

# ACT GREENS

## 2012 ELECTION INITIATIVE

### PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

#### THE ACT GREENS WILL...

- Plan Canberra to meet the challenges of the future. This will include:
  - \$1 million to revise the Territory Plan to support the ACT's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020
  - \$366,000 for industry education to assist the transition to more energy efficient construction
  - \$200,000 for Precinct Code consultation
  - \$20,000 to support the transition to energy efficient hot water
  - \$100,000 for housing affordability planning
  - Energy Ratings Package; and
- \$800,000 to improve community consultation.
- \$301,000 over four years for better regulation and enforcement of building quality in the ACT.

# Plan Canberra to meet the challenges of the future

We need to build Canberra for the future – not the past or even the present. Canberra's challenges include climate change, increased population, shrinking household sizes, peak oil and a lack of affordable housing. The ACT Greens will address these issues<sup>1</sup>.

## **Commit \$1million to revise the Territory Plan to support the ACT's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

If we are to address greenhouse gas emissions in a cost efficient way, then all future development in the ACT should be consistent with our legislated targets to reduce emissions by 40% by 2020 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. The Planning Strategy and Territory Plan has many targets to make Canberra liveable for its people and greenhouse gas reductions must also be there.

The built environment commits us to emissions for decades. Our greenhouse gas reduction targets will be unachievable if we do not build energy efficient homes and infrastructure now.

The United Kingdom has committed to zero carbon development by 2016. Over time new ACT developments need to be zero carbon through energy efficiency first then renewable energy generation to meet remaining energy needs. Many households in Canberra are already zero carbon by



having energy efficient design and either buying Green power or solar panels to generate their remaining energy usage.

As an first step we would introduce legislation for new residential buildings to be minimum 7 star EER (up from 6). Work by Pitt& Sherry shows energy efficiency is cost effective in the ACT.

1. For a fuller outline of these issues see the [exposure draft](#) of Caroline Le Couteur's *Planning and Development (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets) Amendment Bill 2012*; and

2. <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/en/publications/nbf/pathway2020-increased-stringency-in-building-standards.aspx>

# Plan Canberra to meet the challenges of the future

The Territory Plan review will address Canberra's urban form issues as transport is responsible for 23% of our greenhouse gas emissions. The Greens' light rail initiative will transform development in Canberra leading to greater concentration along light rail routes.



Other issues to be addressed in the Territory Plan review include:

- Support for walking, cycling and public transport – good for our health, our social interactions and our finances as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Community gardens and space in Canberra for food production;
- Improving building standards for increased density. This will include better sound proofing (especially relevant to entertainment precincts) and ensuring adequate privacy and communal spaces;
- Rationalisation of parking to reflect active transport options;
- Mobility and residential options for our aged and ageing;
- Ensuring suburban redevelopment enhances sustainability;
- Adequate green space for both the environment and human health.

**The Greens will commit \$366,000 for grants and programs for industry education to assist the transition to more energy efficient construction.**

## ***Zero carbon construction - Precinct Code Consultation & Development***

After revising the Territory Plan to meet zero carbon construction needs, suburban level consultation and planning will be necessary to implement the outcomes. Neighbourhood planning and consultation which results in Territory Plan Precinct Codes should be commenced.

**The Greens will commit \$200,000 to starting this consultation process in 2016-17.**

3. See Caroline Le Couteur's *Water and Sewerage Regulation (Water Heaters) Amendment Bill 2012*

# Plan Canberra to meet the challenges of the future

## *Energy efficient hot water services for all Canberra homes*

This would extend the requirement for energy efficient hot water services to be fitted to existing houses when the current service needs to be replaced<sup>3</sup>. Over the life of the hot water system, more energy efficient hot water services save money for householders. The legislation will provide for limited exemptions where changeover is not feasible. \$20,000 will be provided to engage plumbers and plumbers' associations in developing best steps to the transition.

## *Housing Affordability*

Planning must be part of the solution to the complex problem of housing affordability.

Canberra has too much office space and too little residential space. The Greens support changed regulations so that when offices are converted into housing in town centres or transport hubs (near bus stops) then the existing parking provision is deemed to be sufficient. We also support allowing flexibility to planning regulations so that when offices are converted into apartments this can be done in a way that fits the existing building. This change of regulations to support office conversions would be done as part of ACTPLA's work plan.

The Greens want to ensure that housing affordability is not reduced by unnecessary planning regulations. As examples, in Denmark, 10% of new dwellings are part of 'co-housing' developments where shared facilities (often a unit or room for visitors) increase the liveability of a development while decreasing costs. Canberra already has liveable units smaller than could be constructed under current ACT regulations (e.g. ANU; Waldorf apartments).

Basement parking spaces cost about \$40,000 each and multi storey spaces about \$30,000 each. Not everyone wants a parking space, so there should be more choice for consumers, especially to reduce cost of development.

