



ACT
Government

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline

Advisory Note 20

Territory Planning Authority
September 2025

Introduction to Advisory Notes

Advisory notes provide guidance on how particular processes in the ACT planning system will typically occur, how elements of the system work and how considerations will typically be made. These will typically be technical in nature and may cover anything from steps in an assessment and decision-making process to interpreting elements of the statutory planning documents.

Advisory notes in combination with process maps, guides and factsheets, seek to support all stakeholders to better understand and interact with the planning system.

Advisory notes are for the use of all stakeholders, including the development industry when preparing a development proposal or progressing a proposal through the assessment and approvals process, or the general community when commenting on applications and interacting with the planning system.

Advisory notes are prepared by the Territory Planning Authority to cover elements of the *Planning Act 2023* only. These are not intended to cover other processes, such as Building Approvals under the *Building Act 2004*.

Advisory notes may be updated or added to from time to time.

Version history

Version number	Approved by	Date
1.0	Executive Branch Manager, Statutory Planning Division, CED	11/09/2025

Advisory Note 20: Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline

This advisory note provides guidance on the preparation of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to accompany a development application (DA) to remove the concessional status from a Crown lease.

What is a concessional Crown lease?

Concessional lease – A concessional lease is granted for less than market value. These types of leases are often used to benefit the community. There are restrictions on who can use and own concessional leases. A concessional lease may be a Crown lease or may be a unit lease within a units plan.

Possibly concessional leases -The category ‘possibly concessional’ includes leases that might or might not be concessional. This category is intended to serve as a flag or warning that the lease might be concessional and that further research may be needed to establish whether or not the lease is concessional.

What is a Social Impact Assessment?

A development application (DA) to remove the concessional status from a lease must be accompanied by an assessment of the social, cultural and economic impacts of the proposal. This is known as a **social impact assessment (SIA)**. The preferred format for a SIA is a pdf document that includes separate attachments for the market value valuation report and certificate (see description within document below). This Advisory Note discusses the requirements for SIA for DAs to remove the concessional status from a lease.

A social impact assessment is a triple bottom line process that analyses, assesses, manages and monitors the relevant potential impacts of the proposal. You can refer to guidance documents from other jurisdictions, such as the New South Wales (NSW) Government Social Impact Assessment Guideline for further information to help you understand what a SIA is. [Social Impact Assessment Guideline](#), NSW Government 2023.

A DA to remove the concessional status of the lease may be the first step towards future plans for the lease, such as changing the use. The SIA should explore the various ways that this will impact on the community and consider the positives and negatives of all options to deliver the proposed outcomes.

The Territory Planning Authority must refer a DA to vary a concessional lease to remove its concessional status to the Minister for a decision on the DA. The Territory Planning Authority will use the information in your DA, including the SIA, to advise the Minister. When preparing your application you should address those things that the Minister will consider, noted in Section 309 of the *Planning Act 2023*, including the availability and leased purpose of any land to which concessional leases or community uses apply in the surrounding area.

To complete your SIA you may like to consider engaging a consultant who specialises in this work.

What are the requirements for a Social Impact Assessment?

The following section provides guidance on the structure and minimum contents required for your SIA.

1. Cover Page

This must clearly indicate the name of the proposal, date of preparation of the document, name of person/organisation who prepared the document, and for whom the document was prepared (the proponent).

2. Preferred format

A4 format, portrait, numbered pages.

Please ensure each page of the SIA has a footer that includes the block and section details, and if appropriate the unit number, for the lease and the proponent's name.

3. Base contents

As a minimum, and within the context of the proposal, the SIA must include:

- lease information – include detail for each lease or related lease
 - how did you determine that the lease was concessional?
 - specific lease conditions (if any)
 - block/section/suburb or block/district
 - registered lessee details
 - proponent details
 - tenancy details (if applicable)
 - relevant and interested party detail (if applicable)
- legislative compliance - the proposal should be consistent with:
 - *Planning Act 2023*
 - the ACT Planning Strategy
 - the applicable District Strategy or Strategies
- proposal details
 - objectives for the proposal
 - alternatives
- community profile
 - local - locality as relevant to the project
 - social - demographics
 - infrastructure
 - physical
 - employment
 - economic
- identified community and stakeholder information
- a valuation report and certificate
- recommendations resulting from the SIA report's findings
- glossary of technical terms
- references

The locality and community affected by the project will vary depending on the scale and nature of the project. It is not necessarily linked to the geographic boundaries. Further detail can be found in Section 4.2 Social locality, [Social Impact Assessment Guideline](#), NSW Government 2023.

4. Reasons for removing the concessional status of the lease

Provide a rigorous analysis of why the concessional status of the lease should be removed. The analysis should be informed by sections 1 to 3 of the SIA. It should state a clear reason why the concessional status of the lease needs to be removed at this stage and why such need cannot be satisfactorily addressed under a concessional lease. You should provide evidence to support your claims.

As noted above, you should address those things that the Minister will consider as required by Section 309 of the *Planning Act 2023*.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The SIA shall demonstrate:

- how the proposal will benefit the community
- what benefits may no longer be available to the community and how this will be mitigated
- how the lessee will benefit.

Nothing in this guide restricts a proponent from including additional information.

1. Socio-economic and health

Provide an analysis, that considers the proposal at:

- a. full implementation, and,
- b. the future maximum potential development of the site.

The analysis should consider:

- accommodation and housing,
- community services and facilities,
- interaction between the full potential development of the site, to the extent permitted by the Territory Plan, and the existing community, and,
- the impacts of the proposal on social cohesion.

The analysis should:

- define and describe the practical measures for protecting or enhancing social values, and
- provide a description and rationale on the overall net community benefit.

2. Economic costs and benefits

- Describe the general economic benefits of the proposal.
- Describe the purpose to which monies gained from the potential sale/transfer would be used.

Valuation Report

A valuation report is required for proposals for a variation to remove the concessional status from a lease to enable the calculation of the payout amount under section 311 of the *Planning Act 2023*. The report must:

- be prepared by an accredited valuer,
- include all relevant information utilised in the valuation assessment and full disclosure of all matters that may affect the assessment, market evidence, supporting valuation rationale and market commentary,
- include a valuation of improvements on the land, and,
- be prepared less than six months before the date an application is lodged.

Note: Valuation reports are not made available to the public during public notification.

Valuation Certificate

A one-page summary stating the market value of the lease, authorised by the valuer who prepared the valuation report and used for public notification purposes.

Lodging your application

Please attach your SIA, clearly titled, as one of the documents you upload with your DA to remove the concession status from the Crown lease. ***Remember the removal of the concessional status of a Crown lease can be the only component of the DA.***

Please check your DA submission carefully before you lodge it with the Territory Planning Authority. The consideration of applications can be delayed if you have not attached the correct information, or if you have not filled out the form correctly.

To avoid delays, make sure you fill in all the parts of the development application form.

Got questions?

If you have any queries, please contact the DA Leasing Team at:

Email: ACTPLADALEasing@act.gov.au

Phone: 02 6207 5403

The EPSDD Customer Services team are also available on the following:

Email: ACEPDcustomerservices@act.gov.au

Online: <https://services.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/forms/land-planning-and-building-enquiry>

Phone: 02 6207 1923