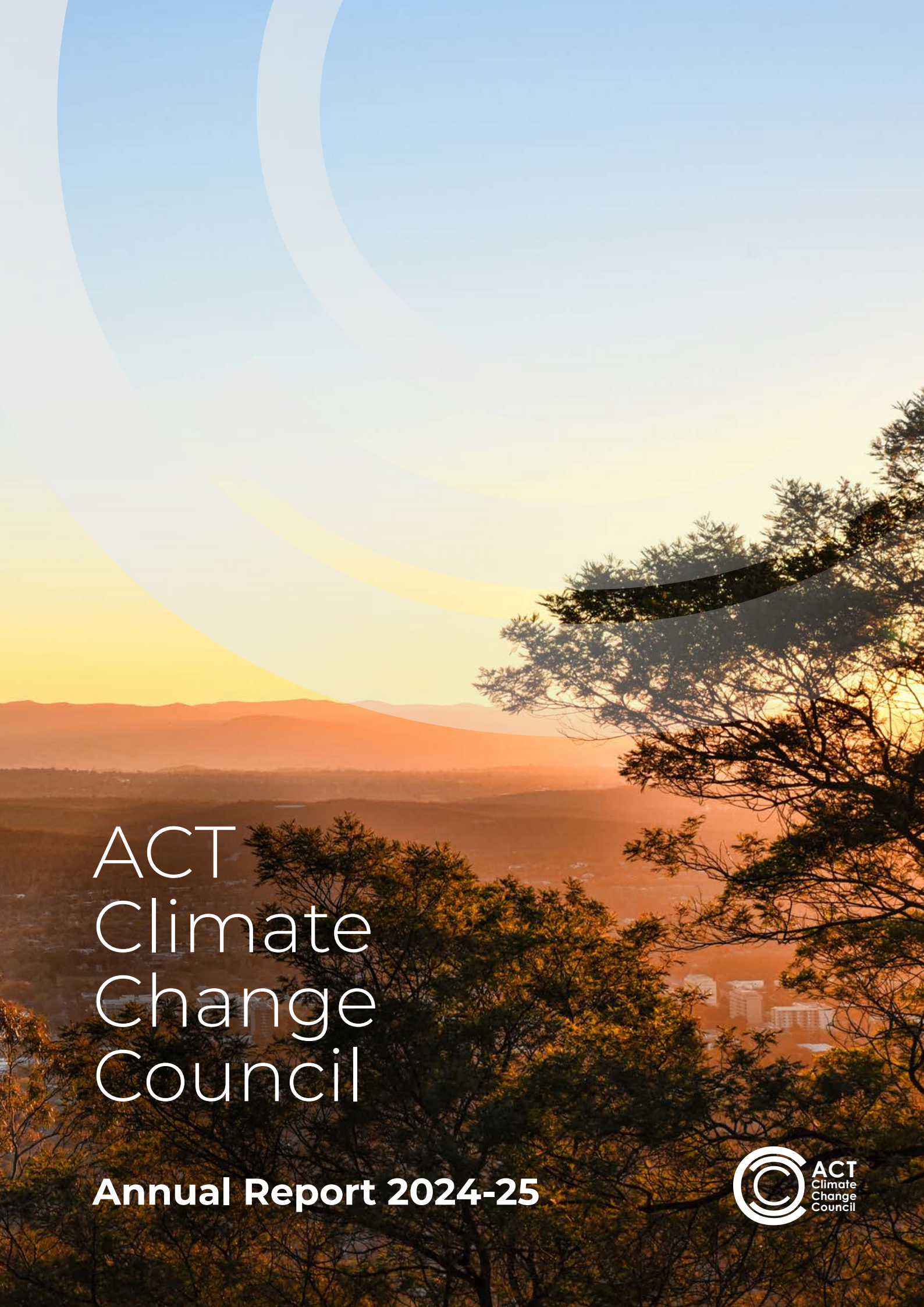


The background of the cover is a scenic photograph of a city at sunset, viewed from an elevated position. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with large, semi-transparent, curved shapes in shades of blue and white overlaid on the upper left. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of trees are visible. The city below is bathed in the warm light of the setting sun, with buildings and roads visible. The ACT Climate Change Council logo is in the bottom right corner.

ACT Climate Change Council

Annual Report 2024-25



Acknowledgment to Country

Yuma
Dhawura Nguna Dhawura Ngunnawal
Yanggu ngalawiri dhunimanyin
Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari
Nginggada Dindi yindumaralidjinyin
Dhawura Ngunnawal yindumaralidjinyin

Hello,
This is Ngunnawal Country
Today we are meeting on Ngunnawal country
We always respect Elders, male and female
We always respect Ngunnawal Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people
as traditional custodians of the ACT and
recognise any other people or families with
connection to the lands of the ACT and
region. We acknowledge and respect their
continuing culture and the contribution they
make to the life of this city and this region.