**The ACT Greens will commit \$100,000 to develop recommendations for planning changes to improve choice and housing affordability.**

# Plan Canberra to meet the challenges of the future

## *Energy Ratings Package*

### **a) Energy efficiency ratings to include whole house expected energy use**

Energy Efficiency Ratings (EER) with the current star rating should also include expected whole house energy use (in megajoules per annum) as with appliances. This would provide a basis for comparison of houses and a figure which could easily be expressed in dollar terms.

### **b) Energy efficiency ratings to include whole house expected energy use**

In 1999, the ACT led the way with Greens legislation to disclose Energy Efficiency Ratings at time of sale. This approach has been improved and passed by the European Union and was to be adopted across Australia via COAG with updated requirements. The national project has stalled. The ACT Greens would restart this and require that current software (not 10 year old software) be used to rate houses when they are sold. We would also improve legislation to ensure that rental dwellings are rated and the ratings disclosed.

Both these projects require legislation only to be funded from existing budgets.

# Improve consultation on planning issues

## *Improve consultation on planning issues by funding community based planning advocacy and policy development*

The ACT Greens would allocate \$800,000 to support planning advocacy and policy development within existing community organisations – the Conservation Council and community councils.

As Canberra grows, it pushes against the natural environment and impacts on threatened biodiversity. As urban density increases we need a well-informed community and clear and open participation in planning processes.

Our planning system can only work if it has widespread community acceptance. Too often the community feels left out of consultation or else that particular developments do not meet the planning rules. This initiative funds community based planning policy work and community based planning advocacy.

## Improve consultation on planning issues

The Greens would allocate \$100,000 a year over four years for the Government to procure independent environment-based planning services from the Conservation Council of ACT to help ensure environmental considerations are taken into account in planning and land development decisions.

The ACT Greens will also provide \$400,000 for planning participation for the Combined Community Councils in undertaking appeals and advocacy in ACT planning processes where these activities would meet certain criteria.

Community councils are incorporated, voluntary, not for profit, community based associations which receive partial funding from the ACT Government. There are

many planning related issues which community members raise and pursue over many volunteer hours. However, they usually cannot afford to cover the costs of campaigns just to uphold the Territory Plan or community values in planning, which is often the case.

The funding would be for the Combined Community Councils for activities which establish precedents or have broader Territory application and which eventually reduce the need for ongoing legal challenges. Funding would be for legal advice, planning advice, community engagement and education. The Councils may contract planning or legal advice directly or provide funding for services to an organisation such as the Environmental Defenders Office.

**"The Greens want to see Canberra built as a connected and liveable city that meets the challenges of the future"**

*- Caroline Le Couteur MLA*



## Build it better

### *\$300,000 over two years to better regulation and enforcement of building quality in the ACT*

As a result of considerable community pressure, the Government convened a Building Quality Forum in 2010. However, the recommendations of the Building Quality Taskforce<sup>4</sup> have not been implemented and the problem has not gone away.



We need better certification and inspection of building work so that owners, especially in multi-unit developments, do not end up funding repairs for years after the building is completed. The Greens specifically support the Building Quality Taskforce recommendation to “Establish a pro-prosecution and a pro-rectification policy towards developers and builders who fail to comply with the BCA [Building Code of Australia] when constructing Class 2 buildings.”

The ACT Greens want the hard work of many members of the public and the profession to lead to real improvement in building quality. The Greens support implementing the recommendations of the Building Quality Taskforce through working with the building industry and getting the best outcome for consumers.

The Greens support a review of building legislation and regulation including the Building Act and the Water and Sewerage Regulation. The Greens will support a review of the adequacy of insurance arrangements for building projects. The Greens will support machinery of government changes to provide more effective and efficient regulation of the building industry in the ACT.

4. [Building Quality in the ACT – Report to the Legislative Assembly](#), Appendix N, p87

# Financial impacts summary

		2013-14 (\$'000)	2014-15 (\$'000)	2015-16 (\$'000)	2016-17 (\$'000)	TOTAL OVER 4 YEARS (\$'000)
ZERO Carbon new construction - Territory Plan Variation	Recurrent Expenditure	400	400	200	....	1,000
ZERO Carbon new construction - Construction Industry Education	Recurrent Expenditure	133	133	100	....	366
Energy Efficient Hotwater	Recurrent Expenditure	20	....	....	....	....
Connecting Communities with Precinct Planning	Recurrent Expenditure	....	....	....	200	200
Changes to make housing more affordable	Recurrent Expenditure	100	....	....	....	100
Planning Advocacy and Support	Recurrent Expenditure	200	200	200	200	800
<i>Build it Better</i> regulation and enforcement	Recurrent Expenditure	148	153	....	....	301
<b>Initiative Total</b>		1,001	353	200	200	2787

## Your Greens Representatives in the ACT Legislative Assembly



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