

# Supporting Community and Affordable Housing in Canberra



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### FOR

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR LAND FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING AND PROPOSALS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL

ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8 OF THE REQUEST

- Q1. Is this process the next round of funding through the Affordable Housing Project Fund?**
- A1. This Request process forms the fourth round of funding as part of the Affordable Housing Project Fund, however it has been amended to be integrated with the release of two sites for community housing and there have been adjustments made to the assessment criteria and overall process.
- Q2. Is it possible to have an extension of the due date to Feb/March 2025. December/January is a period where many key personnel and consultants take leave and are not available, so a submission date of January is very difficult for our sector. We would request a submission date later into February/March to enable us to submit a quality application.**
- A2. At this time it is not possible to extend the Closing Date and Time as the timeframe aligns with processes for confirming provision of Financial Assistance. The amount and type of Financial Assistance requested will affect timeframes. As outlined in Section 5(1)(e) of the Request, if multiple Responses are assessed as suitable for Financial Assistance, decision-making may be linked to the 2025-26 Budget.
- Q3. Do I have to use the Response Form template or can I put my answers in my own document and submit it?**
- A3. Yes, all Respondents are requested to complete the Response Form online and upload it. Other supporting documents may be provided as attachments. Attachments should be referenced in the Response Form, uploaded in either PDF, Word or Excel formats and comply with any page limits listed on the Response Form.
- Q4. I'm proposing a mixed use model with social housing, how do I get funding for social housing and support services?**
- A4. The Financial Assistance which is available from the Affordable Housing Project Fund is for the delivery of Affordable Rental Dwellings only and not for other uses. Financial Assistance will be considered per Affordable Rental Dwelling and other uses will be excluded for the purpose of calculating this.

Funding for social housing and support services is not available from the Affordable Housing Project Fund or this Request process. If you are interested in working with the ACT Government to deliver social housing and support services, you can contact [ACTHousingGRProcurement@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTHousingGRProcurement@act.gov.au).

As outlined in Section 6 of the Request, Respondents are also able to seek funding from other funding sources. Responding to the Request process does not preclude the Respondent from applying for other ACT Government, Commonwealth Government or other grants, loans or funding programs (subject to the terms and conditions of those programs). Respondents are encouraged to seek financing from other sources,

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particularly to fund social housing. Respondents will need to detail these financing sources in the Response Form. Respondents will also need to confirm that access to common areas, building services and facilities are made available to all residents on an equal basis.

**Q5. Can an ACCO CHP apply for the full cost of the land as long as they meet the site requirements?**

A5. A registered CHP is eligible to purchase either the Moncrieff block or Gungahlin block or both. If the CHP is also an ACCO or if there is an ACCO-led consortium where the CHP is the entity that will purchase the block(s), they can seek Financial Assistance for 100% of the land price (all other Respondents can seek Financial Assistance for up to 50% of the land price). Notwithstanding this, their Response *must* meet all the requirements of this Request process, including the requirement to deliver the Minimum Number of Affordable Rental Dwellings on the block, *and* they *must* meet the Threshold Assessment Criteria and Weighted Assessment Criteria.

Potential Respondents should note that Financial Assistance from the Affordable Housing Project Fund is only available for Affordable Rental Dwellings and not for other uses. Responses with lower Cost Estimates will be scored higher, so an ACCO CHP will still need to be competitive for the Financial Response Criterion, and they are encouraged to seek financing from other sources as well.

**Q6. Does it matter what tier a Community Housing Provider is?**

A6. A Community Housing Provider does not need to be a certain tier, as long as the Community Housing Provider is registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH).

**Q7. Regarding Financial Assistance can I please seek clarification, that social rental housing (income-based rent) is excluded? If I were to rent a home to a person at 50% of market rent is that considered eligible?**

A7. The Financial Assistance that is available from the Affordable Housing Fund is linked to Affordable Rental Dwellings, which refers to rent at an amount that is less than 75% of the market rent for that dwelling to Eligible Tenants. Tenant eligibility is consistent with the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption and the current criteria are available at <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2024-79/>.

