

2023

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICE -
REPORT 14 - INQUIRY INTO ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2021-22**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Presented by
Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister**

July 2023

Introduction

On 11 February 2021, the Legislative Assembly passed an amendment to the 2 December 2020 Resolution of Establishment (clause 3) referring the Annual and Financial Reports to the relevant Standing Committee for inquiry and report by 9 April of the year after the presentation of the report to the Assembly pursuant to the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*.

The 2021-22 Annual and Financial Reports were reviewed by the relevant Standing Committees, and each Committee held hearings and reported separately.

The below Government Response addresses the recommendations which relate to the 2021-22 Annual and Financial Reports.

The following Annual and Financial Reports or sections of annual reports, were referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services (the Committee):

- Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate; and
- Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services – Report 14 - Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-22

RECOMMENDATION	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the cumulative environmental impact is considered with any environmental studies, lease variations and planning decisions in relation to the Western Edge.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>The Territory Plan and the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> provides the framework for consideration of environmental impacts in planning decisions. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) can be made for regional scale development such as the Western Edge. During the EIA process, the cumulative environmental impacts will be considered. The assessment of any subsequent development application (DA) that relies on such an EIA will consider the findings and outcomes of the environmental studies, including the cumulative impacts.</p> <p>These principles are proposed to be carried over to the new planning system.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government clarify and outline the steps it will take to meet the District Strategy target for 7-10 percent of all new developments to be social and affordable housing.</p>	<p>EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY</p> <p>All new land release sites are considered for suitability for affordable sale, public housing, community housing or build to rent with an affordable rental component. Suitable sites are offered for this purpose but may not always be able to be progressed as it depends on a range of factors including the financial capacity of project proponents. The targets for affordable, public and community housing in each suburb are notified annually in the ACT Legislative Assembly.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The Committee recommends that Transport Canberra publish six-monthly reporting against the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25 as per the measure in the TCCS Strategic Plan 2021-24.</p>	<p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p> <p>The relevant goal and measure under the TCCS Strategic Plan 2021-2024 was set to align with whole of government internal reporting to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) against the ACT Climate Change Strategy. The whole of government reporting, which Transport Canberra contributes to, is now reported through the Minister's Annual Report under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010, which is publicly available.</p>

<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The Committee recommends that Transport Canberra and City Services publish its Emissions Reduction Plan 2019-20 to 2024-25 and clarify which of the 24 emissions reduction actions assigned to TCCS have been completed to date on the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25.</p>	<p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p> <p>The relevant goal and measure under the TCCS Strategic Plan 2021-2024 was set to align with whole of government internal reporting to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) against the ACT Climate Change Strategy. The whole of government reporting, which TCCS contributes to, is now reported through the Minister's Annual Report under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010, which is publicly available.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government announce the estimated completion date for the raising of London Circuit as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>The current estimate for completion of the raising of London Circuit is Q4 2024.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government announce the estimated completion date and cost for Stage 2B as soon as practicable, as well as updating the estimated timeframes after contracts are signed.</p>	<p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p> <p>The ACT Government is progressing with the planning and environmental approvals for Stage 2B. After the approvals are received a Business Case will be developed and procurement commenced.</p> <p>Through this work, estimates for the completion date will be developed and released. While cost estimates will be developed for the Business Case, the decision as to when to release them will depend on several factors including potential impact on commercial negotiations and value for money for the ACT Government.</p> <p>The delivery timeframe estimates will be updated upon signing of the Stage 2B Contract.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers publishing the procurement date for the 90 electric buses to be acquired in the near future, as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>The ACT Government signed a contract in May 2023 with Vehicle Dealers International (VDI) to purchase 90 Yutong 'E12' battery electric buses. The ACT Government also signed a contract with Custom Denning in June 2023 to lease an additional four 'Element' battery electric buses. These 94 buses will be progressively delivered from 2023 to 2026.</p> <p>These procurements will bring the total number of battery electric buses in the Transport Canberra fleet up to 106 buses over the next three years.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish in their annual reports the number of buses and Light Rail Vehicles in the government fleet.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>The number of buses and light rail vehicles will be published in the TCCS Annual Report.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government require end-of-life reuse and recycling for electric bus batteries, just as solar panels will be recycled for the Big Canberra Battery.</p>	<p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p> <p>Transport Canberra continue to investigate second life options, and this is subject to contractual arrangements with suppliers of battery electric buses.</p> <p>Investigations will inform second life options to utilise on ACT government sites to enable the use of batteries that have reached 80% of their usable life.</p> <p>The ACT Government will continue to work with the Australian Government on their National Electric Vehicle Strategy which includes an initiative for a recycling, reuse and stewardship for EV and other large format batteries.</p> <p>The Australian Government has funded the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries and the Motor Trades Association of Australia to design Australia’s first collective vehicle stewardship scheme, to address end-of-life vehicle waste in Australia.</p> <p>Transport Canberra will continue to work with other jurisdictions to understand what recycling strategies are being adopted with the early take up of battery electric technologies.</p>

