

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

ACT Property Council

Date of consultation:	12 September 2017
Group consulted with:	ACT Property Council
Number of attendees:	8
Name of organisations:	Property Council, Luton, CHC, Canberra Community Law, Independent Property Group

Key themes arising from the consultation

- Government needs to be brave and take a risk in trying new housing types, including tenure types.
- There should be a more strategic release of community land.
- Provide incentives to developers who undertake community led developments by rolling back Third Party Appeal rights.
- Planning considerations that could be changed to enable more affordable housing: community open space trade off POS, height/density, flexible (not less) parking options, location needs to be considered in parking and open space assessment context.
- Developers need a strong and consistent supply of land to be able to secure finance and deliver affordable housing. If there is too much risk then developer costs are too high to be able to deliver a subsidised product.
- There has been an increase in the number of people sleeping in cars around the city centre.
- There is an expectation from Housing ACT that people will be engaging with services prior to being housed, however, this is difficult when you are homeless.
- Crisis accommodation needs to allow pets.
- Affordability needs to be more than the cost of rent and needs to consider all living costs (utilities, groceries, bills, etc.)
- Need to incentivise people to move into private rental.
- Security of tenure is an issue for residential tenants, this could be addressed by allowing long term tenancies under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).
- Minimum standards for rental properties could be written into the RTA which would help to protect residents from sub-standard properties.

Key quotes

- “LVC is a lever that the ACT Government has used to remove competition from the market.”
- “It’s more than bricks and mortar, housing is the base from which to address other issues in a person’s life – mental health, drug and alcohol issues.”
- More community homes for young people like Apprentice House – “Scoop up the people who are not eligible for public housing but need affordable housing.”
- “There are multiple things which need to be done.”
- “No one thing is going to be the solution.”
- “Sometimes people may choose to be homeless – if that is the case, public spaces need to be welcoming for them and we need other options until they want to engage.”
- “If you get something for nothing then it has no value for you – but if you have to contribute something to the greater good then that thing has value for you and you take greater pride in being a part of it.”
- “Don’t give people money – they need incentives.”

What is working well?

- Orange Sky Laundry
- St Johns Care
- The Common Ground model is a good one and should be expanded

What could be improved?

- There needs to be greater flexibility in the development of share housing. There is a maximum of 12 bedrooms allowed before a property becomes a boarding house and attracts all the additional rules for boarding houses. The BCA requirements and ACAT kill all boarding house applications. Boarding houses, managed well, could be an affordable housing option that doesn't currently exist in the ACT.
- Older and younger people need to be incentivised to care for each other in communities/houses. There needs to be a way that dynamic communities are allowed to grow together – something like the Home Share model but not just for people with disabilities.
- Applications for Housing properties are extremely challenging for people who are sleeping rough – they often have no ID and just getting all the paperwork done can be difficult when you are on the street.
- More accommodation for CIT students – they are really struggling.
- Tenants need to be actively managed to downsize in public housing when they no longer need the larger property. The management needs to ensure that the tenant is guaranteed a place in the same neighbourhood if that's what they want, to ensure consistency of medical care and social interactions.
- More availability of financial education programs to people in the bottom two income quintiles.

New ideas

- There is a stream of vacant properties (residential and office space) which are awaiting demolition. The properties could be vacant for a couple of years depending on the DA process. The properties are all very liveable however developers won't lease them in the private rental market because of the need to get people out quickly once a DA is approved. If there was a way for the properties to be head leased and managed by a community housing provider (or similar organisation) who would agree that as soon as the DA is approved people would be able to leave in 4 weeks these properties could then be used as temporary accommodation.
- Government to look at income based subsidies (like NRAS but for ACT).

- Look at a potential model for CHPs that mirrors the DHA model, which might attract investors as it would limit the risk to the asset.
- Develop hubs around the city, for example in Glebe Park, where people could access hot running water for showers and a place to charge their phones.
- Simple design changes could make new developments more welcoming to rough sleepers – current planning processes explicitly make it impossible for people to sleep rough there. We need better designed public benches, hedges, a community garden etc. in public spaces.
- Provide free bikes for people to use as a mode of transport around Canberra.
- The co-housing model in Berlin needs to be looked at.