As 50% of market rent is less than 75% of market rent, provided the tenant is eligible based on the tenant selection criteria, including income, those dwellings would be considered an Affordable Rental Dwelling. However, social housing that is income-based rent is not considered eligible for Financial Assistance. Potential Respondents should be aware that Responses with lower Cost Estimates will be scored higher, so they will still need to be competitive for the Financial Response Criterion.

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**Q8. Can you seek Financial Assistance to purchase land that is not the Gungahlin or Moncrieff site, at 100% of the cost if you are developing the whole site as affordable/social housing?**

A8. It is possible to seek Financial Assistance to purchase land or dwellings that would be regarded as an 'Own Site' for the purposes of the Request. The Respondent or consortium member would need to demonstrate an exclusive right to purchase their Own Site, such as through an exchanged contract for sale or an option agreement. However, their Response *must* meet all the requirements of this Request Process, including the requirement to deliver the Minimum Number of Affordable Rental Dwellings on the block, *and* they *must* meet the Threshold Assessment Criteria and Weighted Assessment Criteria. In the Response Form, Upfront Financial Assistance would need to be identified. This may be for 100% of the price.

Potential Respondents should be aware that Responses with lower Cost Estimates will be scored higher, so they will still need to be competitive for the Financial Response Criterion. Potential Respondents are also reminded that Financial Assistance will be considered per Affordable Rental Dwelling and other uses will be excluded for the purpose of calculating this.

**Q9. What types of dwelling use will be considered for Financial Assistance?**

A9. The Financial Assistance that is available is linked to Affordable Rental Dwellings, which refers to rent at an amount that is less than 75% of the Market Rent for the Dwelling to Eligible Tenants. Tenant eligibility is consistent with the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption and the current criteria are available at <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2024-79/>.

**Q11. Is the minimum amount of Affordable dwellings 10? Are there any funding options for assistance for projects that have less dwellings?**

A11. All Responses seeking Financial Assistance must be seeking to deliver at least the Minimum Number of Affordable Rental Dwellings which is the construction and operation of at least 10 Affordable Rental Dwellings, and at least 15 per cent of Development Dwellings, for a period of at least 15 years, with exemption to the requirement available for Responses that demonstrate exceptional value to the Territory (measured through competitiveness of the score of the Weighted Assessment Criteria). This is also applicable for Own Sites.

It is possible to deliver more than 10 dwellings on the Moncrieff and Gungahlin Blocks and it is anticipated that Responses will include more dwellings due to the Community Facility zoning and sale to Community Housing Providers, however:

- the Minimum Number of Affordable Rental Dwellings for the purposes of Financial Assistance is at least 10 dwellings and at least 15 per cent of Development Dwellings over a period of at least 15 years;
- the purpose clause in the specimen Crown Lease for Block 4 Section 23 Moncrieff identifies use of the premises for the purpose of community housing of not less than 10 dwellings; and
- the purpose clause in the specimen Crown Lease for Block 4 Section 235 Gungahlin identifies use of the premises for the purpose of community housing of not less than 10 dwellings.

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**Q12. Will the Weighted Assessment Criteria differentiate between Responses with certainty of ownership and those with option deeds, where there is uncertainty?**

A12. There is no difference in treatment or weighting under the Weighted Assessment Criteria, provided that either the Crown Lessee is included as either the sole Respondent or as part of a consortium, or if an exclusive right to purchase is demonstrated.

**Q13. Is there any chance of the lands being 'gifted' to a local ACCO/ACCHO?**

A13. This Request process is structured around providing Financial Assistance to fund the purchase, not gifting. ACCOs can contact the ACCO Concierge Service that has been developed.

**Q14. Is it possible to apply for the funding opportunity if your project is receiving funding from additional sources, for example HAFF?**

A14. As outlined in Section 6 of the Request, Respondents are also able to seek funding from other funding sources. Responding to this Request process does not preclude the Respondent from applying for other ACT Government, Commonwealth Government or other grants, loans or funding programs (subject to the terms and conditions of those programs). Respondents will need to detail these financing sources in the Response Form. To put a competitive Response for Financial Assistance from the Affordable Housing Project Fund, Respondents are encouraged to seek funding from a wide range of sources.