<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include the organics and composting sector businesses in their industry consultation as part of the procurement for the new FOGO composting facility.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>Local industry has the opportunity to comment during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The pre-EIS consultation period commenced on the 24 May and will be open to the 5 June 2023. This will include two public drop-in sessions planned for the Saturday 20 May and Wednesday 24 May 2023. The consultation period will include a number of individual stakeholder meetings. TCCS have also conducted a letterbox drop to the Hume industrial precinct and surrounding residential suburbs. The pre-consultation information is available on the TCCS website and promoted through social media channels.</p> <p>There will also be a statutory public exhibition period when the draft EIS is submitted and statutory consultation as part of the subsequent Development Application process. As part of the procurement process upon release of the Request for Proposal to market, interested proponents will be invited to briefing session/s on the tender. The procurement process is subject to strict probity requirements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the plant species on the Plant Species for Urban Landscape Projects list, to ensure that the list only contains appropriate native and exotic species that will not spread to become an invasive species.</p>	<p>EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY</p> <p>TCCS consults with EPSDD regarding the invasive potential of tree species listed in MIS25 and incorporates this information into its planting programs. For example, <i>Pistacia chinensis</i> (Chinese pistachio) is not listed as an invasive species in the ACT, however, TCCS only plant the sterile male form in response to information provided by EPSDD on the invasiveness of this species in nature reserves. All declared pest plants were removed from MIS25 during the last comprehensive update of MIS25 in 2019.</p> <p>EPSDD continue to provide TCCS with information on the environmental impact and invasive ability of tree species present in the ACT region. This information is used to restrict usage and reduce the invasive potential of potentially invasive tree species.</p> <p>MIS25 will continue to be updated to remove any new tree species that are added to the Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Plants) Declaration.</p>

<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise what the after-hours arrangements are for animal welfare calls made to the Domestic Animal Services and advise what inspector and veterinary care options are available for these after-hours matters.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>Domestic Animal Services have two on-call Animal Welfare Inspectors which provide an after-hours service between 7pm and 7am daily to attend to urgent animal welfare and public safety matters. This service can be accessed through Access Canberra. This is in addition to regular animal welfare services which are provided seven days a week between 7am and 7pm.</p> <p>Domestic Animal Services utilise the services of private veterinary clinics after hours for unaccompanied injured domestic animals which require immediate care. These arrangements are complimented by the RSPCA that have animal welfare inspectors which operate during business hours.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report against the amount, incentives and outcomes of the education funds in the new household waste collections contracts.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>The Household Waste Collection Services RFT has been released and will close in late June 2023. The tender has specified a contractor contribution of \$700,000 per annum (adjusted to CPI annually).</p> <p>The contribution is one of a number of sources used to undertake the Territory's community engagement program to support the household's sorting behaviour of waste materials that reduces contamination. This funding will also be used to promote positive behaviours for the transition of FOGO services. The amount and other engagement activities are reported in the Annual Report.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the new contracts for household waste and recycling collections prioritise zero emissions trucks, and if this is not currently feasible, there be a provision in the new contracts to establish a transition to zero emissions trucks during the term of the contract.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>The Household Waste Collection Services RFT specifies industry submit a zero-emissions vehicle transition plan, which includes the implementation of a zero emissions vehicle for waste collections by the second year of service. This will be subject to the responses from industry and the procurement process. The term of the new contract may not lend itself to transitioning to a zero-emissions collection fleet.</p>

<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government engage in targeted consultation with the residents of Belconnen and Gungahlin on the Feasibility Study – Mitchell RMC and Identification of Future Waste Sites in North Canberra report.</p>	<p>NOT AGREED</p> <p>The feasibility study was an investigation into alternative sites for the Mitchell Resource Management Centre (MRMC) conducted as a result of the East Gungahlin High School project originally being proposed in close proximity to the MRMC.</p> <p>Subsequently, the proposed location of the school was relocated to an acceptable distance from the MRMC and as a result the site will remain a transfer station for the foreseeable future and no further feasibility work will continue into other sites for MRMC.</p> <p>The Government has identified Block 1582 as the most appropriate location for a new green waste drop off facility in Belconnen. A separate DA has been lodged for Belconnen block 1582 for a future green waste facility. As part of this DA and its reconsideration, community consultation is being undertaken.</p> <p>No other future waste facilities are planned on the northside that would require consultation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish in their annual and financial reports in detail the number of FTE rangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employed in all fields, including land management, illegal dumping, illegal parking, and animal welfare; and • that are available for after-hour calls. 	<p>NOTED</p> <p>Rangers across the ACT Government are employed to undertake a diverse range of investigative, compliance and regulatory activity including animal welfare, land management, illegal dumping and parking enforcement. They are rarely employed for a singular activity and are often tasked with different activities day-by-day.</p> <p>Domestic Animal Services and City Presentation, within the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, maintain on-call rosters to address the needs of the community after hours.</p> <p>In the 2021-22 financial year, a total of 16 rangers were employed in Domestic Animal Services, and a total of 13 city rangers were employed for licencing and compliance within City Presentation.</p>

<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish all of the waste and recycling audits recently conducted, as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>The ACT Government is finalising its review of the 2023 waste audits.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to publish a time series of public transport usage as a Strategic Objective Indicator in annual and financial reports through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping patronage data reporting; • adding journey data reporting; and • adding the percentage of the population that uses public transport. 	<p>EXISTING GOVERNMENT POLICY</p> <p>Transport Canberra currently collects this information including publishing it on the ACT Government Open Data Portal.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers continuing to publish a time series of Government subsidy per passenger boarding (or journey) in the TCCS Annual and Financial Reports.</p>	<p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p> <p>TCCS will continue to work towards publishing patronage (with Finance calculating subsidy based on their figures) noting that fare systems are undergoing upgrade.</p>