

Statement of Planning Intent
Strategic Planning Division
Environment and Planning Directorate
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

15 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: STATEMENT OF PLANNING INTENT FOR THE ACT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the *Statement of Planning Intent*. The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) commends the Minister for Planning on his commitment to engaging with the community to develop the key planning directions and priorities for the ACT over the coming years. The GBCA believes that an integrated approach to planning for buildings, infrastructure, transport networks and communities is essential if the ACT is to continue to demonstrate leadership in the development of a productive, liveable, resilient and sustainable city and region.

The GBCA encourages the Minister for Planning and the ACT Government to consider how the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be used to inform the *Statement of Planning Intent* so that it can assist in delivering the vision for the ACT's planning system.

About the GBCA

The GBCA is the nation's authority on sustainable buildings, communities and cities. Our mission is to accelerate the transformation of Australia's built environment into one that is healthy, liveable, productive, resilient and sustainable. We work together with industry and government to encourage policies and programs that support our mission. We educate thousands of people each year on how to design and deliver sustainable outcomes for our buildings, communities and cities. We operate Australia's only national voluntary and holistic rating system for sustainable buildings and communities – Green Star.

The Green Star rating system

The first Green Star rating tool was released in 2003 in response to market demand for a rating tool that would evaluate the sustainable design and construction of buildings as well as establish a common language for buildings. Green Star rating tools can be applied to almost all building types. Over 840 projects have now achieved Green Star certification across Australia, with a further 330 projects registered. There are currently over 50 Green Star-certified projects within the ACT.

The Green Star rating system is designed to take an holistic approach within each class and building sector, addressing nine categories in total; Management, Indoor Environment Quality (IEQ), Energy, Water, Materials, Land Use and Ecology, Emissions, Transport and Innovation and defining 'best practice' in each.

Green Star – Communities

In 2009, the GBCA commenced work, in consultation with industry and all levels of government, on the development of a rating tool for sustainable development projects on a community scale; examining issues of economic, social and environmental importance. All state and territory land organisations have been key supporters and sponsors of the Green Star – Communities rating tool, as well as sponsors from local government, the Australian Government and industry.

The first step in developing the Green Star – Communities rating tool was to develop a national framework consisting of five best practice principles:

- Liveability
- Economic Prosperity
- Environment
- Design
- Governance

Stage 2 of the project involved establishing best practice benchmarks and metrics for assessing and certifying sustainable communities. A set of 38 credits (now refined to 35 under PILOT version 0.1) was then developed and tested on a number of projects across Australia. The Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool was launched in June 2012 and there are now 4 projects certified and a further 25 projects registered across Australia, including several in the ACT and Capital region. Please find enclosed with this submission, a copy of the Green Star – Communities National Framework and a list of the categories and credits.

The GBCA believes that the Green Star – Communities rating tool can be a useful reference for the ACT Government in planning protocols and encouraging use of the rating tool for development projects within the city will help to ensure best practice benchmarks are met.

The document released by the Environment and Planning Directorate to kick-start the community planning conversation highlights several areas of focus to help Canberra to grow into a more compact, liveable and vibrant city. These include creating active streets and great public spaces, managing traffic and transport and adapting to a changing climate.

The 35 Green Star – Communities credits could be referenced or adopted as guidelines, benchmarks or community indicators against which projects and/or development across the city can be measured. We also encourage the ACT Government to commit to achieving Green Star certification for specific precinct/community development projects over which they have control. Several examples of how the credits relate to the directions and priorities of the ACT Government are outlined below:

Liv-1 Access to Amenities aims to encourage and recognise projects that provide a high level of access to amenities and can contribute to better place-making. Having a diversity of amenities close to where people live and work contributes to convenience, walkability and wellbeing. This credit establishes a benchmark for the distance between residential uses, workplaces and/or educational facilities in the community to frequently-used amenities.

Liv-3 Healthy and Active Living, aims to encourage and recognise projects that promote healthy and active living. Effective planning, urban design and landscape architecture that support physical activity and social engagement contribute towards healthy and active living in the community. This credit encourages the delivery of tangible elements which lead to health benefits and promote an active lifestyle through more active streets and public spaces, such as paths for walking and bicycle riding, or recreation facilities for exercising.

