

**From:** Vest, Petra  
**Sent:** Tue, 23 Jul 2019 04:52:28 +0000  
**To:** Auty, Kate  
**Cc:** Reichstein, Megan  
**Subject:** Correspondence - Director-General Ben Ponton  
**Attachments:** Correspondence - Director-General - Ben Ponton.pdf, Attachment A - EPSDD - SoE Report Recs and Government Response NEW COPY 17\_7\_19 (ORIGINAL LOCKED).doc, Attachment B - EPSDD - Implementation Status Report Recs and Government Response.docx, Attachment C - EPSDD - Lower Cotter Catchment Recs and Government Response.doc, Attachment D - EPSDD - Update on directorate actions against investigations.doc, Attachment E - OCSE Annual Report 1718\_Acc.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please find attached correspondence from Ben Ponton, Director-General regarding Input of the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE) Annual Report 2018-19.

Kind Regards,

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**ACT**  
Government

Environment, Planning and  
Sustainable Development

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment  
PO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Commissioner

**Input for the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE)  
Annual Report 2018-19.**

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June 2019 seeking information for inclusion in the *Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report 2018* and the *2019 State of the Environment Report (SoER)*.

We are pleased to provide in the accompanying document a description of actions undertaken between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. This effectively provides an update on progress of implementation of the SoER recommendations.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please don't hesitate to contact Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, Sustainability and the Built Environment within my directorate.

Yours sincerely

Ben Ponton  
Director-General  
23 July 2019

# The SOE Report 2015 Recommendations and Government's Response

The Commissioner made 10 main recommendations which are listed below with the Government's response to each one.

## **Recommendation 1 – Climate Change**

*That the ACT Government ensures that the new Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is best practice, cross-sectoral and integrated into other key strategies, with effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation.*

### **Government response: Supported**

The ACT Government supports this recommendation. The ACT's approach to adaptation is consistent with the national Climate Adaptation Outlook: A Proposed National Adaptation Assessment Framework (2013). This framework presents strategies to build understanding and adaptive capacity, and to reduce sectoral and regional vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Informed by this framework, the draft Adaptation Strategy has been developed through a collaborative approach. Enabling Adaptation in the ACT (EnAACT) meetings and workshops were conducted in 2014 with the ACT Climate Change Council, local academics, peak bodies, neighbouring NSW governments and agencies across the ACT Government.

The draft Adaptation Strategy advocates that climate change impacts be 'mainstreamed' into policies and practices across government, households, businesses and the community. It identifies that some people in our community and some ecosystems in our region have a higher vulnerability to the risks from climate change and therefore warrant particular consideration.

It is the ACT Government's intention that climate change adaptation is mainstreamed, which is considered throughout the planning and delivery of systems and services such as buildings, power, water and health services, as well as in the management of natural resources and ecosystems; and preparedness for and response to natural disasters.

The ACT Government receives regular reports from agencies responsible for existing policies and strategies, for example on the Climate Change Action Plan 2 (AP2). An indication of progress is gained from monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the actions. It is proposed this existing mechanism be applied to include reporting progress on climate change adaptation.

When adopted, the final Adaptation Strategy will have a set of actions that, along with other existing climate-related government work, will be able to be routinely reported upon. This process already is applied to the actions in AP2, with six monthly updates provided to the government and made accessible online.

Additionally, each year the ACT Minister for the Environment tables a report in the Legislative Assembly on actions taken in responding to the challenges of climate change.

This annual report, required under section 15 of the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Reduction Act 2010*, is also where whole-of-government progress on the Adaptation Strategy is proposed to be reported.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD, Climate Change & Sustainability Division, Sustainability & Resilience Section)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

**The ACT's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate**

Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Adaptation Strategy has been substantially completed but we know that to continue to adapt to the impacts of climate change there is a lot of ongoing effort required.
- Remaining actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan, including climate-wise homes, resilient plants that will help the ACT adapt to climate change and demonstration projects showcasing climate-wise activities that can be undertaken by developers, builders and homeowners.
- Reviewed the current trees species list for Canberra (Municipal Infrastructure Standard (MIS) 25) to ensure future plantings will be fit-for-purpose for the different climate.
- Developed the “Climate Ready” webtool to help the community identify ways that they can increase their preparedness to climate change impacts.
- Delivered the “Climate Risk Health Check”, an interactive online tool for ACT Government infrastructure managers to identify climate risks and develop strategies to manage vulnerabilities to climate impacts.
- Hosted the “Canberra: A perfect storm” Climate Challenge for Young Professionals, on the day a dust storm hit Canberra, similar to the scenario the audience was pondering, to engage with future decision makers. Partnering with the NESP Hub (National Environmental Science Program) and the Commonwealth Department of Energy and Environment we showcased the ability to work together to identify and solve problems.
- Demonstrated the benefits of innovative projects to combat climate change by the ACT Government by publishing the “Adaptation Innovation” factsheets. These highlighted a range of actions that have been delivered to help the ACT adapt to climate change.
- Released the “Living well with a changing climate: Findings of the 2018 ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change” report, giving a comprehensive insight into the awareness and ability to act by Canberrans to the impacts of climate change. This has enabled us to better plan for the future and develop ways to increase resilience and provided a useful baseline for monitoring community resilience over time.
- Actsmart developed the ‘Creating a Fire Wise Garden’ factsheet which is freely available online and at relevant public events. The factsheet was developed in consultation with Climate Change Policy and Emergency Services Australia, who also promote and share the educational tool with relevant stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 2 – Human Needs**

*That the ACT Government implements the monitoring, reporting and evaluation commitments in the ACT Planning Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy, and details those for the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

A report card on progress on implementation of the ACT Planning Strategy is nearing completion. It will deliver the Strategy's monitoring, reporting and evaluation commitments.

The ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025 was reviewed in 2015. The review analysed implementation progress and provided recommendations for improving waste management in the ACT. The review is being used to inform planning for the future of waste management which is currently underway via the ACT Waste Feasibility Study. As part of the ACT Waste Feasibility Study the Government has reviewed and significantly improved how it collects waste generation and resource recovery data. This will enable more rigorous and transparent reporting and evaluation into the future.

In relation to the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy (NCS) 2013-23, the ACT Government has in place a 5 year NCS Implementation Plan for the period from 2013 to 2018, and is developing a second NCS Implementation Plan for the period from 2019-2023. Progress reports on Implementation Plans will be publicly released.

#### **Update from Directorates (CMTEDD, EPSDD, TCCS)**

**Relevant strategy, plan or program**  
**ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013-2023**

#### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- **Progress report for 2013-18 and the new implementation plan for 2019-23 have been developed and are nearing finalisation.**

### **Recommendation 3 – Human Needs**

*That the ACT Government considers integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation of all the key strategies to guide achievement of improved sustainability outcomes for the ACT, including the ACT Planning Strategy, AP2, Transport for Canberra, the ACT Water Strategy, the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy.*

#### **Government response: Supported in principle**

There is already a high level of integration in developing, monitoring and reviewing all the strategies referred to in the recommendation with the Environment and Planning Directorate having lead responsibility for the ACT Planning Strategy, AP2, Transport for

Canberra, the ACT Water Strategy, the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy.

The ACT Government agrees to consider how it can complement this work by developing a suite of indicators to better assess the effectiveness of environmental management and sustainable development in the ACT.

#### Update from Directorates (CMTEDD, CSD, ED, EPSDD, HD, JACSD, TCCS)

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Water Strategy 2014-44: Striking the Balance

##### Actions completed in 2018-19

- A report card on the ACT Water Strategy was prepared in 2018 to show progress against Implementation Plan One. This shows good progress with implementing the Strategy, especially:
  - Establishment of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group
  - Commencement of the ACT and Commonwealth funded ACT Healthy Waterways Project
  - In-principle agreement to water trading with NSW
  - Delivery of the regional H2OK stormwater education and behaviour change program
  - Continued delivery of the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Program
- Following a series of workshops with key government and community stakeholders, Implementation Plan 2 for the ACT Water Strategy was released on 20 June 2019. The key actions for 2019-23 are:
  - Ensuring a long-term sustainable funding environment for ACT water resource management
  - Reviewing the ACT Water Resources Act 2007 to ensure it reflects best practice and the functional arrangement of water management in the Territory
  - Continuing to move towards Canberra becoming a water sensitive city
  - Continuing to use best practice science to guide on-ground actions to protect and manage our water estate.
- The report card and Implementation Plan 2 are both available on the EPSDD web site at:
- [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act\\_water\\_strategy](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act_water_strategy)

**Recommendation 4 – Air**

*That the ACT Government requires that the air quality impacts of future urban developments are explicitly considered – in particular, the impact of pollution from domestic wood heaters in greenfield developments.*

**Government response: Supported**

Air quality impacts from emissions including wood heaters will continue to be considered in the forward planning stage that informs variations to the Territory Plan to rezone non-urban land to urban purposes (such as residential). If necessary, any requirement or limitation will be introduced through either a structure plan or concept plan, to give statutory effect. Restrictions on the installation of wood heaters are already in place in the Molonglo Valley (excluding Wright), East O’Malley and Dunlop as result of planning studies which determined there was the potential for adverse air quality impacts.

The ACT, through the Meeting of Environment Ministers, is also working towards cleaner air for the entire ACT on several fronts through the National Clean Air Agreement. This includes stricter emissions and efficiency standards for new wood heaters and non-road spark ignition engines, and strengthening reporting standards for particulate matter pollution through the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure.

The National Clean Air Agreement seeks to strengthen management of air quality to reduce air pollution in Australia and to help deliver better air quality information. It also includes long term goals to drive improvements in air quality. This should result in better environmental outcomes for the entire ACT community.

The ACT is already at the forefront nationally in best practice regulation of in-service wood heaters through its education and regulatory framework which includes licensing of firewood merchants, regulatory compliance framework, and initiatives including the Wood Heater Replacement Program and ‘Burn Right Tonight’ public education campaigns.

These measures collectively help to ensure that the ACT continues to maintain high air quality standards.

## Update from Directorates (EPSDD, HD)

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The ACT's ambient air quality is measured in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environmental Protection Measure (NEPM) via the Performance Monitoring Station network in the ACT. The ACT is compliant with the NEPM which is reported annually in the National Environment Protection Council Annual Report available at:

<http://www.nepc.gov.au/publications/annual-reports>

and the ACT Government's Annual Air Quality Report available at:

[https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1320/~/air-pollution#!tabs-4](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1320/~/air-pollution#!tabs-4)

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Air quality impacts from emissions including wood heaters will continue to be considered as part of (draft) variations to the Territory Plan to rezone non-urban land to urban purposes (such as residential). In the 2018/19 financial year there were no rezoning's of non-urban land to urban purposes.
- The ACT Government continues to regulate firewood merchants under the Environment Protection Regulation 2005 after removing the administrative cost and burden to businesses and government of requiring an environmental authorisation in 2017.
- The ACT Government continued the annual *Burn Right Tonight* public education campaign on the correct use of wood heaters over the winter of 2018. The 2019 campaign commenced on 1 June 2019 and includes bus advertising, radio interviews, social media posts, whole of government and shopfront messaging including video content. The campaign was launched as part of the ACT response to World Environment Day which has the theme of 'Beating Air Pollution'.
- The ACT Government's *Wood Heater Replacement Program* aims to reduce winter air pollution from wood smoke by offering a financial incentive to remove wood heaters and replace them with an energy efficient electric alternative. A total of 26 wood heater replacement claims were made during 2018-19.
- A review of the Air Environment Protection Policy and associated regulations under the Environment Protection Act 1997 was initiated. The review seeks to contemporise the ACT's policy for assessing air quality impacts from industrial emissions and setting contemporary industrial emissions standards including criteria for odour emissions.

### **Recommendation 5 – Land**

*That the ACT Government provides resources to fully implement priority actions in the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy, particularly actions aimed at developing foundation knowledge of landscape function and soils in the ACT.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

The ACT Government has resourced priority actions in the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013-23 including:

- Soil mapping: A soils map for the ACT at 1:100,000 scale has been completed. Twelve new soil landscapes have been described for the previously unmapped western portion of the ACT. Sites with significant soil degradation have been identified. The data generated will contribute to regional and national soil datasets. Soil mapping has informed development of a Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) Framework.
- Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) Framework: The ACT Government is currently completing a HGL Framework using information on soils, geology, lithology, slope, soil depth, vegetation and climate. By end 2015, 25 HGL units with management areas had been mapped for the ACT and a salinity hazard report finalised. In 2016, reports for erosion risk, wetlands and climate change refugia will become available.
- Vegetation mapping: At end 2015, high resolution vegetation mapping in the ACT had been completed over an area of 122,950 hectares (ha) including the Kowen, Jerrabomberra and Majura districts. A draft vegetation map of the whole ACT is expected to be completed by the end of June 2016.
- Habitat connectivity: A habitat connectivity map is available on ACTMAPi. Connectivity mapping data has been integrated into the ACT Environmental Offsets Calculator; and
- Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program: An ACT Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program is under development. It incorporates indicators for native vegetation condition.

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD)**

##### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

**Hydrogeological Landscape Framework and vegetation mapping**

##### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- The ACT Hydrogeological Landscapes Framework was completed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage in 2016, funded by the ACT Government and with the support of the Australian Government Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change Fund (Stream 1). The information is publicly available through ACTMapi and helping to inform decision making about land management, urban planning and environmental research.
- The ACT Vegetation Map was completed in 2018 and was made available on [ACTMap](#), [Significant Plants and Animals Map](#) and the [ACT Geospatial Catalogue](#) under CC BY 4.0 licence for free download. The dataset was supplemented with height and cover information at the polygon scale, using the 2015 LiDAR data (Canopy Height Model). Refined mapping of the High Country Bogs and Fens will be completed in the second half of 2019 and updated in the ACT Vegetation Map.

### **Recommendation 6 – Land**

*The ACT Government uses strategic environmental assessments as provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2007 to reduce and manage cumulative and cross-sectoral impacts on the environment.*

#### **Government response: Supported in principle**

Strategic environmental assessments under the ACT Planning and Development legislation are a potentially helpful policy tool to facilitate positive environmental outcomes. For example, strategic environmental assessments could be used to inform Action Plans under the Nature Conservation Act, or variations to the Territory Plan.

It should be noted that the ACT already has an Environmental Impact Statement process that facilitates environmental impact assessment in the ACT. This process is based on a triple bottom line and risk assessment approach and can consider cumulative and off-site impacts.

It is also worth noting that ACT strategic environmental assessments are different from Strategic Assessments under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Although the terminology is similar, the processes are different. The Commonwealth process is an approvals process, whereas the ACT process is intended to assess policy initiatives.

Government will examine options to implement the practical effect of the Commissioner's recommendations

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD)**

##### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

Environmental Impact Statement process, Strategic Assessments and Environmental Significance Opinions (ESO)

##### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- The ACT Government has continued with its EIS process, which is based on a triple bottom line and risk assessment approach and considers cumulative and off-site impacts. The EIS process helps inform the Minister of risks and proposes mitigation measures to help reduce any impacts. During 2018-19 financial year, four ESO scoping documents were issued, with six EISs currently under assessment.
- There have also been a number of EIS exemptions under s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* granted over the last year. An EIS exemption utilises the same triple bottom line and risk assessment framework as an EIS and considers whether the cumulative and offsite impacts have already been considered adequately through other recent studies. The Ginninderry Urban Stage 2 and subsequent stages urban development and the Canberra Brickworks Precinct Access Road and Dudley Street Upgrade EIS exemptions were granted in the 201819 financial year.
- ESOs are also utilised by the Territory for proposals that are considered to have less of an environmental, social and economic risk. ESOs can be granted by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, the Heritage Council and the Planning and Land Authority. If granted, ESOs state that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the matter being considered. These entities are required under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* to take into account cumulative and offsite impacts. Thirty-five ESOs were issued during the 2018-19 financial year.
- The ACT has two approved strategic assessments, relating to the urban



### **Recommendation 7 – Water**

*That the ACT Government assess the consequences of, and understand the driving mechanisms behind, the poor condition of water resources as shown by the indicators for total nitrogen, turbidity, chlorophyll-a and ecological biodiversity, and assess the need for collecting more information for indicators with little available data.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

The ACT Government recognises the value of water quality data and supports Recommendation 7.

The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan (IWMP) was a key output of the ACT Healthy Waterways Program. The plan identified gaps in monitoring, modelling and data management and actions are currently underway to fill these gaps. This includes the implementation of two new water quality monitoring programs, the Land Use Monitoring program, and the Asset Evaluation Monitoring program. These programs commenced in late 2018 and will run into 2020. These datasets will be used to calibrate catchment models to assist in the identification and prioritisation of actions to improve catchment condition and water quality, as well as empirically testing the performance of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) infrastructure in the ACT.

Improved catchment modelling capabilities are currently being developed as part of the ACT Healthy Waterways program. A water quality catchment model for the whole of the ACT is being developed. This model will support scenario testing of both future stressors and potential management actions to improve water quality in the ACT. The catchment model is currently being integrated with the ACT Data Lake, to improve data accessibility and data curation around the model and its outputs.

A key area for improvement identified in the IWMP was around data management and accessibility. To overcome these shortcomings, major waterway monitoring datasets are being ingested into the ACT Data Lake, currently being maintained by ACT Data Analytics Centre in CMTEDD. Data Lake will support the combining of multiple datasets to improve opportunities for analysis and streamlined reporting of waterway status in the ACT. A further benefit will be improved public accessibility to water data in the ACT.

ACT Healthy Waterways has undertaken two major research projects. The Urban Ponds Research project ran from 2017-2019 and examined the potential role that variable water levels in urban ponds may play in improving water quality performance of urban ponds and the benefits to aquatic and riparian plants.

The In-Lake Research Project in Lake Tuggeranong aimed to examine the sources of poor water quality in Lake Tuggeranong, and examine potential management interventions to improve water quality and reduce blue green algae. Intensive monitoring of inflows into the lake and water quality in the lake revealed that high levels of nutrients enter the lake from the surrounding catchment, and that a large store of nutrients exist in the sediments in the lake and are released into the water column in summer when the lake is thermally stratified. Three potential management interventions (Phoslock, Diatomix and Peroxide) were trialled in summer 2018/2019, with findings to inform a third stage of research in 2019/2020.

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch continues to engage volunteers across the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment to undertake water quality, macroinvertebrate and riparian condition monitoring. In addition, a range of other citizen science projects are delivered by the Waterwatch program, including Platypus month, which examines platypus and water rat populations, and 'carp loves 20C' – a program that encourages the community to report on carp breeding in Spring. Results of the Waterwatch program are published every year in the Waterwatch CHIP report. This report uses in excess of 2000 water quality survey records, 200 macroinvertebrate surveys and 200 riparian condition surveys to generate a comprehensive snapshot of waterway condition. This report would not be possible without the amazing efforts of over 200 volunteers that give their time to monitoring our waterways. Waterwatch is funded by ACT Government and Icon Water, and delivered through Southern ACT Catchment Group, Ginninderra Catchment Group and Molonglo Catchment Group.

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD, HD)**

##### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

**Integrated Water Monitoring Plan**

##### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan (IWMP) is complete and implementation is ongoing. The IWMP provided recommendations regarding, monitoring, modelling and data management.
- Procurement was undertaken in 2018 for two new waterway monitoring programs. These programs will collect data to inform the calibration of catchment models for the ACT and provide empirical data on the performance of WSUD infrastructure in the ACT. These monitoring programs will run into 2019/2020.
- A SOURCE model is being developed to inform on water quality in the ACT. This model will be used to identify future stressors on water quality in the ACT and identify plausible interventions and management actions to maintain and improve water quality. Further calibration of the SOURCE model is planned and is identified in the IWMP.
- In-lake research in c Lake Tuggeranong to clarify the major sources and timing of in-lake pollutant release to inform specific management action trials is ongoing.
- Research in ACT urban ponds in order to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality has been completed. Outcomes will inform management of these assets.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information is ongoing. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible.

### **Recommendation 8 – Biodiversity**

*That the ACT Government provides the necessary resources to complete the next phases of the Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

The Government is continuing to fund the Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP). The CEMP will provide recommendations for monitoring selected indicators and develop systems to compile, analyse and report on monitoring data to inform management of eight ACT ecosystems:

- lowland native grasslands
- aquatic and riparian ecosystems
- lowland woodlands
- lowland forests
- upland native grasslands
- upland woodlands
- upland forests
- upland bogs and fens.

The CEMP is being integrated into restoration and management programs including:

- The Herbage Mass Working Group which coordinates and prioritises ecological management of grassy ecosystems across Canberra Nature Park by establishing an extensive network of monitoring plots combined with an explicit decision support framework. The working group identifies when, where and how to maintain herbage mass within ecologically appropriate limits to support conservation of key biodiversity values, and feeds monitoring and management outcomes back into the CEMP adaptive management framework.
- the Grassland Enhancement Program (2016–18) that has established monitoring sites in six grassland nature reserves to assess effectiveness of mosaic burning and grazing treatments
- the ACT Woodland Restoration Program that has established 15 monitoring sites across the ACT and Greater Goorooyarroo.
- Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP) and Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP) by monitoring the cumulative effects of fire management on ecosystem values through impacts of Tolerable Fire Intervals and Growth Stage Status at landscape scales.

The Government will work towards draft plans for the eight ecosystems along with the development and testing of indicators to support the already completed information for the lowland and upland native grasslands and aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program  
Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program

#### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- Completion of CEMP Upland Grassland Ecosystem Monitoring Plan and condition report
- Draft of CEMP Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Monitoring Plan and condition report

### **Recommendation 9 – Biodiversity**

*That the ACT Government formalise biodiversity conservation data collection and storage protocols and procedures, to integrate reports commissioned by different agencies with existing government data.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

The Government will consider options for improving biodiversity conservation data management and the feasibility of integrating data and information from different sources.

EPSDD's Environment Division is consolidating spatial data for internal government access through the Corporate Geographic Database. EPSDD has overhauled the interface and functionality of ACT Gov's public portal for spatial data, ACTMAPi. The Office of Surveyor General has allocated an FTE to developing a Geospatial Data Catalogue to help improve community access and download corporate spatial data.

There has been progress in improving spatial data capture and storage. New applications such as Canberra Nature Map and Collector have created opportunities for data to be collected by a range of stakeholders to notify sightings of flora and fauna. New datasets, including for hydrogeological landscapes, vegetation mapping and LIDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) three dimensional landscape structure, high resolution aerial imagery are enriching our information base to support decision-making. Where possible, many datasets are being made accessible, for example ArcGIS.

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD)**

##### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

ACTMapi

##### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

##### **Conservation Research**

- All ACT Biodiversity Core datasets (threatened and rare flora and fauna, habitat, vegetation communities including ACT Vegetation Map, High Country Bogs and Fens, Grasslands and Important Wetlands), connectivity and restoration tools and urban vegetation structure are available for free download via ACTMapi and the Geospatial Catalogue.
- The ACT Wildlife Atlas and the ACT Protected Plants Database are integrated with Canberra Nature Map and the Atlas of Living Australia (data is shared in both directions)
- The Environment Division has also requested support from the ACT Government's Data Lake which will:
  - better integrate Environmental data storage across EPSDD
  - implement ACT Government Open Access policies
  - increase the availability of data to inform evidence-based decision making
  - increase communication with key external stakeholders (e.g. Commissioner's Office, Federal departments, Conservation Council, researchers and the community)

### **Recommendation 10 – Heritage**

*That the ACT Government and the ACT Heritage Council commence a program of audits to assess and monitor the condition of heritage places and objects on the ACT Heritage Register.*

#### **Government response: Supported**

At present, Part 16 of the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Act) requires public authorities to report to the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) on registered heritage places and objects it has responsibility for. Reporting requirements include details about each place and object including current condition. The Council must review the report and give the authority any comments about the report including any recommendations relating to the conservation of a heritage place or object. The Council must also provide a written summary of the report, and its comments and recommendations, to the Minister. Public authority heritage reports are required each successive three-year period.

Further to this, a discussion paper on the development of an ACT Heritage Strategy is currently out for public consultation. The strategy will set a clear direction for the recognition, protection, conservation and promotion of heritage in the ACT. A long-term strategic vision for the ACT Heritage Register will be addressed as part of the strategy, including its content and size, ensure it contains appropriate representation of places and

#### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD)**

##### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

Program of heritage audits, ACT Heritage Strategy

##### **Actions completed in 2018-19**

- The concept of a program of an audit monitoring the condition of heritage places is supported in-principle however this cannot be implemented in the current climate as resourcing has had to respond to a 51% increase of heritage advice and approval applications (since 2014) and community expectation to reduce the nomination list and legislative amendments to increase heritage compliance tools.
- In reviewing the priorities of ACT Heritage, following its restructure from the Strategic Planning Division to the Environment Division in 2017, the further development of a Heritage Strategy has ceased. The ACT Heritage Council (the Council) met on 15 November 2018 where it agreed to develop a Strategic Plan to focus on priority issues and deliver a strategic vision for the Council. This work continues in 2019.
- No public authority heritage reports were due to the ACT Heritage Council during 2018-19.
- Other strategic work for the 2017-18 period includes:
  - Internal review of heritage offence and compliance provisions  
Commenced internal review of heritage offence and compliance provisions to ensure tools and legislation required for effective compliance and enforcement action are suitable leading to good heritage outcomes.
  - Heritage Festival analysis and review  
ACT Heritage engaged an external researcher to develop a demographic



○ Increased and new ways of public consultation and engagement

On behalf of the Council, ACT Heritage has adopted practices and taken additional measures to engage further with stakeholders and increase clarity surrounding heritage issues and decisions. Specifically:

- In early 2018, ACT Heritage contacted nominators of places that have been nominated longer than one year to inform them of assessment status. Nominators were also invited to provide new or additional information on nominations to assist the Council with expediting assessments in the future.
- ACT Heritage updated the Register to include detailed contextual information on nominated places/objects to provide clarity for property owners and nominators.
- ACT Heritage worked with EPSDD Communications to boost outreach and publicity surrounding Council decisions on provisional registration. Specifically, Council decisions to provisionally register are now publicised on social media to increase community 'buy in' on heritage matters.

• Review of ACT Heritage processes

Developing effective and efficient ways of operating where possible. This is ongoing.

# The Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy (2017) and the Government's Response

In the 2017 Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy, the Commissioner made 17 recommendations which are listed below with the Government's response to each one.

***Recommendation 1. Budget appropriation for climate change mitigation and adaptation policies will be significant, cannot be postponed and must be consistent.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD, Climate Change & Sustainability Division, Sustainability & Resilience Section)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

**The ACT's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate**

- The Adaptation Strategy has been substantially completed and is entering its final year of funding in 2019/2020. Remaining actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan, including climate-wise homes, resilient plants that will help the ACT adapt to climate change and demonstration projects showcasing climate-wise activities that can be undertaken by developers, builders and homeowners.

**AP2**

- The ACT continued to work towards its 40% emissions reduction target by 2020 (on 1990 levels). This target will be achieved by transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2020. The contracts for delivering this target are all established. Additionally, the ACT Government recently legislated the target of retaining a 100% renewable electricity supply indefinitely into the future.

Budget

Ongoing funding has been secured for core programs from 2019-20 FY onwards to provide consistency of effort in addressing climate change. The EEIS has secured funding until 2030 to continue delivering energy efficiency upgrades to businesses and households. EPSDD has also secured funding to develop policy and provide advice in relation to reducing emission from Government operations under the Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

**Rationale:** The ACT Government has a long track record of a progressive agenda in addressing the challenges of climate change and has provided considerable funding to support this work. It is committed to achieving its climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

***Recommendation 2. Energy efficiency initiatives are crucial in delivering climate change outcomes and must be prioritised in policy development.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The Government is currently preparing future policy on climate change towards our legislated target of zero net emissions by 2050 at the latest. One of the key aspects being considered is the ongoing need for improvement in energy efficiency measures, systems and infrastructure. Energy efficiency not only reduces the cost of power to the consumer, it has the benefit of reducing the need for ongoing renewable energy generation infrastructure. In 2017 the Government introduced new, energy efficient activities to the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS), including new space heating and cooling, and water heating systems.

***Please note the blank figures in the response below will not be available until 25 July 2019***

Contact [Antonia.harmer@act.gov.au](mailto:Antonia.harmer@act.gov.au) to request these figures on or after this date.

## Update from Directorates (EPSDD - EEIS)

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

#### Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS)

Since the EEIS commenced on January 2013, around 74,000 households and businesses have participated in the Scheme, including close to 19,000 priority low income households. Over 1.3 million energy saving items have been installed, delivering more than 6.5 million GJ of lifetime energy savings, about \$400 million of lifetime energy bill savings and is estimated to achieve lifetime emission reductions of around 500,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, equivalent to taking approximately 161,000 cars off Canberra roads for a year.

