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DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT

BLOCK 29 SECTION 41

LYNEHAM

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Introduction - The proposal and vision

This project has been designed in response to the Demonstration Housing brief, offering an innovative and alternative housing solution on a unused urban site, at an excellent central location and with opportunities for high-quality living solutions.

The project proposes the following:

- Innovation in delivery of 100% long term affordable and social housing for a period of 25 years delivered in partnership with YWCA Canberra
- Future proofed on-site parking solutions and flexible communal spaces
- A carbon positive development with waste minimisation practices in construction and operation
- High-quality housing options with a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments
- Open communal spaces with a variety of functions such as Yarning Circle and outdoor entertaining zones, edible gardens, outdoor communal gathering spaces.
- Early contractor engagement for efficacy and industry responsive designs.
- YWCA will be engaging and consulting with the Ngunnawal Elders Language Council, for naming the development. The Y did this with Ainslie, and it was an amazing engagement.

Important Issues:

1. The key objectives of this Demonstration Housing project is to provide a high quality (in both design and construction) medium density, multi-residential development that aims to contribute to addressing the 'missing middle' in housing density while delivering a long term affordable and social housing solution in an inner-city location.

2. The development is intended to be carbon-positive, is well serviced by multiple alternative transport solutions and supported by reduced parking requirements of at least one car space per dwelling, extensive end-of-trip facilities with secure bicycle storage, and access to electric-vehicle charging. There is therefore an opportunity for a reduction in the minimum parking requirements that otherwise required for this type of development.

3. This projects aims to encourage the urban in-fill of an underutilised site with a range of dwelling sizes. The development will provide 27 social and affordable homes, with wraparound services that are culturally safe, gender and trauma-informed, provided by YWCA's own highly qualified and experienced Domestic Violence Support Service and Housing Support Unit.

4. YWCA Canberra have provided specialist outreach services for women, their children and families since 1996. The location is highly desirable with access to social, educational, economic and recreational facilities within walking distance or a fast public transport commute. Located a short walk from the Dickson light rail stop, the city centre is 3 km away, and Dickson Town Centre is less than 1km away. There is direct access to the

Sullivans Creek bike path, sporting facilities and play fields of Lyneham. The units are within walking distance, or three light rail stops, to YWCA Canberra office with access to our specialist support services. Access Canberra Service Centre is an accessible and supportive front-door to ACT Government's connected services and is only a 3-minute walk from the site. The area has a diverse selection of schools, and Dickson Town Centre and Canberra City offer a diverse range of employment opportunities.

5. Housing and adequate living standards are two of the twelve key domains of personal wellbeing in the ACT Wellbeing Framework. The construction of 27 social and affordable homes in Inner North Canberra would enhance the wellbeing of moderate and low-income individuals and families by providing them with stable, secure, and affordable housing. In an established inner urban area, the dwellings would provide walkable access to social activities and economic participation, which is fundamental to overall quality of life. Access to such housing can alleviate financial stress, improve mental and physical health, and offer a safe environment for children, thereby contributing to better educational outcomes.

6. Every Canberran should have a safe and secure place to call home. The cost of renting or buying a home is rising across the country, and many people in Canberra are struggling to find an appropriate home in the private rental market. The ACT is growing rapidly, and increasing demand for housing in the ACT and surrounding communities is outpacing infrastructure, leaving people without secure housing options. Through this Demonstration Housing project, YWCA Canberra aims to deliver outcomes at the local level while also considering our global impact.

YWCA Planning Report Response

Who is YWCA Canberra

YWCA Canberra is a well-established organisation that has provided housing and community services and represented women's issues in Canberra since 1929. We have longstanding links with relevant services and stakeholders in the community, as well as the resources and infrastructure to continue expanding our social and affordable housing and family and domestic violence services.

YWCA Canberra has a proven track record of working with women escaping domestic violence, older women, and diverse social and affordable housing tenants in the ACT to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Our purpose-built properties and Domestic Violence Support Service (DVSS) programs are co-designed with key stakeholders to meet the needs of these priority groups, including women and children affected by domestic and family violence (DFV), First Nations and older women. We have continued to pursue and grow our own YHomes social and affordable housing properties and were successful recipients of a grant from the Housing Australia Future Fund.