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ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

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Website: www.climatechoices.act.gov.au

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Letter of Transmittal

Ms Suzanne Orr MLA
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister Orr

It is my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report (Report) of the ACT Climate Change Council (Council) for the financial year ending 30 June 2025.

The Council was established under Section 16 of the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act) to advise you, as Minister, on matters relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing and adapting to climate change.

This Report has been prepared pursuant to Section 19 of the Act and outlines the Council's activities during the 2024–25 financial year, the advice given, and the recommendations made to you as Minister. Subsection 19(3) of the Act provides that within 21 days after receiving this report, it must be presented to the Legislative Assembly; if this date falls within the Caretaker period, Section 19(4b) allows for the report to be tabled on the second day after the ACT Election.

The Council is committed to providing rigorous expert advice on tackling climate change to the elected government of the ACT, through yourself as Minister. The Council has had an active and productive year providing advice and submissions and engaging directly with various stakeholders. We further increased engagement with the Canberra community over the past year through the implementation of our Community Engagement Strategy to further reflect the views of community and business in our advice.

In presenting this Report, I thank my Council colleagues for their continued energy, professionalism, and dedication. I also thank you for your high level of interest, engagement and knowledge in relation to the Council's remit, and additionally the Secretariat provided by the City and Environment Directorate (formerly Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate), and the Directorate itself, for its support and dedication.

Sincerely,



Emeritus Professor Mark Howden AC FTSE FAA
Chair, ACT Climate Change Council
August 2025

Introductory note from the 2024–25 Chair

At a global level, the past two years have been worrying with every month from June 2023 to the present, being at least 1.5C above the pre-industrial level¹. We also experienced the warmest January on record this year, being 1.75C above the pre-industrial level, even though it occurred during a La Niña episode which normally has a temporary cooling effect. It is very likely that the remainder of 2025 and into 2026 will continue breaking this record – and by a long way: the last 10 years have been the ten warmest on record, establishing a clear trend.

The tolling bell signalling disasters has been working overtime. We have experienced serial disasters associated with climate extreme events. The Los Angeles wildfires, the Brazil and Kenya floods, the Canadian forest fires and the associated smoke, and the European summer heatwaves were all major events but there were many, many more. Typhoon Yagi ripped into south-east Asia and recently in Australia, Tropical Cyclone Alfred hit Queensland and New South Wales causing widespread damage: the insured losses alone are estimated at \$1.2 billion, with significant damage to property, infrastructure and agriculture. At the time of writing, we are experiencing record-breaking rainfall and record-breaking drought in adjacent states: our climate risk is growing.

Unfortunately, global greenhouse gas emissions keep increasing and the economic and political forces behind this growth continue largely unabated. As documented exhaustively by the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessments, this commits us to further, large and overall damaging climate changes which add to the difficulties of equitable sustainable development. Consequently, increasing climate impacts also commits us to increased innovation and implementation of more effective climate adaptation strategies. However, Australia is behind the eight-ball on this and there is a lot to do to catch up to the accelerating climate change.

Similarly, we are not matching the immediate, large and consistent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that is consistent with keeping global temperatures between 1.5°C and 2°C above pre-industrial. We are failing at a most basic duty – to hand to our children and grandchildren a planet in better shape than when we inherited it. This is happening even though more and more economic analyses show that inaction on climate change is far, far more expensive than action.

However, here in the ACT and more broadly Australia, there are some signs of hope. The ACT still leads the way with proactive policies that have slashed our Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions and keep us on a pathway to net-zero by 2045. Importantly, these policies are integrating climate change responses with other policy issues such as reducing inequities. But there is more to be done, and the ACT Climate Change Council looks forward to a renewed, updated, more comprehensive and ambitious ACT Climate Change Strategy that deals strategically and proactively with climate emission-reduction and climate adaptation. This would align with the recent Climate Change Authority report that shows in detail how a low-emissions economy could be achieved in the lead up to their anticipated advice that the revised national emission-reduction target should be 75% reduction by 2035.

Across all these issues and more, the Council has continued building its engagement with ACT businesses and the community on implementing more effective climate responses. The Council will also continue to provide evidence-based advice to the Minister on climate adaptation and emission-reduction activities in the ACT, to maintain our well-being, way of life, economy and our natural and built environments.

*Emeritus Professor Mark Howden AC FTSE FAA – Chair,
ACT Climate Change Council*

¹ January 2025 sees record global temperatures despite La Niña. Copernicus Climate Change Service and US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Viewed 30 April 2025.