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- During the 2018–19 financial year, over XXXX energy saving items were installed in nearly XXXX households and businesses, including household activities such as replacement of inefficient heaters and hot water units with high efficient systems, decommissioning of refrigerators and freezers, as well as lighting upgrades to help ACT businesses reduce their energy consumption and save money on electricity bills.
- The ACT Government plans to extend the EEIS to 2030 with policy settings that optimise environmental and social outcomes to reduce energy poverty and progress towards achieving the ACT Government's interim climate change targets.
- The ACT Government's Actsmart suite of programs are designed to complement the activities delivered under the EEIS. A range of support is available to businesses, schools, households (including low income households) and the community to improve their energy efficiency.

**Recommendation 3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies must be embedded and integrated across whole of government functions.**

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The future climate change policy is currently being developed with a key objective of integrating mitigation and adaptation actions in order to maximise co-benefits.

The *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*, *Carbon Neutral Government Framework* (2014), and the *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warming Climate* (2016) seek to ‘embed’ and ‘mainstream’ climate considerations in all ACT Government functions.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change/Carbon Neutral Government)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

Actions completed in 2018-19

- Individual agencies are accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions through Director-General Key Performance Indicators and agency carbon budgets. All Directors-General report emissions reductions and activities undertaken as part of the Carbon Neutral Government Framework. Directors-General report progress to the Head of Service annually. These measures allow high-level executive oversight and ensure incorporation of sustainability and emissions reduction into the Government’s strategic policy direction.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD, Climate Change & Sustainability Division, Sustainability & Resilience Section)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

**The ACT’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate**

Actions completed in 2018-19

- Both climate change adaptation and mitigation actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan.

**Recommendation 4. Transport is the biggest climate change mitigation challenge for the ACT and significant commitment to policy development, action and targets will be central to the ACT continuing its reputation as a climate change policy leader and driver of change.**

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** Emissions modelling to 2050 demonstrates the major contribution of transport emissions and shows that a reduction requires adjustments to mode share trends, vehicle occupancy, trip-length and fuel type of our transport network. The Government has raised this issue with the community in its *ACT’s Climate Strategy to A Net Zero Emissions Territory Discussion Paper December 2017* with a view to include mitigation measures to reduce

emissions from transport in the next climate strategy for the ACT. The Government is also developing the next Transport for Canberra strategy concurrently.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan (2018-2021)

Actions completed in 2018-19

- The ACT Government launched its Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan (2018-2021) to reduce transport emissions with actions aimed to increase active travel and public transport, while incentivising new electric vehicle purchases and establishing the second-hand electric vehicle action plan.
- Reducing transport emissions will be a priority in the ACT's New Climate strategy.
- Roll out of 51 new charging stations across government in 2018/19

***Recommendation 5. Community engagement in discussions about climate change policy is fundamental to effective interventions in respect of mitigation and adaptation.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The Government continues to share information with the community through various means. Throughout 2017 a number of climate change themed stakeholder meetings have taken place including three Roundtables with over 60 community representatives attending each one. The outcomes of these discussions are being considered in the development of climate change policy.

The climate change policy currently being developed continues the wide community and stakeholder engagement by the ACT Government and by the ACT Climate Change Council.

The Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability has invited community representatives to come together in the Climate Change Ministerial Advisory Group (CCMAG) to provide a further mechanism for community organisations and businesses to provide input from their sectors and member groups to the net zero emissions policy as it's being developed. The CCMAG will also be an avenue for communication from Government through CCMAG members to their respective organisations.

## Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change)

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Government remains committed to working closely with the community to implement climate change solutions.
- The new ACT Climate Change Strategy has been informed by extensive community and stakeholder consultation. Government will partner with the community and businesses in the next stage of our efforts to further reduce ACT emissions and build resilience to climate change impacts. Implementing the Strategy, and successfully meeting our interim emission reduction targets, will require broad community participation. Government will look for innovative ways to encourage and support behaviour change and community and business leadership on climate change.
- The community was consulted in 2018 and early 2019 on the extension of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) to 2030 which will support further energy cost reductions, reduce energy poverty and progress towards achieving the ACT Government's interim climate change targets.

***Recommendation 6. Commitment to social equity in the face of climate change challenges must be strengthened in all new policy initiatives.***

### **Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government requires all new policy measures to include an assessment on the impacts on social equity. The Government recognises that climate change will impact, in a disproportionate way, on those on low incomes and those least able to protect themselves, including our infirm, disadvantaged or elderly. This is taken into account across the range of measures being developed to increase the Territory's resilience to climate change impacts.

Lower-income households spend a higher proportion of their income on energy and are most affected by energy price rises, but least able to invest in efficient appliances and thus reduce their energy demand. For this reason, the ACT Government is committed to reducing inequality and helping households reduce energy costs through a variety of programs and services. The combination of these measures should reduce the impact of rising energy prices for low income households as well as achieve co-benefits such as improved health, comfort and helping vulnerable households adapt to a changing climate.

Under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Act 2010* the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability prepares an annual report on action on climate change, including a Cost of Living Statement.

The EEIS provides targeted assistance to low income households through a Priority Household Target. In September 2017, the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability set a 20 per cent EEIS priority household target for 2018 and approved the development of a regulation to expand the classes currently eligible for EEIS rebates. A priority household target within the scheme ensures that a proportion of savings are delivered in low income households, alleviating energy poverty caused by rising energy prices.

## **Update from Directorates (EPSDD - EEIS)**

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) Priority Household Target

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The EEIS Priority Household Target was set at 20% in 2019 and has been increased to 30% for 2020 to encourage electricity retailers to increase opportunities for low income households to benefit from the scheme.

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing initiative

- After the delivery of a successful pilot program in 2017–18, the ACT Government initiated the *Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing* initiative in partnership with ActewAGL. This initiative consists of a \$7.0 million investment to improve the energy efficiency of 2200 public houses, from 01 July 2018 to 30 June 2021.
- Actions completed in 2018-19
- In 2018–19 this initiative replaced approximately 470 heaters and hot water systems with high efficient systems, with estimated lifetime emission reductions of 12,445 t CO<sub>2</sub> –e and \$5.5million in lifetime energy bill savings.

***Recommendation 7. To effectively meet immediate and evolving climate change challenges, policy must be timely, focused by means of multi-sectoral short, medium and long term targets.***

### **Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government has legislated emission reduction targets far beyond those established across jurisdictions in Australia and is on track to achieve them through a progressive and innovative approach to policy development and implementation. The ACT Government has committed to developing additional policy options on climate change toward meeting our target of net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, and to define interim emission reduction targets for 2025, 2030 and 2040. Cross government coordinated actions plans will establish pathways towards these targets with periodic review points to ensure they are effective.

Work is underway in developing a new strategy to 2025 that takes a sector approach in both mitigation and adaptation measures

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (2010)

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Interim targets of 50-60% by 2025, 65-75% by 2030 and 80-90% by 2040 have been legislated.
- Net Zero emissions target has been brought forward to 2045 at the latest
- The Government has committed to not using offsets to ensure abatement is achieved in a manner that reinvests in the local economy.

***Recommendation 8. Climate change policy actions and targets must continue to be monitored and evaluated in open, transparent and independent review and audit processes.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The monitoring and evaluation of Government climate change commitments are tracked and reported on, as required under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*.

The ACT Climate Change Council is the independent advisory body that assists with review of the policy and its targets. Similarly, the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment (OCSE) has played an important role as an independent reviewer of climate change policy delivery.

The preparation of an annual greenhouse gas inventory report for the ACT by an independent organisation also provides transparency in the effectiveness of mitigation measures. These reports are made public and are available on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and OCSE websites.

Additional measures to establish a baseline and monitor progress in increasing the Territory's resilience to climate change impacts are currently being developed taking into consideration international best practice. Once established, progress will be publicly reported.

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD - Climate Change)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2016-2020)

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- In 2018 the ACT Government commissioned the University of Canberra to undertake a longitudinal survey to measure the respective levels of climate risk awareness and resilience throughout the ACT. This survey is intended to be repeated in five years' time to measure progress.
- An independent review of the scheme was undertaken in 2018 and confirmed that EEIS remains appropriate and has been efficient and effective in tackling its original policy problems and scheme objectives by reducing household and business emissions and energy costs with an overall positive benefit–cost ratio.

***Recommendation 9. Engage the community in meaningful conversation about the credibility and validity of investing in offsets to support carbon neutrality against other investment options.***

#### **Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government is developing policy towards net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. The usefulness of offsets as a tool in reaching this target is one of several policy measures being considered. In developing policy, the Government is actively engaging with the community. The ACT Climate Change Council has advised that the use of offsets should be replaced by a social cost of carbon mechanism by which any overshoot from targeted reductions should be quantified and given an appropriate monetary cost. The total cost of the overshoot should then be then re-invested in emission reduction measures within the Territory's control. This approach is described in the *ACT's Climate Strategy to a Net Zero Emissions Territory Discussion Paper* currently out for public comment. This work will also inform the implementation of the *Carbon Neutral ACT Government Framework*.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

Actions completed in 2018-19

- The ACT Government is actively considering advice from the ACT Climate Change Council on using a Social Cost of Carbon in development of the strategy to 2025.

***Recommendation 10. Develop a Basis of Preparation end to end process manual for the ACT emissions inventory to ensure ongoing accuracy and repeatability of ACT emissions monitoring and reporting.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government has prepared a Basis of Preparation as part of the operation of its greenhouse gas inventory.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD - Climate Change)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

Actions completed in 2018-19

- The ACT Government's annual greenhouse gas inventory is undertaken by external consultants who, as part of the process, develop and submit a proposed methodology. This methodology is approved prior to the quantifying of the ACT's emissions to ensure its accuracy and consistency with previous methodologies.

***Recommendation 11. Conduct an audit of ACT emissions inventory to ensure accuracy and facilitate continuous improvement, initially in 2 years' time and at regular intervals thereafter.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government will progress an audit in two years, as recommended.

## Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Climate Change)

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The ACT Government regularly reviews the ACT emissions inventory, prepared by external consultants to ensure accuracy and facilitate continuous improvement.
- The ACT emissions inventory has not been the subject of an external review arranged by the ACT Government in the last two years.

**Recommendation 12. Identify energy productivity and/or efficiency targets in conjunction with emissions reduction targets at 5 to 10-year intervals out to 2050 to optimise sustainability outcomes.**

**Government Response: NOTED**

**Rationale:** The *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reductions Act 2010* includes a section to develop per person energy efficiency targets (Section 10). In 2016 an operational review of the Act was conducted. Regarding energy efficiency targets, the review noted:

“Since the formulation of this section of the Act, the *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012* (EECOLI Act) has commenced. The development of the EECOLI Act supersedes the need for energy efficiency targets to be set as part of the Act. The EECOLI Act sets various energy efficiency targets across the Territory, including the Priority Household Target to assist the most vulnerable in the community to cost increases in energy.

Given the ongoing commitment to energy efficiency regardless of a target, there is no pressing need to formulate one. Creating a per person electricity efficiency target, or a broader energy efficiency target, would mostly benefit reporting and monitoring under the Act. This section of the Act may no longer be relevant given the potential for a 100% Renewable Energy Target, the high level of action already committed to energy efficiency, and the setting of targets in line with national best practice within the EECOLI Act. Section 10 should be considered as a redundant part of the Act that is not operational. Future reviews may simply note this section has been superseded by the EECOLI Act or the section may be removed from the Act.”

The consideration of energy efficiency targets may be re-assessed in future years should a need arise.

## **Update from Directorates (EPSDD - EEIS)**

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

#### **Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS)**

The EEIS establishes a Territory-wide Energy Savings Target (EST) defined as a proportion of a retailers' total electricity sales. Tier 1 electricity retailers must deliver energy efficiency savings to their customers' equivalent to the EST as well as a Priority Household Target.

#### **National Energy Productivity Plan (NEPP)**

The NEPP is an overarching initiative of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Energy Council, aiming to improve Australia's energy productivity by 40% between 2015 and 2030.

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- An independent review of the EEIS in 2018 confirmed ActewAGL has consistently met both the Energy Saving Target and Priority Household Target in every compliance period since 2013.
- The ACT Government contributed to NEPP measures through the COAG process.

***Recommendation 13. Ensure that adequate and permanent resources are committed to the Carbon Neutral Government Program, both in the central facilitation team and within agencies.***

#### **Government Response: Agreed**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government is committed to achieving the objectives of the Carbon Neutral Government (CNG) Program. EPSDD has a team to coordinate the program and provide advice to other agencies. As a result of the CNG Program, many agencies have now employed Sustainability Managers to drive internal efforts to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency.

As part of the CNG Program a CNG Fund was created to provide interest-free loans to agencies to support approved energy efficiency projects. Energy savings are used to repay the loan, replenishing the CNG Fund and making funds available for new projects. Twenty-six ACT Government projects have been supported under the CNG Fund since 2010, to a value of approximately \$14.5 million. A diverse range of projects has been supported including: lighting; heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) upgrades; smart building management systems; and an off grid solar photovoltaic system with battery storage. CNG Fund projects currently generate financial savings to the ACT Government of over \$2 million per annum.

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Carbon Neutral Government)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

Actions completed in 2018-19

- The ACT Government committed to ongoing funding for the Carbon Neutral Government team in the 2019-20 budget.
- All ACT Government directorates employed Sustainability Managers during 2018-19 to undertake a range of activities relating to the CNG Framework including development of applications to the CNG Fund, developing agency emissions targets and engagement activities within their own directorates.

***Recommendation 14. In line with national best practice, consider reporting significant Scope 3 emissions associated with ACT Government operations and clearly document their inclusions or exclusions in carbon neutral aspirations.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government is examining issues relating to reporting Scope 3 emissions in ACT Government operations. Currently the Carbon Neutral ACT Government Framework requires only Scope 1 and 2 emissions of the carbon footprint to be offset for carbon neutrality purposes.

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Carbon Neutral Government)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

Actions completed in 2018-19

- In February 2018 the EPSDD received advice on the inclusion of Scope 3 emissions from the contractor responsible for producing the ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*.
- This advice noted that reporting of Scope 3 emissions would require the systematic and comprehensive collection of a much wider range of data than what is currently required for reporting Scope 1 and 2 emissions. In light of the considerable administrative burden, in the form of extensive data collection and reporting, the report recommended that the Whole of ACT Government reporting of greenhouse gas emissions be confined to Scope 1 and Scope 2.

***Recommendation 15. Produce an emissions boundary diagram for each agency to improve transparency and rigor in reporting emissions and developing mitigation strategies.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** To improve transparency, the ACT Government is preparing a methodology for the creation of the ACT Government greenhouse gas inventory. This methodology will inform the creation of emissions boundary diagrams in 2018.

**Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Carbon Neutral Government)**

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

Actions completed in 2018-19

- EPSDD introduced a formal [ACT Government Emissions Boundary](#) in consultation with Directorates in 2018-19.
- The ACT Government Emissions Boundary determines which greenhouse gas emissions are within the operational control of the ACT Government and therefore need to be addressed under the CNG Framework. This document provides clear direction to Directorates on which assets (e.g. vehicles and facilities) are within their emissions boundaries.
- Assets included in Directorate emissions boundaries are recorded in the Enterprise Sustainability Platform, the online platform for measuring and reporting ACT Government emissions, and in annual Directorate carbon budgets. The list of assets in a Directorate's emissions boundary is reviewed each year when Directorates develop annual carbon budgets. Directorate assets can also be added or removed from the ESP throughout the year as assets come online or are retired.

***Recommendation 16. Ensure ongoing improvement to document processes for government agency greenhouse gas inventories to ensure integrity and efficiency of initiatives.***

**Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** The ACT Government is preparing a methodology for the creation of the ACT Government greenhouse gas inventory. The methodology will reference all data sources and the source of all emissions factors used. This methodology will be used to create an ACT Government greenhouse gas inventory including agency inventories for 2016-17.

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD – Carbon Neutral Government)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The contractor responsible for producing the ACT greenhouse gas inventory under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* has been contracted to produce an annual inventory for ACT Government operations.

### ***Recommendation 17. Improve awareness and ease for applications to the Carbon Neutral Government Loan Fund.***

#### **Government Response: AGREED**

**Rationale:** Ease of applying to the Carbon Neutral Government Fund is part of the Carbon Neutral Government Program's continuous improvement processes including providing adequate governance and probity in the expenditure of public funds. The Carbon Neutral Government Program will continue to seek opportunities to increase awareness of the Carbon Neutral Government Fund.

### **Update from Directorates (EPSDD– Carbon Neutral Government)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral government

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Significant work has gone into encouraging greater utilisation of the CNG Fund in 2018-19.
- CNG Fund guidelines and application documents have been updated and simplified to reduce the administrative burden to agencies.
- In 2018-19 the CNG program hired three Energy Project Officers (EPOs) to provide technical expertise to assist Directorates to identify projects, quantify emissions and financial savings and facilitate applications to the CNG Fund.
- The CNG Fund previously required that all cost savings generated by a project be repaid until the loan was paid back in full to the CNG Fund. The guidelines have been updated so only 80% of the annual savings are repaid to the fund each year. While this extends the length of time over which a loan is repaid it allows Directorates to receive financial savings from the project immediately rather than only after the loan is repaid.

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

The following table sets out the Commissioner’s reporting requirements for the 2018-19 annual reporting period on Directorate updates for actions in relation to The Heroic and the Dammed - Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation recommendations. Recommendations that require a response from your directorate are highlighted in green.

The Heroic and the Dammed – Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation 2018
<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 1.1</b> The Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework be implemented urgently</p> <p><b>Government Response: Agreed in-principle</b> The ACT Government supports the intent of the robust monitoring framework proposed in the report while noting that the framework is broader than that required to inform management practices in the catchment.</p> <p>Current and future monitoring will be aligned with management needs and be cost effective so as not to compromise the actual restoration works being monitored. If future monitoring is required this can be captured under existing regulatory events from Icon Water.</p> <p>The monitoring framework will be reviewed in line with the statutory requirements in the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 as recommended.</p> <p><b>ACT Government response (EPSDD)</b> <b>Relevant strategy, plan or program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP)</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions completed in 2018-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catchment health and water quality monitoring in the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) will primarily be captured under the CEMP framework, EPSDD’s overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework. The forthcoming release of the Riparian and Aquatic Habitat contains several monitoring metrics designed specifically for the LCC to better inform management effectiveness and improve water quality outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation 1.2</b> All existing and future Lower Cotter Catchment data should be stored in a secure central database</p> <p><b>Government Response: Agreed</b> Relevant and prioritised data will be included in the central databases as recommended. EPSDD will work across government (specifically with the Chief Digital Officer) to develop centralised databases with agreed security protocols for the publishing and accessing of the data.</p>

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- ACT Government Data Lake

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Discussions are progressing for EPSDD to access the ACT Government's Data Lake to better integrate environmental data storage and implement the ACT Government Open Access policies. When access provisions are finalised, all relevant Lower Cotter Catchment data, including that collected and synthesised through the CEMP framework, will be incorporated into the Data Lake.

### Recommendation 1.3

Improve consistency and coordination of monitoring, mapping and modelling resources across government

#### Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The ACT Government agrees with the intent of this recommendation noting that much of the recommended monitoring and modelling is already being actioned.

The specific suggestion for biennial LiDAR monitoring would not be the most cost-effective means of monitoring; instead other regular remote sensing options more suitable for informing management will be implemented.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- See actions related to recommendation 1.2
- Whole of EPSDD discussions are ongoing to determine the most suitable, widely applicable and cost-effective remote sensing tools to inform protected area management strategies, including the LCC.

### Funding and resourcing commitments

### Recommendation 2.1

Allocate discrete annual funding from the Water Abstraction Charge (WAC) directly to catchment management for the life of the Reserve Management Plan 2018. This is in addition to existing recurrent funding. Financial year budget rollover is necessary to reflect the contract management cycles for land management works.

#### Government Response: Noted

The ACT Government notes the recommendation to provide additional funding for catchment management for the life of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

2018.

The ACT Government considers that identified priorities, such as additional funding for the life of the Reserve Management Plan 2018 should be considered as part of the annual Budget process. This process enables all related expenditure initiatives to be assessed concurrently, and if agreed, funded on a recurrent basis through the consolidated revenue. Revenue from the WAC is not hypothecated to fund any particular expenditure, but is contributed to consolidated revenue. The WAC is designed to reflect the true value of water as a scarce resource and assists in managing demand.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The government did not accept this recommendation. No additional funding has been allocated to the Lower Cotter Catchment to date

### Recommendation 2.2

Distribute Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) funding discretely for core ongoing operational and strategic long-term management. Allocation of resources between business units within PCS should reflect reserve management responsibilities outlined in the implementation plan.

### Government Response: Agreed

PCS will review existing funding attributed to the region and reapportion appropriately. Funding will be attributed by annual priorities and determined based on an implementation plan for the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 (RMP)

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The completed Implementation Plan forms the basis for the preparation of annual works plan for holistic management of the LCC. Annual works plan for the 2019/20 financial year, and ensuing years, will apportion funding that is consistent with the priorities of the Reserve Management Plan actions, including monitoring requirements.

### Recommendation 2.3

Allocate funding specifically for the implementation and ongoing costs of Recommendation 1 (Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation) across PCS, Conservation Research, Water Policy, and the Environment Protection Authority respective of their individual contributions.

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

### Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The monitoring framework will be reviewed in line with the statutory requirements in the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 as recommended. Currently a substantial amount of monitoring is underway as outlined in responses 1.1-1.3. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework involves all relevant parties, such that funding is apportioned depending on how the monitoring applies to the differing management responsibilities.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- See actions related to recommendation 2.2

### Governance improvements

#### Recommendation 3.1

Complete outstanding Auditor-General's recommendations, specifically recommendations 1, 3 and 4, as a matter of priority by no later than 30 June 2019. This includes undertaking an internal review to confirm completion of all recommendations in consideration of observations made in this report.

### Government Response: Agreed

PCS is working to finalise a Code of Sustainable Land Management Practices to guide its activity across the whole conservation estate, the majority of which is potable water catchment. This will involve consultation with key stakeholders including throughout Government, with Icon Water and the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Code of Sustainable Land Management

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- PCS is working to finalise the Code of Sustainable Land Management Practices to guide its activity across the whole conservation estate, the majority of which is potable water catchment. This will involve consultation with key stakeholders including throughout Government, with Icon Water and the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. A Working Group of PCS staff has been established to further develop and finalise Code of Practice; completion time has been revised to December 2019 to allow for adequate input and consultation from stakeholders.

#### Recommendation 3.2

Review and update the Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Treatment Plan quarterly as per ACT Insurance Authority requirements. Include risk management as a standing agenda item on the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group meeting agenda.

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

### Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The risk treatment plan is a valuable tool in identifying threats to the Lower Cotter Catchment and in prioritising management actions to reduce those risks. The risk treatment plan will be a standing agenda item for the Lower Cotter Catchment implementation coordination group however the government is of the opinion that a formal review on an annual basis or as needed is sufficient.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Assessment and Risk Treatment Plan

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Reviewing the LCC Risk Assessment and Risk Treatment Plan has been added as a standing agenda item on the LCC Implementation Coordination Group.

### Recommendation 3.3

Develop the Reserve Management Plan 2018 Implementation Plan as outlined in the plan and under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 by no later than 30 June 2019. This should include the strategic long-term management of commercial pine plantations, non-commercial pine plantations, and pine wildling regrowth.

### Government Response: Agreed

An implementation plan is a requirement under the *Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018*. The implementation plan will be completed by 30 June 2019 and will focus on landscape restoration and fire hazard management; however it will include actions to mitigate the impacts from historical and current pine plantations. To this end the majority of mature pine wildling removal has already occurred and efforts will now focus on managing its regrowth in the area known as 'Blue Range'. The remaining plantations will be harvested when of an appropriate age and the area returned to native vegetation, noting that this may be in decades to come.

### Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on actions achieved in 2018-19 and a reference to how these are being achieved.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 has been completed and forms the basis on how actions in the Reserve Management Plan are executed.

### Coordination of efforts

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

### Recommendation 4.1

Review the Terms of Reference for the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group, including relevant attendees, and revert to 'Phase 1' until all high and medium priority management actions outlined in the Reserve Management Plan 2018 are complete. This Group will then be critical to review and assess the Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at set intervals over time to facilitate adaptive management.

#### Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group was established to operate in two phases. Phase 1 was written into the Terms of Reference of the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Group to enable the prioritisation of the delivery of the Auditor-General's recommendations. As this task is still being completed (three of the 12 recommendations remain outstanding), the Committee remains in Phase 1.

Once the Committee has addressed the three remaining recommendations, it is proposed the Committee will move into Phase 2, which will be amended in acknowledgement of the intent of Recommendation 4.1 to read as follows: Phase 2: Key stakeholder liaison group for source water protection and land management within the Lower Cotter Catchment with an emphasis on consultation on the implementation of the Reserve Management Plan 2018 and monitoring and evaluation work.

As outlined in the Nature Conservation Act 2014, the custodian retains the responsibility for the delivery of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan and it is not appropriate for this task to fall to a committee. This change to the Terms of Reference of the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Group meets the intent of the recommendation.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

##### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Nil response.

### Recommendation 4.2

The Lower Cotter Catchment be placed as a standing agenda item on the Director's-General Water Group meeting for the life of the current Reserve Management Plan 2018. The Implementation Coordination Group Chair or a delegate should report to the meeting.

#### Government Response: Agreed

The Director's-General Water Group is the appropriate senior official's forum to oversee implementation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan, the group should receive regular progress reports from the Implementation Coordination Group.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Lower Cotter Catchment will be a standing agenda item on all future Director General Water Group meetings

### Recommendation 4.3

The Lower Cotter Catchment become a standing agenda item on the Regional Catchment Management Group meeting schedule, to ensure the consideration of matters concerning water security, climate change, bushfire management, water quality, and feral species, at a regional level.

#### Government Response: Agreed

The ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group is established under the ACT Water Resources Act 2007, to promote coordination and collaboration between Government and community stakeholders concerned with catchment management. This includes coordination between agencies in the ACT. Work to restore the Lower Cotter Catchment is an excellent test case in effective collaboration and cooperation in catchment management.

### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Lower Cotter Catchment will be a standing agenda item on all future ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group meetings

### Legislative interventions

#### Recommendation 5.1

ACT Government amend the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999 to allow for the immediate removal of abandoned vehicles by government authorities.

#### Government Response: Agreed in-principle

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (Emergency Services Agency) is convening a working group to strengthen operational arrangements to identify and quickly remove abandoned vehicles that pose fire risks, noting that the current legislation gives authorised officers the power to remove abandoned vehicles if they are causing a danger to the public. This includes arrangements around the sharing of information, reporting of abandoned vehicles and ensuring all relevant staff are fully aware of their existing powers. The working group will consider what operational and/or legislative changes may be needed to clarify the existing powers that the ACT holds to immediately remove abandoned vehicles and address issues with storage of such vehicles. The working group will include representation from Access Canberra, Environment, Planning and Sustainable development Directorate (EPSDD), Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and ACT Policing.

## Attachment C: Directorate actions in response to recommendations from the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

Further, since the release of the OCSE report, three trial closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras have been installed on roads leading to rural areas of the ACT. These cameras are expected to act as a deterrent to people abandoning vehicles as well as an aid in the investigation of such incidents.

### **ACT Government response (JACS)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- N/A

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Justice and Community Safety Directorate are consulting relevant stakeholders and will be convening the working group on this issue in the near future.

### **Recommendation 5.2**

ACT Government amend the Lower Cotter Catchment Activities Declaration to allow the restriction of public vehicular access to ecologically sensitive and isolated parts of the Lower Cotter Catchment.

### **Government Response: Agreed**

The Government will amend the Lower Cotter Catchment Activities Declaration by 30 June 2019. Restrictions of public vehicle access are being included to the most sensitive sites or sites that are secluded or isolated enough that they may enable anti-social behaviour including the ignition of fires. Whilst public vehicle access restriction may reduce the incidences of anti-social or illegal activity—including arson, it will not entirely prevent it.

### **ACT Government response (EPSDD)**

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

- Nature Conservation (Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve) Activities Declaration 2019
- Nature Conservation (Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve – Uriarra Village) Activities Declaration 2019

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Two new Activities Declarations covering the LCC are now enforceable as notifiable instruments (NI2017-417 and NI2019-418). These significantly improve the public clarity around prohibited and restricted recreational activities, including several changes to public vehicular access to sensitive areas of the LCC, and are more consistent with the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 policies and objectives.

## Attachment D: Update on directorate actions against investigations

The following table sets out the Commissioner's reporting requirements for the 2018-19 annual reporting period on directorate updates for actions in relation to recommendations resulting from investigations by the Commissioner.

