

**Commissioner for the Environment  
Australian Capital Territory**

**Annual Report 2005–06**



Australian Capital Territory Government

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## TRANSMITTAL CERTIFICATE

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**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ACT**

ABN: 52 427 642 151

Mr John Hargreaves  
Minister for Territory and Municipal Services  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

This Report has been prepared under section 5(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements referred to in the Chief Minister's 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 the Environment.

I hereby certify that the attached annual report is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment during the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 has been included and that it complies with the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions.

I also hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with the Public Sector Management Standard 1, Part 4.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you cause a copy of the report to be laid before the Legislative Assembly within three months of the end of the financial year.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Rosemary Purdie  
Commissioner  
18 September 2006

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## PART A: COMMISSIONER REVIEW

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### A.1 THE ORGANISATION

#### Role, functions and services provided

The role of the Commissioner for the Environment and the office are set out in the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993*. The major functions are to:

- produce state of the environment reports for the ACT
- investigate complaints from the community regarding the management of the environment by the ACT Government and its agencies
- conduct investigations as directed by the Minister
- initiate investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT
- make recommendations for consideration by government and include in the annual report the outcomes of those recommendations.



At the request of the local governments who are members of the Regional Leaders Forum, the office also prepares state of the environment reports for the Australian Capital Region, on a fee-for-service basis.

In carrying out these functions, and as is consistent with the intent of the enabling legislation, we aim to contribute to government decision-making in a manner that helps improve the overall management of the ACT's environment.

#### Mission and values

Our mission and values are articulated in the *Office of the Commissioner for the Environment Corporate Plan 2005–06 to 2008–09*, which was finalised in October 2005.

Our mission:

*To develop understanding of changes in the condition of the environment and the reasons for these, and to encourage all sectors of the community to progressively improve the environment, and so work towards sustainability*

Our vision:

*A society with the will to achieve a sustainable high quality environment for all*

In working towards our vision, we recognise that:

- individual and government decision-making aimed at achieving sustainability must consider the costs and benefits for natural, social and economic aspects of the environment
- our natural environment must be managed in an ecologically sustainable way for our society and economy to remain healthy.

Our values guide the way we interact with each other and with all our stakeholders. They are:

- highest integrity
- ethical approach
- honesty
- respect (for different cultures, opinions and values)
- commitment
- trust and trustworthiness
- empathy, fairness and courtesy.

## Agency structure

Our organisation consists of a part-time, independent Commissioner (officially eight days a month), assisted by two full-time permanent staff.

## Clients and stakeholders

Our clients and stakeholders are residents of the ACT and beyond, and are from both government and the community. They include:

- Government:
- the ACT Minister for the Environment
  - the ACT Legislative Assembly
  - all ACT Government agencies
  - the ACT Government's regional partners
- Community:
- all residents in the ACT and beyond who have an interest in the health of the ACT's environment and that in the surrounding region
  - people with a grievance about the way the ACT Government or its agencies are managing the ACT's environment, where the grievance has not been resolved through other channels

## A.2 OVERVIEW

### Strategic Assessment of Performance

My office continued to meet its legal and other functions during the year, although it remained hampered by its limited resources. Discussions continued with the Minister's office about the latter. As it had been necessary to extend the timeframe for completing the *Australian Capital Region State of the Environment Report 2004* (the Regional SoE Report) from June 2005 to June 2006, we liaised closely with member councils of the region to better fit the task to the resources they had provided.



## Planning Framework and Direction Setting Mechanisms

The *Office of the Commissioner for the Environment Corporate Plan 2005–06 to 2008–09* provides our overarching planning framework to deliver our legal and other functions. We hold regular planning meetings to review overall priorities in light of available resources. For major projects such as the preparation of a state of the environment report we develop an action plan and meet regularly to monitor progress and adapt the plan according to needs.

## Organisational environment

As noted above, our organisation is very small, with a part-time, independent Commissioner (officially eight days a month), assisted by two full-time permanent staff. Temporary staff are appointed cyclically for state of the environment reporting purposes or for specific projects. As Commissioner, I report directly to the Minister responsible for the environment.

Because of the role of the Commissioner, our office processes must, by their nature, be, and be seen to be, independent. The following operational principles provide the basis for the way we do our work and aim to achieve professional excellence:

- be objective
- have transparent, inclusive processes
- seek to use the best available knowledge
- take a holistic view (across all aspects of the environment and across the whole of government)
- provide independent analysis and process, based on a cooperative approach
- give balanced consideration to social, economic and environmental values
- strive for continuous improvement
- do the best we can with the resources we have.

