

NT PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING

PROPOSED NT PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT PA2025/0283

Lots 3494 and 5727, Town of Darwin
(121 Mitchell Street & 12 Doctors Gully Road Larrakeyah)

Agenda Item Number: **2**

Meeting Date: 14 November 2025

Attachment A – Exhibition Material

Attachment B – Submissions Received



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Report to the Planning Commission

This report is prepared under section 22 of the *Planning Act 1999*, and considers the submissions made in relation to the proposal.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

ADDRESS:	Lots 3494 and 5727, Town of Darwin (121 Mitchell St and 12 Doctors Gully Rd, Larrakeyah)
AREA:	3488 m ²
CURRENT ZONE:	Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential)
PROPOSED ZONE:	Specific Use Zone
PROPOSED LAND USE:	Dwelling-multiple or dwelling-group
APPLICANT:	Brad Cunnington, Cunnington Rosse Town Planning and Consulting
LAND OWNER:	Young Women's Christian Association of Australia

2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment is responsible for determining proposals to amend the NT Planning Scheme 2020 (NTPS), including the rezoning of land. The *Planning Act 1999* (The Act) establishes requirements relating to the exhibition, consultation and reporting of proposed amendments to the NTPS.

Under section 22(6), the Planning Commission must hold a hearing if submissions are received during the exhibition period, and the Chairperson is satisfied that a hearing would provide further useful information.

Under section 24 of the Act, the Planning Commission must provide to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, a written report that addresses the issues raised in the submissions; the issues raised at the hearing and during any consultation; and any other matters the Commission considers the Minister should take into account when considering the proposal.

3. PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to rezone Lots 3494 and 5727 Town of Darwin (121 Mitchell St and 12 Doctors Gully Rd, Larrakeyah) from Zone LMR (Low-Medium Density Residential) to a Specific Use Zone. It also proposes a consequential update to the Central Darwin Area Plan (CDAP) to reflect the rezoning.

The application states that the amendment seeks to facilitate the development of social and affordable housing that would otherwise be permitted in Zone HR (High-Density Residential) if it met the NTPS car parking requirements for dwelling-multiple or dwelling-group.

A copy of the exhibition material, including the application is at **Attachment A**.

4. SITE AND LOCALITY CONTEXT

Site Description

The site, comprising both Lot 3493 and Lot 5727, has an area of 3 488 m². The site has a frontage to Mitchell Street of approximately 64m and a frontage to Doctors Gully Road of approximately 23m. Lot 5727 currently contains a two-storey building which previously operated as a hostel and Lot 3494 contains a single dwelling.

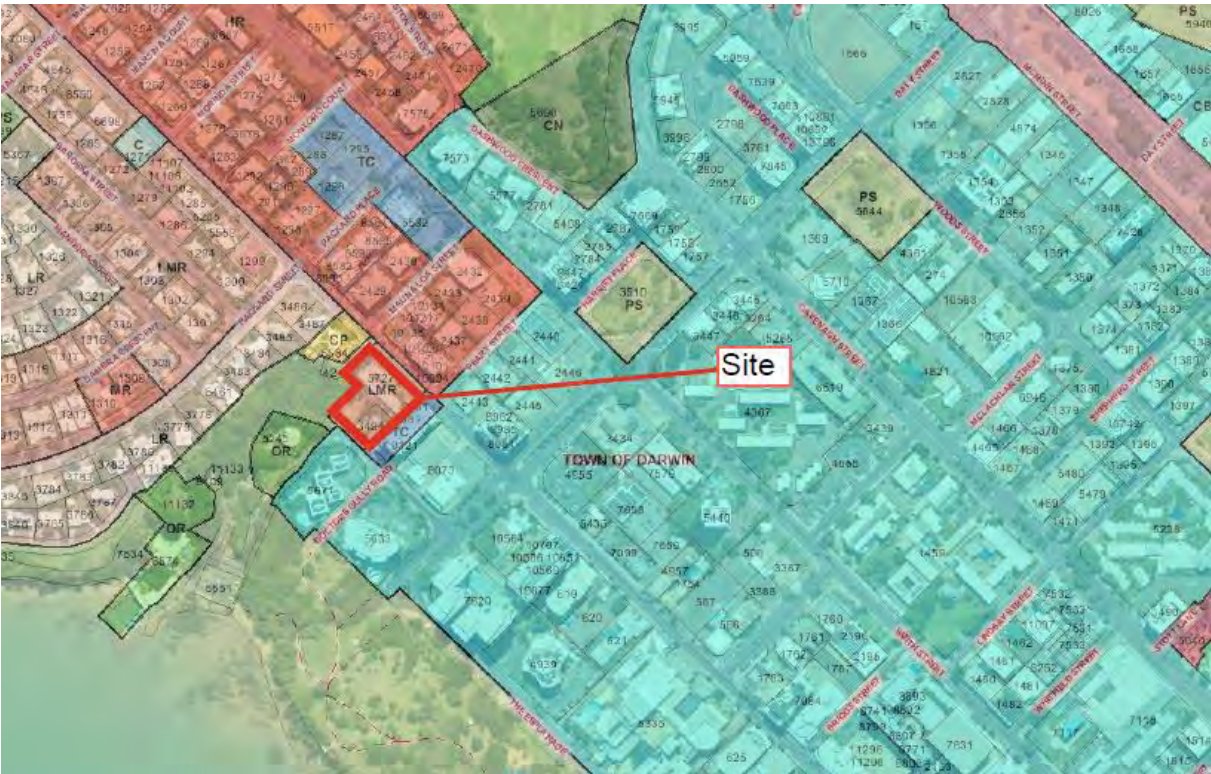
The Central Darwin Area Plan (CDAP) contains the land use vision for Central Darwin and is the relevant strategic framework document for the site. It identifies the site as a potential area of change from Zone LMR to Zone TC (Tourist Commercial).

