

3 July 2015

Territory Plan Variation Unit
Territory Plan Comments
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

Via Email: terrplan@act.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

**Submission from the Master Builders Association of the ACT
Territory Plan Draft Variation 351 (DV351)
Draft Amendment 85 to the National Capital Plan**

Thank you for allowing the Master Builders Association of the ACT (MBA) to make this combined submission on Draft Amendment 85 (DA85) to the National Capital Plan and Territory Plan Draft Variation 351 (DV351).

Master Builders Australia has been operating for over 100 years, representing the interests of up to 30,000 members Australia-wide, with around 1,200 members in the ACT. The MBA represents the interests of commercial builders, residential builders, civil contractors, suppliers/subcontractors and professionals. The MBA is also a Registered Training Organisation and a Group Training Organisation. In preparing this submission, we have canvassed the views of our members for their input and their comments have been incorporated into this submission.

Summary of MBA position

In summary, MBA is supportive of DV351 and DA85 for the following reasons:

- It will help relieve housing unaffordability by providing a long term and sustainable supply of new housing, and
- It will assist the building and construction industry by providing critical additional housing stock which will provide work opportunities for local builders and subcontractors.

Grounds of Submission:

Housing Affordability

It is acknowledged by most key stakeholders in the housing affordability policy discussion that the provision of a sufficient and sustainable supply of 'release ready' land is a vital part of the housing affordability solution. While the Canberra market is well supplied with apartment developments, the supply of greenfield residential land is at historically low levels.

With the Land Development Agency web site currently indicating there are zero blocks of residential land for sale in the ACT, the development at West Belconnen is urgently needed to help relieve the existing land supply shortage, thereby assisting to relieve housing unaffordability.

Pipeline for the local building industry

Housing supply has historically been characterised by long periods of supply drought punctuated by the occasional relief in the form of limited releases for which there is usually fierce competition. The West Belconnen project provides an opportunity for long term sustainable supply of residential land which will help smooth the peaks and troughs in supply.

It is important to emphasise that adequate land supply is the lifeblood for the local building industry. Without it, not only do houses not get built, builders are unable to keep valued workers employed, resulting in many of the ACT's most skilled construction industry workers moving interstate during supply droughts, where their skills are in demand. This has often had a debilitating effect on the capacity of the industry in the ACT to re-tool in the timeframe necessary when land does again become available.

The MBA is highly supportive of the development at West Belconnen because of the local building and construction job opportunities that will be created.

Timing

The LDA/Riverview Project in West Belconnen has been in the pipeline for a number of years and during that time has undergone an extraordinary level of rigorous analysis, including around 70 technical reports supporting the planning proposal. The project has also seen a significant level of public engagement, including the opening of a project office in Kippax, special information sessions, newsletters to local residents, a content rich website and active social media (Facebook and Twitter).

In light of the substantial assessment completed, the level of public engagement, and land supply shortages (discussed previously), the MBA believes that it is imperative that government move quickly to finalise the rezoning so that development applications for this project can proceed, and land is supplied to the local building industry.

Conclusion

In summary, MBA is supportive of DV351 and DA85 because it will supply critically needed residential land in the ACT, assist housing affordability, and benefit the local building and construction industry.

If you require any further information, or would like to clarify any points made in our submission, I may be contacted on (02) 6247 2099.

Yours sincerely



Michael Hopkins
Deputy Executive Director

