



Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Jo Clay MLA on 12 December 2023: Andrew Barr MLA took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard Uncorrected Proof Transcript, 12 December 2023, Page 7

In relation to: Adaptation

MS CLAY: That is fine. I am quite interested in what adaptation projects government is doing. Is there a list of the adaptation projects that are either being considered or being worked up—not draft ideas, but things that are—

Mr Engele: Well there was the report to Cabinet. So I guess that will depend on whether we wanted to produce a publicly available version of that—

Mr Barr: I will work out what we can organise, yes—

MS CLAY: Yes, okay. So, take on notice to have a look at it.

Mr Engele: Yes.

MS CLAY: Thank you.

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The below list summarises the primary adaptation projects, currently being progressed by ACT Government Directorates.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- 'Climate ready' planning and development systems program: This program helps address both adaptation and mitigation aspects of climate change through adapting our built environment regulatory systems (e.g. planning system, Municipal Infrastructure Standards).

- Climate adaptation for nature initiative: initiative launched in early 2022 to respond to identified and emerging risks of climate change to nature, in the context of the agency's role in nature conservation and the agency's role as a land manager.
- ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change: Results from the 2023 *ACT Living well with a changing climate* survey monitoring community resilience and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change are expected to be released in January 2024.
- Empowering community adaptation and resilience: Development of a pilot program to assist the community sector in climate change adaptation planning.
- NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM): Updated 'future climate' projections for the ACT (NARClIM 2.0) will become available, providing the ACT Government with the information and guidance needed to use NARClIM climate projections in risk assessments and adaptation planning.
- Continue to embed climate change provisions in the planning system: Investigating how to embed natural hazard/disaster risk in the planning system. A consultancy will be undertaken in 2024-25 to review the new planning system and determine whether it appropriately addresses climate change related natural disaster risks.
- Minimum standard for ceiling insulation in rental properties: A key focus for the ACT Government is to ensure that all renters in the ACT can live in energy efficient homes with high thermal comfort and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. In April 2023, the new minimum standard came into effect which requires residential rental properties with a ceiling insulation value below R2 to be upgraded to R5, with a phase in period until November 2026.
- Supporting Canberrans to adapt through increased resilience and thermal comfort: The ACT Government undertakes a range of activities to support community preparedness and help households improve the comfort of their homes. These include regular public information campaigns focused on energy efficiency, and rebates and zero-interest loans to support eligible homeowners install reverse cycle air conditioners and ceiling insulation.

Health Directorate

- 2023 Infrastructure Plan (Health): The ACT Government will undertake a strategic review of community health assets and develop a long-term program for the upgrade, renewal and construction of these facilities across Canberra.
- Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy 2021-2025: The Strategy is guiding the ACT Government's approach to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant bushfire smoke events and our management of the smoke from wood heaters.
- Health Sector Adaptation Policy Approach: The Health Directorate is leading a health sector climate change project to develop a shared approach to health sector climate change adaptation and resilience and promote the health co-benefits.
- ACT Health Sector Emergency Planning: ACT Health maintains the Health Emergency Sub-Plan, and multiple annexures and procedures. These plans support the preparedness and response to climate-driven emergencies.

Canberra Health Services

- Updated infrastructure and facilities management policies and procedures: including minimum requirements for sustainable development.
- Critical Services Building: The building is targeting a 5-star Green Star rating and will be the first all-electric tertiary hospital building in Australia.

- CHS Air Quality Management Plan: the plan covers harmful air quality events including smoke, dust storms, high pollen count and gas release events.
- The Sustainability Roadmap highlights a number of climate adaptation and mitigation planning deliverables for the organisation spanning FY23-24 and FY24-25, including a CHS Sustainability Strategy, implementation plan, and associated business cases.

Education Directorate

- Electrification of Government Gas Assets will also provide cooling systems to a number of schools to provide improved temperature control for classrooms during hot days.
- Living Infrastructure Strategy and associated works such as tree audits and management.

Major Projects Canberra

- The Canberra Hospital Expansion Project is responding to the climate emergency and will include specific design responses to mitigate and adapt to future climate change projections.

Justice and Community Safety

- ACT Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan: development and implementation by early 2024.
- ACT Disaster Resilience Strategy: to be finalised in mid-2024.
- Emergency service community preparedness and resilience programs: continued implementation of programs in relation to extreme weather.
- Strategic bushfire management strategies and Aboriginal Fire Management Framework: continued implementation.
- GreenStar accreditation of new major capital works and infrastructure, including design and construction of the Molonglo emergency services station by 2025-2026.

Transport Canberra and City Services

- Urban Forest Act 2023: Tree Planting Program. Continued implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy as we strive towards achieving a 30 per cent tree canopy coverage for Canberra by 2045.
- Improving flood protection: Stormwater works in Narrabundah, Mawson, and Sydney and Melbourne Buildings provide greater flood protection to residential properties during extreme storm events.
- The Strategic Road Maintenance Program: four-year program using significantly increased funding to increase road maintenance activities to restore roads after a long period of wet weather and improve resilience to future periods of extended wet weather.

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- ACT Public Service employment Framework: includes flexible work options for employees during emergency events, remuneration provisions during emergencies, supportive leave arrangements such as Community Service Leave and Leave to Cope with a Disaster and the ability to mobilise the workforce and transfer employees across the ACTPS during emergency events.
- Operational climate impacts considered: Impacts are considered in the management of events, planning for cancellations, management of facilities and assets such as University of Canberra, Stromlo Forest Park and Venues Canberra.

- Office for Climate Action: drives whole of government approaches to risk planning and climate adaptation.
- National Arboretum Canberra: a second access road is being designed to alleviate the risk of limited access to the existing access road. This is particularly important in the case of a bushfire emergency.
- Access Canberra Contact Centre: delivers emergency information to the community on behalf of the Emergency Services Authority and assists the State Emergency Service callers in times of need. Surge capacity models have been tested and Access Canberra could re-allocate up to 50 staff within a matter of hours to be trained and onboarded to support the Contact Centre if required, such as in the case of a bushfire or other extreme weather events.
- Innovation Connect grant program and Priority Investment Program: while these programs are sector agnostic, numerous projects related to climate adaptation have been successful in gaining funding.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: **20.12.23**

By the Minister for Climate Action, Andrew Barr MLA