Locality Description

The site is located directly to the north-west of Darwin CBD and adjoins the northern end of Zone CB (Central Business). To the north-west of the site is the neighbourhood of Larrakeyah which comprises a mix of low, medium and high density residential development.

The site is surrounded by a mix of zones with land to the north and east zoned a mix of HR, LMR, LR (Low Density Residential), PS (Public Open Space) and OR (Organised Recreation) and Zone CB to the south and east. The adjoining site to the south at 10 Doctors Gully Road is zoned Tourist Commercial (TC). Existing development on surrounding sites ranges from one storey up to nine storeys and there is a bus stop located in front of the site on Mitchell Street.

Map 1: Showing Site, Surrounds and Zoning



5. EXHIBITION OF PROPOSAL

On 27 August 2025, the delegate for the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment determined under section 13(3)(a) of the *Planning Act 1999* to continue consideration of the proposed amendment by placing it on exhibition.

The proposal was on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The exhibition closing date was 3 October 2025.

6. SUBMISSIONS

Below is a summary of the matters raised in the submissions, refer **Attachments B1 – B24**.

Public Submissions (Attachments B1-B19)

Nineteen submissions were received from the public regarding this proposal. Two of the submissions were in support and four of the submissions objecting to the proposal were form letter responses.

Public Submissions in opposition (Attachments B1 and B17)

Submitter	Discussion Points
<p>Ari Syrimi (Attachment B1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a deliberate decision to rezone Larrakeyah and the subject site LMR and it went through rigorous public dialogue and consideration. • The adjoining site at 10 Doctors Gully Road gained approval for a development without a need for rezoning and was designed specifically to manage impacts on surrounding land. • Development on the subject site would have detrimental impacts on residents at 10 Doctors Gully Road. • Concentration of low cost housing in this area will cause long term and lasting damage to Larrakeyah and the surrounding CBD. • The development will result in security concerns for the nearby existing childcare and risk its closure. • Case studies of South Australia and Victoria for the reduced car parking rate are not comparative because Darwin does not have the same level of public transport as these regions. • Social and affordable housing will only happen in the short term and in the long term the development will be sold off for private sale.
<p>Efstathios Tsirbas (Attachment B2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic and more people close to existing childcare may jeopardise the viability of the childcare. • The development will result in additional traffic congestion in Darwin City which is already busy and where there are scarce spots to park. • It will disturb households and impact on neighbourhood security. • It will result in a decline in home values in the area. • There would be damage to the unique woodland at Doctors Gully and it would endanger habitats and landmarks. • The development could impact on nearby tourist facilities and risk reduced revenue.

