



# ACT Housing Strategy

Year 5 Report Card

November 2023





## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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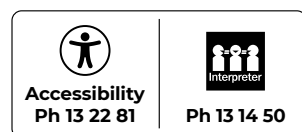
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# Background

The ACT Housing Strategy (the Strategy) was released in October 2018. Its role is to guide the delivery of housing in the ACT over its 10-year lifespan.

While the Strategy focuses on what the ACT Government can do to improve housing-related outcomes for all Canberrans, it includes a particular emphasis on households on low to moderate incomes and those experiencing (or vulnerable to) homelessness.

This is illustrated through the Strategy's five goals, which are:

1. An equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community
2. Reducing homelessness
3. Strengthening social housing assistance
4. Increasing affordable rental housing
5. Increasing affordable home ownership

The Strategy is accompanied by a corresponding Implementation Plan, which identifies areas of responsibility for delivering on actions and prioritises commitments according to agreed timeframes.

The report card shows progress across each of the Strategy's goals in the fifth year of implementation. Of the 74 actions in the strategy, 37 are now complete, 29 are in-development, progressing or continuing and one action is not progressing. During 2022-23, 19 actions were completed, including seven annual actions.





# Highlights

## **Goal 1 – An equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community:**

- In 2022-23, the Government launched a Build-to-Rent site in Turner with 270 dwellings, 15 per cent of which will be affordable rentals subsidised by the ACT Government.
- In 2022-23, the SLA continued the release of land against the housing targets, including sites for 270 affordable, community and public housing dwellings.
- The passing of the *Planning Bill 2022* and the release of the new Territory Plan in September 2023 signal efforts to relax planning restrictions and boost housing supply and choice, while preserving suburb character and amenity.

## **Goal 2 - Reducing homelessness:**

- In 2022, the ACT Government shaped a strategic investment plan for future homelessness services. Direct Grants were provided in March 2023 to 13 organisations.
- Additional Safer Families Grants funding was provided in 2022-23.

- Additionally, 120 young people were supported to maintain tenancies through the Youth Housing Manager function.
- In October 2022, Common Ground Dickson opened, offering 40 supported accommodation units for low-income individuals and families at risk of chronic homelessness.

## **Goal 3 - Strengthening social housing assistance:**

- In 2022-23, the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program delivered an additional 183 dwellings via construction with a further 337 under construction. An additional 38 dwellings were purchased from the market.
- Housing ACT has developed a program of works aimed at realigning the built form of its portfolio with contemporary tenant needs, with the type and composition of new dwellings to be delivered under the program proportionately aligning with the demand expressed on both the Housing Register and Transfer list.



#### **Goal 4 - Increasing affordable rental housing:**

- The Government conducted a Request for Proposal process to provide affordable rental dwellings as part of an existing or planned Build-to-Rent development. Subject to successful negotiation of funding, these projects will deliver 160 community housing owned or managed affordable rental properties, fostering a partnership between the Government and community housing providers.
- Additionally, the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption scheme has seen substantial uptake, with around 170 properties participating in the scheme, benefiting property owners who lease to eligible households at an affordable rate through registered community housing providers.

#### **Goal 5 - Increasing affordable home ownership:**

- During 2022-23, more than 130 eligible buyers exchanged contracts to buy homes through the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.
- The ACT Government also reduced stamp duty, facilitating home ownership.

#### **2023-24 ACT Budget highlights:**

- The 2023-24 ACT Budget included a record \$345 million investment to fund more affordable rental dwellings, renew and repair public housing, and facilitate a significant expansion of the community housing sector.
- The \$60 million Affordable Housing Project Fund is set to support more affordable rental projects, aligning with ACT Government commitments. As well as successful projects through the Request for Proposal process, the fund also includes \$4.5 million towards the Ginninderry women's housing initiative, providing an innovative build-to-rent-to-buy program for women in need, with 22 affordable dwellings in Strathnairn, providing a pathway towards property ownership.