Introduction

The ACT Climate Change Council (Council) advises the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (Minister) on matters relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. The Council was established by the ACT Government in 2011 under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* (the Act).

The Council plays a pivotal role in informing climate change policies in the ACT. It liaises with business and community and scans the horizon for the challenges and opportunities associated with creating a prosperous, climate-ready, net-zero emissions Territory. It seeks to provide leadership and informed advice by listening to community views and attitudes, understanding international best practice on climate change, and raising awareness of climate change risks and the community benefits of effective climate action.

ACT residents are welcome to raise an issue with the Council or alert them to recent climate change news or research.

Statutory obligations

The Council is established under Part 4 of the Act, which also sets out the functions of the Council and outlines how they are to be exercised.

The main function of the Council is to advise the Minister on matters relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing and adapting to climate change. In exercising its functions, the Council must try to consult with representatives from business and the community, including environmental and conservation entities, on matters relating to climate change. The Council must also make efforts to provide information to private entities to encourage action to address, or adapt to, climate change.

In exercising a function under the Act, the Minister must consider any relevant advice given by the Council. Section 19 of the Act requires the Council to provide an Annual Report about the Council's activities during the financial year, including any advice or recommendations made to the Minister. The Council must give the report to the Minister within three months after the end of the financial year. The Act can be found at:

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2010-41>

Administration

Remuneration

Remuneration for the Council is set by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal and reviewed annually. Members were remunerated according to the relevant Remuneration Tribunal Determination. This was initially Determination 18 of 2023, which provided a per diem rate of \$615 for the Chair and \$525 for members. Commencing 1 November 2024, members were remunerated in accordance with Determination 15 of 2024, which provided a per diem rate of \$635 for the Chair and \$545 for members.

The attendance of members at Council meetings during the reporting period is provided at Appendix A and a summary of expenditure is provided at Appendix B.

Gender report

The gender balance of the Council is taken into consideration when members are appointed. Over the 2024–25 reporting period, membership included four male and four female members.

Freedom of information

No freedom of information (FOI) applications specifically relating to the Council were received during 2024–25.

Accountability and secretariat

The Climate Change and Energy Policy Branch within the City and Environment Directorate (CED) provides Secretariat support to the Council. Further information on the work of the Council is available at <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/climate-change/act-climate-change-council>.



Membership

Members are appointed under the Act, which prescribes that the Council must comprise at least five, but not more than ten members, appointed by the Minister. The Minister must, to the greatest extent practical, ensure the Council includes people with a broad range of skills and knowledge relating to mitigating or adapting to climate change.

In March 2024, the [Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction \(Membership\) Amendment Bill 2024](#) was endorsed and enacted by the Legislative Assembly. This Bill provided amendments to ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that the Council includes at least two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members. Consultation and recruitment of two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people was undertaken throughout 2024–25, with one Aboriginal member appointed from 21 July 2025. Work will continue to be undertaken to appoint a second Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander member.

During the 2024–25 financial year, the Council consisted of members with a diverse range of skills and experience in areas such as climate change science, energy efficiency, the built environment, community, health, business, transport, and economics.



Emeritus Professor Mark Howden AC FTSE FAA

Chair 1 July 2021–30 June 2025

Emeritus Professor Mark Howden was appointed to the Council as a member to represent climate change science and appointed as Chair in 2021.

Emeritus Professor Howden is the former Director of the Australian National University (ANU) Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions. He was also Chair of the National Climate Risk Assessment Expert Advisory Committee and is a Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II. He was on the US Federal Advisory Committee for the 3rd National Climate Assessment and contributes to several major national and international science and policy advisory bodies.

Emeritus Professor Howden has worked on climate variability, climate change, innovation, and adaptation issues for over 35 years in partnership with many industry, community and policy groups via both research and science-policy roles. Issues he has addressed include agriculture and food security, the natural resource base, ecosystems and biodiversity, energy, water, and urban systems. Professor Howden has over 430 publications.

He helped develop both the national and international greenhouse gas inventories that are a fundamental part of the Paris Agreement and has assessed sustainable ways to reduce emissions. He has been a major contributor to the IPCC since 1991, with roles in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and now Seventh Assessment Reports, sharing the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with other IPCC participants and Al Gore.



Dr Paul Bannister

Dr Paul Bannister was appointed to the Council for his expertise in energy efficiency and the built environment.

Dr Bannister has expertise in the field of commercial and institutional building energy efficiency. He had a central role in the development of major energy efficiency innovations such as the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) Energy and water ratings and the redevelopment of Section J (Energy Efficiency) of the Australian Building Code (2019 Edition). One of Dr Bannister's particular specialities is the optimisation of building controls, which he has been able to use to create significant improvements in building performance on a wide range of sites.

