



# Missing Middle Housing Reform

ACT Shelter Webinar  
13 February 2026



# Policy Proposal

# Context for this reform



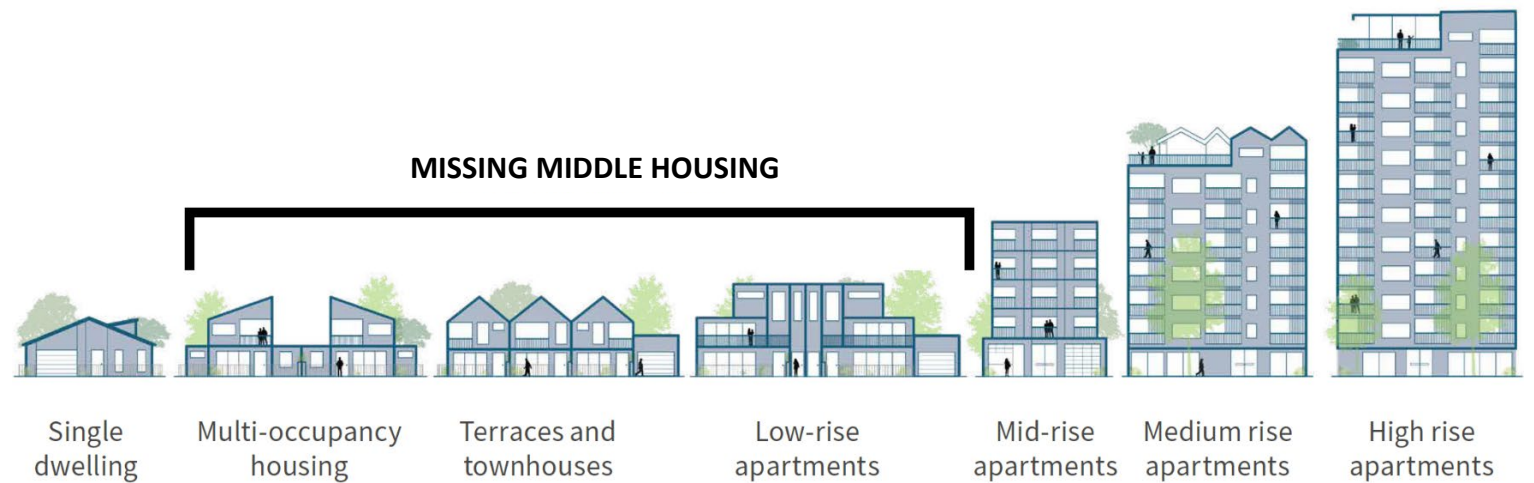
By 2050 we **expect nearly 700,000 people** to call our city home.

A plan to enable **30,000 new homes** across Canberra in the **next five years**:

- more housing choice,
- in new and existing suburbs across the ACT,
- limited amount of available land left for new suburbs,
- make better use of our existing suburbs and limit urban sprawl, and
- plan for a more compact, efficient and sustainable Canberra.

Missing middle housing reforms **open capacity** within our existing residential areas to meet future demand.

# What type of housing?



# Missing Middle Housing Reform

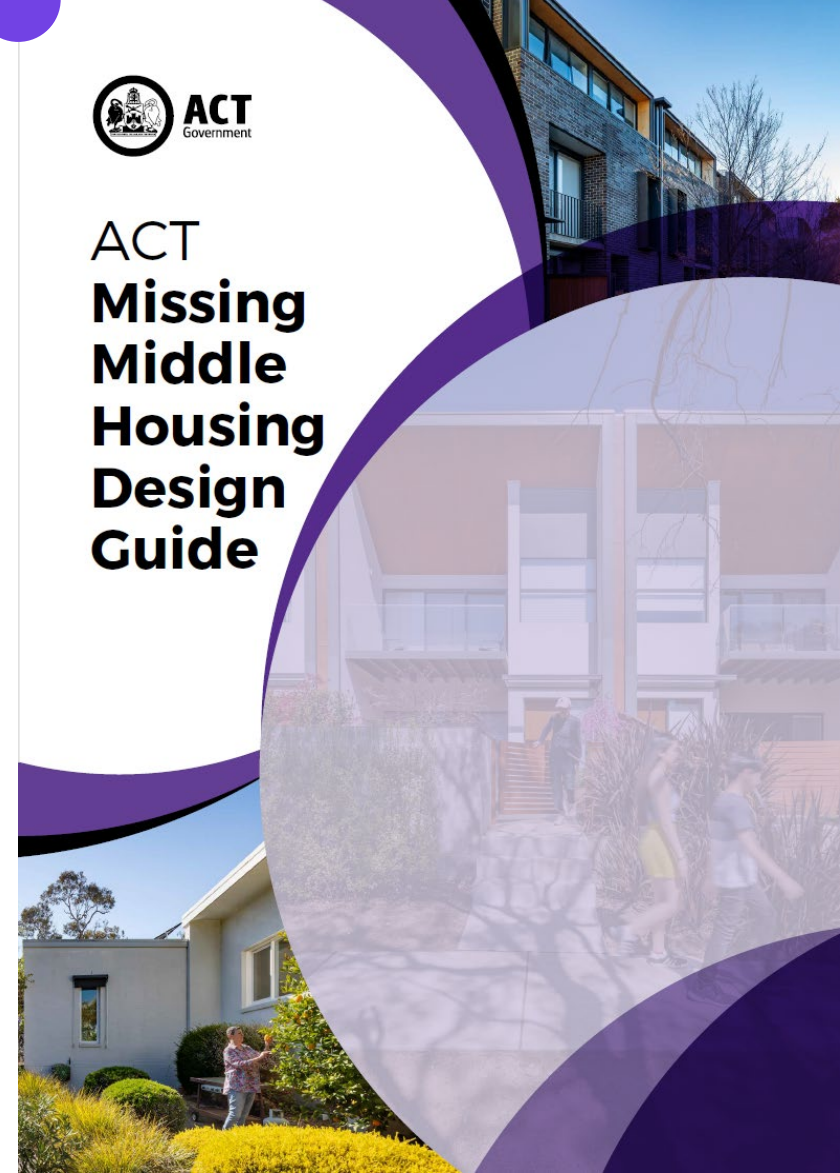
The ACT Government is responding to the demand for greater housing choice by reforms to our planning system, including:

The **Missing Middle Housing Design Guide** will provide best practice guidance for creating well-designed homes that respect local character and contribute positively to our streets and neighbourhoods.

**Changes to the Territory Plan** will remove barriers in the planning system and allow more housing options (including more townhouses, terraces, and duplexes) in residential areas. These changes will make it easier to build well-designed, sustainable homes in our existing suburbs.



## ACT Missing Middle Housing Design Guide



# Key Proposals for RZ1 and RZ2

- **Policy Outcomes** for the RZ1 and RZ2 zones renewed to enable change, whilst respecting neighbourhood and landscape character.
- **Maximum site coverage** retained at 45% to maximise living infrastructure potential.
- Maximum **building heights** in storeys (for all zones) will be in the policy, height in metres will move to the Technical Specification.
  - 2 storeys for multi-unit housing (MUH) in RZ1; 3 storeys for MUH in RZ2.
- **Minimum block area** for 2 dwellings no longer specified.
- Minimum block area for **secondary residences** (granny flats) no longer specified.
- **Maximum number of dwellings** per block guided by site context, and for RZ1, dwelling density targets are defined in the technical specifications.
- Minimum block area for **co-housing** removed in RZ1.

# Key Proposals for RZ1 and RZ2



- **Allowing subdivision in RZ1** prior to constructing a dwelling.
- **Permitting consolidation**, with limitations in RZ1 and planning outcomes to be achieved.
- **Apartments** permitted in RZ1
- **Solar access protections** for neighbours
- **Minimum number of parking spaces reduced**
- **Canopy cover** increased from 15 to 20% while planting area decreased
- Also proposing changes to **RZ3, RZ4 and RZ5 building height** rules to allow a graduation of rise and density across the zones.

# How policy design and implementation can deliver equitable housing

# Policy intent

**Housing choice** – the policy will allow greater housing diversity in all residential areas of the ACT. Under the reforms, tri-occupancies, terraces, townhouses and apartments will be permitted in all residential zones. This will enable the delivery of housing to meet the needs of the ACTs diverse community.

**Density** – changes in permitted density, and the ability to subdivide blocks, will increase the availability of land for residential development, and result in more efficient use of that land.

**Location** – the policy will apply across the ACT, meaning development can occur across suburbs with ranging land values, resulting in housing at a range of price points.

**Access** – increasing the availability of land in established suburbs will deliver housing in well located areas, with good access to amenities.

**Amenity** – standards for minimum dwelling sizes and internal and external spaces that are benchmarked and evidence-based.

**Living infrastructure** – the policy increases the targets for canopy cover to be delivered on a site, to support the ACTs 30% canopy cover target, to reduce urban heat and support biodiversity.

**Sustainability** – guidance to improve dwelling efficiency both during construction and in its ongoing operation and maintenance.

# Policy implementation

**Canberra House Pattern Book** – Following finalisation of the reforms, a pattern book of missing middle housing designs will be produced that will offer a streamlined development approval pathway.

The pattern book will provide the community with cost-effective access to high quality designs that meet the policy intent.

The pattern book will include options for housing outcomes, including **price range**, **dwelling size** and **accessibility**.

Opportunities to enable modern methods of construction (prefabrication) will be explored, which can offer reduced costs and construction timeframes.

**Demonstration** –construction of Pattern Book dwellings.

**Evaluation** – following implementation, the policy will be monitored and evaluated in accordance with the ACT Planning Evaluation Framework.

# Next Steps

# Next Steps – DPA Process



- The **Standing Committee** will conduct their Inquiry, with the report due on 30 April 2026.
- After any Inquiry is finalised, the Government must prepare a response to the Inquiry.
- Following these steps, the DPA may be approved to become an **MPA**.
- The approved MPA will be tabled in the Assembly. **After 5 sitting days, the MPA commences.**

# Next Steps

## Missing Middle Housing Design Guide

- In the meantime, the **Missing Middle Housing Design Guide** will be finalised and endorsed by the Minister.
  - The Design Guide must be considered when submitting a missing middle housing DA
  - Key changes following consultation will include additional guidance on separately titled subdivisions, and considerations for missing middle development in a heritage context.

## Future works

- Government will develop a **pattern book** of pre-approved missing middle designs. The pattern book will be developed via a competition process.
- Also considering **streamlined approval pathways** for lower impact and pattern book developments.

# Thank you