- The ACT Government is investing \$233 million in public housing growth, repairs, and renewal. With over 11,500 social housing dwellings already housing 21,500 people, the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program aims to renew 1,000 properties and add 400 new homes by 2026-27. Approximately 700 dwellings are expected to be delivered by the end of 2023-24.
- \$11 million has been allocated to expedite land release. This funding aims to facilitate maximum new housing delivery in the private market through ongoing planning reform.
- \$20 million has been allocated to homelessness services, encompassing various initiatives.
  - This includes:
    - › \$14.3 million over four years to enhance the capacity of existing homelessness service providers;
    - › \$2.3 million over two years for select facilities to meet rising demand;
    - › \$1.7 million for ongoing support programs like the Rough Sleeper Program and Complex Client Program; and
    - › funding for the Client Support Fund.
  - Additionally, \$1.2 million has been earmarked for hotel brokerage coordinated by OneLink and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, \$389,000 to boost food service capacity, and \$256,000 for sector development and training.
- The ACT Government has responded to housing policy complexity by establishing the Office of the Coordinator-General for Housing, to drive a whole-of-government approach to increase housing supply and deliver more affordable and diverse housing in Canberra.

# Summary of analysis

Short-term, medium-term and ongoing actions

Out of a total of **67 short-term, medium-term and ongoing actions:**



Out of a total of **39 short-term actions:**



Of a total of **9 medium-term actions:**



Of a total of **19 ongoing actions:**



## Short-term, medium-term and ongoing actions

Progress	Short-term	Medium-term	Ongoing	Total
Complete	27	5	5	37
2018-19	5	0	0	5
2019-20	8	0	0	8
2020-21	4	0	2	6
2021-22	5	1	0	6
2022-23	5	4	3	12
In development	2	0	1	3
Progressing	4	2	5	11
Not progressing	1	0	0	1
Continuing	5	2	8	15
Total	39	9	19	67

## Annual actions

The Strategy also includes seven annual actions, all of which have been completed since the release of the Year 4 Report Card.

# Overarching priority action

ID	Action	Status	
A.1	Establish an all-of-government central landing website page to improve navigation for people seeking online information about housing initiatives, homelessness services and public housing.	Complete	✓

## Goal 1: An equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
1A.1	1. Model and publish ACT Government housing supply and demand projections via the ACT Land and Property Report.	ACT Land and Property Report.	Complete	✓
1A.2	2. Monitor and report on trends in Canberra and the region's land and property markets via the ACT Land and Property report.	ACT Land and Property Report.	Complete	✓
1A.3	3. Release an appropriate supply of land in a mix of greenfield and urban renewal locations, informed by modelling and market analysis, to provide land ahead of demand.	Indicative Land Release Program.	Complete	✓
1B.1	1. Dedicate at least 15% of the Indicative Land Release Program each year to affordable, community and public housing with implementation from the 2019-20 program onwards.	Indicative Land Release Program.	Complete	✓
1C.1	1. Maintain a land planning and development pipeline equivalent to four years' demand, as determined by regular demand and supply modelling undertaken under objective 1A.	ACT Land and Property Report.	Complete	✓
1D.1	1. Consider the recommendations of the 2018 Housing Choices Collaboration Hub related to consideration of relevant zoning changes to specific demonstration projects. Review the efficacy of these changes on housing types and choice and progress positive outcomes.	Territory Plan Variations for demonstration housing.	Complete	✓
1D.2	2. Consider directions from the Planning Strategy refresh around urban growth areas and plan for the integration of new housing types in existing urban environments, including links to transport, open space, community and cultural facilities.	Studies of Urban Intensification Areas (as defined by the ACT Planning Strategy).	Progressing	➔
1D.3	3. Undertake appropriate planning and design for greenfield estates to support a variety of housing types and urban environments.	Updated Estate Development Code.	Complete	✓




ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
1E.1	1. Facilitate demonstration projects that showcase innovative, diverse housing options through different mechanisms.	Demonstration housing: Planning approvals in place and/or construction commenced.	Progressing	→
1E.2	2. Consider a range of sites for demonstration housing to design and deliver an inclusive residential community, pending consideration of variations to the Territory Plan for the sites.	Demonstration housing: Site analysis undertaken on multiple sites with outcomes to inform Housing Choices Territory Plan Variation.	Complete	✓
1E.3	3. Consider different occupancy and ownership models including the applicability of community title models for cooperative housing developments.	Consider suitability of community title models for cooperative housing developments.	Complete	✓
1F.1	1. Test design-led planning controls with urban design guidelines as part of draft Territory Plan variations for the City and Gateway urban renewal area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apartment and Attached Housing Design Guidelines in place.</li> <li>• National Capital Design Review Panel considerations informed by AAHDG where relevant.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
1F.2	2. Investigate the introduction of a rating system for housing with accessibility and universal design features when property is advertised, on a voluntary basis, prior to considering a potential mandatory rating scheme.	Explore rating system for dwellings built to accessible standards or incorporating universal design.	Complete	✓
1F.3	3. Investigate planning and design provisions that encourage the supply of affordable housing across the spectrum of community need. This could include investigation of planning options such as inclusionary zoning and incentive mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review into inclusionary zoning.</li> <li>• Outcomes to be considered as part of planning system review.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓







## Goal 2: Reducing homelessness

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
2A.1	1. Work with the community to co-design new policies and programs and bring in the voices of those who have a lived experience of homelessness.	Ongoing engagement with community partners.	Progressing	→
2A.2	2. Implement a more structured and agile approach to community engagement, working iteratively to test ideas and be responsive to the input and feedback.	New policies and programs introduced/ launched.	Continuing	🔄
2B.1	1. Prioritise young people, including young mothers, and women and children escaping domestic and family violence to provide assistance early to minimise the intergenerational impacts of experiencing homelessness.	More frontline homelessness services.	Continuing	🔄
2B.2	2. Continue to partner with the Coordinator General for Family Safety to strengthen the government's response to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.	Continuation of the partnership and program improvements implemented.	Continuing	🔄
2C.1	1. Support culturally appropriate public and community housing accommodation options and support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Increase in accommodation options and support programs - More culturally appropriate housing for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Complete	✓
2C.2	2. Work with the sector to design and implement specific programs targeted at new and emerging groups at risk of homelessness.	More frontline homelessness services - Programs designed and implemented.	Progressing	→
2C.3	3. Work with the sector to investigate and implement a model of support that draws upon the principles of housing first, particularly for those experiencing long-term homelessness.	Model determined - Common Ground Dickson; Axial Housing (ongoing).	Complete	✓
2C.4	4. Strengthen the Human Services Gateway (OneLink) to reach out to people and be available at the times when people need help.	Human Services Gateway strengthened.	Continuing	🔄
2D.1	1. Work with the sector to identify, prioritise and assist those in crisis accommodation who can transition into public, community or private housing depending on their needs, and provide support to assist them to sustain their tenancies.	Improved transition out of crisis accommodation.	Continuing	🔄
2D.2	2. Establish a diverse range of housing models in the ACT to meet the needs of people who require permanent supportive accommodation to remain out of homelessness.	Housing models established.	Continuing	🔄
2D.3	3. Continue supporting the Common Ground model.	Continued operation of Common Ground Gungahlin and investigation underway to establish Common Ground in Dickson.	Complete	✓

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
2E.1	1. Develop a new professional development and training program for frontline housing and homelessness organisations to enhance their organisational and workforce capacity.	Increase in professional development and training in the sector.	Continuing	
2E.2	2. Develop a framework for the proper assessment and referral for people who have a lived experience of trauma.	Better data and analysis procured and utilised.	Complete	✓
2F.1	1. Work across the government to establish formal and informal information sharing and collaboration to provide a holistic response to preventing and addressing homelessness, particularly for those exiting care and custody.	Sharing and collaboration opportunities established.	Progressing	→

### Goal 3: Strengthening social housing assistance

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
3A.1	1. Deliver a plan that sets the strategic vision for the growth and renewal of public housing.	Projections published.	Complete	✓
3A.2	2. Identify and produce publicly available and measurable targets for growth and renewal of public housing against which future success can be measured.	Plan developed and implemented.	Complete	✓
3A.3	3. Develop a new holistic model of social housing that puts the client at the centre.	New housing options delivered.	Progressing	→
3A.4	4. Continue to support diverse and vibrant communities through our 'salt and peppering' of social housing across all areas of Canberra.	Adopt a human-centred design approach to housing services.	Continuing	
3B.1	1. Offer a greater range of housing options that better meet the diverse housing needs of families in the community.	More housing options offered.	Continuing	
3B.2	2. Design and deliver purpose-built housing that adapts to the needs of older people and people living with disability.	Housing designed and delivered.	Continuing	
3B.3	3. Continue the program of renewal started by the Public Housing Renewal Taskforce to replace older, less efficient homes with newer, more cost-efficient options.	Program continued.	Continuing	
3B.4	4. Work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to expand the range of culturally appropriate housing options for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and enhance the capacity of the community housing sector.	New housing options delivered and capacity increased.	Progressing	→



ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
3B.5	5. Work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to co-design the new long-term accommodation complex for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	New accommodation complex designed.	Complete	✓
3C.1	1. Develop a new service delivery approach that works with tenants to give them greater flexibility to choose a home that meets their needs.	Service delivery approach developed.	Not progressing*	⊘
3C.2	2. Build a Modern Social Landlord Framework that sets the industry standard and achieves better outcomes for social housing tenants.	Deliver a modern social landlord framework.	Complete	✓
3D.1	1. Build a client portal that will give social housing tenants up-to-date information about their tenancy and accounts.	Portal built and launched.	In-development	⚙️
3D.2	2. Build a mobile application that delivers immediate access to social housing information, services and applications anywhere at any time.	Application built and launched.	In-development	⚙️
3D.3	3. Create a suite of online application forms for social and affordable housing services that can be completed and submitted electronically.	Forms created and available.	Continuing	🔄
3D.4	4. Make face-to-face services available in more locations across the ACT for people who prefer to talk to someone.	More delivery locations established.	Continuing	🔄

\* 3C.1: Housing ACT has determined that the 'Choice Based Letting' pilot program, which enabled a test group of tenants to browse and select options from a shortlist of public housing properties, is not a practical or effective method of working with tenants given the high demand for properties and constrained supply.



## Goal 4: Increasing affordable rental housing

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
4A.1	1. Set an annual community housing target to provide additional affordable rental properties managed by registered community housing providers as part of the commitment to dedicate 15% of the Indicative Land Release Program to public, community and affordable housing.	Indicative Land Release Program.	Complete	✓
4A.2	2. Engage regularly with the ACT community housing sector to investigate and facilitate options for providing assistance to community housing providers and those in need of community housing, including setting housing targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT Government representatives (CMTEEDD and CSD) attendance at quarterly Community Housing Industry Association meetings.</li> <li>• Schedule of regular meetings to maintain a continuous and open dialogue between the Government and the community housing sector.</li> </ul>	Continuing	🔄
4A.3	3. Enhance mechanisms to reduce the cost of land made available to the community housing sector, including restrictions on Crown leases, land rent or sale at a fixed percentage of market rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban Land Agency Valuations Policy.</li> <li>• Access to land rent for community housing providers.</li> <li>• Links with 4A.7.</li> </ul>	Continuing	🔄
4A.4	4. Under the ACT Government Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, facilitate a project to develop community rental housing on underutilised leased community facility land.	Targeted project/s to be delivered by community housing providers with support from the ACT Government and Innovation Fund (Round 2).	Complete	✓
4A.5	5. Work with community housing providers to develop more affordable rental properties.	Kaleen affordable rental pilot: Tender for community housing provider to manage 33 Housing ACT owned dwellings in Kaleen.	Complete	✓
4A.6	6. Support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander managed community housing in the ACT.	ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIE) and the ACT Government working together to identify suitable opportunities. For example, Housing ACT sponsored two places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community service providers to attend the World Indigenous Housing Conference in 2019.	In-development	⚙️
4A.7	7. Explore opportunities to extend land rent to community housing providers for the provision of affordable rental properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to land rent for community housing providers.</li> <li>• Links with 4A.3.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
4A.8	8. Streamline and digitise the government's interest-free rental bond loan scheme, making it easier to access when people are looking for a home to rent.	Rental Bond Help - Digitised in December 2018.	Complete	✓
4B.1	1. Establish an Affordable Rental Real Estate Management Model as a pilot under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.	Homeground Real Estate Canberra established and successfully operating across the ACT.	Complete	✓