<b>Lake Burley Griffin Investigation</b>
<b><i>Catchment management to improve the Lake's water quality</i></b>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>The ACT Government should develop a strategic approach to water-sensitive urban design (WSUD). This should include:</p> <p>a) Identifying sites where installing catchment intervention, such as wetlands and pollution control ponds, would improve water quality entering Lake Burley Griffin. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. initial feasibility studies into the construction of pollution control ponds or wetlands on the Yarralumla drainage line and Jerrabomberra Creek should be undertaken. Any installations should be designed to be of an appropriate size to treat the catchment area they service; and</li> <li>ii. identifying WSUD that complements current programs of installing wetlands and water control ponds in both new urban areas and retrofitting in existing suburbs where applicable.</li> </ul> <p>b) Ensuring that WSUD requirements are enforced in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ensuring that wetlands and ponds are of appropriate sizes to service their catchments; and</li> <li>ii. undertaking auditing/compliance arrangements to ensure that temporary pollution control ponds for sediment control during the construction phase in new estates are maintained and functioning effectively.</li> </ul> <p>c) Improving monitoring of the effectiveness of WSUD in urban developments to determine whether water quality meets WSUD general code targets. Results should be used to inform improvements in WSUD standards.</p> <p>d) Comparison of ACT approaches to WSUD with those of other Australian urban areas to help the Territory remain consistent with developing technology and best practice.</p> <p>e) Reviewing the efficacy of existing gross pollutant traps. The review should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. effectiveness in pollutant reduction;</li> <li>ii. effectiveness of current maintenance of pollution control measures</li> <li>iii. capital costs;</li> <li>iv. ongoing maintenance costs to ensure the current drainage infrastructure remains high-standard and is in line with current best practice, protecting downstream environments;</li> <li>v. reduction of polluted leachate water; and</li> <li>vi. the capacity to manage requirements of future urban growth and development.</li> </ul> <p>f) Working with the NCA and NSW councils.</p>

## Attachment D: Update on directorate actions against investigations

### Lake Burley Griffin Investigation

#### Commissioner's comment

Progress has been reported. Provide an update on actions achieved in 2018-19 and a reference to how each of the specific recommendations are being achieved in the table below, e.g. a specific committed action from a plan or strategy.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD, TCCS)

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Healthy Waterways Project

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Code and Guidelines

##### Actions completed in 2018-19

#### Recommendation a (i)

- The ACT Healthy Waterways Project (ACT HW) is a joint initiative of the Australian and ACT Governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and further downstream in the Murrumbidgee River system. It involves the construction of a range of infrastructure - ponds, wetlands, rain gardens and swales - designed to 'turn off' or reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment and pollutants entering our waterways. The Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchment are a focus of the ACT Healthy Waterways Project.
- 20 pieces of infrastructure were built in 6 priority catchments across the ACT in 2018-2019. This included assets in the Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchments. Assets are now undergoing establishment for a two year period, in which macrophytes (aquatic plants) are maintained as they develop their water quality improving characteristics.

#### Recommendation c

- The ACT Healthy Waterways Project has rolled out an asset evaluation monitoring program across the ACT. This monitoring program, called the Asset Evaluation Monitoring program aims to quantify the water quality performance of gross pollutant traps, ponds and wetlands across the ACT. This data in turn will be suitable for comparison to modelled performance from MUSIC, which in turn relates to the asset performance in relation to meeting the WSUD general code targets. This monitoring program will run until June 2020. Monitoring is being undertaken at four ponds and wetlands across the ACT.
- Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch continues to engage with volunteers across the entire catchment to monitor water quality, macroinvertebrates and riparian condition from ~200 sites across the ACT and region, including the Lake Burley Griffin catchment. Results of monitoring are published every year in the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch CHIP report.
- Work is progressing to release for public comment shortly an updated version of the WSUD General Code and supporting Guidelines. The WSUD Code has a series of targets for mains water reduction, water quality and stormwater quantity. The ACT Practice Guidelines for Water Sensitive Urban Design provide guidance and options for compliance with the WSUD Code for both private and public developments

Specific Recommendation

Reference to Recommendation

## Attachment D: Update on directorate actions against investigations

Lake Burley Griffin Investigation	
a) i. initial feasibility studies into the construction of pollution control ponds or wetlands on the Yarralumla drainage line and Jerrabomberra Creek should be undertaken. Any installations should be designed to be of an appropriate size to treat the catchment area they service.	As above
ii. identifying WSUD that complements current programs of installing wetlands and water control ponds in both new urban areas and retrofitting in existing suburbs where applicable.	
b) i. ensuring that wetlands and ponds are of appropriate sizes to service their catchments.	
ii. undertaking auditing/compliance arrangements to ensure that temporary pollution control ponds for sediment control during the construction phase in new estates are maintained and functioning effectively.	
c) Improving monitoring of the effectiveness of WSUD in urban developments to determine whether water quality meets WSUD general code targets. Results should be used to inform improvements in WSUD standards.	As above
d) Comparison of ACT approaches to WSUD with those of other Australian urban areas to help the Territory remain consistent with developing technology and best practice.	
e) Reviewing the efficacy of existing gross pollutant traps. The review should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. effectiveness in pollutant reduction;</li> <li>ii. effectiveness of current maintenance of pollution control measures</li> <li>iii. capital costs;</li> <li>iv. ongoing maintenance costs to ensure the current drainage infrastructure remains high-standard and is in line with current best practice, protecting downstream environments;</li> <li>v. reduction of polluted leachate water; and</li> <li>vi. the capacity to manage requirements of future urban growth and development</li> </ul>	
f) Working with the NCA and NSW councils.	
<b>Rural Catchment Management</b>	
<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>That the ACT and NSW governments and the National Capital Authority support planning and implementation of on-ground actions to reduce the potential for soil erosion in the upper Queanbeyan River, upper Molonglo River and Jerrabomberra Creek. In doing so active involvement of Palerang Council, the Molonglo Catchment Management Group, ACTEW and other NRM groups should continue to be strongly encouraged and supported.</p> <p><b>Commissioner's comment</b></p> <p>It is noted that support has been demonstrated through the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy and Implementation Plan. Provide an update on progress.</p> <p><b>ACT Government response (EPSDD)</b></p> <p>Relevant strategy, plan or program</p> <p>Action 18 of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy specifically addresses the mitigation of soil erosion at priority sites across the broader catchment by</p>	

## Attachment D: Update on directorate actions against investigations

### Lake Burley Griffin Investigation

identifying and prioritising significant erosion hotspots across the catchment and developing implementation responses as appropriate.

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Soil erosion in the Lower Cotter catchment has been reviewed and remediation work commenced, as it impacts on raw water quality of Canberra's drinking water. Icon Water has commenced a 'Googong Actions for Clean Water' project identifying erosion hotspots in the Googong catchment.

#### Recommendation 11

That the ACT Government finalise and implement the Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management. The plan should include adequate monitoring, reporting and review, and mechanisms to ensure effective cooperation between ACTEW, NSW and ACT in the management of the Googong Foreshores.

#### Commissioner's comment

This recommendation was made in 2012. In the 2016-17 Annual Report, it was reported that a review of the plan would be undertaken in 2018, should resources be available. Provide an update on progress.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

The Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management was approved by the Commonwealth in 2011 as meeting the requirements of a Land and Conservation Management Plan as detailed in the Googong lease. The plan was updated in 2016.

In 2019 a detailed review of the plan commenced. It is anticipated that the revised plan will be sent to the Commonwealth for their comments towards the end of 2019.

#### Management of other Recreational Waterways

### Lake Burley Griffin Investigation

#### Recommendation 16

A comprehensive assessment of environmental, social and economic value of key ACT lakes be undertaken and take into account current and predicted challenges to water quality. This assessment should inform:

- a) a review and update of *Canberra's Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management* involving extensive community consultation and taking into account the long-term challenges to water quality in the urban catchments;
- b) the need for government investments in water quality;
- c) decisions regarding trials of appropriate in-lake and catchment management measures, with the results assessed from scientific (environmental), social and economic perspectives; and
- d) decisions regarding implementation of lake and catchment management options.

#### Commissioner's comment

Progress has been reported. Provide an update on implementation of the Integrated Water Monitoring Plan.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Integrated Water Monitoring Plan

##### Actions completed in 2018-19

- The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan (IWMP) is complete and implementation has commenced. The IWMP provides a set of recommendations for updating the ACT Government monitoring programs and provides a critical evaluation of future data requirements to inform catchment modelling. A SOURCE model has been developed to deliver an assessment of what water quantity would be at end of pipe for water resource plan compliance. Further calibration of the SOURCE model has commenced, as identified in the IWMP. The calibrated version of the SOURCE model will be used to inform future catchment management actions regarding water quality management.
- Two new monitoring programs began in October 2018. These programs aim to collect water quality data from 1) a range of catchments across the ACT to inform the calibration of SOURCE and MUSIC models, and 2) ACT ponds and wetlands to quantify the performance of WSUD infrastructure in relation to trapping waterborne pollution.
- Stage 2 of the In-lake research in Lake Tuggeranong examined a range of management options to address blue-green algae in Lake Tuggeranong. This is in addition to the 7 WSUD assets built in the Tuggeranong catchment as part of the ACT Healthy Waterways program. Stage 3 of research in Lake Tuggeranong will commence in 2019/2020.
- Research has been completed in ACT urban ponds which aimed to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality. Outcomes from this research will inform management of these assets.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information has commenced. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible. Currently a range of water-related datasets are being ingested into this database, and the aim being to improve public access to data.

### Lake Burley Griffin Investigation

#### Recommendation 17

The ACT, Australian, NSW and local governments establish a Burley Griffin-Molonglo-Queanbeyan catchment management agreement. Such an agreement should outline:

- a) strategic objectives for the integrated and coordinated management of the Lake and catchments, to encompass water quality, environmental flows, potable water, land use, wastewater, and future urban and climate change impacts on the catchment;
- b) each party's responsibilities for water quality in the Lake and its catchments;
- c) a long-term catchment planning framework; and
- d) an evidence-based, adaptive, management workplan.

To avoid past challenges of multi-jurisdictional catchment management co-ordination, such an agreement should include a dedicated governance group with representation from all jurisdictions, a consistent and persistent mechanism to ensure implementation and accountability, and reporting requirements.

The National Capital Authority, as Lake manager, should in the first instance convene a meeting of relevant jurisdictional representatives to guide the above recommendations.

#### Commissioner's comment

Progress was reported on the priority actions in the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group 2017-18 Annual Report. Provide an update on implementation of these actions in 2018-19.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The establishment of ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group and the actions outlined under the Catchment Strategic Operational Plan governed by this group, achieves the intergrated regional approach and coordinated challenges of multi-jurisdictional catchment management outlined in this recommendation. NCA is an integral member of this Committee.

##### Actions completed in 2018-19

- Under the catchment Strategic Opetational Plan the Committee has progressed measures to,
  - -Establish an inter-jurisdictional investment and resourcing framework
  - -Promote evidence based decision making for improved healthy catchments
  - -Continue to inform a catchment wide assessment of vulnerability to climate change
  - -Align enforcement between NSW and the ACT on catchment management practices
  - -Develop an integrated catchment emergency response plan
  - -Provide an integrated catchment management planning approach for growth and settlement patterns in the ACT and region
  - -Improve water quality, protect and restore aquatic ecosystem health and reduce nutrient, sediment and pathogen loads at key sites across the catchment
  - -Develop a regional approach to strategic land and biodiversity management practices

### Report on the Canberra Nature Park (nature reserves), Molonglo River Corridor (nature reserves) and Googong Foreshores Investigation

#### Recommendation 4.2

Reviewing the Canberra Nature Park Management Plan 1999 as mandated under the Planning and Development Act 2007 and in so doing include:

- nature reserves added to the reserve system since 1999;
- addresses categorising nature reserves (recommendation 3.4);
- policies to address current issues and those developed since 1999, particularly;
- Action Plan No. 27 - ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy;
- Action Plan No. 28 - ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy;
- Action Plan No. 29 - ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy; and
- consideration of climate change (including Impacts of Climate on the Canberra Nature Park: Risks and responses by Dr Bob Webb - Appendix E) and connectivity (including Ecological Connectivity for Climate Change in the ACT and surrounding region by Manning et al.).

#### Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on the review of the Canberra Nature Park Plan of Management.

#### ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan

#### Actions completed in 2018-19

- A review of the 1999 Canberra Nature Park Management Plan has been completed.
- A new draft Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan has been prepared and will be released for public comment in 2019.
- The new draft plan includes updated information on the Commissioner's recommendations.



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# List of Acronyms

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ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ANU	Australian National University
CEMP	Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CSD	Community Services Directorate
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EDU	Education Directorate
EEIS	Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
NSW	New South Wales
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

# Section A. Transmittal Certificate





COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
AND THE  
ENVIRONMENT

## TRANSMITTAL CERTIFICATE

Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA  
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 6(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements under the Annual Report Directions.

It has been prepared in conformity with other legislation applicable to the preparation of the Annual Report by the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

I certify that information in the attached annual report, and information provided for whole of government reporting, is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has been included for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

I hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006*, Part 2.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you present the report to the Legislative Assembly within 15 weeks after the end of the reporting year.

Yours sincerely

Professor Kate Auty (Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne)  
Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

19 September 2018

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# Section B. Organisational Overview and Performance



## B.1 Organisational Overview

### B.1.1 COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (the Commissioner) is appointed under the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993* (the Act) and is accountable to the Legislative Assembly through the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is an independent statutory position.

No other legislation is administered by the Commissioner who also has no other statutory functions.

### B.1.2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

#### VISION:

An environmentally sustainable ACT, region and Australia.

#### MISSION:

To act as an independent voice for the environment and sustainability in the ACT, and promote community engagement.

#### VALUES:

Transparency, integrity, independence, research rigour and inclusion.

### B.1.3 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Commissioner undertakes the following functions (these are discussed at greater length in **Section B.2**):

1. State of the Environment Reporting for the ACT (s19 of the Act),
2. Investigations:
  - a. as directed by the Minister (s12(1)(b) of the Act), or
  - b. at the discretion of the Commissioner, into agencies where actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT (s12(1)(c) of the Act), and
3. Investigations of complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a territory authority, or about issues relating to ecologically sustainable development (s13 of the Act).

**STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING**

**INVESTIGATIONS**

**COMPLAINTS**

### B.1.4 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPORTING

The Commissioner is not required to report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

However, the Commissioner and her staff undertake the following:

- contribute as a member of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group,
- commence every team meeting with an acknowledgement of country,
- seek Indigenous people's contribution where appropriate,
- use social media to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, and
- report on Aboriginal heritage in the State of the Environment Report.

## COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

The office is committed to pursuing a vision of reconciliation that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and values. This includes the ability for Aboriginal people to partake in cultural practices on Country and actively participate in planning and management of land and water.

Furthermore, the office is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and systems of governance that facilitate cultural practices on Country and continuing the dialogue with government and research institutions to find the balance between traditional practices and accepted scientific approaches.

In the development of publications, respectful and early engagement with Traditional Custodians is undertaken at every possible opportunity and followed with appropriate citation, remuneration and recognition of intellectual property.

## B.1.5 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

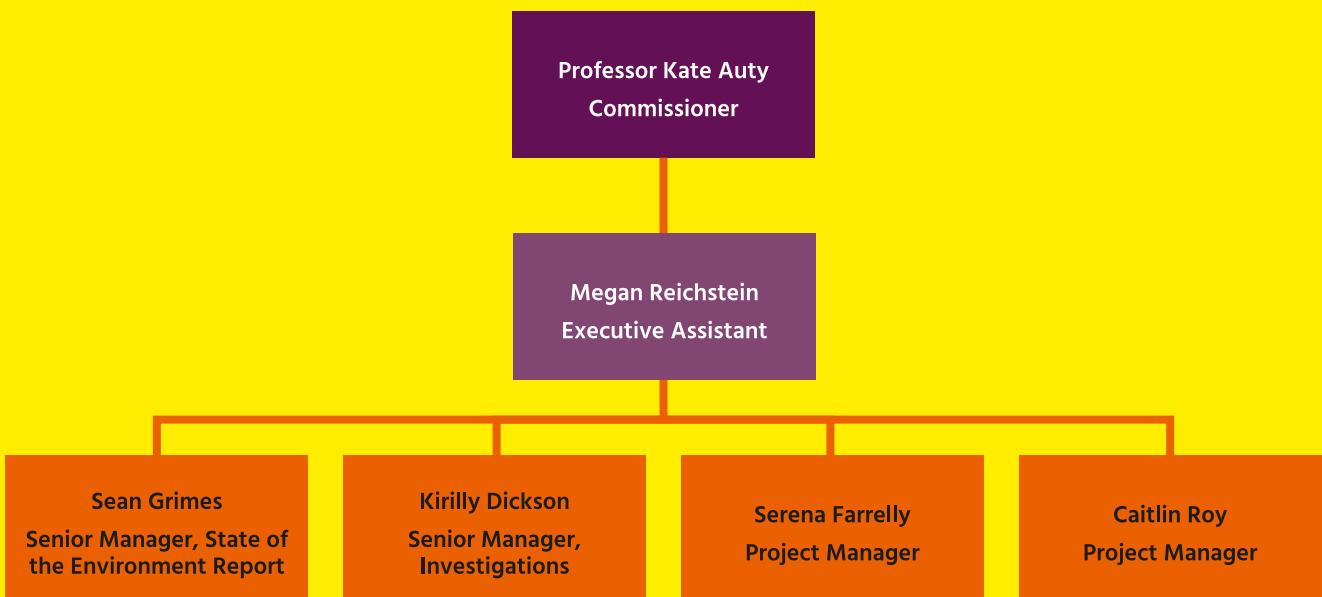
The ACT Commissioner is a Senior Executive Service 2.3 ministerial appointment. The Commissioner’s remuneration is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

The current Commissioner, Professor Kate Auty, holds the following additional roles as at 30 June 2018:

- an Honorary Professorial Fellow with the Faculty of Architecture’s Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, University of Melbourne,
- a Chair of the Banksia Foundation Board,
- a director of the Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation, and
- an advisory board member of the:
  - Institute of Applied Ecology (University of Canberra) External Advisory Panel,
  - Future Earth Australia Advisory Council (Australian Academy of Science), and
  - Environment and Society Synthesis Program (Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University (ANU)).

The Commissioner is supported by a core team of two full-time senior managers (SOG B equivalent), two project managers (SOG C) and one office manager (ASO 6). This is the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (the office) – see **Figure 1**.

**FIGURE 1:** COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT ORGANISATIONAL CHART



The staff of the office have professional expertise in a wide range of skills including engineering, law, aquatic ecology, environmental management, auditing and human ecology. Having these skills in the office means a reduction in the costs associated with contracting external consultants.

Office staff members are employed under the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and observe the *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*.<sup>1</sup>

When workloads increase the Commissioner can employ additional temporary staff.

The office pays for corporate support from EPSDD for matters such as:

- accommodation,
- financial reporting,
- records management,
- recruitment, and
- other personnel services.

Shared Services Information and Communication Technology – located within Commerce and Works of the Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) – provides:

- information management,
- procurement, and
- information technology support.

## B.1.6 STAKEHOLDERS

The Commissioner engages in consultation with, and receives briefings from:

- Federal Government
  - Department of Environment and Energy, and
  - Department of Defence.
- Territory Government
  - EPSDD, and
  - Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).
- Other government agencies
  - National Capital Authority,
  - Threatened Species Commissioner,
  - ACT Human Rights Commission (Public Advocate, Children and Young People Commissioner), and
  - ACT Auditor-General.
- Universities
  - Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, and
  - Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU.
- Disciplinary experts
  - Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra, and
  - EPSDD Conservation Research.



*Mature tree in Kinlyside Nature Reserve. Source Kirilly Dickson*

<sup>1</sup> ACT Government, 2010: *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*

- Educationalists and skills trainers
  - Australian Association of Environmental Educators and Canberra Institute of Technology.
- Non-government organisations with environment and sustainability interests
  - SEE-Change,
  - the Conservation Council ACT Region,
  - Canberra Ornithologists Group, and
  - Friends of Grasslands, Landcare and catchment groups.
- Experts as necessary for reporting and specific organisational functions in respect of
  - the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for the Proof of Concept, and
  - the 2017 Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy (full list at **Appendix 1**).
- The Commissioner attends and presents at forums, in accordance with invitations and in respect of matters of interest. These have included:
  - the opening address at the 2017 Ecocity World Summit; the Fenner Conference on the Environment: Urban Sustainability and Conservation,
  - a keynote speaker at the Australian Climate, Water and Forests Leadership Forum; the Better Laws for a Better Planet Environmental Law Symposium; Annual Water Matters Conference,
  - chairing a Chief Executive Officer's panel and concluding remarks at Banksia Ignite; chairing the ANU Climate Update 2018; facilitating panel discussions regarding Women on Bikes; the Climate Adaptation conference; the ACT Grassy Woodlands Forum, and
  - contributing to panel discussions for the National Health and Medical Research Council; the Network of Environmental Social Scientists Forum; the Blue Shield Australia Symposium.

For a more extensive list of presentations by the Commissioner and her staff at conferences, seminars and forums please refer to **Appendix 2**.

Staff in the office organised an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, multi-directorate seminar on 29 May 2018 with two early career scientists discussing recent extreme events in Australia and how to improve communication of science. This event was well attended by approximately 45 people. Positive feedback was provided by participants on the relevance of this session.



## Seminar: Climate change and ideas on how to better communicate science

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May  
1:30pm-2:30pm**

**Ground Floor North Function Room, Dame Pattie Menzies House,  
16 Challis St, Dickson**



Dust storm in Sydney (Sept 2009)  
Christophe Loutay / Aurora Photos

Would you like to know more about recent extreme rainfall and temperature events in Australia?

Want to know how to communicate scientific information better?

Then come along to this seminar to learn from these two interesting speakers:

- [Dr Sophie Lewis](#), Senior Lecturer in Geography at the University of NSW in Canberra. Sophie will speak about her recent research into extreme rainfall and temperature events.
- [Dr Rebecca Colvin](#), Knowledge Exchange Specialist at the Climate Change Institute, Australian National University. Rebecca will speak about how to make information, in particular climate change information, more approachable for the general public.



ANU closed due to flash flooding (Feb 2018)  
ABC News

Please RSVP by Thursday 24 May to [serena.farrely@act.gov.au](mailto:serena.farrely@act.gov.au).

## B.1.7 THE COMMISSIONER'S ACHIEVEMENTS

A summary of the Commissioner's achievements in 2017–18 against each key function follows.

### B.1.7.1 MONITORING THE ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE 2015 ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The response of the ACT Government to the Recommendations of the *ACT State of the Environment Report 2015*<sup>2</sup> was tabled towards the end of 2016. This document can be found on the Commissioner's website ([www.envcomm.act.gov.au](http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au)).

Progress reports on the 10 Recommendations are detailed in **Section B.2.3.2**.

### B.1.7.2 COMMISSIONING OF SPECIAL REPORTS

The office received a Ministerial direction pursuant to ss12(1)(b) and 21(1)(a) of the Act to investigate and report on three matters on 8 June 2016 and additional matters on 17 July 2017 and 17 December 2017. These are:

- the implementation of ACT Government climate change policies, as detailed in *AP2: a new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*,<sup>3</sup>
- the implementation of the commitments in the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*,<sup>4</sup>
- evaluation of the restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment,
- an independent audit of the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance (NES Plan)*<sup>5</sup> and its associated actions for the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment, and
- evaluation of the *Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010* and assessment of whether any changes were necessary.

The Special Reports are discussed in **Section B.2.1.2**.

### B.1.7.3 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADDRESSED

The Commissioner responds to complaints from the public in accordance with the Act. The Act provides the Commissioner with a discretion not to investigate certain complaints (s14 of the Act).

Typically only a few complaints are received each year.

The Commissioner routinely forwards complaints to the appropriate directorate for attention. If the response requires further consideration, the Commissioner explores the issues raised and may determine to undertake an investigation.

Details of complaints received and how these were addressed are outlined in **Section B.2.1.3**.

### B.1.7.4 OTHER SUBMISSIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commissioner regularly provides input into government consultation processes to promote environmental sustainability.

A list of the submissions provided in this reporting year is outlined in **Section B.2.4.3**.

### B.1.7.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY IN FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE

The community engagement activities of the office have been expanded with the enhancement of the social media profile and the continuation or recommencement of a number of initiatives such as support for the Parliament of Youth. For further detail refer to **Section B.2.4.2**.



Over 200 students at the panel session of the Parliament of Youth. Source Caitlin Roy

2 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2015: State of the Environment Report 2015

3 ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the Australian Capital Territory*

4 Umwelt, 2013: *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan, Final*

5 ACT Planning and Land Authority, 2011: [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/600964/NES\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/600964/NES_Plan.pdf), accessed 27 August 2018

## B.1.8 OUTLOOK: CURRENT AND FUTURE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

The issues which will continue to present challenges and opportunities to the ACT include climate change, transport policy and practice, sustainable land development, our ecological footprint and water.

### B.1.8.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

**“Climate change brings risks that will impact every aspect of our society. Scientific evidence tells us there is an urgent need for action on part of our communities, and our governments, to get the job done.”**

ACT Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability,  
Shane Rattenbury.<sup>6</sup>

We know that we are facing grave climate change challenges including – hotter, drier days and nights and more extreme weather events, heat related illness and deaths, increased bushfire risks, water resource threats, changes to the distribution of species (creating winners and losers) impacts on agricultural productivity and undermining of the built fabric. The work of climate scientists like Dr Sophie Lewis (ANU) illustrates the record breaking events with which we have been contending.

The ACT has set ambitious climate change targets, demonstrating leadership in Australia and is among the leaders of climate policy in the world. In May 2018, the ACT Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Shane Rattenbury, announced the government is bringing forward the previous target of achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions by five years to 2045.

Climate change impacts will be felt by biodiversity and humanity.

**‘Direct health effects from an unstable climate are readily identifiable, and community awareness is increasing. However, recovery from extreme climatic events is commonly protracted, frequently poorly understood, poorly planned, and poorly funded. The result is mental stress super-imposed on the initial loss, which is reinforced by the large scale, and significant erosion of community cohesion and relationships.’<sup>7</sup>**

Dr Liz Hanna, ANU

Our current level of infrastructure provision may not meet the need as conditions change.

**‘Over the last decade, severe heatwaves around Australia have resulted in deaths and an increased number of hospital admissions for heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease and acute renal failure.’<sup>8</sup>**

We will need to take a much more strategic approach to conserving vegetation and improving habitat connectivity, as this will be under extra pressure due to climate change.

Trees in urban areas play a particularly important role in mitigating the urban heat island effect, as well as providing habitat for animals and birds.