**Q15. If an ACCO is in a consortium with a developer, can the developer develop a property on this land and ACCO lease the land for long term (99 year) rather than ownership.**

A15. As outlined in Section 1 of the Request, only entities that are CHPs registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) can purchase the Moncrieff and Gungahlin Blocks. A developer who is a consortium member cannot purchase those sites, so it would not be possible for an ACCO to lease from a developer. For Own Sites, it is possible for a developer to own the land and/or develop property on the land, and for an ACCO consortium member to lease the land or dwellings long term. However, in order to be considered an ACCO-led consortium for the purposes of the Weighted Assessment Criterion, the ACCO would need to be identified as the lead Respondent in 'Section 1 – Respondent Details' of the Response Form. The Response Form must clearly outline the details of each consortium member and the nature, structure and proposed financial arrangements of the consortium.

**Q16. Do you have a list of ACCOs interested in participating in the Request process?**

A16. As outlined in the Request, ACCOs must meet the Clause 44 definition found in the Closing the Gap agreement and demonstrate they operate/provide service delivery in the ACT or Canberra Region (for example, through existing ACT service delivery or ACT-based governance arrangements).

Below is a list of ACCOs considered to meet this definition as at 10 December 2024. The Aboriginal Service Development Branch of the Community Services Directorate is also happy to support introductions and connections to these ACCOs to support this process. Please reach out to [aboriginalservicedevelopment@act.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalservicedevelopment@act.gov.au) for further support.

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ACCO	NRCH Registered
<a href="#">Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation</a>	Yes
<a href="#">Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation</a>	Yes
<a href="#">SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation</a>	Yes
Everymob	No, interested in partnerships
<a href="#">Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services</a>	No
<a href="#">Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation</a>	No
<a href="#">Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)</a>	No
Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation	No
<a href="#">Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation</a>	No
<a href="#">Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Aboriginal Corporation</a>	No
<a href="#">Corroboree Group</a>	No
Mental Health for Mob	No
<a href="#">Thirrili</a>	No
<a href="#">Worldview Foundation</a>	No

**Q17. We understand that for proponents with their own site, the site “must not have existing requirements for affordable, community or public housing”. If a CHP are looking at an acquisition opportunity for a site that has a requirement for 25 affordable rentals and are looking to deliver 100 affordable rentals on the site, can they seek Financial Assistance for 75 of the 100, or are they ineligible to seek any assistance for this project?**

**A17.** A CHP can only seek Financial Assistance to purchase a site that has existing affordable, community, and public housing requirements, where the Financial Assistance is to deliver additional affordable dwellings on top of the existing housing requirements. As an example, if the proposed site has an existing requirement to deliver 25 affordable housing and no public and community housing requirements and the total yield is 100 dwellings, then the proponent can seek Financial Assistance to deliver affordable housing to deliver 75 of the 100 dwellings. The Response must clearly outline that the Financial Assistance is sought to deliver additional affordable dwellings on top of the existing requirements.

**Q18. Does the Zoning and purpose clause on the Gungahlin and Moncrieff sites restrict the ability to strata and sell some of the dwellings?**

**A18** Block 4 Section 235 Gungahlin and Block 4 Section 23 Moncrieff are zoned ‘Community Facilities’ and clause 3(b) in the Specimen Crown Lease for both sites specify the purpose use of the sites are for ‘Community Housing’. Assuming the reference to ‘the ability to strata’ refers to subdivision under the *Unit Titles Act 2001 (ACT)*, the Territory Plan 2023 Subdivision Policy states that “subdivision of a lease developed for Supportive Housing, Community Housing, Retirement Village, including subdivision under the *Unit Titles Act 2001*, is not permitted”. Notwithstanding this, Potential Respondents should obtain their own legal and/or planning advice and rely on their own enquiries.