Submitter	Discussion Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers could utilise the rezoning and deviate from the original intended plans for the site.
<p>George and Athina Tsirbas</p> <p>(Attachment B3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting high rise transitional accommodation poses serious risks to child safety and wellbeing. • The proposal will worsen traffic in an already congested area on the edges of Darwin CBD. • There is a risk of disruptive conduct because of the nature of transitional housing. • It would reduce nearby home values. • A location nearer key resources including shops, healthcare providers, therapy centres, job opportunities and a social hub would be better suited for this kind of development. • Proposal would impact on the nearby micro rainforest which is a crucial wildlife refuge and contains landmarks such as Peel's Well. • It may jeopardize nearby tourist attractions such as the fish feeding and Mindil Beach Markets. • Developers could change their intention after the rezoning is approved.
<p>Daniel Myers – Strata Chair</p> <p>Bethmini Daniel – Strata Secretary</p> <p>(Attachment B4 and B5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intent to increase density and vary car parking to enable affordable housing can be achieved without a rezoning as the current zone allows for residential uses. • The proposed zoning is a significant departure from Zone TC (Tourist Commercial) future use of the site and there is already an adequate supply of HR (High Density Residential) zoned land in the area. • An Exceptional Development Permit (EDP) may be more suitable for allowing social and affordable housing. • Allowing higher density social and affordable housing on this site may lead to a concentration of vulnerable populations. • There would be a drastic change in nature of the area for residents and visitors and a drop in value of nearby homes.
<p>Samantha and Drosso Lelekis</p> <p>(Attachment B6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal and reduced car parking rates would result in congestion and traffic safety issues particularly because of the reduced car parking rates. • Anything greater than 4-storeys in height will have a significant impact on the adjoining residents of Catalina Apartments and the surrounding environment.

Submitter	Discussion Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rezoning is inconsistent with the CDAP, and this type of rezoning should occur through comprehensive strategic planning rather than ad-hoc rezoning. • The development may result in various social problems because vulnerable inhabitants will have close proximity to licenced premises, and this may increase associated antisocial behaviour. • There are better locations for this type of development on existing road corridors that provide connectivity and public transport to Darwin CBD or other locations outside the inner City. • It would result in a reduction in property land value. • Existing infrastructure may be inadequate to accommodate the proposed development of this scale including water, sewer, electrical, waste collection, emergency services access.
<p>Andrew Brown (Attachment B7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal will further exacerbate existing car parking and traffic issues. • Uncertain about the scale of the proposal in terms of building height, setbacks, site coverage with open space and green area. • Doctors Gully has a much smaller scale than sites on Mitchell Street in the CBD and no effort has been made to manage this including impacts on the adjacent childcare facility. • Health and safety concerns arising from the proposal and the childcare facility next door because of increased traffic, construction impacts, safety at pick up and drop off time. • The application should be refused unless the Specific Use Zone includes built form controls. • Concerns that YWCA will sell their sites to developers who can use the Specific Use Zone without any social and affordable housing. Requests the approval is conditional on the site being developed by YWCA for disadvantaged families only. • It may result in domestic violence situations and endanger nearby residents.
<p>Nicholas Kirlew – PLan: The Planning Action Network Inc (Attachment B8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no numerical requirements for height, setbacks, site coverage, deep soil planting or open space in the Specific Use Zone making it uncertain what the scale of development will be. It would be more appropriate to rezone to HR • Doctors Gully Road is much lower in scale than Mitchell Street and there is no transition to the lower scale. • No data has been provided to demonstrate residents of social housing have fewer cars.

Submitter	Discussion Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rezoning has not mentioned the sensitive use, being a childcare that is adjacent to the site and its location close by may result in safety concerns. • The consultation undertaken by the developer to date was not transparent. • No information has been provided in relation to management of stormwater, shading, deep soil planting or canopy cover.
<p>Nicola Jackson (Attachment B9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is extremely visible and accessible for alleged abusers and puts the victims at risk. A location that is not easily seen and on a main road would be more appropriate for this type of use. • Consultation undertaken by developer was tokenistic and no changes have been made to the proposal in response to community concerns. • The scale of the proposed development would impact on the character of the neighbourhood and the nearby Larrakeyah Well and Doctors Gully walking paths. • Already congested roads including Mitchell Street will worsen with the proposal. The reduction in parking is shortsighted and consideration hasn't been given to staff of the facility. • Reduction in car parking poses a risk to community members. • Increased demand for existing services such as schools, childcare, infrastructure, transport etc. haven't been considered • Proposal will worsen anti-social behaviour in the area and may increase alcohol related issues because of its location close to licensed venues.
<p>Mario Tsirbas (Attachment B10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic and more people close to existing childcare may jeopardise the viability of the childcare. • Will result in additional traffic congestion in Darwin City which is already busy and has scarce spots to park. • It will disturb households and impact on neighbourhood security. • Will result in a decline in home values in the area. • There are more suitable sites for this type of development in other locations with closer proximity to essential infrastructure. • There would be damage to the unique woodland at Doctors Gully and it would endanger habitats and landmarks. • The development could impact on nearby tourist facilities and risk reduced revenue.

