



**Canberra
Business
Chamber**



Incorporating Active Living Principles in the Territory Plan – Update

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1. Active living and active transport principles

The Task Force’s membership is generally supportive of these changes involving the promotion of active living and active transport principles by the ACT Government. And we believe there is an opportunity to strengthen the rationale about why people should convert to these modes.

At the moment the reason for becoming more active is promoted on a health basis only – to reduce obesity and related diseases (refer to page 6 ‘The evidence for change’).

However, active transport has other highly significant co-benefits like:

- reducing air pollution,
- reducing carbon emissions, and
- reducing traffic congestion.

The 2015 State of the Environment Report, produced by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, found that petrol consumption accounted for 5% of Canberra’s ecological footprint. Our overall footprint is 8.9 global hectares per person, three and a half times the global average. More than 60% of our footprint is a product of our households. The table below provides some insight into this environmental concern.

1.	Electricity supply	12%
2.	Eating & Drinking out	6%
3.	Petrol	5%
4.	Gas supply	4%
5.	Air & space transport	4%
6.	Other food products	3%
7.	Ownership of dwellings	3%
8.	Beer & malt	2%
9.	Clothing	2%
10.	Wooden furniture	2%

Table 1. Top 10 commodities derived from ACT Ecological Footprint

2. Climate Change

Incorporating Active Travel Principles into the Territory Plan makes only one mention of climate change on page 21. This requires elaboration. Hotter, drier summers as a result of climate change will have a significant impact on active living and active transport. Hot weather will be a significant barrier to people exercising. Climate change has the potential to increase expenditure on lighting for ovals as training sessions are pushed into the cooler evening hours. Climate change also has the potential to impact tourism – as we have seen with the tennis when heat prohibited play in Victoria.

The changes to the Territory Plan should address how climate change will be considered in urban planning. Some ways to help keep urban open space cooler include:

- incorporation of shade trees – they can reduce the local micro-climate in summer by 5 to 10 degrees Celsius, and
- the use of water sensitive urban design measures (WSUD) – directing stormwater via permeable surfaces into the soil profile, rain gardens/reed beds, wetland and food gardens.

A great deal of work has now been done on the value of the urban forest and it could be usefully referenced in any response to this call for submissions.

3. At a more detailed level:

The six principles outlined are sensible and are generally not prescriptive, giving projects freedom to demonstrate themselves how the principles have been met for a particular design. However, there are three areas that warrant a note;

- (page17-18) Rule R38 for RZ1 and RZ2 zoning states minimum landscape areas of 40% for communal or private open space, half of which (20% of site) must be planting area. Setting a reasonable proportion of landscaping is important to development quality. Higher density zones RZ3, RZ4, RZ5 and Commercial zones also have a minimum open space requirement of 20%, with half (10%) for planting.
- (page 19) Item 16 is an interesting inclusion for Multi-Unit Housing Codes, Element 10, to provide stairs that are open, visually inviting and located in a prominent location near a lift. In larger projects, where fire stairs are required, it is not clear whether the stair for active living could replace a fire stair. It is unlikely, meaning the active living staircase would be an additional, albeit important building element that adds cost. This requirement also extends into Commercial Zones where a similar problem exists – the active living stair may be in addition to the fire stair(s) already provided.
- (page 31) Finally, changes to the Estate Development Code require at least 95% of dwellings to be either within 500m of a bus stop or within 750m of a frequent network bus stop. The ability to meet these requirements is outside of most proponent's control, especially if the area is a new area and public transport is not yet provided.

In conclusion we are generally supportive of draft variation DV348 to incorporate active living principles into the Territory Plan. These changes support the design ethos that promotes the health and wellbeing of people by providing healthy places.

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