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
4B.2	2. Encourage an increase in supply of affordable rental properties from private owners that can be managed by the community housing sector through the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, by investigating options such as a land tax concession on properties rented at 75% of market rate and managed by community housing providers.	Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption scheme (pilot commenced on 1 July 2019).	Complete	✓
4B.3	3. Investigate financial incentives to encourage the delivery of additional affordable rental housing on privately-owned land, including through lease variation charge remissions, or planning controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lease Variation Charge Remission</li> <li>Inclusionary zoning</li> <li>Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption scheme.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
4B.4	4. Release a residential development site (or sites) via expression of interest process for the construction of affordable rental properties under a Build-to-Rent model.	Demonstration housing site/s released for construction of affordable rental product.	Complete	✓
4B.5	5. Establish or expand a Home Sharing Model under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.	Homesharing model established through Innovation Fund (Round 2).	Complete	✓
4C.1	1. Develop and implement outstanding recommendations of the Review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 with a focus on fairness and security for vulnerable tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2019</i>. Once commenced, this legislative instrument will improve tenants rights to own pets, make modifications to rental properties and disincentivise excessive rental increases.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
4D.1	1. Undertake a communications campaign to promote existing support measures for tenants and landlords.	Communications campaign to promote support and assistance measures for tenants and landlords.	Complete	✓
4E.1	1. Investigate establishing priority categories for 'at-risk' groups to access community housing, the affordable home purchase database and Affordable Rental Real Estate Management model properties.	Priority groups identified through Innovation Fund (Round 1).	Complete	✓
4E.2	2. Facilitate a project to support dedicated accommodation options for low-income families escaping domestic violence under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.	Innovation Fund Round 2 (specified category).	Complete	✓
4E.3	3. Facilitate a project to support a specialist disability accommodation development for either affordable rent or purchase under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.	Innovation Fund Round 2 (specified category).	Complete	✓
4E.4	4. Work with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the development sector and people with disabilities and their families and carers to identify potential opportunities to facilitate the development of Specialist Disability Accommodation under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.	Facilitate development of specialist disability accommodation (SDA) under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.	Progressing	➔

## Goal 5: Increasing affordable home ownership

ID	Action	Indicator/s	Status	
5A.1	1. Set an annual target to increase affordable home purchase opportunities as part of the commitment to dedicate 15% of the Indicative Land Release Program to public, community and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicative Land Release Program.</li> <li>SLA Annual Report for release figures.</li> <li>Links with Goal 1 actions.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
5A.2	2. Investigate mechanisms to protect and maintain dedicated, individually titled affordable home purchase homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions on leases for applicable dwellings under the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
5A.3	3. Investigate new affordable home purchase price thresholds linked to the number of bedrooms, to replace the current thresholds linked to floor area, to coincide with the finalisation of the Apartment Design Guide and the Attached Housing Design Guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.</li> <li>Apartment and Attached Housing Design Guides.</li> </ul>	Progressing	→
5A.4	4. Deliver a communications campaign to encourage awareness of the Commonwealth Government's new first home super saver scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications campaign to promote Commonwealth Government's first home super saver scheme. Target group: first home buyers.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
5A.5	5. Undertake a targeted communications project to promote the role of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) as housing financier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to purchase a home with low-cost financing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications campaign targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in need of financial assistance to purchase a home.</li> </ul>	Progressing	→
5A.6	6. Explore the viability of dedicated affordable home purchase properties to be constructed and sold to eligible households on the ACT Government's home purchase database.	Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.	Progressing	→
5A.7	7. Investigate financial incentives to encourage the delivery of additional affordable home purchase properties on privately-owned land through consideration of mechanisms such as lease variation charge remissions, or planning controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lease Variation Charge Remission.</li> <li>Inclusionary zoning.</li> <li>Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption scheme.</li> <li>Links with 4B.3.</li> </ul>	Complete	✓
5B.1	1. Pilot a shared equity initiative in partnership with a community housing provider.	Shared equity homes released to the market.	Complete	✓
5B.2	2. Investigate feasibility and possible program design for implementing a broader-ranging shared equity (or rent to buy) scheme in the ACT.	Implement a shared equity (or rent to buy) scheme.	Complete	✓
5B.3	3. Investigate the feasibility of expanding the Land Rent Scheme to allow a shared land equity product through stair casing.	Determine feasibility of expanding Land Rent Scheme to allow a shared land equity product through stair casing.	Complete	✓
5B.4	4. Test co-housing models for affordable housing provision through the first year of the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.	Test co-housing models for affordable housing provision through the first year of the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund (Round 1).	Complete	✓