Econ-5 Affordability aims to encourage and recognise projects that promote housing and living affordability. The ACT Government has identified that a growing and more urbanised Canberra can offer greater housing choice and this credit looks at a range of issues such as access to amenities, access to education and employment opportunities. Housing affordability strategies recognised under this credit include:

- Providing a range of lot sizes to support housing diversity, and a mix of densities with increased density near activity centres
- Providing a proportion of housing lots and dwellings to the market at an affordable price purchase for low-to moderate-income households
- Provision of key worker housing
- Provision of a program for guaranteeing the supply of shared equity and/or social housing within the development
- Establishing partnerships between organisations to ensure allocation and delivery of affordable housing stock.

Env-11 Transport encourages projects that reduce the environmental impact of transportation. The ACT Government is already focused on improving and integrating Canberra's transport options and this aim for both the ACT as a whole and for precinct and community development within it by the *Env-11* credit. This credit requires an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) to be developed which sets out how various forms of transport outcomes, particularly the existing and future public transport network and planning and provisions for active transport will be planned.

Gov-6 Adaptation and Resilience aims to encourage projects that are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate and natural disasters. The ACT Government is already taking decisive action to ensure the resilience of the ACT against extreme weather events and natural disasters. The *Gov-6* credit encourages the development of two plans - a Climate Adaptation Plan, and a Community Resilience Plan which are intended to identify the climate risks and potential mitigation actions, but to also ensure that the community understands what to do in extreme events.

Env-3 Heat Island Effect aims to encourage and recognise projects that reduce heat island effect. 'Heat island effect' is a term used to describe the impact of local air temperatures around cities, as a result of excessive absorption of solar energy by dark surfaces, and subsequent retention of such energy in the mass of the built environment. Radiating heat from built structures throughout the day and night can result in higher average temperatures in urban locations, when compared to rural areas within a smaller geographic location.

Env-5 Greenhouse Gas Intensity aims to encourage and recognise projects that minimise the greenhouse gas intensity of energy supplied to the community, and in particular to infrastructure. Points are awarded where the greenhouse gas intensity of energy supply in the community is less than the greenhouse gas intensity of the energy available in a business as usual baseline. The GBCA commends the ACT Government on its recent achievement of the first legislated emissions reduction target of peaking per person emissions and achieving an 8 per cent fall in emissions between 2011 and 2014.

Env-6 Sustainable Buildings aims to encourage and recognise projects that deliver 'green' buildings and energy efficient homes designed and constructed to meet the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime.. Points are awarded within this credit if eligible buildings within achieve a certified rating with Green Star or another compliant environmental rating tool.

The ACT Government has already demonstrated strong leadership with its commitment to achieve Green Star ratings for all new schools, but there are many opportunities to commit to more sustainable and adaptable buildings across the ACT. A number of precincts and urban renewal sites around Australia have made commitments to achieving Green Star certification for the buildings within them. These include:

- Barangaroo in NSW, where Lend Lease has delivered 6 Star Green Star certification for all buildings at South Barangaroo.
- Bowden Village in SA, where the Urban Renewal Authority has mandated Green Star certification for all buildings within Bowden Urban Village.
- Elizabeth Quay in WA, where the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has mandated all buildings within this project achieve 5 Star Green Star certification.
- Parramatta Square in NSW, where Parramatta City Council has specified Green Star certification for all buildings within this site.
- Docklands in Vic, where VicUrban developed the *Melbourne Dockland's Environmentally Sustainable Design Guide* to set a minimum level of sustainable design requirements for development on the site.

Green Star – Communities Guide for Local Government

The Green Star – Communities Guide for Local Government is a resource for local governments which further outlines how the Green Star – Communities framework and rating tool can be used to inform policy and strategy as well as encouraging development projects in their local government areas that will enhance liveability, contribute to local economic prosperity and deliver sustainable outcomes. Please find a copy of the guide enclosed with this submission and on our website at www.gbca.org.au.

The GBCA values its strong, ongoing relationship with the ACT Government Ministers and Directorates, as well as agencies such as the Land Development Agency. We would welcome the opportunity to brief Minister Gentleman and the planning team on Green Star – Communities and how it can assist the ACT Government in achieving the objectives of the finalised Statement of Planning Intent. Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 02 8239 6233, or via email at katy.dean@gbca.org.au, should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

Katy Dean
Director – Advocacy