We work closely with other agencies in order to meet our functions. During the year, we liaised with a range of ACT Government agencies whose work is relevant to recommendations arising from the *2003 ACT State of the Environment Report*, or whose work was relevant to inquiries and complaints lodged with my office or to government documents released for public comment. These interactions were predominantly with officers in Environment ACT and the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA). We also worked closely with member councils of the Australian Capital Region in preparing their four-yearly comprehensive state of the environment reports.

Because of the small size of the organisation, the office is supported by a major agency (Chief Minister's Department, through Environment ACT) for financial reporting and support, personnel delegations and support, and a range of other ACT Government initiatives. Details of these are provided in entries under Parts B and C of this report.

## Significant organisational change and/or revision to administrative arrangements

There were no organisational changes during the year. In July 2006 administrative assistance to the office was transferred from the Chief Minister's Department to the Department of Territory and Municipal Services. This was as part of the outcomes of the ACT Government's *Strategic and Functional Review of ACT Public Sector and Services* (the Costello Review). Apart from a CPI increase to our budget, no other changes were made to my office as part of the Costello Review.

## Role in administration of legislation or other regulatory activities

The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* is the enabling legislation and prescribes my functions (see section A.1 above). The office administers no other legislation and, as Commissioner, I have no regulatory activities.

### A.3 HIGHLIGHTS

Our main organisational challenges for the year were to complete the Regional SoE Report and to address ongoing resource issues. Preparation of the Regional SoE Report continued to be the most time and resource intensive activity, and the level of effort required left limited time for the office to maintain contact with its diverse stakeholders and reduced capacity to provide advice on various government policies and strategies.

Preparation of the Regional SoE Report involves preparing individual state of the environment reports for each of the 17 New South Wales Local Government Authorities that, along with the ACT, make up the Australian Capital Region. We made major progress in preparing the report and progressively publishing it on the web, and were close to meeting the revised output of completion by 30 June 2006. All mandatory indicators, some non-mandatory indicators, and one environmental issue were finalised by the end of the financial year or had been provided to councils for comment. Drafts had been prepared for most other non-mandatory indicators and three of the remaining five environmental issues. To help progress this work in a timely way, and with the concurrence of the councils, we reduced the scope of many non-mandatory indicators and placed greater reliance on council social plans for data and issues relevant to these indicators.

In February 2006, my office facilitated a workshop with councils in the Australian Capital Region to review New South Wales Government requirements for council state of the environment reporting and assess options for preparing future regional state of the environment reports through my office in light of the collective experience in preparing the 2004 report. Various measures for streamlining the process were identified, and the councils agreed to revised funding arrangements. An additional outcome of the workshop was a submission from the councils, through the Regional Leaders Forum, to the New South Wales Department of Local Government in response to its review of environmental and other reporting requirements, *Fitting the Pieces Together: Integrated Planning and Reporting by NSW Local Councils*.

In my *Annual Report 2004–05*, in relation to an earlier review of my office that included a recommendation the Commissioner's work level should be increased, I noted the need to make an informed assessment of what would be required for a Commissioner for the Environment to be fully effective, based on work records for a 12-month period. In February 2006 I provided a report to the Minister for the Environment. It suggested that my work levels during the previous year demonstrated a need to increase the official work level for the Commissioner to be able to effectively carry out all the statutory and other functions. In this report I also raised an area of duplication between the work of my office and other areas of government and suggested some options for addressing it. A response to my report was subsumed by the Costello Review.

#### **A.4 OUTLOOK**

The highest priority for the coming year will be work on the *ACT 2007 State of the Environment Report* (2007 SoE Report). This will include finalising the structure of the report, liaising with agencies about data standards and timelines for data provision, and commencing data compilation and analysis. I will also hold discussions with the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, aimed at minimising duplication between the 2007 SoE Report and the ACT Government's second report on measuring progress towards sustainability. Structural changes arising from the Costello Review may initially slow down some of this work.

Completion of the Regional SoE Report and its publication on the web (<http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au>) will also be a high priority in the first quarter of the year. This will include remaining indicators and environmental issues, maps and other illustrations and revising (as necessary) the indicator definitions. My office will also continue, in conjunction with member councils, to examine measures to streamline future regional state of the environment reporting processes, and to assess the implications for my office of any changes to local government state of the environment reporting requirements that may arise from the New South Wales Department of Local Government's review *Fitting the Pieces Together: Integrated Planning and Reporting by NSW Local Councils*.

Resources will remain a key issue for my office during 2006–07, for the same reasons outlined in my last annual report. I will continue to discuss these matters with the ACT Government in the context of the changed departmental structures, functions and budgets announced in the June 2006 budget.

#### **A.4 CORRECTIONS**

There are no corrections.

## **PART B: AGENCY PERFORMANCE**

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### **B.1. ANALYSIS OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE**

This section addresses key performance measures of the office: state of the environment reports and investigation activities during the year.

Section 14(8) of the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* also requires reporting of complaints received that did not proceed to a full investigation, and the reasons for their not doing so.