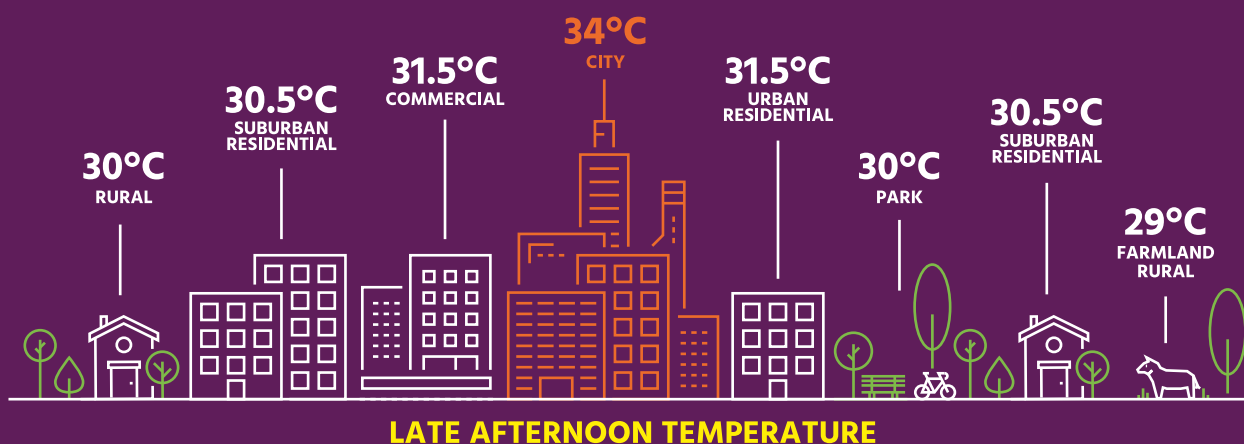
6 [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/rattenbury/2018/nations-climate-action-capital-sets-world-leading-environmental-targets](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/rattenbury/2018/nations-climate-action-capital-sets-world-leading-environmental-targets), accessed 16 July 2018

7 Parkinson D and Zara C, 2013: *The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster*, The Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 28(2)

8 Climate Council, 2017: *Cranking Up the Intensity: Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events*

## THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND CONCEPT

URBAN CITY AREAS HAVE UP TO 5°C HIGHER TEMPERATURES THAN RURAL FARMLANDS



*The Urban Heat Island – urban city areas have up to 5 degrees C higher temperatures than rural farmlands*

A report released in November 2017 by the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub outlines the expected risks to Australia’s urban forest from climate change and urban heat, including Canberra.<sup>9</sup> The findings of this study demonstrate that for a business as usual climate scenario in 2070, 40% of trees in the urban forest have a risk rating from some to high for being vulnerable to future predicted temperatures.<sup>10</sup>

### B.1.8.2 TRANSPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE

**“The future for transport is clear – it is renewable and it is electric.”**

Former ACT Deputy Chief Minister, Simon Corbell.<sup>11</sup>

As the city of Canberra grows, the pressures on transport will require ongoing attention. In the last ten years, major greenfield developments in Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley have demonstrated that our current approach to transport needs to be more responsive to demand. Furthermore, the transport sector contributes significant greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>12</sup>

ACT households are highly dependent on private vehicles, with each household owning an average of 1.8 vehicles.<sup>13</sup>

9 [http://www.nesurban.edu.au/publications-resources/research-reports/CAULRR07\\_RisksAustralianUrbanForest\\_Nov2017.pdf](http://www.nesurban.edu.au/publications-resources/research-reports/CAULRR07_RisksAustralianUrbanForest_Nov2017.pdf), accessed 16 July 2018

10 Ibid

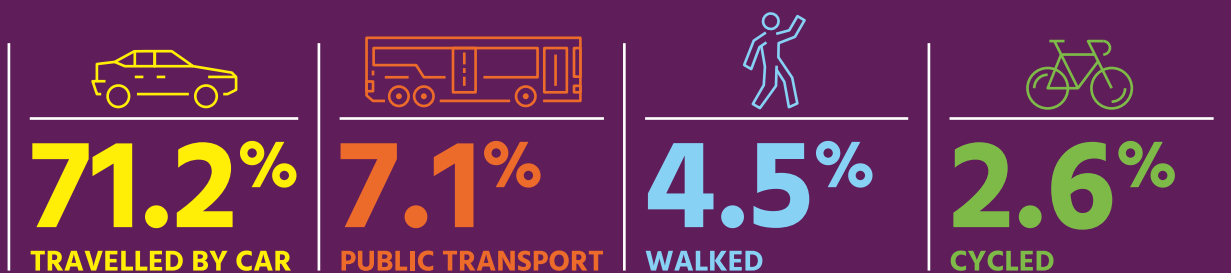
11 [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/corbell/2016/act-government-brings-hydrogen-energy-storage-to-canberra](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/corbell/2016/act-government-brings-hydrogen-energy-storage-to-canberra), accessed 16 July 2018

12 ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the Australian Capital Territory*

13 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016, [http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/8ACTE?opendocument](http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/8ACTE?opendocument), accessed 10 August 2018

# ACT TRANSPORT MODES

## HOW DO CANBERRANS TRAVEL TO WORK?



**WE OWN ON AVERAGE 1.8 MOTOR VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD AND ONLY 5.5% DO NOT OWN CARS.**

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-  
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Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census

Planning and development regulations allow developments to be built with minimal or no car parks. However, without demonstration sites, it is difficult to determine how such a policy would be accepted by Canberrans.

The development of the light rail, and the urban renewal underway along the light rail route, presents a unique chance to change our behaviours and transport paradigms. Interest in carless households is emerging. Share-car companies, reliable and functional public transport options, functional cycleways and a society that desires clean and healthy living, are all promoting a shift to no-car homes.

The most significant change in transport is anticipated to come from electric vehicles, as transport represents one of the greatest challenges in achieving the ACT Government target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. By 2020, it is expected that over 60% of the ACT's emissions will be from transportation.<sup>14</sup>

On 28 August 2017, Canberra's first electric and hybrid buses began picking up passengers, with one hybrid and two electric buses as part of a 12 month trial. The ACT Government sees this as a "stepping stone to the future."<sup>15</sup> In April 2018, the ACT Government released an action plan for the *ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles*. This reflects the global shift to zero emissions vehicles which is already well underway.

<sup>14</sup> ACT Government, 2018. *The ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan 2018–21*

<sup>15</sup> The Canberra Times, 25 August 2017, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/act/canberras-first-electric-and-hybrid-buses-go-into-service-on-monday-20170825-gy3x0r.html>, accessed 30 August 2018



100% electric cars. Source Kate Auty

The *Transport for Canberra*<sup>16</sup> policy is under review and provides the opportunity to meet these challenges and improve the sustainability of our transport practices. It will require both good policy and community engagement to achieve the best outcomes.

### B.1.8.3 SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT

The ACT population is predicted to grow to 500,000 by 2033.<sup>17</sup> The populations of the satellite cities of Yass and Queanbeyan will continue to act as feeder cities and residents of those towns will continue to be users of ACT roads, transport, health, sporting, schools and other infrastructure. The new Ginninderry development (construction commenced April 2018) is a cross-border development that will also utilise facilities in the ACT to serve an estimated population of 30,000 people.<sup>18</sup>

The Gungahlin Strategic Assessment (endorsed June 2013) and the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment (endorsed October 2011) are the other two large development projects currently underway in the ACT. While these developments provide housing, they also put pressure on the natural environment, as residential areas and associated facilities significantly disturb the landscape and are constructed adjacent to nature reserves which

provide habitat to nationally threatened species. For more information on these two developments refer to **Section B.2.1.2**.

The way we develop our city is critical to the environment and our community. A city built well is a healthy city. Such a city provides all residents with the opportunity to live in areas with the essential elements of a liveable community. Population growth and climate change require innovative solutions to create resilient cities able to address the physical, social and economic challenges of the 21st century.

We need access to affordable and diverse housing options, linked via public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to employment, education, local shops, public open space and parks, health and community services, leisure and cultural centres.

Land development in the ACT needs to continually evolve to meet these challenges and provide a city that is healthy and socially equitable.

<sup>16</sup> ACT Government, 2012: *Transport for Canberra Policy*

<sup>17</sup> <http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/demography/projections/act/total> accessed 16 July 2018

<sup>18</sup> <https://ginninderry.com/visit-ginninderry-thursday-17-may-sue-cassidy-australian-garden-history-society/>, accessed 18 July 2018



Restoration plantings at Barrer Hill, Molonglo Valley. Source Kirilly Dickson

#### B.1.8.4 OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

The ACT continues to exhibit the largest ecological footprint on average per person of any Australian jurisdiction (8.9 hectares). This is about three and a half times the global average (according to our most recent calculations of ACT data).

Our total ecological footprint based on 2011–12 data was about 14 times the land area of the ACT and with current patterns, by 2060 it will be approximately 24 times the area of the ACT.

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### FACT

The average ecological footprint of Canberrans is 8.9 global ha per person

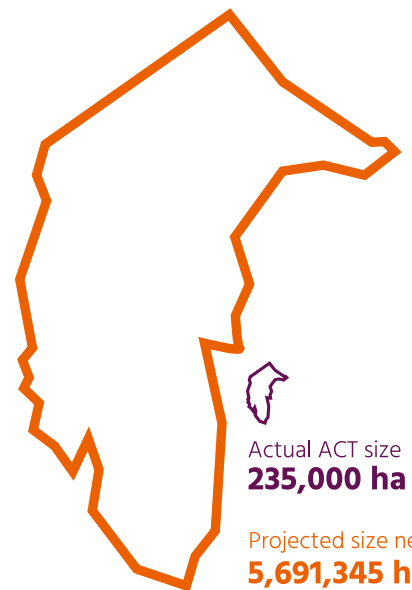
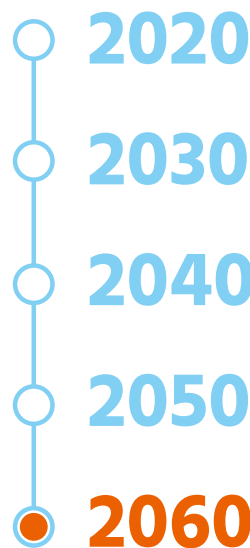
Based on 2011 - 2012 data



### PROJECTION POPULATION GROWTH FROM

**2016** → **2060**  
**396,675** → **669,814**  
**PEOPLE** → **PEOPLE**

From the State of Environment Report 2015



Ecological Footprint of people in the ACT. Source Alex Garret

It becomes increasingly important to engage the ever-growing population in the ACT with the ecosystems which sustain and surround them. Enhancing people's awareness of their impact on the environment could lead to a reduction in use of resources, thereby reducing our ecological footprint.

Action to reduce the ecological footprint of Canberrans will need to be intergenerational and unified across all demographics and sectors.

To this end it is good to see the work being done in the ACT Parliament of Youth, with which the Commissioner is aligned. This involves children and young people, their parents, school communities, teachers, principals and non-government organisations with an interest in environmental sustainability.

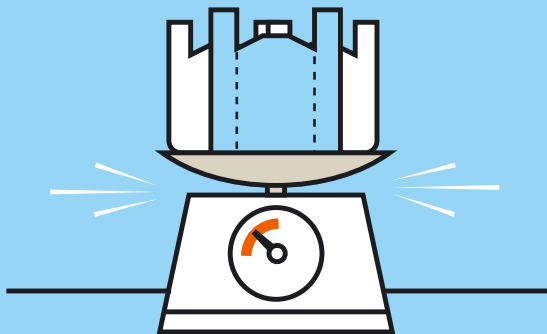
Actsmart's work on sustainability in schools is of paramount importance in encouraging young people to address energy, transport, waste and water conservation challenges. All ACT schools are signed up to the Actsmart program.

The ecological footprint of people in the ACT will be re-examined by the office later in 2018 using more recent data. This will allow us to compare how things have changed over the last few years. This will be reported in the 2019 State of the Environment Report.

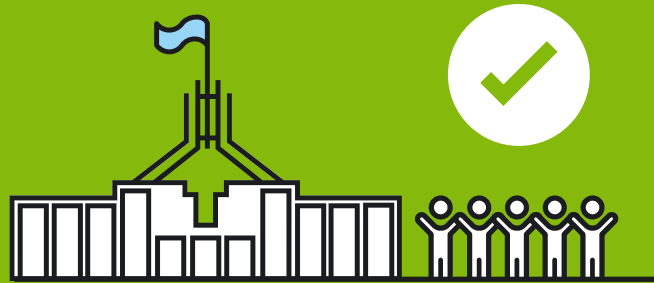
Over the past 12 months, the issue of waste, particularly plastic, has featured prominently in the media across the country. This relates to our levels of consumption, which are particularly high in the ACT and which contribute to our large per capita ecological footprint.

The ACT introduced legislation in November 2011 to reduce the amount of single use plastic by requiring a minimum thickness of plastic bags with the aim that they will be reused several times. This legislation is estimated to have reduced our plastic bag consumption by about 55 million plastic bags in 2017–18. However, in the same period, the ACT still used about 9.5 million reusable plastic bags, and 9.6 million boutique plastic bags (those that are branded by the retailer and thicker than other plastic bags).<sup>19</sup>

## THE ACT PLASTIC BAG BAN HAS REDUCED OUR PLASTIC BAG USE:



BY **1132** TONNES  
FROM 2011 – 2018



**199** TONNES  
IN 2017–18 ALONE  
**AROUND 55 MILLION PLASTIC BAGS**

19 Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2018: *Unfantastic Plastic - Review of the ACT Plastic Shopping Bag Ban*



Boomerang bags at The Market, Wanniasa. Source Kirilly Dickson

It is critical that whatever bags people use, they reuse them as many times as possible and that we need to take further action to reduce our plastic addiction.

To be effective in reducing the ecological footprint of our community we need to improve community engagement. This is not only a practical challenge but also a theoretical one. Further exploration of this can be found in the 2017 *Implementation Status Report of ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*<sup>20</sup> produced by our office.

#### Case Study

### WHAT HAPPENS TO LEFTOVER FOOD AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE?

The number of people in Federal Parliament House varies greatly depending on whether it is a sitting week (3500 people) or not (1600 people).<sup>21</sup> This means that planning in the kitchen can be a challenge, in particular the minimisation of food waste.

In 2017, the Department of Parliamentary Services partnered with OzHarvest to help reduce food waste. On most Fridays, OzHarvest now collects excess food from Parliament House for distribution to those in need.

The chefs have become quite creative with reusing leftovers to make a new menu item the next day, such as:

- grilled cheese sandwiches with ketchup chutney made from over-ripe tomatoes and leftover cheese from buffet platters,
- chicken leek mornay with fried polenta made from leftover pie mix, filling and polenta which was close to expiration, and
- protein bliss bites made with excess seeds, nuts and grains also close to expiration.

Parliament House also had three bee-hives installed in March 2017 to raise awareness about bee decline and to contribute to the global effort of saving these critical species.<sup>22</sup>

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15

20 Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2017: *Implementation Status Report of the ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*

21 <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/act/what-happens-to-the-leftover-food-at-parliament-house-20180622-p4zn5j.html>, accessed 8 August 2018

22 [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Department\\_of\\_Parliamentary\\_Services/Publications/Annual\\_Report\\_2016-17/Part\\_4\\_Report\\_on\\_Activities/Chief\\_Operating\\_Officer\\_Division/Parliament\\_House\\_abuzz\\_with\\_new\\_beehives](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Department_of_Parliamentary_Services/Publications/Annual_Report_2016-17/Part_4_Report_on_Activities/Chief_Operating_Officer_Division/Parliament_House_abuzz_with_new_beehives), accessed 8 August 2018

### B.1.8.5 WATER

Climate change will have significant impacts on water availability, water quality and surrounding ecosystems and environments. By 2030, climate change is predicted to cause a 10% decrease in the volume of surface water in Australia. Research from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) indicates south-eastern Australia will be one of the most impacted areas of the Murray-Darling Basin, with expected increases in surface temperatures, evaporation rates and water demand from existing water users.<sup>23</sup>

It is important that water planners clearly identify and demonstrate how climate trends and projections have been considered in developing water plans, planning

frameworks and supporting documentation. This includes the need to describe objectives, how water will be managed to take account of climate variability within a planning period, and how water planning approaches may need to transition over time to respond to potential longer-term climate impacts.

Fortunately for the ACT and surrounding region, the ACT Government is already taking considerable steps to adapt our land and water resources to climate change through the *ACT Water Strategy 2014–44* and the *H2OK: Keeping our Waterways Healthy* program. These issues will also be addressed in the Commissioner’s evaluation of restoration in the Lower Cotter Catchment due December 2018 and the forthcoming State of the Environment Report 2019.



Promotional material used in the H2OK campaign. Source ACT Government

23 <https://www.mdba.gov.au/discover-basin/landscape/climate> accessed 2 August 2018

## B.2 Performance Analysis

### B.2.1 REPORT ON STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ACT

#### B.2.1.1 STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

This section relates to statutory functions under s19 of the Act.

The *2019 ACT State of the Environment Report* is currently under development. The report will cover the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019. The report will be delivered to the Minister on 21 December 2019. The Minister then has six sitting days to present the report to the Legislative Assembly.

Over the 2017–18 period, planning and development was undertaken for the *2019 ACT State of the Environment Report*. This included determining the preferred content and structure of the report, as well as the products for public release. The Commissioner recognises the need to better engage the ACT community by improving the communication and accessibility of state of the environment reporting. To assist in this process, the office is engaging with a range of experts on science communication and website development. In addition, the office is working with the ACT Government and a range of external experts to determine key data requirements for the *2019 ACT State of the Environment Report*.

The *2019 ACT State of the Environment Report* will continue the work already progressed in the development of environmental accounts for the ACT using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.<sup>24</sup> In September 2017, the Commissioner released a proof of concept exposure draft *Environmental-Economic Accounts for ACT State of Environment Reporting*.<sup>25</sup> This proof of concept presented ACT environmental accounts for land, environmental condition, biodiversity, water, air emissions, solid waste and environmental expenditure. The work required cooperation between many people and agencies

including ANU, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, the Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW) and ACT Government. The experiences gained, and the collaborations formed as a result of this process, will be used to inform the development of further environmental-economic accounting work for state of the environment reporting in the ACT. Other ACT accounts are under consideration. The office is also in the process of scoping work to account more extensively for ecosystems, ecosystem services and biodiversity.

An update on implementation of the ten recommendations from the *2015 State of the Environment Report* can be found in **Section B.2.3.2**.

#### B.2.1.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

This section relates to the statutory functions under s12 of the Act.

In 2016, and again in 2017, the Commissioner received a Ministerial direction to conduct specific investigations and prepare reports on the following:

1. Implementation of ACT Government climate change policies, as detailed in *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*<sup>26</sup> through Implementation Status Reports in 2014, 2017 and 2020. The 2017 report was completed on time and submitted to the Minister (30 September 2017). The Government Response was tabled in early 2018 with agreement to 16 of the 17 recommendations. An update from the ACT Government on the progress of these recommendations is outlined in **Section B.2.3.2**. A list of experts consulted on for this report is included in **Appendix 1**.

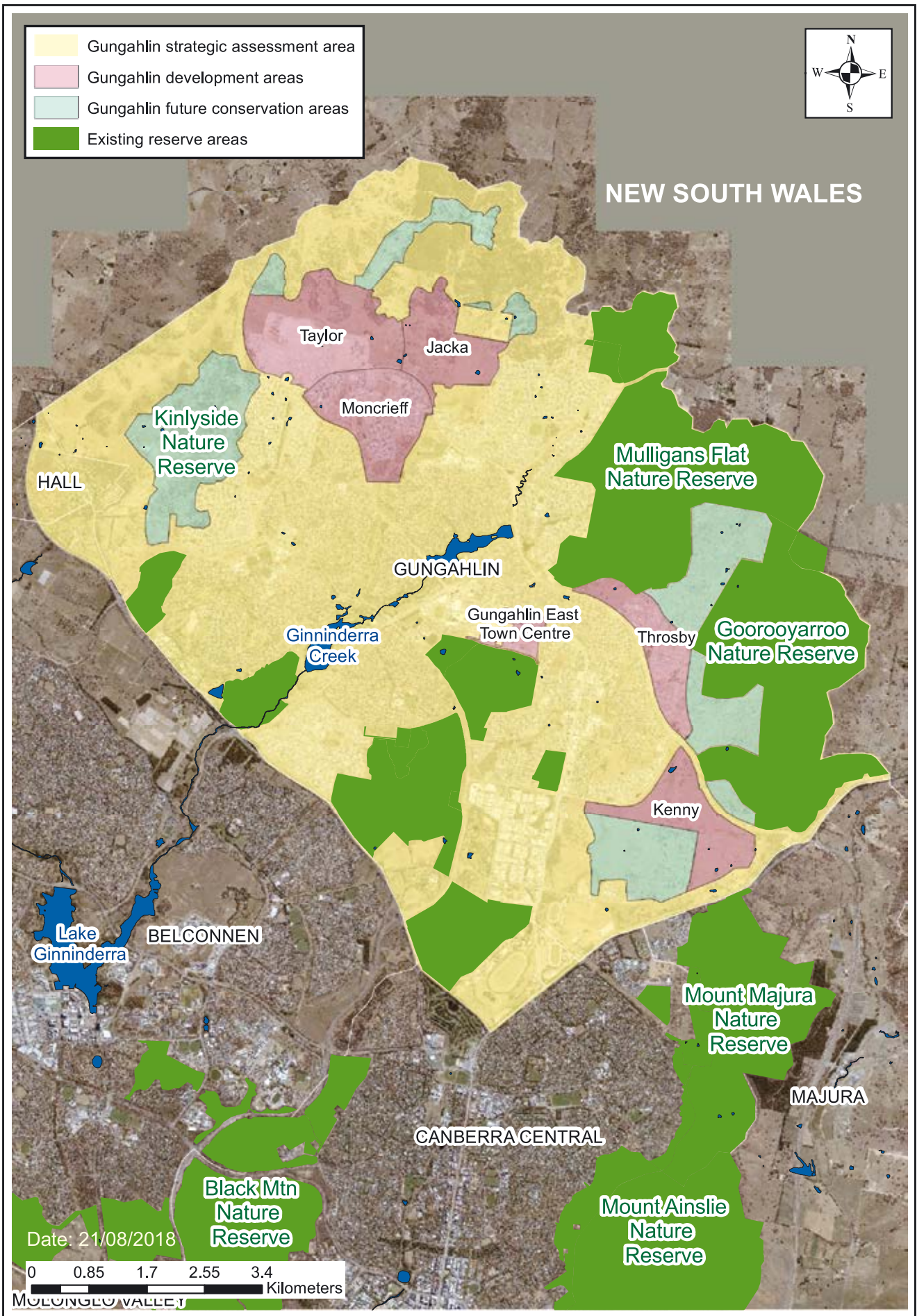
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<sup>24</sup> United Nations, et. al. 2014, *System of Environmental Economic Accounting 2012 Central Framework*, New York

<sup>25</sup> Smith, B., Summers, D., Vardon, M. 2017, *Environmental-economic accounts for ACT State of the Environment Reporting: Proof of concept*, ACT Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Canberra

<sup>26</sup> ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*

**FIGURE 2:** MAP 1: LOCATION OF THE GUNGAHLIN STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT IN THE ACT



- An audit of the implementation of the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*<sup>27</sup> (pursuant to a direction from the Australian Government in the Plan under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)). This involved an audit of 37 commitments from the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*.

The first report was due on 20 December 2017 and was submitted to EPSDD on 20 November 2017 to allow timely submission to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy. It was submitted to the Minister on time. Five Corrective Action Requests were made in the report and all five were responded to satisfactorily within the required timeframes. An update on implementation of these Corrective Action Requests is outlined in **Section B.2.3.2**. The audit report included eight recommendations which were all agreed to in the Government Response.

- An independent audit of the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance* and its associated actions for the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment. This involved an audit of 60 commitments in the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance*.

The report was due on 7 May 2018 and was submitted to EPSDD on 6 April 2018 to allow timely submission to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment

and Energy. It was submitted to the Minister on time. Four Corrective Action Requests were made in the report and the first one was responded to satisfactorily in the reporting period. Twelve recommendations were given in the report and the Government Response is due to be provided by 4 November 2018.

- An evaluation of the operations of the *Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010* and assessment of whether any changes were necessary.

The report was submitted to the Minister in the next reporting period.<sup>28</sup>

- An evaluation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration (pursuant to the Auditor-General's Recommendation 12 in the *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment – Auditor General's Report 2015*).<sup>29</sup>

A contract with University of Canberra and Arup has been initiated to support the office to develop a long term monitoring and evaluation framework to consistently assess water quality and ecological restoration in the Lower Cotter Catchment over time.

An Expert Reference Group including experts in ecology, hydrology, restoration assessment, geology and fire ecology has been established to provide technical advice on the evaluation and monitoring framework.

The project is on track to meet the December 2018 deadline.



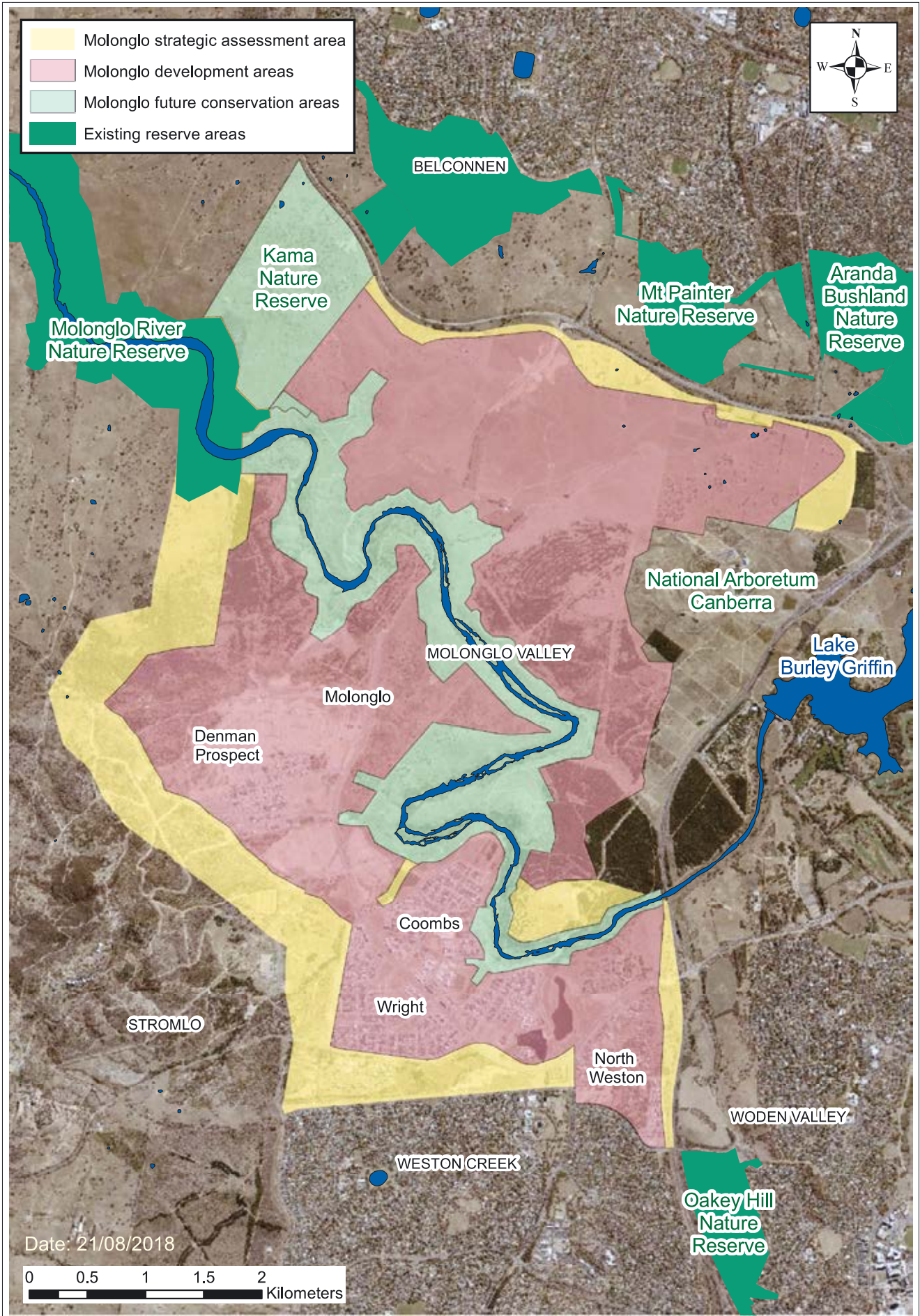
*Restoration in the Lower Cotter Catchment. Source Ian Falconer*

<sup>27</sup> Umwelt, 2013: *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan, Final*

<sup>28</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2018: *Unfantastic Plastic - Review of the ACT Plastic Shopping Bag Ban*

<sup>29</sup> ACT Auditor-General, 2015, *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment*, Report No. 3/15

**FIGURE 3: MAP 2: LOCATION OF THE MOLONGLO VALLEY STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT IN THE ACT**



### B.2.1.3 COMPLAINTS

Complaints may be made to the Commissioner about the ACT Government’s management of the environment or about issues relating to ecologically sustainable development in the ACT (s13 of the Act). All complaints must be on a prescribed form (available on the ACT Legislation Register AF2017-157).

In addition to prescribed complaints, individuals and groups have, over time, indicated their concerns and

opposition to government actions in a manner of other ways. Simple inquiries which have resulted in complaints being formalised are addressed directly. Some of these inquiries are referred to the ACT Government and resolved. Telephone and email inquiries have not always resulted in complaint investigations. Some complainants express ongoing concern about continuing issues – such as the cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

The first responsibility is to forward the complaints to the appropriate agency for their attention.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS FOR 2017–18**

ISSUES STATUS	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	TOPIC
Complaints from 2016–17	1	Little Eagle, Strathnairn development, West Belconnen, received 22 June 2017. Closed on 23 February 2018 after a confidential ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal resolution between the parties.
Issues raised in 2017–18 (Potential Complaints – no complaint form received)	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate management of CSIRO site at Ainslie</li> <li>2. Development at Hume impacting environmental values</li> <li>3. Split Environmental Impact Statement process for Fyshwick development</li> <li>4. Illegal Waste dump at Hume</li> <li>5. Kippax Master Plan</li> <li>6. Overgrazing by rabbits and kangaroos at Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie</li> </ol>
Complaints received in 2017–18	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of aged care facility at Kaleen, received 10 July 2017. Closed on 15 September 2017 after ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal resolution between the parties.</li> <li>2. Cat containment – raised previous complaint from 2016 on 6 October 2017. Closed on 13 April 2018. The office is following this up as part of implementation of one of the Corrective Action Requests from the <i>Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment</i>.</li> <li>3. Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroo – two complaints received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First received 25 July 2017, raised issues with regard to Googong Foreshores. Closed 24 August 2017.</li> <li>• Second received 27 October 2017, with regard to CSIRO report from 2014 through Freedom of Information request from the complainant. Commissioner made several enquires and sought independent advice. Closed on 25 June 2018.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Since July 2017, five different complaints have been closed, one of which was pending from 2015–16, and one from 2016–17. The issue related to the Eastern Grey Kangaroo management continues to be actively raised with the office.

