

2.1 Statement Of Strategic Directions

The following Statement of Strategic Directions sets out the principles for giving effect to the main object of the Territory Plan as required by the Planning and Development Act 2007.

The Statement recognises that the ACT must be planned as both the setting for the National Capital and as a self-governing community in its own right. Accordingly, it complements and applies concurrently with the principles and policies set out in the National Capital Plan, while emphasising the particular needs of the Territory. The Statement also recognises that the Territory is set within a regional context and must have regard for its regional role and impacts including its responsibilities under any intergovernmental agreements, such as memorandums of understanding between the ACT and NSW Governments.

The Statement includes the principles for sustainable development as well as the spatial planning and urban design principles that are intended to guide the more specific policy content of the Territory Plan.

The principles for sustainable development follow a 'triple bottom line' approach with specific principles relating to environmental, economic and social sustainability. The spatial planning and urban design principles are divided into specific principles relating to urban areas, non-urban areas, and urban design.

The ordering of the principles is not intended to convey any notion of relative priority, and each needs to be given due consideration where relevant to a proposal. Together, the principles in the Statement of Strategic Directions provide a framework for the policy content of the Territory Plan. They are intended to guide the planning and development of the ACT and, in particular, provide a basis for considering proposed variations to the Territory Plan.

1. Principles For Sustainable Development

General Principles

- 1.1 Planning processes and decisions will be focused on the combined achievement of economic vitality, community wellbeing, and environmental quality. Broad community involvement will be a key element in the pursuit of sustainable development, as will complementary regional strategies and agreements.
- 1.2 Matters of broader National Capital, metropolitan and regional significance will be carefully considered when formulating Territory Plan policies and when making decisions about development proposals and sequencing.

- 1.3 Economic, social and environmental objectives will be pursued in a balanced and integrated way, having regard to both short-term and long-term factors, such that present needs can be met without prejudicing the welfare of future generations, and without serious or irreversible loss of life-supporting natural resources or damage to the environment.
- 1.4 Wherever appropriate, the broader global and regional context and potential cumulative impacts of decisions will be taken into account. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for failing to prevent environmental degradation.

Environmental Sustainability

- 1.5 Planning policies will seek to ensure the efficient use of all resources and to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources. Waste minimisation, reuse and recycling will be encouraged, whilst energy-rating and conservation measures will be applied wherever appropriate, particularly in transport, subdivision planning, and building design and construction.
- 1.6 The pattern of development is to reflect land capability constraints resulting from topography, soils, geotechnical factors, drainage, natural hazards, micro-climate and the sensitivity of ecosystems. Particular attention will be given to the need to conserve soil, water and vegetation; maintain biological diversity; safeguard important ecosystems and ecological processes; and provide and protect wildlife corridors.
- 1.7 Land and water resources will be planned in accordance with the principles of integrated catchment management and water sensitive urban design. Policies will seek to protect identified environmental values, whilst focusing on opportunities for multi-purpose use of resources. Special attention is to be given to protecting sources of the Territory's water supply and to maintaining environmental flows in rivers and streams.
- 1.8 Planning policies will provide for the sustainable management of rural areas, ensuring that rural lands nominated for future urban development or other purposes can be retained in productive use and properly managed for the time being. Appropriate activities to reduce nett greenhouse gas emissions will be encouraged.
- 1.9 Urban expansion will be contained in order to minimise impacts on valuable natural and rural areas.
- 1.10 Integrated land use and transport planning will seek to maximise accessibility and transport efficiency, reduce energy consumption, support the preferred pattern of development, promote safety, safeguard environmental quality, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.11 Policies for environmental planning and management will ensure amenity, minimise pollution, and protect public health and safety.

Economic Sustainability

- 1.12** Planning policies will facilitate the widest possible range of commercial, retail, industrial, rural, tourism, and other forms of economic activity in order to promote new investment and a more diversified economy, to underpin employment growth, and to respond to changing economic opportunities.
- 1.13** The characteristics of the city that contribute to economic growth: Canberra's role as the national capital and the seat of Federal Parliament; the ease of getting around the city; the safe and clean environment; and the vibrancy of centres as places of social, cultural and business exchange, will be enhanced.
- 1.14** An adequate and diverse supply of industrial land will be maintained to facilitate both conventional and new forms of industry.
- 1.15** Tourism will be fostered by permitting a variety of entertainment, leisure and accommodation facilities, including opportunities for ecotourism, in appropriate locations throughout the Territory.
- 1.16** Sufficient land will be set aside for major communications, educational, scientific, or other activities requiring broadacre sites in appropriate locations outside urban areas.
- 1.17** In planning future development and redevelopment, particular emphasis will be placed on cost-effective provision and management of existing and new infrastructure and services, taking into account whole-of-life and whole-of-system costs, including the ecological footprint of proposed developments and activities.

Social Sustainability

- 1.18** Provision will be made for a comprehensive range of readily accessible community, cultural, sporting and recreational facilities, distributed according to the varying needs of different localities and population groups. In major centres and developing areas, sites will be safeguarded where necessary for particular community needs.
- 1.19** A variety of open space types will be provided in each district or local area to meet the diverse recreational needs of residents and visitors, and to contribute to community health.
- 1.20** Planning policies for community facilities and open space will encourage multiple use and flexible design to allow for changing needs.
- 1.21** Provision of affordable, adaptable and special-needs housing will be promoted throughout the city, as well as modification or redevelopment of existing stock to meet emerging social needs.