Dr Bannister is a well-known speaker on energy efficiency issues both nationally and internationally, having presented at numerous conferences within Australia and overseas. He has published well over 80 papers on energy efficiency related issues. Dr Bannister has strong networks in the building and property industry, from government through to builders and from industry associations through to individual property managers.



Associate Professor Cris Brack

Associate Professor Cris Brack was appointed to the Council for his expertise in environmental management.

Associate Professor Cris Brack (Honorary) has close to 30 years of experience in natural resource measurement and management at the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society. This experience includes researching, teaching and developing best practices in urban forestry, publishing 12 peer reviewed articles on urban forests and green spaces, and another 70 papers on carbon sequestration, natural resource assessment and management.

Associate Professor Brack won an Australian Museum Eureka Award for Environmental Science for his work on the National Carbon Accounting System (NCAS), which was developed to support national policy development on climate change mitigation. He has extensive skills and experience working with ANU and the ACT Government on the planning and management of Canberra's urban forest, including street trees and the National Arboretum. His recent research has focused on sustaining a vibrant and healthy urban forest in the presence of increasingly harsh climate scenarios.



Ms Sophia Hamblin Wang

Ms Sophia Hamblin Wang was appointed to the Council for her expertise in business.

Ms Hamblin Wang is currently the Chief Operations Officer of Mineral Carbonation International, a company that develops sustainable materials that incorporate CO2 emissions into building products and was recently awarded first place for Resource Innovator of the Year at the New Materials Summit in Berlin. Ms Hamblin Wang is also a co-founder of 'Kingfisher Co-Housing Canberra', which aims to build resident-led micro-co-housing communities in Canberra. She has previously been a delegate at many national and international conferences on climate change, entrepreneurship and business including the World Economic Forum in Davos, 2020 and the UN Youth Climate Change Summit in New York, 2019.



Ms Mia Swainson

Ms Mia Swainson was appointed to the Council for her experience as President of the Canberra Environment Centre, founding Chair of Zero Waste Revolution, and leader of an environmentally and socially responsible consultancy business.

Ms Mia Swainson has an environmental engineering qualification and experience in social analysis, environmental management and business strategy in government and non-government organisations. Ms Swainson brings a depth of experience from consulting engagements across the ACT Government and in the ACT's health and social services sector.

Ms Swainson is also the President of the Canberra Environment Centre (since 2018) and has significant experience engaging with a large variety of ACT stakeholders across the public, private and community sectors. This has included contribution to the development of community environment education programs in the ACT.



Dr Arnagretta Hunter

Dr Arnagretta Hunter was appointed to the Council for her expertise in health and climate change research.

Dr Arnagretta Hunter has been a consultant physician and cardiologist since 2008. Dr Hunter is an academic and advocate working across clinical medicine, health research and advocacy in public policy to address complex challenges particularly relating to climate change. She has skills across medicine, political science and communications. Dr Hunter has made many public presentations as well as publishing articles and academic papers on climate and health issues since 2008.

Dr Hunter is dedicated to understanding the health impacts of climate change, the advantages of working with communities on complex problems and the co-benefits of social change. Dr Hunter won the Sydney Sax medal (AHHA) as chair of Bushfire Impact Working Group in 2020 and is a Churchill Fellow.

Dr Hunter has worked with a range of community and professional organisations including the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), the RACP where she is Deputy Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Committee. She has provided advice for the National Health and Climate Strategy and to federal government agencies.



Associate Professor Aparna Lal

Associate Professor Aparna Lal was appointed to the Council for her expertise in environmental impacts and health outcomes for communities.

Dr Aparna Lal has a multidisciplinary science background, with two postgraduate degrees in Wildlife Science and Ecology, a PhD in Public Health and qualifications in Environmental Law and Zoology. A large part of Dr Lal's current work focuses on populations that are disproportionately vulnerable to a variety of health impacts associated with environmental variability, including climate change. In Australia, these include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and rural communities, children, and the urban poor.

Dr Lal also brings expertise in high level statistical modelling and best-practice open science to her work that considers how a focus on human well-being can improve outcomes of ecological restoration.



Dr Thomas Longden

Dr Thomas Longden was appointed to the Council for his expertise in environmental economics.

Dr Longden holds a PhD in environmental economics and has expertise in energy, transport and health. His research focuses on applied economics, which has included energy economics, health economics and environmental health. His publications have focused on the deployment of electric vehicles, the cost and emission intensity of hydrogen, temperature-related mortality, and energy insecurity. This work has also included assessments of the relationship between health, housing, energy and extreme temperatures. A recent example was published in *Nature Energy*.

Dr Longden also contributed to two chapters of the IPCC report *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change*.



