

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information – Notice of Decision

I refer to your application under section 30 of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 (the FOI Act), received by the City and Environment Directorate (CED) on 28 November 2025. In which you sought access to the following information:

...any documents held by the City and Environment Directorate that relate to the social impacts or consequences, specifically:

- *housing choice between detached houses, townhouses and apartments;*
- *the ability of families to access detached housing with a private backyard; housing affordability for different dwelling types;*
- *and any equity or distributional impacts between income groups*
- *of the ACT Government's:*
- *compact city approach;*
- *commitment to locate at least 70 per cent of new housing within the existing urban footprint; and*
- *consideration of an urban growth boundary or hard urban edge for Canberra.*
- *This includes, but is not limited to, briefs, reports, modelling, internal advice, or correspondence.*

Please exclude duplicates of publicly available documents.

I thank you for engaging with our office to refine the scope of your application. On 15 January 2026, the amended scope of your application was confirmed as follows:

Documents that include analysis or consideration of housing preferences for families, specifically relating to the option of a detached house with a backyard, prepared or held by the planning division since 2016.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the FOI Act, CED is required to provide a decision on your access application within 30 working days. Under section 41 of the FOI Act, you agreed an additional amount of time to decide your application. Therefore, a decision is due on or by **20 February 2026**.

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Director-General of the City and Environment Directorate under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the FOI Act.

Decision on access

A search for CED records has been completed and 3 records within the scope of your application have been identified. The records are listed in the schedule at **Attachment A**.

I have decided to:

- grant **full** access to 1 record.
- grant **partial** access to 2 records.

The reasons for my decision are detailed in the *statement of reasons* section below. The records being released to you are provided at **Attachment B** with redactions applied to any information contrary to the public interest to release.

I note that CED has publicly released a range of information that relates to this subject. For ease of reference, I have included at the end of the schedule weblinks to these documents and websites.

Statement of reasons

The FOI Act has a pro-disclosure bias, which requires information to be disclosed unless doing so would be contrary to the public interest. As an Information Officer, I am responsible for determining whether disclosure of the information within the scope of your application would be contrary to the public interest.

My assessment begins with Schedule 1 of the FOI Act, which outlines categories of information that are taken to be contrary to the public interest to disclose. If the information does not fall within any of these categories, I must then apply the public interest test under section 17 of the FOI Act. This test involves weighing the factors favouring disclosure against those favouring nondisclosure, as set out in Schedule 2.

In reaching my access decisions, I have taken the following into account:

- the FOI Act
- the information that falls within the scope of your application
- the ACT Ombudsman FOI Guidelines.

I confirm that I have not considered any of the factors listed in section 17(2) of the FOI Act, which outlines a list of considerations that must not be taken into account when applying the public interest test.

Schedule 1 – Information taken to be contrary to the public interest

- No relevant sections identified.

Schedule 2 – Public interest test

Factors favouring disclosure (Schedule 2.1)

- *Section 2.1(a)(i) - promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability.*

- *Section 2.1(a)(ii) - contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.*

In reviewing the information within the scope of your application, I have decided that disclosure promotes open discussion of public affairs and enhances government's accountability generally. It is well established that the Canberra community have a considerable interest in the development of, and availability of housing in the ACT. I have given moderate weight to these 2 factors favouring disclosure.

Factors favouring nondisclosure (Schedule 2.2)

- *Section 2.2(a)(xi) - prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

The technical papers (scheduled records 2 and 3) contain the methodology of the modelling used by SGS Economics and Planning. This includes substantial details outlining the methodology and research undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning, from which competitors could discern their approach and methodology, consequently leaving them at a disadvantage, a factor favouring nondisclosure under schedule 2, 2.2(a)(xi) of the FOI Act. Due to the detriment that could be expected to SGS Economics and Planning by disclosing their methodology, I have given significant weight to this factor favouring nondisclosure.

Balancing the factors

Having applied the public interest test outlined in section 17 of the FOI Act, I have concluded that some information contained in the records is not in the public interest to disclose. Accordingly, this specific information is redacted and released to you in accordance with section 50(2) of the FOI Act.

Consistent with the pro-disclosure intent of the FOI Act, I am satisfied that redacting only the information that is contrary to the public interest ensures compliance with the FOI Act while still providing access to the majority of the information held by CED within the scope of your application.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable for this application because the fee has been waived in accordance with section 107 of the FOI Act.

Online publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CED maintains a disclosure log, which is a public record of access applications and decisions. Your original access application and my decision will be published on the CED disclosure log. Your personal contact details will not be published.

ACT Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access application is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek ACT Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the FOI Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is provided to you, or a longer period allowed by the ACT Ombudsman. If you wish to request a review of my decision, you may write to the ACT Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the FOI Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<https://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Please contact the CED Information Access team if you have any queries in relation to your application via CEDFOI@act.gov.au or 6207 2987.

Yours sincerely



Kirra Cox
Information Officer
City and Environment Directorate
20 February 2026