The organisation continued to strengthen our role as a trusted provider of community services, childcare, registered training unit and housing initiatives, while navigating a dynamic funding environment and rising cost pressures. Despite these challenges, YWCA Canberra has remained focused on delivering quality services, advancing gender equality, and ensuring financial sustainability to support the community's long-term needs.

Through sound financial stewardship and a commitment to sustainability, YWCA Canberra has strengthened its financial standing while strategically investing in initiatives designed for long-term impact. The organisation remains well-equipped to address future challenges and capitalise on opportunities that advance its mission to promote equity and inclusion for women, families, and communities throughout the ACT.

YWCA's vision for the Lyneham Demonstration Housing Project

The key objectives of the Demonstration Housing Project are to deliver a high-quality, medium-density residential development, help address the 'missing middle' in housing density and provide a long-term social and affordable housing solution in an inner-city location.

This development is well serviced by multiple alternative transport solutions and is well located to road, light-rail, bus, bike and nature corridors as well as local amenities such as shops, schools and community facilities. The development will include a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. It is intended to be carbon-positive, supported by reduced parking requirements, at least one car space per dwelling, extensive end-of-trip facilities with secure bicycle storage, and access to electric-vehicle charging. This project aims to encourage the urban infill of an underutilised site with a range of dwelling sizes. Through this Demonstration Housing project, YWCA Canberra aims to deliver outcomes at the local level while also considering our global impact.

Why YWCA Canberra is suited for this project

YWCA Canberra has extensive experience delivering social and affordable housing projects across Canberra, consistently demonstrating excellence in project delivery, quality assurance, sustainability practices, and stakeholder collaboration. We have successfully completed social and affordable housing developments, overseeing all stages of construction from initial planning through to project handover, ensuring timely and cost-effective outcomes. Our robust project management processes and commitment to safety standards have established a strong track record of quality assurance.

We work closely with local consultants, contractors, and government authorities to deliver outcomes that meet community needs while fostering positive relationships with local stakeholders, ensuring meaningful engagement for high-impact social and affordable housing projects. YWCA Canberra has engaged with the Development and Implementation team for the Demonstration Housing Project, and we will continue this engagement with the D&I team up to the finalisation of the Development Application.

YWCA Canberra's 95-year history of providing housing demonstrates its longevity and established role in the community. YWCA Canberra has a strong partnership with the ACT Government and will continue to work with other ACT Government-funded services and community organisations to refer suitable tenants to our social and affordable housing vacancies and collaborate to secure long-term positive outcomes for tenants.

The Lyneham Demonstration Housing Project will build on the success of YWCA Canberra's proven track record in developing purpose-built, social and affordable housing. This project is backed by the governance and operational structure and resources of YWCA Canberra, drawing on the expertise and skills of Board and staff from across the organisation in areas such as finance and corporate services, strategic communication and marketing, property management, housing and community development.

What is the need

Every Canberran should have a safe and secure place to call home. The cost of renting or buying a home is rising across the country, and many people in Canberra are struggling to find an appropriate home in the private rental market. The ACT is growing rapidly, and increasing demand for housing in the ACT and surrounding communities is outpacing infrastructure, leaving people without secure housing options.

While the ACT Government has committed to building 5,000 additional public, community and affordable rental dwellings by the end of 2030, every day YWCA Canberra witnesses the devastating effects of homelessness and housing insecurity within our community. According to ABS census data, the number of homeless persons increased by 11.3% from between 2016 and 2021 in the ACT (compared to a 5.2% increase nationally). Concerningly, youth homelessness rose by 13.7% over the same period in the ACT. At the same time, YWCA Canberra's Violence Support Service received 399 new referrals from July 2024 to June 2025 - representing a 41% increase from the last financial year. Social housing can play a critical role in supporting women and children fleeing domestic and family violence by providing them with a safe, stable, and supportive environment in which to rebuild their lives. Sadly, infrastructure is not being built fast enough to keep up with demand.

In 2019-20, data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) clearly demonstrates the unmet needs disproportionately affecting North Canberra and the neighbouring Belconnen district, where this Demonstration Housing site is located. These two districts have some of the highest instances of unmet needs for women and children seeking short-term crisis or emergency accommodation who have experienced family and domestic violence. As outlined by the Department of Social Services AIHW Factsheet for the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program (we could attach this), over the last four years, there were on average:

- 31.5 places unprovided for short-term or emergency accommodation in North Canberra, and
- 64.5 places unprovided for short-term or emergency accommodation in Belconnen.