Observers (Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee members)



Ms Roslyn Brown

Ms Roslyn Brown is a Ngunnawal woman. Among numerous cultural advisory roles, Ms Brown is co-founder and serves as Co-Chairperson of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, founder and co-chair of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.

Ms Brown has a strong Cultural commitment to reconciliation and improving the status and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT region and advocates for the awareness and continuance of Aboriginal cultural practice and protocols. Through her various roles she has advocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on issues such as housing, justice, caring, disability, and health and successfully lobbied to establish holistic health care, training opportunities and support structures for Indigenous people in the ACT.

Ms Brown is employed as Elder in Residence at the University of Canberra, a member of the CIT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory committee and was an inaugural elected member of the ACT Indigenous Elected Body (ACTIEB). As a representative and advocate for many in the community, she has demonstrated her commitment to the Ngunnawal Land, Culture, and the spirit of the People.



Mr Djibin Mudford

Mr Djibin Mudford is a current member of the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) with strong interests in climate change and fire management on Ngunnawal Country. Mr Mudford has been actively engaged with the ACT Climate Change Council as an observer and has attended numerous environment and cultural summits on behalf of the DNCCC including the Biri Bulmba Budang National Custodians of Country Summit in 2023 and the AIATSIS Summit in 2024.

Mr Mudford has previously spent more than thirty years with ActewAGL and its predecessors as a Linesman, Leading Hand, Foreman, and Manager looking after the Canberra community's electricity supply. This role allowed him to be on, and look after, Country through asset management of power poles and vegetation particularly in our more sensitive areas such as National Parks and Reserves systems. He is very passionate about caring for Country and being a voice for the Ngunnawal People as part of the committees across the ACT.

Activities and changes

The Council provided advice to both the Minister and the former Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) now CED. The Council prepared advice on the following items, with more information provided throughout this Report:

- ACT emissions reductions targets roadmap/next steps
- Cultural Burning/fire regime management in the ACT
- Lithium batteries and an electrified Canberra
- Community Engagement
- Development of the new Climate Change Strategy
- Establishment of the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect.



Council Meetings

The Council formally met five times in the 2024–25 reporting period in addition to progressing work through informal and out-of-session Council meetings. Two Observers (Ms Roslyn Brown and Mr Djibin Mudford) from the DNCCC were invited to attend Council meetings.

The Council also continued consultation with representatives from business and the community on climate change matters.

Tuesday 13 August 2024

This was the Council's first meeting for the 2024–25 financial year.

The former Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA and the Council discussed the ACT's emissions reductions targets, cultural burning and Council membership and recruitment. There was discussion around the challenges associated with achieving net-zero targets, particularly if they are brought forward in line with the Council's earlier advice, as well as the increasingly economic advantages of implementing scope 3 emissions interventions.

The Council identified that there are significant positive social, cultural and economic impacts to cultural burning in the ACT region and that although there are minimal carbon benefits in the short-medium term, cultural burning should be reintroduced to the region.

The Council and Minister Rattenbury discussed the extension arrangements currently being processed for the four members whose appointments were due to end in January 2025. Future skillsets and recruitment of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members were also considered.

ACT NoWaste also presented an overview of the ACT Circular Economy Strategy and ACT NoWaste's key priorities such as the new Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) Facility.



Tuesday 15 October 2024

This was the Council's second meeting for the 2024–25 financial year. Due to caretaker conventions ahead of the Saturday, 19 October 2024 ACT election, Minister Rattenbury did not attend.

The Council discussed the ACT Government's *Low Carbon Concrete (LCC) policy*, the Council's *Community Engagement Strategy*, the Canberra Sustainability Expo 2024, options for carbon pricing, the Council's position on offsets policy, the scope 3 emissions trajectory, and reducing the ACT's carbon footprint.

The Council also received a presentation by Transport Canberra on the *Zero-Emission Transition Plan (Plan)* and learnings from early implementation of the Plan.

There was discussion about upcoming Council activities such as connecting with community groups, attending the Canberra Sustainability Expo 2024, and plans for developing a post-election roadmap.

The Council further discussed a draft paper on carbon pricing options, including the importance of adopting a whole-of-government approach and the implications of missing emissions reduction targets. The Council also agreed to begin developing a paper documenting formal advice on an ACT Offsets Policy once the new Minister was sworn in.

Monday 17 February 2025

This was the Council's third meeting for the 2024–25 financial year.

The newly appointed Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, Ms Suzanne Orr MLA and the Council discussed the ACT Government's climate change priorities, which included the development of a new Climate Change Strategy, the establishment of the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect to lead and develop a landscape plan for the ACT, emissions reduction and offsets, and a just transition.

The Council also received a presentation from Professor Kenneth Baldwin on the Energy Innovation Fund, an update on strategic discussions between the Chair and the ACT Audit Office, and the new Council appointment process (applications closed on Friday, 28 February 2025).