## B.2.2 PERFORMANCE AGAINST INDICATORS

This section of the report provides an assessment of the Commissioner's performance against our key statutory functions as indicators:

- reporting on the ACT State of the Environment Report Recommendations,
- scoping, investigating and preparing reports on Ministerial or Commissioner-initiated investigations, and
- responding to community complaints.

**TABLE 2:** SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS <sup>30</sup>

ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS <sup>28</sup>	ORIGINAL TARGET 2017-18	ACTUAL RESULT 2017-18	VARIANCE FROM AMENDED TARGET
a. Report on the uptake of recommendations on the ACT State of Environment Report as part of the annual report	October 2017	October 2017	0
b. Undertake Ministerial initiated investigations in accordance with the Minister's direction	100%	100%	0
c. Undertake Commissioner initiated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%*	0
d. Undertake complaints generated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%*	0
e. Report on complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory agency as part of the annual report	October 2017	October 2017	0

\* Please note that there have been no Commissioner initiated or complaints generated investigations in 2017-18.

<sup>30</sup> 2015-16 Budget Statements, Environment and Planning Directorate, p17 [http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/733812/E-EPD-Budget-Statements.pdf](http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/733812/E-EPD-Budget-Statements.pdf)

## B.2.3 INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT

### B.2.3.1 SPECIAL FACTORS WITH A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (a) of the Act and includes details of 'any special factor that the Commissioner believes had a significant impact on the environment during the year'.

The Commissioner identified the following as having a significant impact on the environment during 2017–18:

- Climate change and drought. This has taken the form of several impacts in the region such as potentially influencing the dieback of Blakely's Red Gum trees. It is not certain whether reduced landscape resilience due to climate change is contributing to widespread dieback of this species, but research is being undertaken to determine the cause. If a population of trees is already vulnerable to dieback due to old age, disease, etc., changes in the climate may be the final trigger for local species collapse. As the climate continues to change, it may be that conditions are no longer suitable for some species.<sup>31</sup>
- Extreme weather event. On Sunday 25 February 2018, the inner north of Canberra received 66.2mm of rain within a 5 hour period, causing flash flooding. This is well above the long-term average for the month of 51.2mm. The ANU was hit particularly hard, with floodwaters causing significant damage to dozens of buildings and construction equipment, as well as inundating the basement of the Chifley library, causing permanent damage to rare books. The ANU was closed the following day to allow for safety checks of infrastructure and clean-up following the event.<sup>32</sup>
- The spread of African Lovegrass. This has been particularly severe in southern ACT and not only represents an exotic plant risk to conservation areas such as Namadgi National Park, but also to farmers as it excludes other species and reduces carrying capacity.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it increases fire risk as it burns hotter than native species.
- Splitting the Land Development Agency into two different agencies and incorporating them both into EPSDD. It is not clear whether this change in organisational arrangements will have a 'significant impact' on the environment. The Commissioner will continue to observe the impact.

### B.2.3.2 MEASURES TAKEN DURING THE REPORTING YEAR

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (b) of the Act and must include details of 'measures taken during the year by or for the Territory in relation to the implementation of any recommendation in a State of the Environment Report under s19 or special report under s21'.

This includes responses from Directorates regarding:

1. actions undertaken between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018 against the ten recommendations from the 2015 State of the Environment Report (s19 of the Act),
2. an update on directorate actions taken between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018 against investigations (s21 of the Act), and
3. an update on actions undertaken against recommendations for completed complaint investigations (note this is not required under the Act but it is useful to include so we can track actions).

Responses provided by directorates have been summarised with minimal editing.



*Blakely's Red Gum dieback. Source Nick Wilson*

31 <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/investment-plan/biodiversity-overview/climate-change-building-landscape-resilience/dieback/what-are-we-doing>, accessed 2 August 2018

32 <https://anuobserver.org/2018/02/26/anu-flood-caused-extensive-damage-library-books/>, accessed 2 August 2018

33 [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/722097/Weeds-Strategy-factsheet\\_ACCESS.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/722097/Weeds-Strategy-factsheet_ACCESS.pdf), accessed 2 August 2018

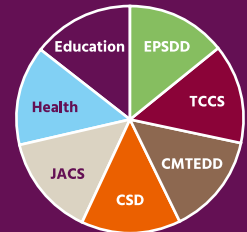
# The State of the Environment Report 2015 Recommendations, Government's Response and Directorate updates

Below are the updates on implementation of the recommendations from the State of the Environment Report 2015. The State of the Environment Report 2019 is due to the Minister in December 2019.

## Recommendation 1 – Climate Change

That the ACT Government ensures that the new Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is best practice, cross-sectoral and integrated into other key strategies, with effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates

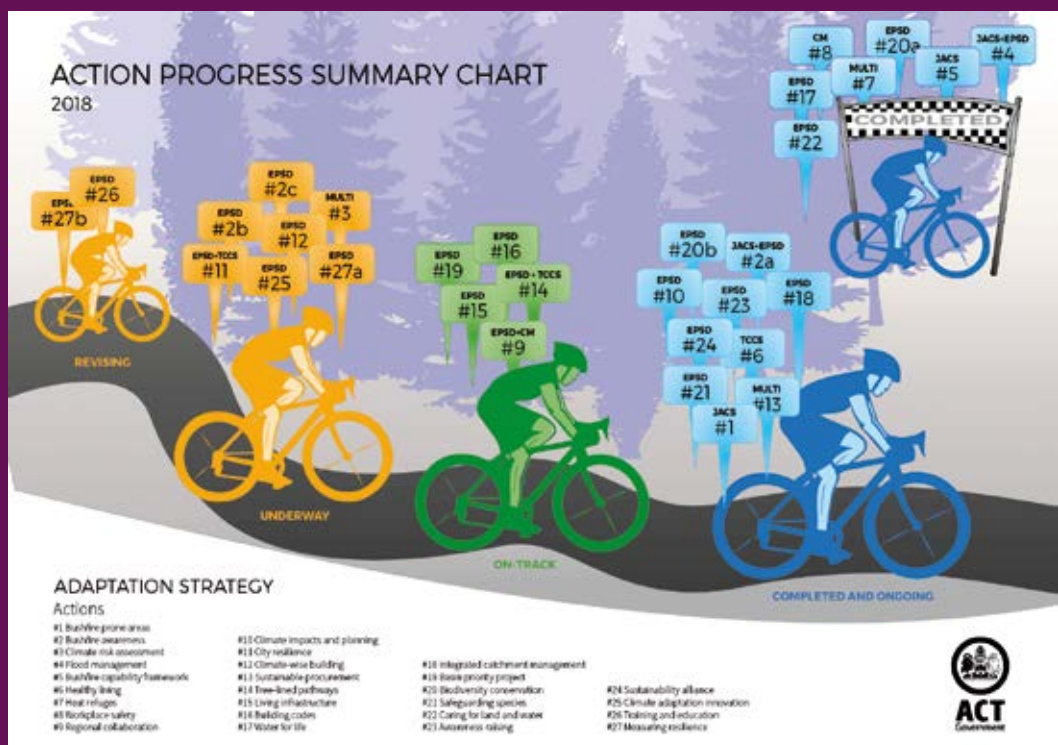


### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The ACT's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate.

### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The Action Progress Summary Chart has been approved by the Climate Change Steering Committee.



- There are five actions that are still on-track as their completion dates are by the end of 2018 or later and progress is being made on their delivery.
- There are a further six actions that are progressing, but considered 'amber' using the traffic light system as their completion date was the end of 2017. A short statement on these actions is provided in the implementation plan. These are all on-track to be delivered during 2018.

- Risk Assessment (action #3) is progressing well.
- Household tools for bushfire prone areas and climate resilience (action #2b and c) are being developed in partnership with Emergency Services Agency, Actsmart and climate policy.
- Climate resilience and sustainability has been incorporated in the draft urban design guidelines and climate policy is beginning a review of climate-wise building standards to identify guidelines for application in the ACT (action #10 and #12).
- A number of factsheets have been developed by climate policy in collaboration with other directorates and are going through final approval and graphic design processes (action #25).

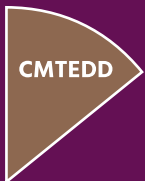


### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Active Travel Framework and Strategic Cycle Network Plan.*

### Actions completed in 2017–18

TCCS progressed work on an updated strategic cycle network plan. This informed the development of projects funded in the 2018–19 ACT Budget to deliver active travel works in Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden Town Centres, as well as cycling network and footpath improvements. The 2018–19 ACT Budget provides \$2 million to deliver priority network improvements.



### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The objectives of the *ACT Climate Adaptation Strategy* are integrated into Innovate Canberra's key strategies on investment, trade, innovation and business development.

### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Renewable Energy is identified as a key capability of the ACT, and the ACT Government is actively pursuing investment opportunities, as well as supporting innovation and industry growth in renewable energy technology.
- One example is the ACT Government's establishment of the <2 Degrees Renewables and Cleantech Innovation Hub which brings together start-ups and pioneering organisations from Australia and from around the world to develop the ACT's vibrant renewable energy and cleantech sectors.

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### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Community Services Directorate (CSD) has been carrying out energy efficiency improvements to existing public housing properties under the Energy Efficiency Program and as part of core service delivery.

### Actions completed in 2017–18

- In 2017–18, the ACT Government trialled a partnership with ActewAGL to include public housing properties in the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme. The trial program replaced over 200 existing inefficient gas wall heaters with highly efficient electric heat pump units.
- New public housing properties are constructed to meet a minimum of a 6 star energy rating. New dwellings are designed to maximise solar gain, and include construction wall and ceiling insulation to enhance building thermal efficiency. Double window glazing, as necessary, and draught seals are also provided to windows and doors to reduce heat loss. A window furnishings program has also been commenced and dwellings are equipped with energy efficient appliances.
- In new constructions, and as part of major upgrades, water saving measures and sanitary fixtures are provided that reduce the consumption of potable water, and reduce the flow to the sewer and stormwater systems. This includes through measures such as installation of water tanks, dual flush cisterns, water efficient shower heads and flow regulators/aerators.



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## Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) Actions completed in 2017–18

- **The revised ACT Bushfire Prone Area was published in May 2017.**

The revised Bushfire Prone Area has adopted a standardised approach to categorising bushfire prone vegetation into classes of hazard. For example, the 2017 mapping considers and incorporates the different risks posed by forest, woodlands or grasslands. Areas of intensively managed vegetation (e.g. golf courses, recreation areas, Canberra International Airport, etc.) are also recognised and the mapping adjusted accordingly. This approach, supported by vegetation data derived from recent aerial imagery and field validation, is consistent with the methodology applied by New South Wales (NSW) Rural Fire Service and allows certain vegetation types to be excluded.
- **The Territory Wide Risk Assessment was published in December 2017.**

Developed as a requirement of the National Partnership Agreement – Natural Disaster Resilience, the *Territory Wide Risk Assessment* provides a strategic level analysis of the natural hazards and other emergency risks facing the Territory. Risks directly linked to climate change, including bushfires and heatwaves, continue to be rated as the ACT's extreme risks. Key risks identified in the *Territory Wide Risk Assessment*, have been used by EPSDD to inform the development of a risk assessment matrix that once finalised, will be used by ACT Government Directorates, to undertake climate change risk assessment of directorate-owned infrastructure.
- **The Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign**

To support building the resilience of Canberra households in the Bushfire Prone Area, the *Canberra Bushfire Ready* doorknock campaign was developed in 2014, and has been implemented every bushfire season since. It involves the delivery of a targeted message by emergency service volunteers and staff to Canberrans living near the urban bushland interface to prepare their homes, property and families to respond to bushfires and natural disasters. The *Canberra Bushfire Ready* campaign in 2017–18 highlighted the positive influence of delivering community education in an integrated and coordinated approach. With a focus on reaching out to older Canberrans their carers and the wider community, this season's doorknock campaign reached 1000 residences across 25 suburbs as well as the rural communities of Tharwa, Uriarra and Hall. This has encouraged the ACT community to take greater responsibility for their safety by acting on information, advice and other cues provided before an emergency.
- **A draft of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan has been prepared.**

A *Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan*, setting out high level policy and governance arrangements for the management of flood risk in the ACT, is in the process of development, led by Emergency Services Agency through the ACT State Emergency Service. The *Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan* will encompass guiding principles and key actions relating to the management of flood risk through mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This is across all ACT Government Directorates, Australian Government agencies and private sector partners with responsibilities relating to flooding in the ACT.



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## Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Health contributes to multiple jurisdictional and inter-agency discussions to improve health outcomes in the face of climate change, including being an active contributor to the cross-government Climate Change Working Group responsible for implementation of the ACT's climate strategy.

ACT Health also supports climate change strategies in the planning and preparedness arrangements across the emergency management sector. A primary example of this is the *Territory Wide Risk Assessment*. The purpose of the *Territory Wide Risk Assessment* is to provide a strategic level analysis of the natural disasters and emergency risks facing the ACT, including the impact of climate change.

ACT Health is a supporting agency for heatwave emergencies under the ACT extreme heat plan. This plan recognises that climate change has resulted in worsening heatwaves that are hotter, last longer and occur more. ACT Health works closely with the ACT Ambulance Service and relevant agencies to manage the public health impacts of heatwaves, including vulnerable groups (e.g. young children and babies, the elderly, pregnant women, individuals with a disability, etc.).

## Actions completed in 2017–18

- ACT Health implemented a comprehensive communications strategy at the beginning of the 2017–18 summer season, and during periods of hot weather throughout the summer.
- ACT Health facilitates the ACT Health Emergency Management Sub-Committee. This sub-committee provides a forum for discussion and collaboration across the ACT health sector in the area of emergency management, including the impact of climate change on natural disasters. It comprises representatives from all ACT hospitals, Capital Health Network and other ACT Government stakeholders.
- ACT Health has collaborated with the Bureau of Meteorology in developing forecast modelling for various weather conditions.
- ACT Health has also developed protocols and communication strategies for the natural phenomenon of Thunderstorm Asthma. Thunderstorm Asthma is a form of asthma that is triggered by an uncommon combination of high pollen (usually during late Spring to early Summer) and a certain kind of thunderstorm. ACT Health acknowledges the need to consider climate change in the planning and delivery of emergency management systems to respond to natural disasters.
- ACT Health rolled out AirRater in August 2017, a free app that provides real-time, geographically-specific data on pollen, air quality and temperature. This information assists people with asthma and hay fever to know their triggers for symptoms and take steps to manage their condition.



### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities Output Specifications. The specifications integrate sustainability performance alongside other design requirements and inform new school and refurbishment design.

Heat mitigation, building tuning and tree planting programs. These are synergistic programs to improve the resilience of school buildings to extreme temperatures while enhancing operational and energy efficiency.

### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities Output Specifications have been integrated into the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Innovation and Learning, Belconnen High School refurbishment and the new North Gungahlin School (primary to year 6).
- Heat mitigation works were conducted across highest priority classrooms as identified by the schools and triaged by the Education Directorate (EDU). Works will continue into 2018–19.
- Building tuning works including building envelope improvements and mechanical plant efficiency measures were implemented across the highest intensity gas users by school class (college, high school, primary school, etc.).
- A tree planting program using advanced specimens to improve shade to school grounds, heat banking surfaces and exposed building walls has been implemented at priority sites.

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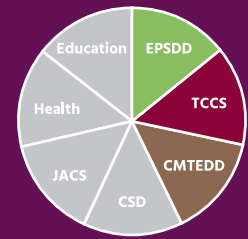
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## Recommendation 2 – Human Needs

That the ACT Government implements the monitoring, reporting and evaluation commitments in the ACT Planning Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy, and details those for the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–2023.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

The *ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23* continues to be implemented as guided by the 2013–18 implementation plan. A progress report on the 2013–2018 Implementation Plan will be prepared in 2018–19 together with a second Implementation Plan for the period from 2018–2023. Actions completed in 2017–18 (also reported against *Recommendation 5 – Land*) included:

- A migratory species action plan was finalised ([https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation\\_and\\_ecological\\_communities/threatened\\_species\\_action\\_plans/migratory-species-action-plan](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities/threatened_species_action_plans/migratory-species-action-plan)).
- The Identifying Biodiversity Refugia project modelled and mapped the current and future suitability of desirable native species under plausible regional climate model scenarios. Information on the location and extent of local refugia are informing ecological restoration and fire management on-ground (programs), 'climate-ready' conservation objectives (policy), as well as a better understanding of the ecology and vulnerability of desirable species (research).
- Assessment of Barriers to Fish Passage. This project aims to grade and assess the barriers to the movement of fish in the waterways through the ACT, and identify those barriers which need to change to allow fish passage. In 2018 the Murrumbidgee River, Molonglo River, Lower Cotter Catchment, Upper Cotter Catchment, Condor Creek, Lees Creek and small streams in Namadgi National Park are programmed to be surveyed.
- A draft complete coverage vegetation map for the ACT was completed and is undergoing quality assessment before being uploaded to ACTMapi in the 2018–19 financial year. Mapping data has already been used in refugia modelling, data development for the *Regional Fire Management Plan*, dieback severity and distribution modelling, and supporting the revised native woodlands strategy.
- Hydrogeological Landscape categorisation according to the features which affect the flow of water. Each Hydrogeological Landscape contains a unique set of management issues such as dryland salinity, land degradation and wetland climate vulnerability. For each of the 25 Hydrogeological Landscapes in the ACT, there is a 'salinity report' and a 'soil and land degradation management report' that details local landscape functions, hazards, and management opportunities. This information can help land managers plan strategies and landuse actions that are best suited to a landscape. (<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/tools-resources/local-landscape-information>).



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- A new waste regulatory framework commenced on 1 July 2017, requiring waste processing facilities and transporters to report quarterly on their activities to the government, which will enable more rigorous and transparent reporting and evaluation into the future.
- In May 2018 the ACT Waste Feasibility study published a recommended roadmap towards achieving the strategic goals of the *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025*.



## Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.* Innovate Canberra is supporting the establishment of an Agriculture and Plant Sciences Precinct at ANU/CSIRO Black Mountain.

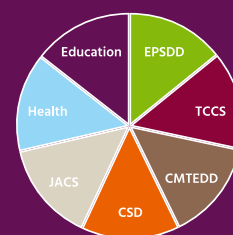
## Actions completed in 2017–18

- The ACT Government is supporting the development of the National Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Precinct, which brings together key scientists and researchers from CSIRO and the ANU to collaborate and work together on key environmental and agricultural issues and challenges of today.
- One example is the ACT Government funding the establishment of the Centre for Agricultural Entrepreneur Training which aims to create and sustain a culture of entrepreneurial activity and awareness in the broadly-defined agricultural sciences, and in doing so, strengthen the National Agricultural & Environmental Sciences Precinct and diversify the local and regional economy.

## Recommendation 3 – Human Needs

That the ACT Government considers integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation of all the key strategies to guide achievement of improved sustainability outcomes for the ACT, including the ACT Planning Strategy, AP2, Transport for Canberra, the ACT Water Strategy, the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy.

**Government response: Supported in principle**



## Update from Directorates



Since the last review the responsibilities for these strategies has moved across directorates. EPSDD is responsible for the *ACT Planning Strategy*, AP2 – now the *Climate Change Strategy*, *ACT Water Strategy*, and the *ACT Nature Conservation Strategy*. *Transport for Canberra* and the *ACT Waste Management Strategy* are now led by TCCS. These strategies continue to align in achieving common sustainability outcomes.

## Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Water Strategy 2014–44: Striking the Balance* (the Strategy).

The Strategy was launched on 1 August 2014 with a vision of a community working together managing water wisely to support a vibrant, sustainable and thriving region. The Strategy can be found at: [www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/621424/ACT-Water-Strategy-ACCESS.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/621424/ACT-Water-Strategy-ACCESS.pdf).

## Actions completed in 2017–18

Implementation Plan 1 identifies seven strategies to support the outcomes. There are 31 milestones, comprising 18 actions and a further 13 sub-actions.

- 27 milestones have been completed or assessed as progressing as planned and to be completed prior to the finalisation of Implementation Plan 1.
- Three milestones have been assessed as in progress but area scheduled to be concluded early in Implementation Plan 2.
- One milestone is due for commencement in 2019 pending release of specific study results.

A Report Card summarising the achievements of Implementation Plan 1 is available at: [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act\\_water\\_strategy](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act_water_strategy).

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## ACT Planning Strategy Refresh

During the reporting period, the government announced the ACT Planning Strategy Refresh engagement (the Refresh). The Refresh commenced in the third quarter of 2018 and will continue into the next reporting period.

The Refresh acknowledges that a lot of the *2012 ACT Planning Strategy* remains relevant, however there is a need to take into account the ongoing evolution of the city, most notably light rail, ongoing urban renewal and a growing population. A refreshed ACT Planning Strategy document will include the progress made on key government priorities such as, achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT by 2045, providing increased housing choice and affordability, and delivering improved and integrated public transport and active travel.

The ACT Planning Strategy Refresh is an opportunity to enhance alignment further between relevant strategies including the *ACT Planning Strategy*, *AP2* and *Transport for Canberra*. Further details are available here: <https://yoursay.act.gov.au/act-planning-strategy-refresh>.



## Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Transport for Canberra* and the *ACT Waste Management Strategy*.

## Actions completed in 2017–18

### Transport for Canberra

- TCCS engaged WSP Australia in October 2017 to develop a new transport strategy. In relation to outcomes, the project scope includes achieving net zero transport emissions by 2045 and improving efficiency and accessibility of the network.
- TCCS is working closely with EPSDD to ensure an integrated approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the transport strategy with other key strategies.

### ACT Waste Management Strategy

- The *Waste Feasibility Study* ensured consistency with *AP2* and put forward a recommendation to reduce waste sector emissions through diverting organics from landfill.



## Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Water Strategy*, *ACT Planning Strategy* and *ACT Waste Management Strategy*.

## Actions completed in 2017–18

- provided ongoing health input and consideration through Development Applications, and
- provided information and consideration into policy development.



## Relevant strategy, plan or program

*AP2*, *ACT Water Strategy 2014–44*, *Transport for Canberra 2012–2031*, *ACT Nature Conservation Strategy*, *ACT Waste Management Strategy*.

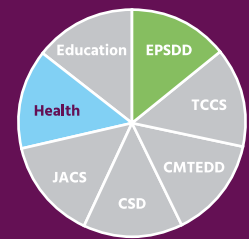
## Actions completed in 2017–18

- The EDU Carbon Budget target of a 3% carbon emission reduction is on track to be achieved (full year data not available at the time of reporting).
- Framework for an EDU Sustainability Plan was developed and included in the 2017–18 Resource Management Plan (currently under review). Stakeholder consultation to commence 2018–19.
- EDU is in a unique position to engage young people in strategies to guide improved sustainability outcomes for the ACT. EDU support the ACT Parliament of Youth, an annual event that engages school students in developing their ideas for a sustainable ACT.
- Progressed the EDU Sustainable Transport Strategy with construction of end of trip bicycle storage facilities in progress at four schools. Bicycle infrastructure site planning completed through to 2020–21.

## Recommendation 4 – Air

That the ACT Government requires that the air quality impacts of future urban developments are explicitly considered – in particular, the impact of pollution from domestic wood heaters in greenfield developments.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The ACT's ambient air quality is measured in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environmental Protection Measure via the Performance Monitoring Station network in the ACT. The ACT is compliant with this measure which is reported annually in the National Environment Protection Council Annual Report available at: <http://www.nepc.gov.au/publications/annual-reports> and the ACT Government's Annual Air Quality Report is available at: [https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1320/~/air-pollution#Itabs-4](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1320/~/air-pollution#Itabs-4).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Air quality impacts from emissions including wood heaters will continue to be considered as part of (draft) variations to the Territory Plan to rezone non-urban land to urban purposes (such as residential). In the 2017–18 financial year, there were no rezonings of non-urban land to urban purposes.
- The ACT Government has implemented the stricter air emission and efficiency standards for wood heaters agreed nationally by environment ministers through amendments to the *Environment Protection Act 1997* and associated regulation in June 2017.
- The ACT Government passed the Red Tape Reduction legislation in August 2017 to regulate firewood merchants under the Environment Protection Regulation 2005. This removed the administrative cost and burden to businesses and government while maintaining regulation of the activity.
- The ACT Government ran the *Burn Right Tonight* public education campaign on the correct use of wood heaters over the winter of 2017. The 2018 campaign commenced on 1 June 2018 and includes radio and bus advertising, radio interviews, whole of government and shopfront messaging, including video content.
- The ACT Government's *Wood Heater Replacement Program* aims to reduce winter air pollution from wood smoke by offering a financial incentive to remove wood heaters and replace them with an energy efficient electric alternative. A total of 25 wood heater replacement claims were made during 2017–18.



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Health continues to provide technical support and advice to Environment Protection Policy and the Environment Protection Authority on ambient air quality issues.

## Recommendation 5 – Land

That the ACT Government provides resources to fully implement priority actions in the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy, particularly actions aimed at developing foundation knowledge of landscape function and soils in the ACT.

**Government response: Supported**

### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23, in particular Action 1.1 Develop baseline information on landscape function.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The ACT Soil Landscapes dataset enhances knowledge of soils, landscapes, and physical and chemical constraints to land use in the urban, conserved and rural environments in the ACT. Within the ACT, 55 soil landscape map units provide an inventory of soil and landscapes with relatively uniform land management requirements and are available on ACTMAPI. Soil profile information and soil test results can be accessed via eSPADE at: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/eSpade2Webapp](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/eSpade2Webapp).
- Hydrogeological Landscape Framework – each Hydrogeological Landscape contains a unique set of management issues such as dryland salinity, land degradation and wetland climate vulnerability. For each of the 25 Hydrogeological Landscapes in the ACT, there is a ‘salinity report’ and a ‘soil and land degradation management report’ that details local landscape functions, hazards and management opportunities. This information can help land managers plan strategies and land use actions that are best suited to a landscape. (<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/tools-resources/local-landscape-information>).
- Vegetation mapping – A complete draft coverage vegetation map for the ACT has been completed and is undergoing quality assessment before being uploaded to ACTMAPI in the 2018–19 financial year. Mapping data has already been used in refugia modelling, data development for the *Regional Fire Management Plan*, dieback severity and distribution modelling and supporting the revised native woodlands strategy.
- A spatial and temporal analysis of the distribution and health of Blakely’s Red Gum has been undertaken. This information can demonstrate any trends or patterns that might be occurring. A map to demonstrate the extent and severity of Blakely’s Red Gum dieback has been prepared ([http://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/image/0017/1073330/Dieback-ACTNRM-Website-Map.jpg](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/image/0017/1073330/Dieback-ACTNRM-Website-Map.jpg)).
- CEMP – EPSDD continues to develop initial monitoring plans and condition analysis reports for eight broad ecosystems. The CEMP provides for adaptive management of biodiversity values in ACT reserves network by providing a structured, transparent and regular evaluation and reporting framework. Over the past 12 months the Conservation Research unit has completed and published the *Lowland Grassland Ecosystem Monitoring Plan* which is available on the EPSDD website and an evaluation report which reports on the ecological condition of our lowland grassland reserves.

## Recommendation 6 – Land

The ACT Government uses strategic environmental assessments as provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2007 to reduce and manage cumulative and cross-sectoral impacts on the environment.

**Government response: Supported in principle**

### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Environmental Impact Statement process, Strategic Assessments and Environmental Significance Opinions.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

The *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* process has been used in the last year to assess two waste management facilities in Hume (a liquid waste management facility and a waste plastic to fuel facility). The ACT Government has continued with its Environmental Impact Statement process, which is based on a triple bottom line and risk assessment approach and considers cumulative and off-site impacts. The *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* process helps inform the Minister of risks and proposes mitigation measures to help reduce any impacts.

There have also been a number of *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* exemptions under s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* granted over the last year. An Environmental Impact Statement exemption utilises the same triple bottom line and risk assessment framework as an *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* and considers whether the cumulative and offsite impacts have already been considered adequately through other recent studies. Since 1 July 2016, three *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* exemptions have been processed by the ACT Government for urban development in the Molonglo Valley, a mixed-use development in Kingston and the removal of an underground petroleum storage system at a service station site in Kaleen.