This collectively represents 38% of total unmet needs in the ACT. The neighbouring Gungahlin area adds a further 47.25 unmet placements, bringing the North Canberra area to 56.8% of total unmet needs in the ACT.

Who will it be for and why is this site is appropriate

YWCA Canberra is pursuing the construction of owned and operated, social and affordable housing, with 27 homes and wraparound support services available to vulnerable members of the community for the next 25+ years. The development will provide 27 social and affordable homes, with wraparound services that are culturally safe, gender and trauma-informed, provided by YWCA's own highly qualified and experienced Domestic Violence Support Service and Housing Support Unit. There is currently no Crown Lease for this site, and it is covered by the Demonstration Housing Legislation.

YWCA Canberra have provided specialist outreach services for women, their children and families since 1996. Through this wraparound approach, YWCA will provide the required domestic violence specialist support and tenancy case management for the tenants, utilising our established programs and staff, while adhering to national housing standards as a community housing provider. The location is highly desirable with access to social, educational, economic and recreational facilities within walking distance or a fast public transport commute. Located a short walk from the Dickson light rail stop, the city centre is 3 km away, and Dickson Town Centre is less than 1km away. There is direct access to the Sullivans Creek bike path, sporting facilities and play fields of Lyneham. The units are within walking distance, or three light rail stops, to YWCA Canberra office with access to our specialist support services. Access Canberra Service Centre is an accessible and supportive front-door to ACT Government's connected services and is only a 3-minute walk from the site. The area has a diverse selection of schools, and Dickson Town Centre and Canberra City offer a diverse range of employment opportunities.

How is it funded – construction and operationally

Earlier this year, YWCA Canberra successfully applied for a grant from the ACT Government and was awarded $3.8 million towards the purchase of the land at 56 Wattle Street, Lyneham and all professional fees in pursuit of the approval of the development application.

YWCA Canberra is working with the ACT Government to secure a Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) Round 3 grant to fund the construction and the ongoing operational costs to support the future tenants of the development.

Outcomes being targeted

The impact of this Demonstration Housing Project would be significant, sustained, and direct**.** The proposed development addresses key ACT Government priorities, including urban infill and environmental design principles, located next to major public transport networks. YWCA Canberra is committed to delivering a well-designed, well-located development of 27 social and affordable homes for the Canberra community, with a minimum 25-year operational lifespan on this empty lot. YWCA Canberra's tenancy management would provide any required additional services and support for tenants as part of its pre-existing services to the Canberra community, aiming to achieve long-term, direct impact through housing stability for tenants.

Housing and adequate living standards are two of the twelve key domains of personal wellbeing in the ACT Wellbeing Framework. The construction of 27 social and affordable homes in Inner North Canberra would enhance the wellbeing of moderate and low-income individuals and families by providing them with stable, secure, and affordable housing. In an established inner urban area, the dwellings would provide walkable access to social activities and economic participation, which is fundamental to overall quality of life. Access to such housing can alleviate financial stress, improve mental and physical health, and offer a safe environment for children, thereby contributing to better educational outcomes.

Increased residential occupancy would enhance the vibrancy of the area, fostering a stronger sense of community through new social connections and the revitalisation of underutilised spaces, thereby improving the safety and overall appeal of the neighbourhood. In the long term, the influx of new residents would boost foot traffic and demand for goods and services, providing economic benefits to local businesses. Residents are likely to spend time locally, supporting cafés, shops, and service providers, thereby creating a more sustainable business ecosystem.

Measures of success

We have formulated a realistic development timeline, including major milestones such as DA

approval, community consultation, construction, the development launch and the commencement of tenants and wraparound services. The measure of success that will ultimately make the biggest impact on the community will be the successful placement of individuals and families into 27 new social and affordable homes in 2029. YWCA Canberra has managed multiple contracts with ACT and Commonwealth Governments over many years and is, therefore, fully aware of the reporting obligations required. As part of measuring our project's success, we will be reporting to the ACT Government in line with our HAFF Round 3 grant obligations (if successful) and tracking not only key milestones and outcomes but also challenges and areas for improvement. De-identified data on future tenants will be collected and measured over the life of the 25-year service agreement in both our NRSCH report and Housing Outcomes Star evaluation.

Future generations will benefit from this investment, as YWCA Canberra's remit as a charity and registered community housing provider requires us to reinvest retained earnings and continue to provide housing in the ACT.