The Council agreed to a revised workplan to Friday, 30 June 2025, focussing on providing advice to inform the new Climate Change Strategy, establishment of the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect, and development of options for carbon pricing in the ACT.

Thursday 3 April 2025

This was the Council's fourth meeting for the 2024–25 financial year.

The Council and the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water discussed draft advice to inform development of a new Climate Change Strategy, and the establishment of the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect. They further discussed the Council's *Community Engagement Strategy*, options for carbon pricing and ways to reduce transport emissions.

The Council also received a presentation from the Office of Nature Conservation on Climate Adaptation for Nature.

Thursday 19 June 2025

This was the Council's fifth and final meeting for the 2024–25 financial year.

The Council discussed updates to the *Community Engagement Strategy*, including outcomes and learnings from recent stakeholder engagement events held on 19, 23 and 26 May 2025, with potential options for enhanced future community engagement considered.

The Council considered progress against the *2019–25 Climate Change Strategy* and progressed their advice to inform development of a new Climate Change Strategy. They noted their advice on the establishment of the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect has been provided to the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water.

The Directorate thanked the Council for their time, dedication and contributions to addressing climate change in the ACT throughout their appointments and wished them well.

Advice and recommendations

Over 2024–25, the Council provided climate change advice firstly to the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction and later, the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, as well as the Directorate and broader ACT Government. This included:

- Updated advice on the latest climate change science and alignment with the ACT's emissions reduction targets.
- Implementing an engagement strategy to ensure the views of the Canberra community and business are reflected in the advice the Council provides to the Minister.
- Providing input and advice on negative emission technologies and offsets, future challenges and opportunities for the ACT, cultural burning practices, the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect and development of the new Climate Change Strategy.

The Council's formal advice can be viewed on their website: <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/climate-change/act-climate-change-council>.

Cultural fire/fire management in the ACT

The Council prepared a report which explores the historical context of fire management in Australia, the re-emergence of cultural burning practices, challenges and controversies surrounding its implementation, and recommendation for future management strategies.

The ACT, situated on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal Peoples crossing into NSW, has a complex history of fire management. Traditional land management practices, including what we currently term cultural burning, played a crucial role in shaping the landscape before European settlement. After European settlement, changes in land use, population growth and perceptions altered fire regimes. These altered regimes along with increasingly extreme weather patterns have increased the risk of catastrophic fires and the consequent emission of significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Wildfires, especially during extreme weather events, create and emit substantial quantities of carbon dioxide immediately due to combustion and over time due to decay of killed biomass.

Cultural burning, led by Indigenous people or traditional custodians across Australia, has gained renewed interest due to its benefits in promoting cultural and spiritual practices with beneficial social, health and ecological outcomes. Except for savanna burning, cultural burning has not highlighted significant carbon sequestration gains and there may be trade-offs with emissions of other GHG emissions.

Despite its recognized advantages, cultural burning faces significant challenges across Australia, including local regulatory barriers, limited resources and public misconceptions. The implementation of cultural burning practices varies across different regions within Australia, with some areas showing more active adoption. Effective fire regime management in today's landscapes requires a multifaceted approach, including planned burns, mechanical fuel reduction and cultural burning as well as direct intervention to reduce risk to people and infrastructure.

While planned burns can reduce fuel loads and mitigate fire risks, concerns exist regarding their ecological impacts and effectiveness, particularly under extreme weather conditions. Mechanical fuel reduction methods and alternative approaches, such as biochar production, offer additional strategies for managing fire risks while minimizing environmental harm but have a range of constraints.



Lithium batteries and an electrified Canberra

The Council prepared a paper highlighting the crucial role in Canberra that lithium-ion batteries, with their recyclability leading to relative eco-friendliness, will play. They will stabilise energy generation and reduce overall energy costs. They already play a crucial role in decarbonising transport in Canberra. However, safety challenges exist, including the risk of infrequent fires and explosions due to damage, inappropriate charging and deterioration from ageing, primarily in e-bikes, e-scooters, and other similar sized rechargeables.

The ageing process, inappropriate charging for low quality batteries or battery damage can lead to thermal instability and “second life” batteries can also increase risk. Ongoing research is exploring alternatives to the lithium-ion batteries currently produced commercially, focusing on minimising risks, increasing energy density and power delivery and extending battery life. Despite potential advancements, the ACT will maintain a presence of the current generation lithium-ion batteries for the foreseeable future and will need to deal with any inherent risks.