Submitter	Discussion Points
Skye Cochrane (Attachment B11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing growth in this area has meant nearby roads are often congested and parking is limited, and this development will worsen it. • Shift to high density and government supported housing will impact on the existing neighbourhood character. • Uncertainty about how this development may impact on value of nearby properties. • Areas like Palmerston, Berrimah or other parts of CBD already have infrastructure and would be better suited to this kind of development
Kenwood and Rachelle Lay (Attachment B12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development would block ocean and sunset views for surrounding properties. • Inconsistent with CDAP's intent to have a transition in height between the CBD and low density Larrakeyah neighbourhood. • The development will increase traffic and on street parking in an area that already experiences congestion. • Loss of views and amenity impacts will directly affect market value and rental returns of surrounding properties.
Tina Griffiths (Attachment B13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is excessive in height and scale and will reduce privacy and amenity for neighbouring properties. • The development will create further congestion and parking pressures in an already constrained area. • The location next to a childcare facility raises safety, noise and traffic conflicts with the adjoining sensitive use. • Inconsistent with the established low-medium density character of the area. • It will set an undesirable precedent.

Form Letters (Attachments B14 to B17)

Four form letters were received in response to the proposal from Nicho Peters (B14), Warren Fryer (B15), Stuart Charleston (B16) and Damien and Kim Charles (B17).

The submissions raised the following concerns:

- The proposed Specific Use Zone will undermine the intent of the existing LMR zoning and will give more flexibility to height, density and design.
- Development would overlook adjoining backyards, pool and rear windows and would result in a development that is not compatible with surrounding low-density development.
- There is currently limited parking availability in the surrounding streets and future development would worsen this. It will also result in safety issues with the nearby childcare as there will be less parking.

- High density development would detract from the established vegetation and green area near the site.
- Existing antisocial behaviour, violence and police call-outs will be amplified by the proposed development.
- There is already a transitional housing facility (Silos Roberts Hostel) located nearby and concentrating these services near each other will overburden the neighbourhood and is not considered best practice.
- A location that's already zoned for higher density with more capacity to expand infrastructure would be a better location for this type of development.
- The proposal has not adequately addressed the concerns raised through community consultation already undertaken by YWCA.

Public Submissions in support (Attachments B18 and B19)

The two submissions in support are summarised in the table below:

Submitter	Discussion Points
Morgan Rickard (Attachment B18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence shows that developments of this nature with strong tenancy management reduces incidents of anti-social behaviour and improves neighbourhood cohesion. • It addresses a critical shortage of long-term housing options for women and children and is in the public interest. • It aligns with the strategic framework and <i>Planning Act 1999</i>. • A Specific Use Zone is appropriate to deliver the intended community benefit.
Michael Byrne - NT Shelter (Attachment B19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a severe shortage and high demand for accommodation for people experiencing domestic and family violence and this proposal will assist in addressing this. • YWCA is well equipped to undertake and manage this type of development. • Nature of this type of tenancy would be 1 bed households making the reduced car parking appropriate. • The site is ideally located close to public transport and essential services, and it will suit the needs of single-parent households.

Service Authority Comments (Attachments B20 to B23)

Comments received from Service Authorities are summarised in the table below.

Service Authority	Comments
Transport & Civil Infrastructure,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection.

Department of Logistics & Infrastructure (DLI) (Attachment B20)	
Power and Water Corporation (Power) (Attachment B21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection. • If approved, YWCA shall engage an accredited electrical consultant and contractor to design and construct the required underground power servicing suitable for the future subdivision/development.
Power and Water Corporation (Water) (Attachment B22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection • Easements shall be created over all Power and Water assets that traverse the subject lots. • Future development could trigger various upgrades to existing water and sewer infrastructure.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development (Attachment B23)	<p>Support for the proposal because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since closure of the old facility on the site there have been no new housing options for women and children escaping violence in the CBD and the development will fill a much-needed gap. • There is currently imbalance of housing concentration as some areas in Darwin and Palmerston have high concentration of low-income residents separated from services. Encouraging a mix of tenures is seen as a potential solution to improve wellbeing and social outcomes. • Potential for YWCA to receive funding under future rounds of Housing Australia Future Fund.

Local Authority Submission (Attachment B24)

City of Darwin Council (Attachment B24)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objections in principle. • Not contrary to the Compact Urban Growth Policy, Darwin Regional Land Use Plan, and only a minor administrative change to the CDAP. • Generally consistent with the applicable requirements of the Act.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That under section 24 of the *Planning Act 1999*, the Planning Commission report to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment on the issues raised in submissions, issues raised at the hearing and any other matters it considers the Minister should take into account when considering the proposal.