACTPLA puts on that and whether there is any thought of changing the zoning designation of Fyshwick so that it really can be a precinct for affordable housing, given that I believe many of the people who work there live in Narrabundah, perhaps because it is handy, which is an area that is rapidly turning into a Yarralumla or other suburb as houses get sold off. I am just interested in the idea of how flexible we might be, because it is my opinion that the sort of segregated zoning policy that we inherited from the NCDC, which predated concern about climate change, is up for revision.

Mr Barr: Dr Foskey, there are no plans to make Fyshwick a town centre, so Fyshwick will not be a town centre. I can make that statement.

MR SESELJA: It has finally gone on the record.

Mr Barr: That is right; the pressure that the opposition spokesperson has been—

DR FOSKEY: I am so glad I gave you the opportunity to say that.

Mr Barr: The pressure that the opposition spokesperson has been seeking to place on me is—

MR SESELJA: You're going to do it by stealth, are you?

Mr Barr: No. Fyshwick will not be a town centre and we would look to meet the needs of the East Lake community within that community. I indicated earlier on that we are looking for employment possibilities for around 3,000 people and for a range of mixed-use developments to occur there. So the opportunity for a variety of the different possibilities is there in terms of the services that those people who live in the area will need. I do not see the need to change the arrangements at Fyshwick at all, so I am very comfortable to formally put on the record that Fyshwick will not be a town centre.

DR FOSKEY: Nonetheless, there are security issues in Fyshwick at the moment. It is a deserted suburb at night, except for a few little hot spots, and there are all kinds of reasons for including residential development, apart from it being a town centre. So, if its not being a town centre rules out any residential development, especially of the affordable kind where people can live handy to their work, we could rethink our definitions a bit perhaps. Are you ruling that out? Are you ruling out the idea that there could be some residential development?

Mr Barr: I do not think residential development in an industrial zone is something that was favoured in times past. I would not see a particular reason to change that. We do not have a huge amount of industrial land. We have got three major estates in Mitchell, Fyshwick and Hume, so I would not want to be putting in place policies that would see a diminution in industrial land to be taken over for housing needs.

DR FOSKEY: No, not taken over—integrated planning. I am just wondering where you think the workers of Fyshwick are going to live, given that bus services between Fyshwick and the rest of Canberra are pretty poor and so on. Maybe we could tackle a few problems with a similar solution.

Mr Savery: I will just add some comments to the minister's observations. A town centre is not necessarily constituted as a result of having residential comprised within it, but do not take that statement to mean that therefore residential should be in Fyshwick. There is no intention to have major commercial office development, high-end retail in the form of discount department stores, chain supermarkets et cetera. In the form of chain supermarkets and more local conveniences, they are expected to be in the East Lake/Kingston foreshore locality, providing for ease of access and proximity to those individuals.

What we are looking at is East Lake potentially providing an employment base, or potential employment base, for Fyshwick. Also, the eastern broadacre study that is being commenced now, which is looking at the whole area from Majura through the airport right the way down to Hume, may identify some isolated pockets for residential. It is to be determined. Certainly the intention is to identify future employment land, because we will run out of industrial land at some point.

But in amongst that you may find that there are opportunities for areas of local residential development that can be viably supported and that would be within reasonable commuting distance, and by that I mean hop on a bicycle or potentially walk to employment opportunities within Fyshwick. But there is no specific planning project underway that would envisage residential in any form being located in Fyshwick other than caretaker-type residences.

DR FOSKEY: I realise that it takes a long time to make anything happen and that is why I keep suggesting it.

MR SESELJA: The territory plan, the task force that was set up: where is that at? How many times has that met and when is that going to be completed?

Mr Barr: I will be going to a further round of public consultation on the completed work of the reference group and the independent assessor in the middle of next month. The reference group has met regularly through, I think, July, August and September and perhaps even into October—seven times, I am told. The independent assessor has also had a number of meetings with the reference group and then with other stakeholders and will come out again with a further draft for further public consultation in the middle of next month—I think about the 12th or thereabouts.

DR FOSKEY: I am just going to bring up EpiCentre briefly. I have a few questions and probably not enough time. There is only a very brief mention of that sale on pages

15 and 152 and there are more outcomes in the auditor's report than are mentioned in ACTPLA's commentary, which does have a self-congratulatory tone. Are there some indications that the establishment of EpiCentre may be changing or even skewing planning directions? We have heard the concept of there being a railway precinct in that sort of area and a number of other ideas. I am just wondering how much EpiCentre now being in existence, or on its way probably, is influencing planning decisions that might have been going in another direction prior to that approval.

Mr Barr: I would say very little. EpiCentre has no bearing at all on the issues in relation to the railway. I think it was a somewhat mischievous interpretation by the *Canberra Times* to suggest that there was going to be the EpiCentre railway station. At no point was that ever a possibility. The question of the future location of the railway station is a matter for the East Lake planning study. In terms of the premise of your question, no, I do not accept that that is a reality.

DR FOSKEY: There is talk of there being a supermarket and other sorts of things that you might expect in a town centre, though, in EpiCentre.

Mr Savery: I just stress again that we are not promoting or supporting the development of a town centre at Fyshwick and there is no proposal that we are aware of for those types of developments that would constitute the backbone of a town centre. They would require a change to the territory plan to be considered and I am not aware that the minister has indicated any support for a change to the territory plan.

Mr Barr: Just let me repeat for the record that Fyshwick will not be a town centre.

Mr Savery: EpiCentre is only a relatively small part of a much larger estate. Section 48 is a much larger estate and there are a number of further releases coming up in that estate, one of which was recently announced. I do not know if it was by the Chief Minister or by the Land Development Agency itself, but that is primarily focused on car sales and related service trades activities, all of which are entirely consistent and appropriate for that precinct and location. To pick up on the minister's comments with the railway, the potential rationalisation of rail infrastructure is driven by East Lake, not by EpiCentre.

THE CHAIR: Okay. There being no further questions, I thank you very much, minister and officials from ACTPLA, for providing your time this afternoon. If we have any questions on notice we will get those to you as soon as we can.

Mr Barr: I look forward to the usual number.

THE CHAIR: We will get a copy of the transcript to you as soon as possible as well.

The committee adjourned at 4.57 pm.