While lithium-ion batteries have transformed energy usage, challenges persist, necessitating consideration of policy responses. Safety, equity and effective usage could be enhanced through education, research and development. This report recommends promoting improved battery information, discouraging indoor charging of devices with substantial lithium batteries like e-scooters and e-bikes, expanding charging infrastructure for such devices, developing comprehensive plans for integrating batteries into electricity networks at precinct-level and supporting equitable electric vehicle charging options, particularly for high density residents. Proactive measures could address safety concerns and assist in the effective utilisation of lithium-ion batteries in Canberra’s sustainable future.





A behavioural insights approach to net zero: Options for the ACT

The Council prepared a paper advising that delivery of net zero emissions in the ACT by 2045 will depend on substantial social and behavioural change. Achieving such widespread changes in behaviour is one of the biggest public engagement, political and technical challenges of the Net Zero transition. It's also a huge opportunity, with climate scientists pointing out that massive emission reductions can be achieved if we all adopt a handful of changes in our lives.

Economics has traditionally assumed that people always make rational decisions in their best interests. Behavioural economics challenges the view that people will always act rationally, in their own self-interest. For example, we tend to satisfy our present self rather than planning for the future. Behavioural insights apply behavioural economics concepts to the real world by drawing on empirically tested results. These tools can inform the design of government interventions to improve the welfare of citizens. There are behavioural insights teams throughout governments around the world, including in Australia and New Zealand.

The OECD defines behavioural insights as an inductive approach to inform policy makers of the human behaviours driving economic and societal outcomes. Driven by experimentation and piloting, it combines insights from psychology, cognitive science and social science with empirically tested results to discover how humans “actually” make choices.

We know that a great majority of Australians want to live more sustainable lives² and that people are already taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint. However, there's a long way to go to transform this positive sentiment into a net zero society.

Drawing from the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019 – 2025*, and the recent *ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory*, the Council has noted the below priority areas for behaviours that need to change are in household energy, transport and waste.

² Commonwealth Bank, Majority of Australians keen to live more sustainably. Published 23 December 2021. Accessed February 2023



Household energy

- Electrification of heating, cooling and cooking
- Gas network closed from 2045
- Acceptance of smart meters, time-of-use tariffs, home storage and smart appliances.



Transport

- Encouraging people to use public transport and active travel
- Encouraging people to use zero emissions vehicles



Waste

- Food and garden waste collection for all households
- Reducing food waste

However, public engagement, information and effective communications are central to achieving widespread behaviour change. They have a role to play upstream by increasing transparency of businesses and thereby encouraging effective market competition. They are central to downstream intervention: supporting and encouraging people to make informed, greener choices where they can. Public engagement is also about listening, through citizens assemblies, polls and social research.

These activities help us to understand the wide range of legitimate interests and constraints to ensure measures taken are fair and the co-benefits are widely understood and felt by all. This increases the mandate to act, and the effectiveness of policies or interventions led by Government or business.

The Council has further developed a series of options which include:

- *Provide simple guidance for all Canberrans, including improving the current Climate Choices website to provide information on what they can do to reduce the GHG emission footprints, how they can do it and what will be most impactful.*

- *Continue to lead by example with a Net Zero Government by 2040, well ahead of the 2045 target. Share the journey with small, medium and large businesses across Canberra.*
- *Target communication and support during timely moments of disruption, with tailored communications and relevant support at timely moments when taken action is easier for individuals. For example, make energy improvements when moving home, change travel habits when moving home, job or school, and switch away from gas when replacing gas appliances that are at end of life.*
- *Advocate for national action on eco labels, advertising regulation and greenwash, and create a simple system of ecolabels across key product sectors (food, clothing, retirement funds) and business (supermarkets, banks, airlines, retail chains) to engage consumers in choosing green options, and by extension, incentivizing businesses to become more sustainable.*
- *Introduce ecolabels and associated industry training for retail businesses that sell gas appliances and alternatives to gas appliances.*

The Council notes the need for a clear ranking of suggested actions, government plans and signposting of all relevant support enabling the community to make behavioural changes that support the net zero transition.



New Climate Change Strategy

The Council's advice highlighted the climate challenges the ACT is projected to face in the future. It stressed the need for a post-2025 Climate Change Strategy that comprehensively considers both adaptation and emission-reduction strategies in the development of government policies and programs. The Council identified that strong focuses should be:

- considering vulnerable people and communities, and overall equity: a just transition
- health and wellbeing
- behavioural change
- electrification, transport, and the built environment
- EV ready buildings and fire safety
- business and investment opportunities.

Office of the ACT Landscape Architect

The Council's advice brought together both the benefits and a proposed structure for the Office of the ACT Landscape Architect, focussing on the landscape being a key part of mitigation and adaptation to inform how the ACT prepares and adapts to the changing climate.

