MASTER BUILDERS
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

MEDIA RELEASE

Home approvals up

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canberra, ACT | Tuesday, 3 November 2026

September 2026 was the strongest month for new home approvals in the ACT since February 2026, but Master Builders ACT has warned against becoming complacent when it comes to getting more homes built for Canberrans.

A total of 453 new homes were approved in the ACT in September 2026, a 188.5 per cent increase on the previous month. Over the year to September 2026, a total of 4,113 new homes were approved, which is 397.8 per cent higher than the year to September 2025.

Despite the positive headline figure, Master Builders ACT warns that the Territory remains well behind its National Housing Accord target, achieving just 7,382 approvals so far against a target of 9,113, a shortfall of 1,731 homes and 19 per cent below the required build rate.

To get back on track, the ACT's planning pipeline requires a 41.4 per cent uplift in approval pace, or a monthly average of 401 approvals.

'Every extra home approved means another Canberran moving closer to housing security,' said Anna Neelagama, CEO of Master Builders ACT.'

'We mustn't be lulled into a false sense of security by one strong month. This is a step in the right direction, but the overall trend still shows the tide going out on home building, with a 1,530-home underbuild since the Accord began in July 2024.'

Master Builders ACT has also warned that approvals alone do not deliver homes. New home building starts also show a 1,392 shortfall against the National Housing Accord, with the ACT requiring an additional 14,010 new starts between now and June 2029.

'While more approvals is a promising sign, we must also see a rise in new home starts and completions,' said Ms Neelagama.

‘Getting homes started, and completed, is still a stumbling block. Regulatory burden is still making it difficult to get projects off the ground, while building costs continue to blow out, adding further pressure to the pipeline.’

The average approved value of a detached house in the ACT reached $746,800 in September 2026, substantially higher than the Australian average of $533,900.

The Association also points to a shift in the composition of approvals in favour of higher-density housing. In September, 326 of the 453 approvals were multi-unit dwellings, while detached houses accounted for just 92. Over the past 12 months, multi-unit dwellings represented 79.7 per cent of all homes approved in the ACT, with high-density apartments alone making up 67.3 per cent.

Medium-density ‘missing middle’ housing represented just 12.4 per cent of total approvals, while detached houses accounted for only 20.3 per cent.

Positive steps forward include the introduction of recent productivity reforms, which Master Builders ACT welcomes as a start toward improving the delivery environment.

‘Recent productivity reforms are a positive step, but they must be matched with sustained action on approvals, reduced regulatory burdens and greater investment in skills if we are to close the gap on the National Housing Accord,’ Ms Neelagama said.

END

Media enquiries:

Tara Nichols | Communications & Marketing Manager
tnichols@mba.org.au | 0430 026 612