



Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

JOHNATHAN DAVIS MLA: To ask the Minister for Economic Development

Ref: The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), Budget paper B, page number 31, output class 3.6

In relation to: Arboretum Paving

1. The National Arboretum Master Plan endeavours to duplicate the size of some roads and build more carparks and there was criticism from user groups, who preferred the unpaved areas for recreation.
 - a. What are the emissions and environmental impacts of this plan?
 - b. What consultation was conducted among users?
 - c. Are there plans for offsets?

ANDREW BARR MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1a.

The objective of this project is to formalise portions of the existing publicly accessible and internal maintenance (non-sealed) road network, as well as informal and non-paid parking areas. The main project drivers include public and staff safety, accessibility, and protection of the Arboretum's living collection.

The short construction phase of the project (20 weeks) will result in an increase in emissions from heavy vehicle use. Dust emissions will also temporarily be experienced, although these are being reduced using suppression methods. As this project does not deliver 'new' roads, there are no or minimal emissions associated with clearing, drilling, excavation or cut and fill.

Once works are completed, a total emissions reduction is expected as heavy machinery will not be routinely required to maintain the roads. Additionally, there will no longer be a need to bring material to site to maintain the surface of the roads. Formalised and safe car parking spaces will increase protection for the forests and provide greater public safety – as visitors are currently parking on roadside verges and into forests.

1b.

The National Arboretum Canberra conducted a targeted user group consultation meeting on 5 October 2021 to discuss the key aspects of this project. This was a successful meeting, including the opportunity for Q&A and the provision of several options for users on site (in particular for runners) illustrating the site's continued suitability for a wide range of recreational activities.

Specifically, users including equestrian, runners and cyclist groups were consulted regarding project implications for site access and utilisation during construction.

Furthermore, this project is linked to the National Arboretum Canberra Master Plan priority project listing, which underwent stakeholder consultation and was endorsed by Cabinet in 2018.

1c.

Given the relatively minimal emissions produced by the project, there are no formal plans for offsets. However, the Arboretum continues to contribute to carbon sequestration with 44,000 onsite trees, as well as other sustainability initiatives such as solar. Work continues on the planting of planned forests, with over 1,200 trees planted in the last 12 months to complete Forest 24 – Japanese Crepe Myrtle.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Economy Gender and Economic Equality

Signature: 

Date: 4.11.21

By the Minister for Economic Development, Andrew Barr MLA