The Council noted that the new role would intersect with climate change policy across the continuum from mitigation and adaptation through community cohesion, social integration, and health co-benefits of modifications to how and where we live. It would bring expertise to preserve, protect and develop biodiversity within the ACT, as caring for biodiversity as the climate changes is a challenge and proactive work on this problem is important.

The natural environment offers opportunities to carbon capture, reducing carbon impacts for our Territory, and caring for the natural environment also offers remarkable benefits for health. Green spaces have been demonstrated to impact positively on many metrics of physical and mental health and offer important mechanisms to reduce the growing risk to health from heat.

Landscape integration with the built environment can promote social engagement, cohesion, and cooperation – all of which is important for disaster preparation and response, including for the extreme weather events that will occur more frequently as the climate changes. Landscape is a key tool and focus for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

One challenge, and opportunity, for the new role is integration across all the elements of government and policy where the urban, built, and natural environment intersect. This list of elements is diverse and includes environment, planning, health, climate change, transportation, small business and the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and emergency / disaster preparation.

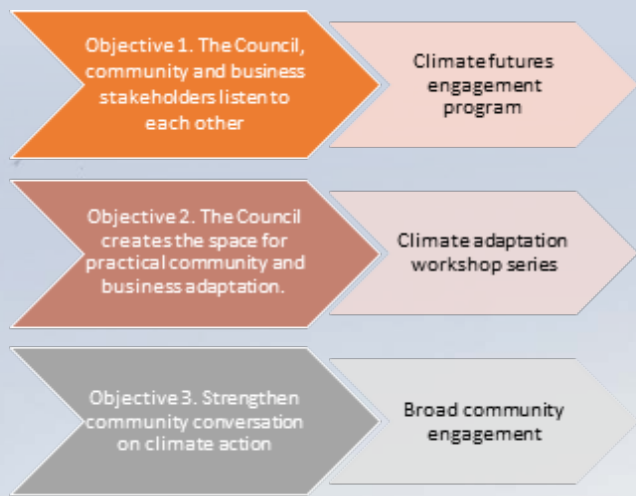
Engagement

Council members organised and participated in a range of engagements during the year, including forums, briefings, and presentations, with community and businesses.

Community Engagement Strategy

The Council’s Community Engagement Strategy sets out a structured approach to engaging the Canberra community so that their views are reflected in the advice the Council provides to the Minister. The Strategy commenced on 1 July 2023. A summary is available at <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/climate-change/act-climate-change-council#Council-publications>

The Community Engagement Strategy includes three objectives:



- In 2024–25, the Climate Futures Engagement Program included meetings with environmental Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), community sector organisations, young people, the Canberra Business Chamber, and Traditional Custodians.
- The Council participated in the ACT Government’s Climate Storylines project, and co-design workshops, the former being narrative descriptions of potential future climate states based on scenarios with compounding and cascading impacts from bushfires, smoke, and heatwaves for the ACT.
- The opportunity for broad community engagement was planned to be through the Council’s attendance at the Canberra Sustainability Expo 2024. The Council further held a series of informal morning chats with the community on several occasions, which were well received. The Council further held targeted stakeholder roundtables with local experts in the areas of multi-unit developments, transport and built environment on 19, 23 and 26 May 2025.

Contact the Council

The community and stakeholders are invited to contact the Council via the Climate Change Council Secretariat.

Email: ClimateChangeCouncilSecretariat@act.gov.au

Telephone: 13 22 81 (Access Canberra)

Post: GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

Connect with the Council online

The Council maintains a presence on Twitter and LinkedIn and invites the community to connect with them through social media.

X (Twitter): [@act_ccc](https://twitter.com/act_ccc)

LinkedIn: [ACT Climate Change Council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/act-climate-change-council)

Website: <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/climate-change/act-climate-change-council>



Appendix A: Meeting

Attendance

The Council formally met five times during the 2024–25 reporting period:

- Tuesday, 13 August 2024
- Tuesday, 15 October 2024
- Monday, 17 February 2025
- Thursday, 3 April 2025
- Thursday, 19 June 2025.

Number Of Council Meetings Attended By Council Members:

Member	Number of meetings held during member's tenure	Number of meetings attended
Emeritus Professor Mark Howden (Chair)	5	4
Dr Thomas Longden	5	4
Dr Paul Bannister	5	4
Associate Professor Cris Brack	5	5
Ms Sophia Hamblin Wang	5	3
Ms Mia Swainson	5	5
Associate Professor Aparna Lal	5	5
Dr Arnagretta Hunter	5	5



Appendix B: Expenditure

Climate Change Council	Totals 2024–25
Remuneration	\$53,777.55
Meeting Costs (Supplies & Services)	\$16,416.50
Total (excluding GST)	\$70,194.05

The totals listed here relate to meetings and activities remunerated in the 2024–25 financial year. Remuneration for Council members is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