The ACT has two approved strategic assessments, relating to the urban development of Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley. The ACT Government and Riverview Projects (ACT) Ltd received approval for the West Belconnen Strategic Assessment for proposed urban development at West Belconnen under the Commonwealth's EPBC Act.

Environmental Significance Opinions are also utilised by the Territory for proposals that are considered to have less of an environmental, social and economic risk. Environmental Significance Opinions can be granted by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, the Heritage Council and the Planning and Land Authority. If granted, Environmental Significance Opinions state that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the matter being considered. These entities are required under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* to take into account cumulative and offsite impacts.

During 2017–18, the Directorate continued preparing the draft Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment documentation under Part 10 of the Commonwealth's EPBC Act. The strategic assessment is assessing Matters of National Environmental Significance in the context of future employment-related development in parts of the Eastern Broadacre area. The Eastern Broadacre area is located on the eastern side of Canberra and extends from the Majura Valley, around Fyshwick, through the Jerrabomberra Valley to Hume and Tuggeranong. It is expected that consultation of the draft strategic assessment will commence in the 2018–19 financial year. The draft strategic assessment documentation is also considering ACT listed flora and fauna.

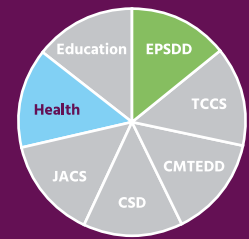
Subject to the approval of the strategic assessment by the Commonwealth, a subsequent environmental approval under the ACT's *Planning and Development Act 2007* and rezoning(s) to the Territory Plan will be required.

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## Recommendation 7 – Water

That the ACT Government assess the consequences of, and understand the driving mechanisms behind, the poor condition of water resources as shown by the indicators for total nitrogen, turbidity, chlorophyll-a and ecological biodiversity, and assess the need for collecting more information for indicators with little available data.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Integrated Water Monitoring Plan.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* is complete and implementation has commenced. The *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* provides a set of recommendations for updating the ACT Government monitoring programs and provides a critical evaluation of future data requirements to inform catchment modelling.
- A SOURCE model has been developed to deliver an assessment of what water quantity would be at the end of a valley target site for water resource plan compliance. Further calibration of the SOURCE model is planned, and is identified in the *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan*.
- Research has also commenced in ACT urban ponds in order to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality. Outcomes will inform management of these assets.
- Procurement is currently underway for event based monitoring (as per the *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan*) to improve understanding of how pollutants are moving in storm events and in turn to improve our application of catchment and development scale modelling. This work will inform future planning and development decisions.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information has commenced. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible.
- In-lake research has commenced in Lake Tuggeranong to clarify the major sources and timing of in-lake pollutant release to inform specific management action trials to be conducted in Spring 2018 and Summer of 2018–19.

Health

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT Wide Water Quality Monitoring Framework.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- provided advice in relation to recreational water quality issues to stakeholders,
- undertook sample and monitoring programs for recreational water quality within the ACT,
- provided health advice and monitored recreational and drinking water contaminants, and
- continued to regulate the use and implementation of septic systems in the ACT and provide advice on greywater systems to minimise ecological and human health impacts.

## Recommendation 8 – Biodiversity

That the ACT Government provides the necessary resources to complete the next phases of the Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program.

**Government response: Supported**

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

CEMP. Conservation Research and the Parks and Conservation Service in EPSDD continue to develop monitoring plans and condition analysis reports for the eight broad ecosystems within the CEMP.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The Lowland Grassland Ecosystem Monitoring Plan has been completed and published ([http://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/1149030/Technical-report-Lowland-native-grasslands-monitoring-plan-October-2017.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1149030/Technical-report-Lowland-native-grasslands-monitoring-plan-October-2017.pdf)). The evaluation report outlines the ecological condition of our lowland grassland reserves, makes recommendations for improvements in both on-ground management and monitoring, and identifies key knowledge gaps for future research. Condition of most indicators for lowland native grasslands were rated as 'poor' against reference condition (expected pre-European condition) but 'moderate' to 'good with some concerns' against the target condition identified for short to medium term management goals.
- Work is in-progress analysing monitoring and research data to contribute to CEMP condition reports for upland grassland ecosystems and aquatic and riparian ecosystems. Monitoring plans will be developed for the remaining ecosystems (upland and lowland woodlands, and upland and lowland forests) over the next 12 to 18 months.
- The Environment Division is working to produce an Integrated Ecosystem Implementation Plan for lowland grasslands that will link broad strategic goals and commitments identified in documents such as the *ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy* with CEMP recommendations to prioritise on-ground actions for the next five years.

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*Native fauna dolls at The Link building at Ginninderry. Includes the Little Eagle, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Golden Sun Moth, etc. Source Kirilly Dickson*

## Recommendation 9 – Biodiversity

That the ACT Government formalise biodiversity conservation data collection and storage protocols and procedures, to integrate reports commissioned by different agencies with existing government data.

**Government response: Supported**

### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACTMapi, Canberra Nature Map.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- A complete coverage draft vegetation map for the ACT has been completed and is undergoing quality assessment before being uploaded to ACTMapi in the 2018 financial year. The mapping meets the National Vegetation System Level 6 criteria, the highest level of detail and resolution defined by the National Vegetation System. The mapping includes vegetation community classifications consistent with NSW nomenclature; estimates of species composition in canopy, shrub and ground layers; structural characteristics such as canopy height and cover and shrub cover. Supporting metadata and mapping unit descriptions and accuracy assessments are being developed for web publication. These data have been published on ACTMapi.
- ACT Government continues to support the Canberra Nature Map on-line application. Every week additional sites of flora and fauna of the ACT are added to the database by members of the community. This growing source of knowledge is being used in land management.

## Recommendation 10 – Heritage

That the ACT Government and the ACT Heritage Council commence a program of audits to assess and monitor the condition of heritage places and objects on the ACT Heritage Register.

**Government response: Supported**

### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Program of heritage audits, *ACT Heritage Strategy*.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Draft letters to public authorities and dataset templates were prepared during the period and are due for release in mid-2018.
- Work on the *ACT Heritage Strategy* was deferred due to a refocus on priorities and a shift in resources in other areas within ACT Heritage, in particular, a 28% increase in Development Applications from the past financial year. There also continues to be a general increase in the number of heritage submissions made to the ACT Heritage Council, which has increased from 491 to 601 over the past two financial years – a 19% increase.

# Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy (2017) Recommendations, the Government's Response and Directorate updates

In the 2017 *Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*, the Commissioner made 17 recommendations which are listed below with the Government's response to each one and an update from directorates on actions achieved during 2017–18.

## Recommendation 1. Budget appropriation for climate change mitigation and adaptation policies will be significant, cannot be postponed and must be consistent.

**Government Response: AGREED**

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The ACT Government continues to deliver on its agenda to address climate change. Current funding allocation is supporting a number of mitigation and adaptation projects with new additional funding available in 2018–19 to implement actions under the new policy document *The ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan 2018–21*.

## Recommendation 2. Energy efficiency initiatives are crucial in delivering climate change outcomes and must be prioritised in policy development.

**Government Response: AGREED**

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS).

The EEIS requires electricity retailers to achieve energy savings in households and small-to-medium enterprises. The scheme also provides targeted assistance to low income households through a 20% Priority Household Target.

Since the EEIS started in 2013, more than 71,000 households and businesses have participated in the scheme, including more than 18,000 priority low income households.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- During 2017–18 approximately 100,000 energy saving items were installed in 2,500 households and businesses, including household activities such as replacement of inefficient space heaters with high efficiency heaters and decommissioning of refrigerators and freezers, as well as lighting upgrades to help ACT businesses reduce their energy consumption and save money on electricity bills.
- An Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing Pilot Program was initiated in November 2017 as a partnership between ActewAGL and the ACT Government to help low income households reduce their energy consumption, emissions and save money on gas and electricity bills. The pilot program replaced 240 old, inefficient heaters with new high efficient systems, including 83 ducted 6 star gas heaters and 157 electric reverse-cycle air conditioners.

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- A new regulation commenced on 1 January 2018 to extend the classes of priority households. These new classes were proposed during consultation to set the 20% Priority Household Target for 2018.
- An independent review of the EEIS was undertaken in 2018 to determine how well the EEIS is working, to what extent it has achieved its statutory objectives so far, whether it remains appropriate for the future and how it could be improved. Stakeholders contributed to the review through workshops, focus groups, individual interviews, surveys and direct feedback.

### Recommendation 3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies must be embedded and integrated across whole of government functions.

Government Response: **AGREED**

#### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy (under development)*

*The ACT's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The ACT Government continues to develop integrated climate policy across its agencies. It is currently actively coordinating the development of integrated new policy initiatives including climate policy, *Transport for Canberra* and the Planning Strategy Refresh.

### Recommendation 4. Transport is the biggest climate change mitigation challenge for the ACT and significant commitment to policy development, action and targets will be central to the ACT continuing its reputation as a climate change policy leader and driver of change.

Government Response: **AGREED**

#### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy (under development).*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Ongoing discussions with community representatives, the Canberra Business Chamber, the Climate Change Council, the Climate Change Ministerial Advisory Group and officers from TCCS are shaping potential new actions to be included in the new Climate Change Strategy towards reducing emissions from the transport sector.
- The ACT Government has just released *The ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan 2018–21*. This action plan highlights current incentives in the ACT towards increased uptake of zero emission vehicles as well as new initiatives to support transition to electric vehicles through government fleet replacement with all new vehicles to be electric from 2021 onwards.

## Recommendation 5. Community engagement in discussions about climate change policy is fundamental to effective interventions in respect of mitigation and adaptation.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The outcomes of the extensive and ongoing engagement activities through a series of climate change roundtables informing the *ACT's Climate Strategy to A Net Zero Emissions Territory Discussion Paper December 2017* are being collated in a report to be made public. There is a commitment to release a 'Register of Ideas' from this community engagement exercise which will be the basis for ongoing discussions.
- The Climate Change Ministerial Advisory Group and the ACT Climate Change Council continue to have an active community engagement advisory role to government.
- The Sustainability Alliance was convened in 2018 to provide input into living infrastructure planning.

## Recommendation 6. Commitment to social equity in the face of climate change challenges must be strengthened in all new policy initiatives.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The development of the new *Climate Change Strategy* will include an in-depth cost benefit and social equity analysis of any proposed policy options.

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## Recommendation 7. To effectively meet immediate and evolving climate change challenges, policy must be timely, focused by means of multi-sectoral short, medium and long term targets.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- In May 2018 the ACT Government announced the establishment of a new target of net zero emissions by 2045, five years earlier than the previous target under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Act 2010*.

## Recommendation 8. Climate change policy actions and targets must continue to be monitored and evaluated in open, transparent and independent review and audit processes.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Annual reporting on the status of progress of actions addressing climate change, both mitigation and adaptation measures, is a requirement under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*. The latest report can be found at: [http://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/1133605/2016-17-Climate-Change-and-Greenhouse-Gas-Reduction-Act-2010\\_ACCESS.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1133605/2016-17-Climate-Change-and-Greenhouse-Gas-Reduction-Act-2010_ACCESS.pdf).
- The ACT's greenhouse gas inventory report is prepared each year by an independent party. The latest report can be found at: [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1133635/ACT-GGI-report-2017.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1133635/ACT-GGI-report-2017.pdf).

## Recommendation 9. Engage the community in meaningful conversation about the credibility and validity of investing in offsets to support carbon neutrality against other investment options.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- In October 2017, the ACT Climate Change Council submitted advice to government on the use of offsets as part of the process in developing a new climate change policy. This advice is public and has been discussed at several community engagement sessions. This advice is available at: [https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1135876/20171019-Letter-from-ACT-Climate-Change-Council-to-Minister-Rattenbury-interim-targets.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1135876/20171019-Letter-from-ACT-Climate-Change-Council-to-Minister-Rattenbury-interim-targets.pdf).

## Recommendation 10. Develop a Basis of Preparation end to end process manual for the ACT emissions inventory to ensure ongoing accuracy and repeatability of ACT emissions monitoring and reporting.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy* (under development).

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- In 2017–18, the ACT Government developed a standard operating (development) procedure for the ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The procedure covers how the Greenhouse Gas Inventory has been developed, including for specific sources of emissions (e.g. electricity, fuels (transport) and waste).

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## **Recommendation 11. Conduct an audit of ACT emissions inventory to ensure accuracy and facilitate continuous improvement, initially in 2 years' time and at regular intervals thereafter.**

**Government Response: AGREED**

### **Update from Directorates**



#### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

*Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)*

*Climate Change Strategy (under development).*

#### **Actions completed in 2017–18**

- The audit will be undertaken in the 2019 –20 financial year.

## **Recommendation 12. Identify energy productivity and/or efficiency targets in conjunction with emissions reduction targets at 5 to 10 year intervals out to 2050 to optimise sustainability outcomes.**

**Government Response: NOTED**

### **Update from Directorates**



#### **Relevant strategy, plan or program**

*Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reductions Act 2010.*

#### **Actions completed in 2017–18**

The consideration of energy efficiency targets may be re-assessed in future years should a need arise.

## Recommendation 13. Ensure that adequate and permanent resources are committed to the Carbon Neutral Government Program, both in the central facilitation team and within agencies.

Government Response: Agreed

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Budget 2018–19 – Budget Paper 3 – p107.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The 2018–19 ACT Government budget allocated \$1.897 million to implementing and strengthening the Carbon Neutral Government Program.
- As the ACT gets closer to meeting its 100% renewable electricity target, government projects aimed at reducing emissions from natural gas and transport will become increasingly important. The 2018–19 budget will see dedicated specialists targeting the focus areas of transport and building operations (heating and cooling).
- Included in the 2018–19 ACT Government budget is \$800,000 for a Carbon Neutral Government Fund Grant Scheme, which is designed to support innovative projects and new technologies that are unable to access support from the Carbon Neutral Government Loan Fund.
- All directorates now have sustainability managers, who coordinate carbon budgets and quarterly reporting within their agencies.

## Recommendation 14. In line with national best practice, consider reporting significant Scope 3 emissions associated with ACT Government operations and clearly document their inclusions or exclusions in carbon neutral aspirations.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- As part of the current process to refresh the Carbon Neutral Framework, the ACT Government is considering the costs and benefits of including scope 3 emissions in the ACT Government emissions boundary.

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## Recommendation 15. Produce an emissions boundary diagram for each agency to improve transparency and rigor in reporting emissions and developing mitigation strategies.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- As part of the current process to refresh the Carbon Neutral Government Framework, the ACT Government is considering the emissions boundary for the program. Consultation has been undertaken in 2017–18 to clarify the boundary with stakeholders across government. Feedback from agencies will be integrated into an emissions boundary diagram and incorporated in the refreshed Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

## Recommendation 16. Ensure ongoing improvement to document processes for government agency greenhouse gas inventories to ensure integrity and efficiency of initiatives.

Government Response: AGREED

### Update from Directorates

EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- In 2017, the ACT Government engaged an external party to calculate the ACT Government's 2016–17 greenhouse gas emissions inventory. The government greenhouse gas emissions inventory is now consistent with the methodology of the ACT greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
- Directorates create an annual emissions reduction target and report quarterly on progress. Public reporting of these reports commenced in 2018 and are available on the EPSDD website.

## Recommendation 17. Improve awareness and ease for applications to the Carbon Neutral Government Loan Fund.

Government Response: **AGREED**

### Update from Directorates



EPSDD

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- During 2018, funding to support feasibility studies for potential projects was made available to directorates through the Carbon Neutral Government Fund. As a result, the Carbon Neutral Government Fund has had an increase in successful applications during 2017–18. There has also been an increase in the number of forecasted projects (projects under development that have not yet applied to the fund).
- The 2018–19 ACT government budget will see dedicated energy project officers supporting agencies identify projects and apply for funding under the Carbon Neutral Government Fund.

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# Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Independent Audit Update on Corrective Action Requests (1, 2, and 3)

## **CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUEST 1 – PROVIDE A PLAN ON HOW TO ADDRESS COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT FOR CAT CONTAINMENT.**

Provide an update on progress of delivery of the key tasks outlined in the plan to address compliance and enforcement of cat containment.

ACTION	TASK	UPDATE
Continue to implement cat containment-related actions in the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy	Prepare options for cat registration.	The registration of cats is being explored as part of an annual pet registration model.
Implement legal instrument required to declare Gungahlin East Town Centre as a cat containment area	Prepare instrument for Minister approval.	The Minister has approved a cat containment declaration for Strathnairn, Macnamara and Gungahlin Town Centre East under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> . It will soon be notified to the Legislation Register and presented to the Legislative Assembly.
Education program	Develop key communication messages on responsible cat ownership, in consultation with key stakeholders, focusing on the requirements and benefits of cat containment in declared cat containment suburbs.	TCCS continues to work with EPSDD on the ACT Cat Plan.
	Communicate key messages as part of the ‘Paws for Thought’ responsible pet ownership campaign, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• website content,</li> <li>• media releases, and</li> <li>• personal contact in conjunction with enforcement activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Responsible cat ownership is part of the ongoing ‘Paws for Thought’ responsible pet ownership campaign.</p> <p>The ‘Paws for Thought’ campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of responsible pet ownership, including cats. It is hoped that the campaign will influence a change in the behaviour of cat owners towards increased responsibility such as ensuring cats are de-sexed, microchipped and contained. Under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i>, dogs are more heavily regulated than cats which in part explains why the ‘Paws for Thought’ content is more focused on dogs. TCCS is committed to engaging with and educating all cat owners in the ACT regarding their responsibilities.</p> <p>A number of educational activities, including stalls at public events, remain ongoing. Eight ‘Paws for Thought’ information stalls have already been held at community events, reaching between 30 and 200 people at each stall.</p>

ACTION	TASK	UPDATE
Compliance program	Develop budget bid seeking resources to manage cat containment and enforce the relevant legislation.	2017–18 budget bids have been submitted for the upgrade of Domestic Animal Services facilities to manage cats and support enforcement activities.
	Undertake reactive compliance based on complaints.	TCCS is expanding its capability to respond to and manage cat compliance issues, via expansion of the Domestic Animal Services shelter at Symonston to accommodate seized cats (expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year). Once this area is complete, future proactive compliance activities will be undertaken.
	Implement budget bid provisions to increase educational activities and pro-actively enforce cat containment provisions.	2017–18 budget bids have been submitted for additional resources to manage cat containment.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUEST 2 – REVIEW THE TAYLOR STAGE 1 CEMP, AND WORK UNDERTAKEN IN RELATION TO THIS CEMP, TO IDENTIFY WHETHER ANY BREACHES IN RELATION TO MATTERS OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE HAVE OCCURRED BY 20 JANUARY 2018.**

Provide an update on implementation of the new procedure for referral of Construction Environmental Management Plans to relevant agencies and approval in accordance with *The Framework for Construction Environment Management Plans for areas of Gungahlin subject to the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment 2013*.

**UPDATE**

The draft procedure for a Construction Environmental Management Plan for greenfield developments within the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment was implemented in February 2018.

The procedure was updated in May 2018 to provide clearer guidance on the requirements for a Construction Environmental Management Plan for Development Application Assessment Officers and relevant agencies.

Information on the Construction Environmental Management Plan requirements is currently being prepared and will be placed on the ACT Government’s Strategic Assessment website to ensure applicants/contractors are aware of the requirement to submit a Construction Environmental Management Plan in accordance with the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment. The updated website is due to be completed in third quarter of 2018.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUEST 3 – PREPARE A PROCESS DOCUMENT OUTLINING THE STEPS REQUIRED TO DOCUMENT OR REPORT INVESTIGATIONS INTO ANY REAL OR POTENTIAL BREACHES OF COMMITMENTS OF THE PLAN BY 20 JANUARY 2018.**

Provide an update on implementation and communication undertaken to inform relevant parties of the new procedure for reporting potential or real breaches of commitments of the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan 2013*.

**UPDATE**

The incident reporting procedure for Gungahlin Strategic Assessment was implemented on 20 January 2018. The procedure was circulated to relevant agencies and presented at the Gungahlin Working Group meeting on Tuesday 6 February 2018.

The process has been recently updated to ensure there is sufficient time to determine if an incident is a breach\* prior to notifying the Plan Implementation Team. This change was made to ensure the Plan Implementation Team has comprehensive information to make recommendations including any actions for remediation.

The change does not remove the requirements under the Plan to notify the Commonwealth immediately of any potential breach or provide an investigation report to the Commonwealth 2 weeks after the Plan Implementation Team have been informed of the incident.

\*For the purpose of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment, a breach is defined as action/activity that results in an adverse impact on a matter of national environmental significance (that has not been assessed and approved by the Commonwealth).

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*Cat containment is an important conservation action in urban areas. Source Phillip Gibbons*

# Updates on actions in relation to recommendations from investigations by the Commissioner

The following table sets out the Commissioner’s reporting requirements for the 2017–18 annual reporting period on directorate updates for actions in relation to recommendations resulting from investigations by the Commissioner.

## LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN INVESTIGATION – MAY 2012



### CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE LAKE’S WATER QUALITY


#### Recommendation 7

The ACT Government should develop a strategic approach to Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). See below for detailed actions.

#### Commissioner’s comment

Progress has been reported. Provide an update on actions achieved in 2017–18 and a reference to how each of the specific recommendations are being achieved in the table below, e.g. a specific committed action from a plan or strategy.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION	ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION	
	 <p data-bbox="587 1122 999 1234">RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OR PROGRAM ACT HEALTHY WATERWAYS PROJECT WSUD CODE AND GUIDELINES.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1026 1122 1393 1234">TCCS IS THE LEAD FOR ITEM E) IN THE TABLE BELOW. TCCS HAS PROVIDED SOME COMMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OTHER ITEMS.</p>
<p>a. Identifying sites where installing catchment intervention, such as wetlands and pollution control ponds, would improve water quality entering Lake Burley Griffin. This should include:</p> <p>i. initial feasibility studies into the construction of pollution control ponds or wetlands on the Yarralumla drainage line and Jerrabomberra Creek should be undertaken. Any installations should be designed to be of an appropriate size to treat the catchment area they service.</p>	<p>The ACT Healthy Waterways Project is a joint initiative of the Australian and ACT Governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and further downstream in the Murrumbidgee River system. It involves the construction of a range of infrastructure – ponds, wetlands, rain gardens and swales – designed to ‘turn off’ or reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment and pollutants entering our waterways. The Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchment are a focus of the ACT Healthy Waterways Project.</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input: Any installations should comply with the Municipal Infrastructure Standards and be used in safety in design.</p>
<p>ii. identifying WSUD that complements current programs of installing wetlands and water control ponds in both new urban areas and retrofitting in existing suburbs where applicable.</p>	<p>Infrastructure will be constructed in both the Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchments to improve water quality through reduction of pollutants. The civil component will be completed by June 2019.</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input:</p> <p>TCCS are to be involved in pre-design discussions on any current programs or infrastructure to be proposed in new urban areas and retrofitting in existing suburbs.</p>

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION	ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION	
	 <p data-bbox="592 376 1002 488"><b>RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OR PROGRAM</b> <b>ACT HEALTHY WATERWAYS PROJECT</b> <b>WSUD CODE AND GUIDELINES.</b></p>	 <p data-bbox="1023 376 1394 488"><b>TCCS IS THE LEAD FOR ITEM E) IN THE TABLE BELOW. TCCS HAS PROVIDED SOME COMMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OTHER ITEMS.</b></p>
<p>b. Ensuring that WSUD requirements are enforced in particular:</p> <p>i. ensuring that wetlands and ponds are of appropriate sizes to service their catchments.</p> <hr/> <p>ii. undertaking auditing/compliance arrangements to ensure that temporary pollution control ponds for sediment control during the construction phase in new estates are maintained and functioning effectively.</p>	<p>Reported at Recommendation 7 (a) (i) and (ii) and at (c) and (e).</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input:</p> <p>Any installations should comply with the Municipal Infrastructure Standards and be used in safety in design.</p> <hr/> <p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS has no additional input.</p>
<p>c. Improving monitoring of the effectiveness of WSUD in urban developments to determine whether water quality meets WSUD general code targets. Results should be used to inform improvements in WSUD standards.</p>	<p>The ACT Healthy Waterways Project is rolling out an asset evaluation monitoring program across the ACT. This monitoring program, called the Asset Evaluation Monitoring program, aims to quantify the water quality performance of gross pollutant traps, ponds and wetlands across the ACT. This data in turn will be suitable for comparison to modelled performance from Model for Urban Stormwater Improvement Conceptualisation, which in turn relates to the asset performance in relation to meeting the WSUD general code targets. This monitoring program will run until June 2019. Work is progressing to release for public comment shortly an updated version of the WSUD General Code and supporting Guidelines. The WSUD Code has a series of targets for mains water reduction, water quality and stormwater quantity. The ACT Practice Guidelines for Water Sensitive Urban Design provide guidance and options for compliance with the WSUD Code for both private and public developments.</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input:</p> <p>TCCS, EPSDD and Icon Water currently undertake water sampling across various sites across Canberra. This includes the bi-monthly dam monitoring and the ACT Lakes and Rivers monitoring. This program will be continued in 2018–19.</p>
<p>d. Comparison of ACT approaches to WSUD with those of other Australian urban areas to help the Territory remain consistent with developing technology and best practice.</p>	<p>The ACT Government (EPSDD and TCCS) continue to participate in a national community of practice around stormwater management through the Australian Stormwater Association. This includes participation in national conferences, presenting papers and nominating for awards. Practical operational advice about new stormwater management technologies is also sought from other jurisdictions with experience in the application of these technologies.</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input:</p> <p>TCCS will be undertaking a benchmarking exercise with other jurisdictions to look at stormwater management (as per the Stormwater Performance Audit undertaken by Marsden Jacobs in 2017).</p>

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION	ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION	
	 <p><b>RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OR PROGRAM</b>  <b>ACT HEALTHY WATERWAYS PROJECT</b>  <b>WSUD CODE AND GUIDELINES.</b></p>	 <p><b>TCCS IS THE LEAD FOR ITEM E) IN THE TABLE BELOW. TCCS HAS PROVIDED SOME COMMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OTHER ITEMS.</b></p>
<p>e. Reviewing the efficacy of existing gross pollutant traps. The review should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. effectiveness in pollutant reduction,</li> <li>ii. effectiveness of current maintenance of pollution control measures,</li> <li>iii. capital costs,</li> <li>iv. ongoing maintenance costs to ensure the current drainage infrastructure remains high-standard and is in line with current best practice, protecting downstream environments,</li> <li>v. reduction of polluted leachate waste, and</li> <li>vi. the capacity to manage requirements of future urban growth and development</li> </ol>	<p>An ACT Water Sensitive Urban Design Infrastructure Audit was undertaken as part of Phase 1 of ACT Healthy Waterways Project. The project comprised three stages.</p> <p>Stage 1 took a high-level view of stormwater treatment system performance, focusing on qualitative performance. Stage 1 employed rapid assessment methods which could be employed across 42 assets to obtain a general picture of their performance at the ‘macro’ scale.</p> <p>Stage 2 focused on understanding the better-performing assets at a ‘functional’ level, including quantifiable assessment (pollutant reduction), wherever possible, and quantifying lifecycle costs.</p> <p>Stage 3 focuses on the opportunities for improving stormwater treatment systems, developing options for rectification, renewal and replacement, quantifying costs and benefits. The review has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided advice on asset performance,</li> <li>• has informed budgeting for operation and maintenance and development of template cost estimates for construction of assets, and</li> <li>• enabled comparison through the standardisation of Model for Urban Stormwater Improvement Conceptualisation parameters.</li> </ul>	<p>TCCS is the lead agency.</p> <p>TCCS will be undertaking a gross pollutant trap audit and build on the previous audit undertaken in 2015–2016 by Alluvium Consulting.</p>
<p>f. Working with the National Capital Authority and NSW councils.</p>	<p>The ACT Government established the ACT and Regional Catchment Management Coordination Group, which includes membership by the National Capital Authority and local councils in the region. This group is actively engaged in addressing catchment management issues affecting Lake Burley Griffin (See also response to Recommendation 10 below).</p>	<p>EPSDD lead agency. TCCS additional input:</p> <p>TCCS is currently a member of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group.</p>

## RURAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

### Recommendation 10

That the ACT and NSW governments and the National Capital Authority support planning and implementation of on-ground actions to reduce the potential for soil erosion in the upper Queanbeyan River, upper Molonglo River and Jerrabomberra Creek. In doing so active involvement of Palerang Council, the Molonglo Catchment Management Group, ACTEW and other Natural Resource Management groups should continue to be strongly encouraged and supported.

#### Commissioner's comment

It is noted that support has been demonstrated through the *ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy* and Implementation Plan. It was reported in the 2016–17 Annual Report that this action was yet to commence. Provide an update on progress.