- 1.22** Urban development will be planned in a manner that promotes community vitality and safety, applying principles of crime prevention through environmental design. Provision will also be made for emergency services infrastructure necessary to ensure a high standard of safety for residents and visitors.
- 1.23** The needs of people with disabilities will be recognised in all facets of urban planning, particularly including the design and operation of transport and access systems and the assessment of development proposals.
- 1.24** New suburban areas will be planned with a legible and permeable hierarchy of roads; conveniently located commercial and community facilities; a network of open spaces; an off-road system for pedestrians and cyclists; and provision for accessible public transport.
- 1.25** Heritage and cultural values will be safeguarded, including in particular those of the Territory's Aboriginal peoples and those derived from both its rural history and urban development as the National Capital. The distinctive qualities of residential areas and other places, as well as elements of community heritage, will also be recognised and their conservation promoted.
- 1.26** Identified places of heritage significance will be protected in accordance with requirements for their conservation contained in the Heritage Register and any relevant heritage guidelines under the *Heritage Act 2004*. Special provisions are included in the Heritage Act for the recognition, registration and conservation of Aboriginal heritage.

2. Spatial Planning And Urban Design Principles

Urban Areas

- 2.1** Canberra will continue to develop as a series of discrete urban areas within a landscape setting of hills, ridges and other open spaces. Each town will offer a diversity of housing types; the broadest possible range of employment opportunities; and convenient, linked access to retail centres, community facilities and open space.
- 2.2** Future residential settlement will be accommodated through development of greenfields areas, subject to detailed feasibility and suitability studies; some expansion of existing towns; and appropriate use of suitable vacant or under-developed sites.
- 2.3** Commercial and retail activity will be concentrated in centres and other planned nodes of intensive activity that are well served by public transport to ensure an efficient pattern of development. Primary emphasis will be placed on strengthening and enhancing existing and new centres and nodes, including improved urban design and encouragement of more mixed-use development.

- 2.4** Planning policies will support revitalisation of the City Centre as the pre-eminent centre of governance, commerce and entertainment for the ACT and its region, while keeping the City Centre in appropriate balance with other town centres. Within the City Centre, provision will also be made for a range of major community facilities and opportunities for high-density residential development.
- 2.5** A wide range of housing types will be permitted in identified residential areas close to commercial centres and some major transport routes to increase choice; maximise opportunities for affordable housing; and secure some intensification of development consistent with maintaining residential amenity. Outside of these areas, planning policies will protect the typically low density, garden city character of Canberra's suburban areas.
- 2.6** Higher density development will be encouraged within and near major centres, and in other suitable locations that are well served by public transport.
- 2.7** Development will be planned to encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling, including commuter cycling. Routes will be reserved for an enhanced inter-town public transport system. Requirements for vehicle parking will be related to commercial needs and transport policy objectives.
- 2.8** Industrial areas will be in locations accessible to suitable freight services, and where industrial activity is unlikely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment or the amenity of residential areas.
- 2.9** A planned hierarchy of roads will be maintained in order to promote road safety, protect the amenity of residential and commercial areas, and facilitate the efficient movement of major traffic flows and heavy vehicles.
- 2.10** Adequate provision of open space throughout the Territory will remain a high priority. Open space will be planned and carefully maintained as an integrated, hierarchical system that provides for a diversity of sport and recreation activities, contributes to the legibility and character of urban development, is cost-effective to maintain, and assists in the effective management of stormwater.

Non-urban Areas

- 2.11** Planning policies will protect the landscape and environmental qualities of the hills and ridges surrounding urban areas, the Murrumbidgee and other river corridors, the mountains and forests west of the Murrumbidgee River, and productive rural landscapes.
- 2.12** Planning for non-urban and natural areas will also recognise the values of land for research, education, recreation and tourism purposes.
- 2.13** Clearance zones will be established where necessary around major facilities to protect the operational efficiency of those facilities and to minimise adverse environmental impacts.

Urban Design

- 2.14** Policies and procedures to promote high quality, creative design of development, urban spaces and landscape settings will be applied throughout the Territory, and innovation encouraged, in keeping with the spirit of the National Capital as an exemplar of best practice. Particular care will be taken to ensure high-amenity, quality design outcomes within residential areas, heritage areas, major centres and activity nodes, and along principal approach routes. The relationship between the public and private realms will also be emphasised in terms of the design quality of precincts and shared spaces, including spaces around buildings, as well as that of individual developments.
- 2.15** Policies will acknowledge Canberra as the national capital and the symbolic heart of Australia and will seek to preserve the landscape features that give the national capital its character and setting; respect and reinforce the key elements of Walter Burley Griffin's formally adopted plan for Canberra within the proposed urban settlement pattern; enhance and strengthen approaches and backdrops to the city and its national institutions; conserve open space between urban areas as visual separation buffers consistent with the landscape setting; retain areas that are identified as the rural setting surrounding the city; and retain key vistas created by the landscape network within new settlement areas.
- 2.16** Retention of Canberra's unique landscape setting, including the integration of natural and cultural elements that create its 'garden city' and 'bush capital' qualities, will be accorded the highest priority. Special attention will be given to safeguarding visual amenity, protecting vegetation and other important features within the established urban landscape, and ensuring the high quality of environmental design in new developments or redevelopment.
- 2.17** Advertisements and signs will be carefully controlled to maintain environmental amenity.