

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 13

31 October 2025

Question No. 717

Chiaka Barry MLA: To ask the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to the answer provided by the Minister to a question without notice on 23 September 2025, can the Minister (a) provide detail of the two step “Expression of Interest” process for community groups seeking land for community and religious purposes, including links to public information and copies of internal policy guidance documents, (b) provide assessment criteria for applications at each stage, (c) advise how applications are assessed, including (i) whether there is an independent advisory process, (ii) who the decision-maker is for such allocations and (iii) what is the review process for applicants that are unhappy with the outcomes, (d) provide information on all requests made in the last five years, with details of outcomes, including deidentified data showing (i) the size of the land requested (ii) what the land would be used for, (iii) the date the request was made, (iv) the date decisions were communicated to applicants for each of the two step processes, (v) the outcome of the request and (vi) the reasons for a decision to decline each request, (e) provide data on the number and sizes of land that has been allocated for community purposes, and data on land that is currently available but not yet allocated, and (f) advise what specific venues would be able to accommodate a gathering of over 3,000 participants with specific religious needs, such as a capacity to burn offerings and conduct funerals, and what is the cost to communities of booking these venues for 10 days.

CHRIS STEEL MLA - The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:

- (a) The ACT Government seeks to continue supporting strong communities by making land available for community organisations to develop for a range of community facilities including places of worship. The government’s preference, to ensure fairness and equity, is to sell these sites through a two-stage sales process commencing with a request for an expression of interest (REOI) that community organisations can respond to. An evaluation panel identifies a shortlist of respondents from the REOI submissions and invites them to participate in the second stage of the process, a request for tender (RFT)

The two-stage sales process is aimed at improving transparency in the sales process, hearing from all potential organisations who may be interested in developing the land, and identify an organisation whose proposal best meets a range of criteria including benefit to the community and financial viability. Further detail and public information can be found at [For community use - City and Environment Directorate - Planning](#).

act.gov.au

(b) The assessment criteria for the REOI are provided in the table below. The REOI requested high level of information. The RFT seeks more detailed information against each of these criterion.

	Criteria	Weighting
1. Applicant Details and Eligibility	Applicant details including organisation name, ABN, address, phone number, email and primary contact details. Provide evidence the organisation is a not-for-profit community organisation and the organisations constitution or rules are consistent with the proposed use of the site for the proposed community facility.	Pass/Fail
2. Financial Capacity	Demonstrate the proponent's financial capacity to construct and operate the facility by providing an indicative development cost and details of the organisation's funding sources for the proposed development. Examples of funding sources could include grants, loans, cash and liabilities. Information provided will be assessed by EPSDD from a feasibility perspective and an opinion of your financial capacity to fund the proposal will be formed from the information provided.	20%
3. Proposed Development and demand for the facility	Provide details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposed use of the land; why your organisation requires this land to meet its needs; current and projected number of your organisation's members; timing and staging of construction; and why the proposed development could not be accommodated at existing land holdings which cater for the same purpose/religion in the ACT. Sketch plans are encouraged to demonstrate how you plan to use the land.	30%
4. Community access and benefit	Provide an overview of how the local and broader Canberra community can benefit from the proposed development by detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how your organisation plans to connect with and provide access to your facility by the local and broader community; what part of the facility will be available for the broader community. 	30%
5. Scale and Impact on surrounds	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the scale of development is appropriate for the block size; and how the proposed development will minimise the negative impact on the surrounding environment, including car parking, traffic, noise, lighting, tree canopy etc. Sketch plans are encouraged to demonstrate whether your proposed development can fit on the site. Please consider open space, parking and manoeuvring requirements.	20%

(c) The submissions for the 2024 releases (refer part d) were assessed by a cross-government evaluation panel made up of representatives from the former Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), the former Transport Canberra and City Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and the Suburban Land Agency. The submissions were assessed against the evaluation criteria for the REOI, and those shortlisted have been invited to submit a response to the RFT for the three sites that have progressed to the second stage. These RFT processes will close between 24 November 2025 and 2 December 2025. While each round of CFZ land releases will follow a similar process, the specifics of a release and the responses received may require slight adjustments to the process. For example, there may be a need for an independent advisory process with regard to particular technical aspects of a proposal; or there may be a need for a change of Delegate due to operational changes or

conflicts of interest. Responses to the sub-parts of the question are provided below with regard to the 2024 REOI process.

- (i) No – there was no independent advisory process
- (ii) The delegate for the 2024 REOI process was the Executive Group Manager, Development and Implementation, EPSDD, (now City and Environment Directorate)
- (iii) Unsuccessful respondents are invited to receive feedback on their submission and are encouraged to participate in future land sales process. TendersACT have a complaints management procedure which details the process for managing complaints about a Territory procurement.

(d) The first REOI was released on 2 September 2024 for the six blocks of land listed in the table below.

- (i) The land area is in the table below.
- (ii) The permitted uses are in the table below.
- (iii) The six REOI were released on 2 September 2024.
- (iv) Respondents for the Evatt, Gowrie, Gungahlin, Kambah and Chisholm REOIs were advised of the outcome on 28 March 2025. A second stage of the process, the RFT, has progressed for Evatt, Chisholm and Gungahlin. These RFT process have not yet concluded. The respondents for the Molonglo REOI were advised of the outcome on 25 June 2025.
- (v) The outcome of the REOI is in the table below.
- (vi) Many of the responses included uses that were not permitted in the terms of the REOI and were therefore deemed unsuccessful. Other respondents did not demonstrate the financial capacity to fund their development proposal or their proposal was considered not appropriate for the size and location of the site.

Site	Area	Permitted Uses	No. of respondents	No. of shortlisted respondents
Block 14 Section 52 Evatt	1,827m ²	Place of Worship Community Activity Centre	3	2
Block 4 Section 291 Gowrie	1,692m ²	Place of Worship Community Activity Centre Residential Care Accommodation	3	0
Block 5 Section 235 Gungahlin	4075m ²	Religious Associated Use Community Activity Centre	5	1
Block 24 Section 286 Kambah	1,523m ²	Community Activity Centre	4	0
Block 9 Section 567 Chisholm	12,284m ²	Place of Worship Community Activity Centre Indoor Recreation Facility Outdoor Recreation Facility	7	2
Molonglo Town Centre	TBD	Uses permitted in the community facility zoning	11	10

- (e) The table above includes the blocks of land that are currently progressing through the sales process. The Evatt, Chisholm and Gungahlin blocks have progressed to the RFT stage. At this time, none of these blocks have been allocated to a community organisation.

There are five blocks of land, listed below, that are included in the 2025-26 Housing Supply and Land Release Program for release for community purposes. Studies and site investigation work is progressing on these sites with a view to releasing them in first quarter 2026.

Site	Area	Zoning
Block 1 Section 228 Gowrie	2,330 m ²	Community Facility
Block 5 Section 477 Richardson	6,700 m ²	Community Facility
Block 3 Section 12 Chapman	1,676 m ²	Community Facility
Block 13 Section 501 Isaacs	5,644 m ²	Community Facility
Block 4 Section 291 Gowrie (re-release)	1,692 m ²	Community Facility

The City and Environment Directorate is also undertaking work to identify and assess various additional sites that might be found suitable for community facilities development in future years.

- (f) None of the blocks of land being offered in the two stage REOI/RFT community facility land sales processes would be of sufficient size to accommodate a gathering of over 3,000 participants. Exhibition Park, [GIO Stadium](#) and other large venues may be a suitable location for large gatherings.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Chris Steel MLA

Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

Date: 21/11/25

This response required 3hrs 45mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$442.78.