#### ACT Government response

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy.*

##### Actions completed in 2017–18

- An inter-jurisdictional decision-making framework related to catchment policy and planning has been endorsed by the Coordination Group.
- The Coordination Group agreed to a three tiered cost sharing approach (22/11/16) for an interjurisdictional investment and resourcing framework. Detailed business cases for specific programs have been presented to the Coordination Group and will be considered in the third Quarter of 2018.
- The Centre for Urban and Regional Futures has been appointed to inform a catchment wide assessment of vulnerability to climate change. A stakeholder engagement workshop was held in November 2017. A report will be provided at the August meeting in 2018.
- The Coordination Group strategically support the role and work undertaken by peak stakeholder groups, volunteers, and land owners and managers via a successful ACT Budget Bid to help the three Catchment Groups operating in the region to move to a more sustainable funding model.
- Coordination Group developed an integrated catchment emergency response plan that outlines the environmental values to be retained/rehabilitated in the event of significant natural events in our key

catchments. The emergency response plan was adopted at the Coordination Groups March 2019 meeting and is in the process of being disseminated to all relevant stakeholders in the region.

- Coordination Group moved to secure long term water supplies for the ACT and Region by including water trading in 2017 work plan for Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration and inclusion in NSW and ACT Water Resource plans due for accreditation in 2019. Additionally, in principle agreement was reached at the recent Murray Darling Basin Authority Ministerial Council Meeting the Coordination Group is also developing a proposal to conduct a feasibility study into regional water security that will include the regional centres of Queanbeyan, Yass and Cooma.

### Recommendation 11

That the ACT Government finalise and implement the Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management. The plan should include adequate monitoring, reporting and review, and mechanisms to ensure effective cooperation between ACTEW, NSW and ACT in the management of the Googong Foreshores.

#### Commissioner's comment

This recommendation was made in 2012. In the 2016–17 Annual Report, it was reported that this action will be completed when appropriate resources are available. Provide an update on progress.



#### ACT Government response

##### Relevant strategy, plan or program

The *Googong Foreshores Plan of Management* was finalised and sent to the Commonwealth Government in 2010. In November 2011 the Commonwealth responded that the plan met the strategic requirements of the Land and Conservation Management Plan as required under the Googong lease.

##### Actions completed in 2017–18

- Implementation of the plan is ongoing and several updates to the plan have been made since 2011.
- It is now proposed that a formal review of the plan will be undertaken, commencing in 2018, should resources be available.

## MANAGEMENT OF OTHER RECREATIONAL WATERWAYS

### Recommendation 16

A comprehensive assessment of environmental, social and economic value of key ACT lakes be undertaken and take into account current and predicted challenges to water quality. This assessment should inform:

- a. a review and update of *Canberra's Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management* involving extensive community consultation and taking into account the long-term challenges to water quality in the urban catchments,
- b. the need for government investments in water quality,
- c. decisions regarding trials of appropriate in-lake and catchment management measures, with the results assessed from scientific (environmental), social and economic perspectives, and
- d. decisions regarding implementation of lake and catchment management options.

### Commissioner's comment

Progress has been reported. Provide an update on implementation of the *Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management*.



### ACT Government response

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Integrated Water Monitoring Plan.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

- The *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* is complete and implementation has commenced. *The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan* provides a set of recommendations for updating the ACT Government monitoring programs and provides a critical evaluation of future data requirements to inform catchment modelling. A SOURCE model has been developed to deliver an assessment of what water quantity would be at end of pipe for water resource plan compliance. Further calibration of the SOURCE model is planned, and is identified in the *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan*. Workshops (March 2017 and May 2017) were undertaken with scientific experts to identify the specific knowledge gaps and research priorities for Lake Tuggeranong and Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

- In-lake research has commenced in Lake Tuggeranong to clarify the major sources and timing of in-lake pollutant release to inform specific management action trials to be conducted in Spring 2018 and Summer of 2018–2019.
- Research has also commenced in ACT urban ponds in order to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality. Outcomes will inform management of these assets.
- Procurement is currently underway for event based monitoring (as per the *Integrated Water Monitoring Plan*) to improve understanding of how pollutants are moving in storm events and in turn to improve our application of catchment and development scale modelling. This work will inform future planning and development decisions.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information has commenced. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible.

### Recommendation 17

The ACT, Australian, NSW and local governments establish a Burley Griffin-Molonglo-Queanbeyan catchment management agreement. Such an agreement should outline:

- e. strategic objectives for the integrated and coordinated management of the Lake and catchments, to encompass water quality, environmental flows, potable water, land use, wastewater, and future urban and climate change impacts on the catchment,
- f. each party's responsibilities for water quality in the Lake and its catchments,
- g. a long-term catchment planning framework, and
- h. an evidence-based, adaptive, management workplan.

To avoid past challenges of multi-jurisdictional catchment management co-ordination, such an agreement should include a dedicated governance group with representation from all jurisdictions, a consistent and persistent mechanism to ensure implementation and accountability, and reporting requirements.

The National Capital Authority, as Lake manager, should in the first instance convene a meeting of relevant jurisdictional representatives to guide the above recommendations.

## Commissioner's comment

Progress was reported on the six shorter-term actions in the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group 2016–17 Annual Report. Provide an update on implementation of these actions in 2017–18.



## ACT Government response

### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*ACT and Region Catchment Strategy.*

### Actions completed in 2017–18

During 2017–18, the ACT and Region Coordination Group met on three occasions (20 September, 30 November and 29 March). It continued to address the implementation of priority actions in the *ACT and Region Catchment Strategy*. The Coordination Group focussed on the following actions:

- **Action 1: Build an inter-jurisdictional decision-making framework related to catchment policy and planning**  
The Coordination Group endorsed a decision-making framework at its November meeting, which paved the way for consideration of specific proposals for co-investment under Action 2.
- **Action 2: Establish an inter-jurisdictional investment and resourcing framework**  
The Coordination Group agreed to a strategic investment approach to the implementation of the actions in the regional catchment strategy. This included an approach to co-funding secretarial support for the group as well as priority projects.
- **Action 4: Continue to inform a catchment wide assessment of vulnerability to climate change**  
The Coordination Group continued to explore this issue in partnership with EPSDD and Canberra Urban and Region Futures. A workshop in October 2017 convened by Canberra Urban and Region Futures brought together key stakeholders in the ACT, NSW and local government to focus on the preparedness of the region to climate change.
- **Action 7: Strategically support the role and work undertaken by peak stakeholder groups, volunteers and landowners**  
In collaboration with the Coordination Group, EPSDD worked on strategic and organisational priorities for community based catchment groups in the region. The Chair, Professor Ian Falconer leant

his strong support to the ACT Government providing core operational support for these groups, to fill a gap left by the Australian who no longer fund this type of activity. This work led to the ACT Government providing interim support in the 2018–19 ACT Budget for catchment groups to enable the groups to work with EPSDD to move to a more sustainable financial and operational footing.

- **Action 8: Develop an integrated catchment emergency response plan**  
Investigations on this action commenced early 2017 thanks to a grant from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program with EPSDD engaging the consultancy firm Alluvium to develop the ACT and Region Catchment Post-Emergency Recovery Plan. The project is jointly managed by a working group incorporating Icon Water, Emergency Services Agency and EPSDD. The Recovery Plan has now been finalised and in the process of being published.
- **Action 9: Build community understanding about catchment health to promote behaviour change through a broad range of communication and education strategies**  
In February 2017, the *H2OK Keeping our Waterways Healthy* stormwater education and behaviour change program was jointly launched by the ACT Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman, Federal Senator Zed Seselja and the Chair of the Coordination Group, Professor Ian Falconer. The program which operates across the Upper Murrumbidgee Region targets actions by urban and rural residents as well as the building and construction industry that have a negative impact on our waterways. The program combines awareness, education and inventive elements including seasonal social media campaigns, a catchment road show, drain art and drain stencilling, demonstration sites, industry collaborations and ambassadors to get the key messages across that 'Only Rain Goes Down the Stormwater Drain'.
- **Action 10: Provide an integrated catchment management planning approach for growth and settlement patterns in the ACT and Region**  
The Coordination Group is promoting collaboration between the ACT and regional NSW in exploring opportunities for regional collaboration under the aegis of the NSW South East and Tablelands Regional Plan.

# REPORT ON THE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (NATURE RESERVES) – OCTOBER 2011

## MOLONGLO RIVER CORRIDOR (NATURE RESERVES) AND GOOGONG FORESHORES INVESTIGATION

### Recommendation 4.2

Reviewing the Canberra Nature Park Management Plan 1999 as mandated under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and in so doing include:

- nature reserves added to the reserve system since 1999,
- addresses categorising nature reserves (recommendation 3.4),
- polices to address current issues and those developed since 1999, particularly,
- Action Plan No. 27 – ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy,
- Action Plan No. 28 – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy,
- Action Plan. No 29 – ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy, and
- consideration of climate change (including Impacts of Climate on the Canberra Nature Park: Risks and responses by Dr Bob Webb – Appendix E) and connectivity (including Ecological Connectivity for Climate Change in the ACT and surrounding region by Manning et al.).

### Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on the review of the Canberra Nature Park Plan of Management.



### ACT Government response

#### Relevant strategy, plan or program

*Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan 2018.*

#### Actions completed in 2017–18

A review of the *Canberra Nature Park Management Plan 1999* has been undertaken and will be made available for public comment in 2018, along with a new draft reserve management plan for Canberra Nature Park.

The new Canberra Nature Park plan includes:

- nature reserves added to the reserve system since 1999,
- IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) classifications for all reserves in Canberra Nature Park (the Conservator has assigned category IV – habitat/species management area with a primary objective to maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats). The draft Canberra Nature Park plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of Category IV,
- policies that address current issues and those developed since 1999 including reference to those in Action Plan 27 (currently under review), the new *ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy* and Action plans, and Action Plan 29 (currently under review), and
- consideration of climate change and connectivity.

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# Table of closed complaint investigations and investigation recommendations

Below is a table of complaints and investigation recommendations for which the Commissioner has sought comment on and no further action is needed. As such, the Commissioner has closed these complaints and recommendations. This is the first year that this approach has been used.

**TABLE 3: COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS CLOSED THIS REPORTING PERIOD**

COMPLAINT	RESOLUTION
Woden Green Development – report into compliance with plans of management	The 2016–17 response from EPSDD was deemed adequate and no further action is required.
Alleged damage to public unleased land associated with development work on Block 20, Section 28 (99 Rivett St) adjoining Helms Place, Hackett	The 2016–17 response from EPSDD was deemed adequate and no further action is required.
Belconnen Town Centre planning and third party appeal information for development decision notices	The 2016–17 response from EPSDD was deemed adequate and no further action is required.
Lake Closure Protocols	<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>In line with the current guidelines, the ACT Government and the Queanbeyan City Council should identify and map sources of faecal contamination entering urban stormwater systems, the significance of the sources, and long-term strategies for reducing loading. In addition, a rigorous and comprehensive procedure for rapid ‘sanitary surveys’ in the event of elevated indicator concentrations should be established.</p> <p><b>Commissioner’s comment</b></p> <p>Progress has been reported and is deemed adequate. No further inquiries are being undertaken by this office.</p>
Options for ‘in lake’ management to improve water quality	<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>The National Capital Authority and the ACT Government undertake a feasibility study, including a triple bottom line analysis, of macrophyte restoration across the Lake. Priorities for consideration should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>construction of a wetland in the Lake between Springbank Island and the mouth of Sullivans Creek,</li> <li>construction of a wetland in the Lake at East Basin, and</li> <li>restoration of macrophyte beds in Lotus bay, Orana Bay, and at Weston Park East Beach.</li> </ol> <p><b>Commissioner’s comment</b></p> <p>Progress has been reported and is deemed adequate. No further inquiries are being undertaken by this office.</p>

COMPLAINT	RESOLUTION
Catchment management to improve the Lake's water quality	<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>The ACT Government, Queanbeyan City Council and National Capital Authority work collectively to raise awareness of the impact of organic matter, and other household or commercial materials (for example, garden and lawn fertilizers) on the Lake Burley Griffin catchment. Information should include the contribution that all sectors of the community can make to improving water quality by appropriately using and disposing of such materials.</p> <p><b>Commissioner's comment</b></p> <p>The update provided for the 2016–17 Annual Report was deemed adequate. It was observed that the H2OK program sufficiently met this recommendation. No further action is required.</p>
2011 Molonglo River Corridor Complaint	<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>That the Molonglo Riparian Strategy is released publicly on the ACTPLA website, along with an explanation of how it will be incorporated into the Molonglo River Park Plan. This should be updated regularly. The directorate that has carriage of implementing the NES plan should also host this information on their website.</p> <p><b>Commissioner's comment</b></p> <p>This has been superseded by the recommendations provided by the Commissioner in the <i>Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment</i>. An update on implementation of these recommendations will be provided in the Commissioner's 2018–19 Annual Report as the ACT Government Response is yet to be provided (expected by November 2018).</p>

### B.2.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS STILL TO BE IMPLEMENTED

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (c) of the Act and must include details of 'any recommendation in a report mentioned in paragraph (b) that the Commissioner believes is still to be implemented or fully implemented'.

Having reviewed the answers provided by directorates and agencies, there is nothing to be reported under this section that has not yet been outlined in this report.

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## B.2.4 ACTIVITIES UNDER THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT

This section relates to the objects of the Act under s2B (a) – (e) in the Act.

### B.2.4.1 SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT

The objects of the Act are to ensure regular and consistent reporting on matters relating to the condition and management of the environment and progress towards ecologically sustainable development in the Territory. This is outlined in **B.2.4.2**, and **B.2.4.3** below.

### B.2.4.2 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The aim of using social media in the office is to reach a broader audience and export the message of ecologically sustainable development.

The Commissioner is actively pursuing a policy of building a social media profile to strategically promote ecologically sustainable development. The office does not have the resource base to establish a dedicated communications team. Whilst no formal media strategy has been developed, all members of the office staff are involved in promoting environmental sustainability by electronic media.

The office's Facebook profile, Living Sustainably ACT had over 1100 followers at 30 June 2018 and continues to grow. Two-thirds of our followers are women and one-third are men. Over half of our Facebook followers are based in the ACT. The remainder are from across Australia with a smattering from other countries.

#### Case study

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY RIDE

Very early on a chilly autumn morning on 8 March 2018, a group of keen people met at the National Portrait Gallery at 5:50am for a briefing before departing on the ride at 6am. It was International Women's Day.

There were two options for riding:

- A 30km bunch road ride, and
- A leisurely 12km ride around the east basin of Lake Burley Griffin (including Jerrabomberra Wetlands).

The Commissioner, Kate Auty, and a member of her staff, chose the option around the lake. A total of seven people arrived to take part in this ride. Approximately 20 people chose the 30km ride.



*About to set off for the leisurely ride option in the dark.  
Source Kate Auty*

Charles Black from CycleLifeHQ led this ride and Kate Auty provided commentary along the way regarding relevant environmental issues.



*Jerrabomberra Wetlands in the early morning fog. Source Kate Auty*

Upon successful completion of the ride, the team returned to the Portrait Gallery for breakfast and presentations. A number of reporting links were made and the office continues to be actively engaged in programs to increase female participation in cycling.

The registration cost for participation in the event was a donation to World Bicycle Relief Australia. This organisation is mobilising people through the power of bicycles, by donating bicycles to those in need to assist them to carry out their daily duties in a safer and more efficient way. There is a particular focus on empowering women and children by giving them a mode of transport other than walking.

As the ride was on International Women's Day, a key message for the event was gender equality, as well as encouraging more women to ride bikes for various reasons such as increasing mental and physical health, the social and community benefits of riding and to inspire others to do the same.

The event raised enough money for the donation of 10 bicycles to mobilise those in developing countries to access education and employment.

The office's Twitter feed, @EnvComm\_ACT had over 1,500 followers at 30 June 2018.

Events which involve the office, the staff and the Commissioner are routinely posted and statistical insights are monitored to determine which issues are of interest to the public.

### SEE-Change and Parliament of Youth

The office continues to work with *SEE-Change* and *Australia21* in the Parliament of Youth, including assistance leading-up to the event as well as support on the day.

In the lead-up to the event, staff from the office presented at professional development sessions for teachers to assist them in communicating the subject matter. Waste in the ACT was chosen as an example of an issue the school children could consider in terms of how to reduce their impact on the environment.

On the day, our office provided representation on the sustainability panel and an interactive display to engage the school children. The aim of the display was to encourage the children to think about complex issues relating to different kinds of shopping bags such as how much energy/water it takes to make the various bags, how many times you need to use the bag to make it worthwhile and which ones have the greatest impact on the environment when discarded. The students then had to choose which bag they thought was the best for the environment.

The office will ensure the Plastic Bag Report is made available to educators across the ACT.



*The display created by the office for the Parliament of Youth. Source Kirilly Dickson*

### Direct engagement

Forms of direct engagement included meetings with the Commissioner, presentations, launches, seminars and project support with a wide range of individuals and groups. Presentations from the Commissioner and other staff at the office at conferences, seminars and forums are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

### Messages of Appreciation

Feedback provided on an ad hoc basis gives an indication of the work the Commissioner has been undertaking with community and individuals:

“Thank you [Kate] for a most interesting talk. It clearly stimulated much discussion around the table. The feedback from lunch participants is wonderful. I greatly admire your outstanding contribution to many significant issues.”  
Dr Helen Sykes, Director of Future Leaders.

“Now you see the reason why I appointed Kate as the ACT Commissioner. She is one of the great and compelling environmental advocates.” Simon Corbell, Victorian Renewable Energy Advocate.

“Dear Kate, thank you for making the time to input to my research on public decision-making and sustainable development...I also feel very lucky to have had the input of such an exceptional woman to my research.” Mitzi Bolton, PhD student at ANU.

“Dear Kate, I wanted to thank you personally for speaking at the Accelerate Climate Action event last night. You brought so much energy to the whole event. Not only did I love your speech, I appreciated the way you brought a uniquely Canberran feel to the evening.” Tony Auhl, City Coordinator of 350 Canberra.

### B.2.4.3 SUBMISSIONS

The office comments and provides input into ACT Government draft documents by specific invitation or through the public consultation process (often advertised via Your Say on the ACT Government's website).

Submissions to public consultations are made publicly available on the Commissioner's website, however, this is not the case with submissions by invitation.

**TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION MATTERS IN 2017–18**

SUBMISSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	DATE SUBMITTED
Draft Migratory Species Action Plan	Include threats from climate change in more detail, address role of monitoring and review, focus for management should be on location priorities due to limited sites in ACT, clarify policy and legal context.	24 August 2017
ACT Housing Strategy	Include an extra goal to ensure that broader sustainability and liveability outcomes are included, consider the incorporation of energy efficient standards and incentive for landlords and tenants, implement measures to ensure affordable housing achieves best practice design and quality, affordable housing needs access to public transport, enhance social inclusion and reduce stigma of public housing and its residents.	15 September 2017
ACT Housing Choices Discussion Paper	Pursue urban consolidation, implement standard design guidelines for sustainability and liveability, create innovative models to address rental and housing affordability.	2 February 2018
ACT Volunteering Statement Action Plan 2018–19 Consultation Paper	Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, use infographics to present information to improve communication, consider inclusion of an assessable monitoring framework for the actions.	14 February 2018
Molonglo River Reserve Draft Reserve Management Plan	Refer to <i>Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment</i> .	19 March 2018
Climate Policy – Net Zero Emissions Territory	Reiteration of recommendations provided in the <i>2017 Implementation Status Report</i> .	20 March 2018
Belconnen Bike Path	Add in three pedestrian crossings onto roads in the cycleway and fix tree root issues.	25 May 2018
Unnatural Fragmentation of Habitats – Nomination as a Key Threatening Process	Supported the nomination and noted that the issue will be further explored in the <i>2019 State of the Environment Report</i> .	8 June 2018
Nature in our City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlighted the increased pressure on urban open space due to the construction of higher density residential suburbs, and</li> <li>noted the increase in the number of suburbs adjacent to natural areas has the potential to negatively impact our nature reserves and species.</li> </ul>	29 June 2018

## B.2.5 INFORMATION IN AGENCY ANNUAL REPORTS

This section relates to s23 in the Act.

All agencies responded to the Commissioner’s requests for information relating to the state of the environment reporting within a reasonable time.



Office green wall – self-funded. Source Serena Farrelly

## B.3 Scrutiny

There were no requests for the Commissioner to report on progress during the reporting period in relation to undertakings made in reports produced by entities charged with responsibility for scrutiny, including the Auditor-General, Ombudsman and Legislative Assembly Committees.

## B.4 Risk Management

Risks are considered and addressed appropriately in all activities of the office. Advice is sought on procurement for major commissions on an as-needs basis. Risk is discussed at fortnightly staff meetings and a risk register has been developed for the office.



*Yellow-Box tree in Kama Nature Reserve. Source Kirilly Dickson*

## B.5 Internal Audit

According to the ACT Government Internal Audit Framework “in the case of a small agency with no board, the governing body may elect not to delegate their ‘conformance’ responsibilities and functions to a committee.” This means that the Commissioner has the responsibility to delegate auditing responsibilities.

Staff in the office are aware that the EPSDD’s Audit Committee is available for assistance if required.

## B.6 Fraud Prevention

Information on the office’s fraud prevention processes and any reports or allegations are outlined in the EPSDD’s 2017–18 Annual Report.

## B.7 Work Health and Safety

The office is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Occupational health and safety is managed in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (amended and in force as at 1 July 2016).

During 2017–18 the Commissioner did not receive any notices under the revised Act, and there were no notifiable incidents. The Commissioner does not pay a first tier worker’s compensation premium.

Three stand-up desks are available in the office to aid staff health management. We also have two office bicycles to cycle to meetings. Staff also walk to meetings if the distance is appropriate. The office borrowed an electric mountain bike from Parks, Conservation Services for a one month trial and options for an electric bike for the office are being explored.

Staff are encouraged to bring plants into the office to enhance the quality of the air, as well as improving their mental health.

The office’s workplace health and safety policy is included in EPSDD’s 2017–18 Annual Report. Staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant initiatives run by EPSDD.

## B.8 Human Resources Management

Further information to that provided in this section can be found in EPSDD's 2017–18 Annual Report.

### B.8.1 WORKFORCE PROFILE

#### B.8.1.1 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) HEADCOUNT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As noted in **Section B.1.5**, while our standard staffing number is six FTEs, at different times variations can occur in response to changing needs and situations. This is reflected in the following tables.

**TABLE 5: FTE BY GENDER AND HEAD COUNT**

HEADCOUNT TOTAL	FTE		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
6	6	FTE by gender	5	1	<b>6</b>
6	6	Headcount by gender	5	1	<b>6</b>
		% of workforce	83.3	16.7	<b>100.0%</b>

**TABLE 6: FTE BY CLASSIFICATION**

CLASSIFICATION GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Administrative officers	1	0	1
Senior officers	3	1	4
Statutory office holders	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

**TABLE 7: HEADCOUNT BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY AND AVERAGE YEARS OF SERVICE**

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Casual	0	0	0
Permanent full-time	4	0	4
Permanent part-time	0	0	0
Temporary full-time	1	1	2
Temporary part-time	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
Average years of service	4.7	0.2	4

**TABLE 8: HEADCOUNT BY DIVERSITY GROUP**

	HEADCOUNT	% OF TOTAL STAFF
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1	16.7%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	0	0.0%
People with a disability	0	0.0%

**TABLE 9: HEADCOUNT BY AGE GROUP**

AGE GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Under 25	0	0	0
25–34	2	0	2
35–44	1	0	1
45–54	1	1	2
55 and over	1	0	1

**TABLE 10: PERMANENT RECRUITMENT AND SEPARATION RATES**

DIVISION	RECRUITMENT RATE	SEPARATION RATE
Administrative Officers	0%	0%
Senior Officers	0%	0%
Executive Officers	0%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

Figures on recruitment and separation rates by classification group in **Table 10** are generated as a percentage of the cohort group with the total for the office shown at the bottom of the table.

The effect of these calculations for a very small cohort such as the office is to produce rates that may look a little high or unusual.

## B.8.2 ATTRACTION AND RETENTION INITIATIVES

The office had no Attraction and Retention Initiative arrangements during 2017–18.

## B.8.3 PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The office has a commitment to strengthening workforce and organisational capacity through building skills and capabilities. This learning and development is guided by individual achievement plans and supported through our strategic plan.

In addition to formal training sessions, office staff attended seminars and forums on various environment and sustainability topics including:

- adaptation to and mitigation of climate change,
- international and sub-national reporting on environmental-economic accounting,
- biodiversity and ecosystems research,
- heritage, planning and development,
- water and catchment management,
- renewable energy,
- active transport and light rail,
- state of the environment reporting, and
- communicating environmental/sustainability issues.

## B.8.4 FUTURE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES

Learning and development priorities for all office staff are identified within individual performance plans.

## B.8.5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The office actively participates in the EPSDD Graduate Program and has previously benefitted from hosting a number of graduate placements.

From June to September 2017, the office accepted the placement of an environmental engineer with post graduate qualifications in city planning and development.

From September to December 2017, the office accepted the placement of an urban planner with experience working in planning consultancies. During rotation in our office, these graduates gained experience in a range of topical projects and novel, diverse, interesting and challenging work. The office also linked the urban planner graduate to the ACT Government Architect.

In addition, the office has accepted placements from ANU and University of Canberra undergraduate students in environmental science related studies.

The office has also provided university students with ideas for projects they can undertake which relate to real world issues. In the reporting period, the office was involved with three of these projects:

1. Techlauncher in the Computer Science area at ANU, relating to innovation technologies for communicating the state of the environment report,

2. Complex Problems for a Fenner School course at ANU, relating to smart cities, transport, energy and use of technology, and
3. Sponsoring a project for an environmental policy research course at the Fenner School at ANU in relation to exploring options for cat containment in the ACT. These reports were publicly displayed on our website and linked to relevant ACT Government directorates.

### **B.8.6 PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND ACTPS TRAINING CALENDAR**

No staff members participated in the study assistance program during 2017–18.

All staff attended mandatory sessions and took up other ACTPS-advertised training opportunities. Details of learning and development programs offered to all ACT Government staff, including the office staff, can be found in the EPSDD 2017–18 Annual Report.

## **B.9 Ecologically Sustainable Development**

### **B.9.1 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

During the first few months of 2017–18 the office was located at Macarthur House in Lyneham in a shared office space with ACT Procurement Services.

On 12 October 2017, the office moved to a new location at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) campus in Bruce.

At this location, the office occupies 137.5 square metres of floor space at Bruce (not including shared access to kitchens and public amenities for all staff based on a proportion of the tenancy floor space). The office pays less for this space than Macarthur House, even though it is a larger area. Office staff also have access to use Block K – the CIT Sustainable Skills Training Hub.

#### **Case Study**

### **CIT SUSTAINABLE SKILLS TRAINING HUB**



*Building K at CIT Bruce. Source Ben Wrigley*

This is a purpose built facility at the CIT Bruce Campus for hands-on ‘green’ skills training in emerging sustainable technologies for both residential and commercial construction sectors. Students will be trained here in the design, installation, testing, commissioning, and maintenance of these technologies and will gain the skills required to assess and employ the latest in green building applications, materials and new products.

The project was initiated in 2009 in response to the Commonwealth Government’s Training Infrastructure Investment for Tomorrow.

*“The proposed new building will promote CIT’s aim to deliver accredited training programs that provide practical and significant ways of improving the education and training outcomes for tradespeople, science professionals and engineers so that they can make knowledgeable and constructive contributions to future thinking around climate*

*change adaptation. The project will provide a key component of the hands-on training required to re-skill and up-skill participants in CIT's existing suite of green skills training programs* – Extract from User Requirements Brief.

The new building was completed in time for the commencement of the 2011 academic year and has surpassed expectations. Each of the design objectives have been met and put together in such a way that the building is already in demand by teaching staff other than who the building was designed for. CIT and the community have a 'State of the Art' training facility targeted towards a sustainable future for all Australians.

## ELECTRICAL

Power generation exceeds the power requirements of the building through:

- A 2 kW gas fired fuel cell which generates electricity using natural gas as a fuel source.
- 2 x 30 kW gas fired micro-turbines which generate electricity using natural gas as a fuel source.
- 10kW solar photovoltaic panels – The building is fitted with solar photovoltaic panels mounted in two configurations. The first is a set of fixed panels in a standard configuration (facing North at a 35 degree inclination). The second set is mounted on two dual axis tracking systems which follow the sun path during the day. This set-up allows students to compare the efficiencies of both configurations.



*The solar photovoltaic panels on the top floor of Building K.*  
Source Ben Wrigley

- A 3kW wind turbine is to be erected remotely from the building to provide turbulence free operation.
- Lighting in the building is a mixture of high efficiency T5 fluorescent fittings, high efficiency compact fluorescent fittings and LED fittings and are all controlled by a digital lighting control system.
- DALI Lighting Control System – a digital lighting control system which utilises sensors to detect ambient lighting levels and room occupancy to provide appropriate lighting levels throughout the building.

## MECHANICAL

The mechanical plant is a relatively complex system of devices that heat and cool the building as well as provide training on new green technology. In order for the systems to work either simultaneously or separately, there are four water tanks located on the ground floor which maintain different temperatures, and which act as heat exchangers. The primary heating source for the building is a heat recovery module which collects waste heat from fuel cell and micro-turbines to produce hot water for heating and cooling.



*The piping network below the building which heats the building.*  
Source Ben Wrigley

All rainwater collected by the building is stored in tanks and is re-used for building heating and cooling systems, toilet flushing and glasshouse irrigation on site.

## RESULTS

Although many of the individual technologies used in this facility are in use in other buildings, very few combine all those technologies under one roof. Interconnections between items of plant have been designed to allow students to experiment with different combinations of plant equipment to achieve the best efficiencies.

This building leads the way in many areas of sustainability. This facility will make a significant contribution to the employability of scientists and engineers in a professional community that is tackling the challenges of climate change. Importantly, the building design will allow sufficient flexibility to adapt to new and emerging green technologies as they become available.

This building has already won a Master Builders Association award for the best commercial environmental project and has been submitted to the Green Building Council of Australia targeting a 6 Green Star rating which signifies 'World Leadership' in environmentally sustainable design. It is the first educational building in Canberra targeting a 6 Star Green Star rating and only the second in Australia.



Battery recycling collection in the office. Source Serena Farrelly

Staff and the Commissioner had access to the bicycle cage facility at Macarthur House and now have access to free car parking and bicycle parking at CIT Bruce. Consideration has been given to the purchase of an electric bicycle for staff use as it is no longer efficient to ride to meetings with a regular bicycle from the new location in Bruce. Staff in the office trialled the use of an electric mountain bicycle for one month, kindly loaned by Parks and Conservation staff.

## B.9.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The office is covered under the EPSDD Resource Management Plan.

Specifically, the Resource Management Plan refers to the office (p7):

*‘Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is located at 490 Northbourne Avenue Dickson.<sup>34</sup> Due to the proportionally small impact of those 6 FTE in their workplace, the Key Performance Indicator for the office is to maintain its full Actsmart Business Accreditation.’*

The office is accredited as an Actsmart business and continues to participate in the program. Accreditation was renewed in October 2017 at our new location at Bruce CIT.

The office participates in the EPSDD Green Team. This is an ongoing commitment that allows our staff to be connected to what is going on in terms of sustainability initiatives in EPSDD and across ACT Government.

The office ensures that its facilities are appropriate to maintain independence from relevant ACT Government activities.

A range of strategies are in place to assist in achieving more sustainable resource management, including:

- continuing to work towards becoming a paperless office by using electronic data management via Objective Electronic Data Management software for filing and to minimise paper and cartridge use,
- circulating electronic versions of reports for comment rather than hard copies, as well as developing interactive reports online to reduce the need to print reports,
- collecting household batteries in the office for recycling,
- striving for sustainable procurement through our tendering assessment processes,
- using 100 per cent recycled paper for our printing,
- initiating our own system for composting organic waste (see Case Study below),
- having two staff members trained in the use of the ACT Government Enterprise Sustainability Platform,
- all staff have their own coffee cups and do not use disposable ones, and
- encouraging staff to carpool or use MyWay bus passes to attend off-site meetings and events where feasible.

<sup>34</sup> Note that on 1 February 2017, the office was relocated to Macarthur House and to Bruce CIT on 12 October 2017

## COMPOSTING AT CIT

Our office moved to the CIT Bruce campus in October 2017. The campus does not have a composting facility or a contract in place for compost collection. The option of having a contractor come to collect the compost from our office twice a week was explored and it was going to be quite expensive as we only have a small office of six staff members.

So we decided to do it ourselves.

When the Actsmart team came to conduct our waste audit, they provided us with a 7 Litre collection bin for the kitchen. Staff within our office are on a roster to empty this bin into the compost bin outside twice per week. Each time the bin is emptied, the amount of food waste in the bin is recorded so that at the end of the financial year we can calculate quite accurately the amount of food waste our office has produced. This is the first time in a number of years that we have been able to accurately record the volume of organic material that our office staff produces as we are not sharing an office.



*Our compost collection bin in the kitchen with the record of the volume of food emptied to the compost outside. Source Serena Farrelly*

The food waste is deposited into a 150 Litre compost bin outside. A blue-tongue lizard was observed living in this outside compost bin over the summer months, which our office was very excited about.

Adjacent to the outside compost bin are a couple of veggie garden areas that are used by the Year 12 students on campus for practical experience. The plan is for the students to use our compost on their veggie gardens to provide more nutrients for the plants.



*Our compost bin outside, with the veggie gardens in the background. Source Serena Farrelly*

Staff in the office have been very diligent in emptying the small bin in the kitchen into the large bin outside. This is important as it ensures the food waste in the small bin does not start to decompose before it is taken outside.

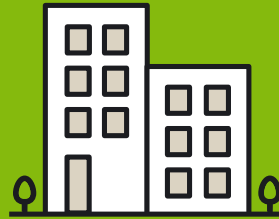
One of the facilities staff at Bruce CIT also discovered some sheets of padding made from sheep wool that had been discarded in the waste to landfill bin. He collected these sheets of padding and brought them to our compost area so we could add them to our compost bin as they are 100% wool so completely biodegradable. These were diverted from landfill and instead provide a natural substance for variety in our compost bin.

The facilities staff were also interested in our composting system and started collecting vegetable scraps to add to our compost bin outside. Thus, establishment of the composting system for our office not only saved financial costs, it also helped to raise awareness about composting with other staff on the CIT campus.

# HOW DID OUR WASTE CHANGE FROM 2016-17 TO 2017-18?



**6 Staff members**



Paper usage increased by **37%**



**2016-17**

**2017-18**



**Total waste produced increased by 17%**

## How much was sent to landfill?

**2016-17**

**2017-18**



**Material sent to landfill decreased by 34%**

## How much was recycled?

**2016-17**

**2017-18**



**Total material to be recycled increased by 68%**



**CO-MINGLED RECYCLABLES +50%**



**ORGANIC MATTER +50%**



**PAPER AND CARDBOARD +87%**

### FACTORS INFLUENCING DATA

Small staff numbers and resource use results in larger percentage increases or decreases relative to small changes in unit amount.

Measurement of waste leaving the office was estimated, thus the data produced is not exact.

**TABLE 11: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE – CURRENT AND PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR**

INDICATOR AS AT 30 JUNE 2017	UNIT	PREVIOUS FY 2016–17	CURRENT FY 2017–18	% CHANGE
Agency staff and area				See explanatory note 1 for this column
Agency staff	FTE	6	6	
Workplace floor area	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	98.8 <sup>a</sup>	137.5	
Stationary energy usage				
Electricity use	Kilowatt hours	15,202.77	14,207.23	
Natural gas use	Megajoules	17,526.23 <sup>b</sup>	23,264.5	
Diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
Transport fuel usage				
Electric vehicles	Number	0	0	
Hybrid vehicles	Number	0	0	
Other vehicles (not electric or hybrid)	Number	0	0	
Total number of vehicles	Number	0	0	
Total kilometres travelled	Kilometres	0	0	
Fuel use – petrol	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)	Cubic Metres (Cm <sup>3</sup> )	0	0	
Water usage				
Water use	Kilolitres	37.61 <sup>c</sup>	66.65	
Resource efficiency and waste				
Reams of paper purchased	Reams	35	48 <sup>d</sup>	
Recycled content of paper purchased	Percentage	100	100	
Waste to landfill	Litres	1,600 <sup>e</sup>	1050 <sup>f</sup>	
Co-mingled material recycled	Litres	600 <sup>g</sup>	900 <sup>h</sup>	
Paper and cardboard recycled (including secure paper)	Litres	800 <sup>i</sup>	1500 <sup>j</sup>	
Organic material recycled	Litres	200 <sup>k</sup>	300 <sup>l</sup>	
Greenhouse gas emissions <sup>m</sup>				
Emissions from transport	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	0	0	
Scope 1 emissions	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	0.90	2.11	
Scope 2 emissions	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	10.14	6.46	
Total emissions Tonnes	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	11.04	8.58	

See explanatory notes overleaf

## Explanatory notes for Table 11

- a. This figure is the average of the two areas the office was located in over the reporting year. At WOTSO Workspace the office occupied 113.2 m<sup>2</sup> (7 months) and at Macarthur House the office occupied 84.4 m<sup>2</sup> (5 months).
- b. Estimate natural gas consumption at Macarthur House only (5 months). The Enterprise Sustainability Platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO Workspace.
- c. Estimate water consumption at Macarthur House only (1 February 2017 to 30 June 2017). The Enterprise Sustainability Platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO Workspace.
- d. This number was an increase on the amount of paper used in 2016–17 due to the fact that the office produced four reports for the Legislative Assembly in the last financial year, compared to only one in the previous reporting period.
- e. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO Workspace three 10L hoppers were collected three times per week, at Macarthur House this was reduced to one 10L hopper emptied daily into a 55L hopper shared with two other teams emptied two times a week.
- f. The office moved to CIT Bruce on 12 October 2018 and a new Actsmart Audit was completed at this new location. The figures for 2017–18 are estimates based on our collection from CIT Bruce with a 15L bin filled approximately once a week. An average monthly volume based on last year's total was also added for the 4 months we were located in Macarthur House (July-October 2017).
- g. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO Workspace six 8L hoppers were emptied monthly, at Macarthur House this was reduced to one 75L hopper shared with two other teams that was emptied two times a week.
- h. The figures for 2017–18 are estimates based on our collection from CIT Bruce with a 40L bin approximately half-filled once a week. An average monthly volume based on last year's total was also added for the 4 months we were located in Macarthur House (July-October 2017).
- i. WOTSO Workspace and Macarthur House had one 120L hopper for secure paper collected every eight weeks. This figure does not include cardboard taken to the outside hopper for recycling.
- j. This figure was calculated by adding a total of 780L for secure paper (120L emptied every 8 weeks) and 720L for paper and cardboard (240L bin emptied 3 times) at Bruce CIT which is what occurred. This figure does not include cardboard taken to the outside hopper for recycling at Macarthur House (July-October 2017).
- k. This is an estimate figure based on staff contributions to bins managed by a commercial organics waste management company. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO Workspace one 3L hopper was collected weekly, at Macarthur House this increased to one 18L hopper shared with two other teams.
- l. This figure was calculated by adding up the recorded volume of food taken to the compost each week as a percentage of the 7L bin in our kitchen at CIT Bruce from 1 November 2017 to 30 June 2018, (total 230L). An average monthly volume based on last year's total was also added for the 4 months that we were located in Macarthur House (July-October 2017).
- m. The Enterprise Sustainability Platform was reconfigured with a changed floor area for WOTSO Workspace resulting in changed totals for 2016–17.

### 1. Percentage change between 2016–17 and 2017–18 financial years

Calculating a percentage change between 2016–17 and 2017–18 does not provide a meaningful comparison. Most figures are estimates based on data for whole buildings or floors. While floor area has been used to calculate our contribution or usage, the office is a very small unit and has been accommodated within a floor shared with either one or two other larger ACT Government units whose tenancy, in turn, changed over the financial year.

### 2. Historical data for the Previous FY (2016–17) column

Differences between Enterprise Sustainability Platform sourced data in the Previous FY (2016–17) and that in the original 2016–17 Report are due to changes such as updates to agency occupancy and historical consumption data, and annual adjustments to ACT specific electricity emissions factors.

### 3. Updated greenhouse gas emissions factors

Emissions reported for stationary energy and transport fuels include Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions only. Emission factors used to calculate natural gas and fleet fuel are based on the latest National Greenhouse Accounts (NGA) Factors.

Greenhouse gas emissions for electricity consumption have been calculated using the following emissions factors based on the latest (May 2018) ACT Electricity Emissions Factor Report:

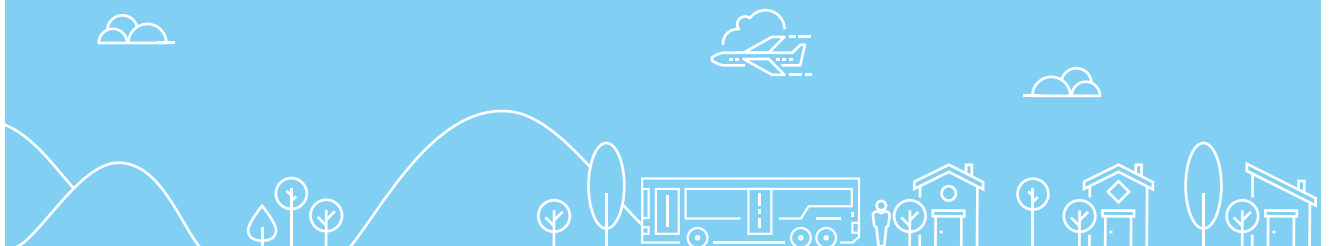
- A factor of 0.667 kilogram (kg) CO<sub>2</sub>-e / kilowatt hour (kWh) or 0.667 tonne (t) CO<sub>2</sub>-e / megawatt hour (MWh) has been used to calculate electricity emissions (Scope 2) for the 2016–17 period. It is based on actual historical data and is a retrospective adjustment of the original 0.525 factor (Scope 2) used for 2016–17 annual reporting. Page 3 of 3, and
- A factor of 0.455 kilogram (kg) CO<sub>2</sub>-e / kilowatt hour (kWh) or 0.455 tonne (t) CO<sub>2</sub>-e / megawatt hour (MWh) has been used to calculate electricity emissions (Scope 2) for the 2017–18 period.

The emissions factors include total GreenPower purchases for the ACT calculated in the third quarter of the respective financial years and are specific to the ACT. These emissions factors (Scope 2) reflect the increasing contribution of renewable electricity generated under the ACT's 100 per cent Renewable Energy Target. Consequently they are lower than those reported in the latest National Greenhouse Accounts Factors.

### 4. Green Power purchased in 2017–18

The ACT Government purchased an estimated 7,600 MWh (Megawatt hours) of GreenPower, representing an indicative 5% of the ACT Government's electricity consumption for 2017–18.

# Section C. Financial Management Reporting



## C.1 Financial Management Analysis

Further information on the office's financial management is covered in the EPSDD 2017–18 Annual Report.

## C.2 Financial Statements

The ACT Government appropriation for the office in 2017–18 was \$1,535,000.

The financial transactions for the office are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the EPSDD 2017–18 Annual Report as part of 'Expenses on Behalf of the Territory'.

## C.3 Capital Works

The office has no capital works projects.

## C.4 Asset Management

The office does not own or manage any major assets but maintains a portable asset register.

## C.5 Government Contracting

### **C.5.1 PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES**

Consistent with the provisions governing procurements up to \$200,000, the office continues to work with ACT Procurement Solutions to complete procurement actions where necessary. Included in all our requests for quote is a requirement for respondents to outline their demonstrated commitments to sustainability practices within their business.

### **C.5.2 EXTERNAL SOURCES OF LABOUR AND SERVICES: INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000**

During 2017–18 the office initiated five contracts exceeding \$25,000.

**TABLE 12: CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000**

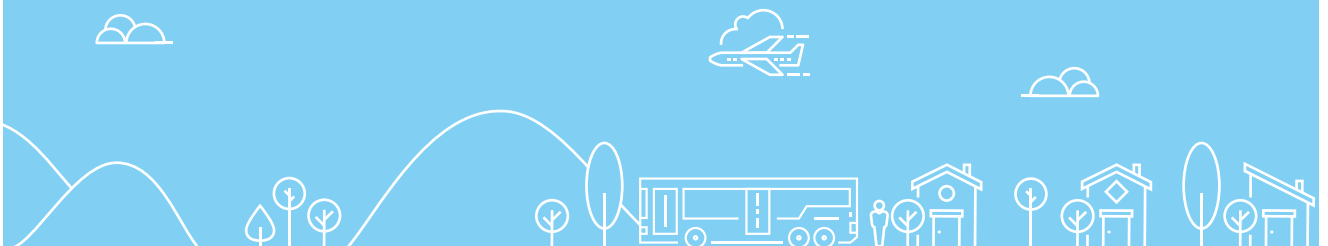
CONTRACT TITLE	PROCUREMENT METHODOLOGY	SOCIAL PROCUREMENT	PROCUREMENT TYPE	EXEMPTION FROM QUOTATION AND TENDER THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS	CONTRACTOR NAME	CONTRACTOR AMOUNT	EXECUTION DATE	EXPIRY DATE	SME
Graphic Design Services	Quotation	No	Services	No	Cre8ive Australasia Pty Ltd	\$32,580.00	6 July 2017	30 December 2017	Yes
Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment	Quotation	No	Consultancy	No	Arup Pty Limited	\$61,871.25	10 November 2017	30 June 2018	No
Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation	Quotation	No	Consultancy	No	Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra	\$51,933.20	11 January 2018	31 December 2018	No
Plastics Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010 Options Analysis	Quotation	No	Consultancy	No	Australian National University	\$104,208.50	2 March 2018	31 December 2018	No
Design, Typesetting and accessibility services	Quotation	No	Consultancy	No	Cre8ive Australasia Pty Ltd	\$71,665.00	21 March 2018	21 March 2021	Yes

## C.6 Statement of Performance

The statement of performance for the office is included in the EPSDD 2017–18 Annual Report as ‘Expenses on Behalf of the Territory’.



# Section D. Appendices



# Appendix 1: Experts Consulted for the Second Implementation Status Report of the ACT Government's Climate Change Policy

Professor Andrew Blakers, Australian National University

Dr Matthew Stocks, Australian National University

Anna Nadolny, Australian National University

Kirsten Anderson, Australian National University

Lauren Bradley, Woden Community Service

Dr Sophie Lewis, Australian National University

Dr Elizabeth Hanna, Australian National University

Dr Evan Franklin, Australian National University

Professor David Griggs, Monash University

Gordana Marin, Monash University

Professor Ian Falconer Australian Order

Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service

Romilly Madew, Green Building Council of Australia

Catherine Townsend, Chief Architect ACT Government

Dr Hugh Saddler

Professor Frank Jotzo, Australian National University

Matt Drum, Ndevr Environmental Consulting

Claire Bright, Ndevr Environmental Consulting

Stephen Christos, Ndevr Environmental Consulting

Hannah Meade, Ndevr Environmental Consulting

## Appendix 2: Staff presenting at conferences, seminars and forums

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
12–14 Jul–17	Opening address & Moderator	Ecocity World Summit 2017	Ecocity Builders	Kate Auty
21-Jul-17	Moderator	Bushfire Symposium	Conservation Council	Kate Auty
28-Jul-17	Presentation	Talk to students – Frank Fenner Foundation	Frank Fenner Foundation	Kate Auty
08-Aug-17	Presentation	National Trust (ACT) – (your views and priorities for environment management and ecologically sustainable development issues in the ACT.)	National Trust ACT	Kate Auty
15–16 Aug–17	Workshop	National Environmental-Economic Accounting Workshop	Department of the Environment and Energy	Becky Smith
25-Aug-17	Presentation	D-G Awards Recognition and Acknowledgement lunch (Kate to talk about leadership in creating sustainability)	TCCS	Kate Auty
26-Aug-17	Presentation	ACT Landcare workshop – talk on peri-urban land	ACT Landcare	Kate Auty
30-Aug-17	Presentation	One Defence Conference – talk on what sort of organisational structures or organisational cultures lead to actual environmental change	Defence	Kate Auty
31-Aug-17		ANU – Student Project Marketplace – Invitation to host student projects for ANU’s Complex Environmental Problems in Action course	ANU	Kate Auty
07-Sep-17	Facilitating	Ride Sally Ride – Women on Bikes panel discussion – Kate facilitating	TCCS	Kate Auty
20-Sep-17	Presentation	Engineers Australia function – ‘Sustainability and Energy in the ACT’	Engineers Australia	Kate Auty
22-Sep-17	Presentation	Program Committee of the Melbourne Forum Lunch – talk about your environmental work	Melbourne Forum	Kate Auty
03-Oct-17	Presentation	Interjurisdictional Technical Working Group (Environmental-Economic Accounts) briefing on ACT accounts work and proof of concept	National Technical Working Group	Becky Smith/ David Summers
04-Oct-17	Presentation	Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy briefing on ACT accounts work and proof of concept	Department of the Environment and Energy	Becky Smith
09-Oct-17	Presentation	Interjurisdictional Strategic Working on Environmental-Economic Accounts – briefing on ACT accounts work and proof of concept	Interjurisdictional Strategic Working on Environmental-Economic Accounts	Becky Smith
17-Oct-17	Presentation	South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources briefing on ACT Environmental-Economic Accounts work and proof of concept	South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources	Becky Smith
18-Oct-17	Panellist	Navigating careers in complex environmental contexts	ANU	Kate Auty

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
20-Oct-17	Panellist	Designing Healthy Liveable Cities Conference – Panellist Invitation – re Liveability Index	National Health and Medical Research Council Centre of Research Excellence	Kate Auty
21-Oct-17	Panellist	Workshop – Rural Doctors of Australia conference – The panel session ‘Greening your Practice and Hospital’	Rural Medicine Australia	Kate Auty
25-Oct-17	Presentation	Parliament of youth – teacher information session	SEEChange	Serena Farrelly
26-Oct-17	Presentation	Parliament of youth – teacher information session	SEEChange	Poppy McRae
01-Nov-17	Introduction	Banksia Sustainability Awards	Banksia Foundation	Kate Auty
06-Nov-17	Presentation	Environmental Deans Meeting – presentation on the connections between the office and the ACT Government, and how the Commissioner’s work plays a role in informing policy development; and in how the Commissioner is working with universities in both education and research.	ANU	Kate Auty
09-Nov-17	Panellist	Network of Environmental Social Scientists Forum – Evidence and Public Policy – Is evidence-based policy achievable and desirable?	University of Queensland	Kate Auty
19-Nov-17	Panellist	Skepticon – Power Battle: The Future of Energy (One of the big questions for Australia’s future is the energy question. As the battle continues, these experts have unique and differing views on the right way to go for energy production. Is renewable energy the only way forward? Is nuclear an option?)	Australian Skeptics Incorporated	Kate Auty
21-Nov-17	Keynote speaker	CDP Australian Climate, Water and Forests Leadership Forum – how the ACT Government is formulating and taking action on sustainability and environment in the transition towards a sustainable and green economy.	CDP	Kate Auty
22-Nov-17	Presentation	Conservation Council – Biodiversity Working Group briefing on ACT Environmental-Economic Accounts work and proof of concept	Conservation Council – Biodiversity Working Group	Becky Smith
28-Nov-17	Presentation	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage briefing on ACT Environmental-Economic Accounts work and proof of concept	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage	Becky Smith
28-Nov-17	Briefing	Chief Executive Officer NSW Office of Environment and Heritage briefing on ACT Environmental-Economic Accounts work and proof of concept	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage	Becky Smith
30-Nov-17	Presentation	Canberra Urban and Regional Futures Annual Forum (Kate’s session was on urban forest renewal)	Canberra Urban and Regional Futures	Kate Auty
01-Dec-17	Keynote speaker	Yackandandah Festival of ‘Dangerous’ Ideas	Totally Renewable Yackandandah	Kate Auty
30-Jan-18	Presentation and Panel member	Blue Shield Australia Symposium – Panel Session 1 – Science, Media, Politics and Academia of climate change and natural disaster	Blue Shield Australia	Kate Auty
07-Feb-18	Presentation given	University of the Third Age Belconnen current affairs class – invitation to speak on the role of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	University of the Third Age	Kate Auty

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
08-Feb-18	Chair	ANU Climate Update 2018 – State of the Climate – Prof Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	ANU	Kate Auty
15-Feb-18	Guest Speaker	Guest speaker at National Parks Association General Meeting	National Parks Association (ACT)	Kate Auty
28-Feb-18	Presentation	Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee Meeting 87 – Kate to talk about communication and liaison between the Committee and the Office	Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee	Kate Auty
06-Mar-18	Student Career Night	Kate to talk about the range of opportunities that exist in her area of work	Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society	Kate Auty
07-Mar-18	Podcast Interview	General discussion re Kate’s background, why she does what she does, what excites her about her work, what are the difficulties in her work, how does she overcome these; her dreams for the future?	The Sustainable Hour (with Anthony Gleeson) Interview	Kate Auty
14-Mar-18	Guest Lecturer/panel	‘Understanding the state of Australia’s environment’ (15 minute presentation and then joining the panel to discuss issues with students)	ANU	Kate Auty
20-Mar-18	Speaker	International Day of Forests 2018 – Forest and Sustainable Cities Seminar	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	Kate Auty
21-Mar-18	Master of Ceremonies	North East Water Forum – The Future of Water in a changing Climate	North East Water	Kate Auty
27-Mar-18	Keynote Speaker	Better Laws for a Better Planet: A Symposium on the Future of Australia’s Environment Laws	Australian Panel of Experts on Environmental Law, National Environmental Law Association, IUCN National Committee Australia and Places You Love	Kate Auty
29-Mar-18	Presentation	Minerals and Energy Economics Course 2018	Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU	Kate Auty
03-Apr-18	Interview	Work of the office	Rod Taylor	Kate Auty
4-5 Apr-18	Opening plenary	Fenner Conference on the Environment: Urban Sustainability and Conservation – biggest challenges and opportunities for urban sustainability and conservation in Australia and beyond	Australian Academy of Science, CAUL, University of Melbourne, The Nature Conservancy, Urban Ecology in Action, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria	Kate Auty
02-May-18	Presentation	History of Divestment and the move to 100% Renewable Electricity by the ACT	350.org	Kate Auty
09-May-18	Facilitated Panel Discussion	Climate Adaptation conference	Climate Change Institute (ANU)	Kate Auty
11-May-18	Chair	City of Melbourne Workshop: actionable case studies and city research	City of Melbourne	Kate Auty
12-Jun-18	Presentation	Institute of Architects Chapter Council meeting	Institute of Architects	Kate Auty

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
15-Jun-18	Principal MC, chaired a Chief Executive Officer's panel and concluding remarks	Banksia Ignite	Banksia Foundation	Kate Auty
21-Jun-18	Keynote speaker	Annual Water Matters Conference	Australian Water Association	Kate Auty
27-Jun-18	Chair of Panel	ACT Grassy Woodlands Forum	EPSDD	Kate Auty

# Appendix 3: Compliance Statement

The *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* must comply with the 2017 Annual Report Directions (the Directions). The Directions are found on the ACT Legislation Register at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2017-280/default.asp>. The Compliance Statement indicates the subsections, under the five Parts of the Directions that are applicable to the office and the location of information that satisfies these requirements:

## PART 1 DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW

The requirements under Part 1 of the 2017 Directions relate to the purpose, timing and distribution, and record keeping of annual reports. The *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* complies with all subsections of Part 1 under the Directions.

In compliance with s13 Feedback, Part 1 of the Directions, contact details for the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment are provided within the *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* to provide readers with the opportunity to provide feedback.

## PART 2 DIRECTORATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODY ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The requirements within Part 2 of the Directions are mandatory for all directorates and public sector bodies and the *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* complies with all subsections. The information that satisfies the requirements of Part 2 is found in *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* as follows:

- Transmittal Certificate, see Section A, page 1,
- Organisational Overview and Performance, inclusive of all subsections, see Section B, pages 3–70, and
- Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of all subsections, see Section C, pages 71–74.

## PART 3 REPORTING BY EXCEPTION

The office has nil information to report by exception under Part 3 of the Directions for the 2017–18 reporting period.

## PART 4 DIRECTORATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODY SPECIFIC ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The subsections of Part 4 of the 2017 Directions are applicable to the office and can be found within the *2017–18 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* at **Section B2**, pages 17–60.

## PART 5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORTING

All subsections of Part 5 of the Directions apply to the office. Consistent with the Directions, the information satisfying these requirements is reported in the one place for all ACT Public Service directorates, as follows:

- N. Community Engagement and Support, see the *2017–18 Annual Report of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate*,
- O. Justice and Community Safety, including all subsections O.1 – O.4, see the *2017–18 Annual Report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate*,
- P. Public Sector Standards and Workforce Profile, including all subsections P.1-P.3, see the annual *State of the Service Report*, and
- Q. Territory Records, see the *2017–18 Annual Report of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate*.

ACT Public Service directorate annual reports are found at [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/report/annual\\_reports](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual_reports).







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