This section of the report complies with section 14(8) and also with the ‘special annual reporting requirements’ of section 20 of the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993*. It notes any significant impacts on the environment during the year plus progress on implementation of recommendations from state of the environment reports. There were no recommendations from investigations that were either directed by the relevant Minister or initiated by the Commissioner on which to report progress on implementation.

#### **Key result area—State of the Environment reporting**

As noted in my last annual report, preparation of the Regional SoE Report increased in magnitude and complexity because of the addition of three councils to the Regional Leaders Forum and changes to the council boundaries made by the New South Wales Government Boundaries Commission in February 2004. The council boundaries for the 2004 report are shown in Figure 1.

The above changes had significant implications for mapping and reporting resources that had previously been invested in state of the environment reporting for the Australian Capital Region, and for continuity of reporting against indicators between the 2000 and 2004 state of the environment reports.

By the end of the financial year, the office had, for each council:

- finalised all 20 mandatory indicators or provided proposed final material to relevant councils for comment
- finalised six non-mandatory indicators (those not required under New South Wales law) or provided proposed final material to councils for comment
- prepared drafts for most other non-mandatory indicators
- completed one environmental issue (Air quality)
- made significant progress in preparing three of the remaining five environmental issues (Catchment quality, Biodiversity, Resource use).

Detailed planning and preliminary work for the ACT’s 2007 SoE Report, scheduled for the second half of the financial year, was put on hold until the outcomes of the Costello Review were announced.

Figure 1: Map of Australian Capital Region Local Government Areas



## Key result area—Investigations

### s12(1)(a) (Investigations arising from complaints)

One new investigation was commenced during the 2005–06 year in response to a complaint, and I facilitated a resolution for another complaint that did not warrant formal investigation. My office also continued to act as facilitator for inquirers and people who ring with complaints about management of the environment. Most of the inquirers are referred directly to the appropriate agency for action. In some cases, the caller has already received some assistance from the relevant agency but resolution had not occurred. In those cases, the caller generally knew the number to contact, but has looked for an impartial body. My office has continued a greater facilitation role, without the need to proceed to full investigation of a problem, to help such people reach resolution.

The number of inquiries my office received during the year is shown in Table 1. While the number remains small, it indicates there is some level of community dissatisfaction with environmental management in the ACT.

**Table 1: Complaints and inquiries received by the Commissioner**

<b>Formal complaints</b>	
Formal complaints on hand at the end of the previous financial year	2
Decision not to investigate	1
Formal complaints received during the financial year	2
Decision to investigate pending at end of financial year	1
<b>Inquiries and potential complaints received</b>	
<b>38</b>	
Inquirer directed to appropriate contact	30
Action facilitated by the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment	8
Matter resolved	7
Resolution still pending	1

### Complaints on hand at 1 July 2005

#### Management of noise from motorsport at Fairbairn Park (April 2005)

This complaint arose from an analysis of motorsport clubs' compliance with management plans using data supplied under a Freedom of Information application. Following discussions with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on this matter during May, June and July 2005, I facilitated a meeting between representatives of the complainant group and the EPA in August 2005. At this meeting, the EPA agreed to include several matters in its review of relevant environmental authorisations, and to meet with representatives of the complainant group on a regular basis. I decided that no further investigation by me was warranted.

#### Impact of proposed development of Forde on wetlands (June 2005)

This complaint was related to ACTPLA and covered three inter-related matters: i) the processes followed in handling objections submitted by the complainant; ii) the environmental values assigned to the wetland area and the extent to which they were considered in the finalisation of Draft Variation 130; and iii) whether any measures were being taken during the detailed design for the suburb of Forde to protect the wetland area.

Following receipt of ACTPLA's material that was relevant to the complaint, a meeting with ACTPLA's officers and a site inspection with officers from Environment ACT, it was clear that some of the issues raised by the objector had arisen because of different interpretations of the physical location of the wetlands referred to. I subsequently wrote to ACTPLA and the Land Development Agency noting the wetlands had local environmental values, and recommended specific provisions be made (in consultation with Environment ACT) for protecting these values during the development of Forde. In my letter to ACTPLA, I also suggested changes to improve the transparency of how it addressed objections.

### **Action facilitated by the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment**

Matters raised by community members related to: ACT building regulations, urban development, fire hazard reduction, management of heritage listed properties, management of urban and commercial noise, use of biofuel by the ACT Government, ACT vehicle emission standards, industrial and urban pollution, energy consumption, sick buildings, and the protection of threatened ecological communities. My office also received calls relevant to matters in some local government areas within the Australian Capital Region, and other interstate issues. ACT matters were referred to the EPA, Environment ACT, ACTPLA and other relevant sections of the ACT Government. Interstate matters were referred to the relevant regional councils or appropriate state government agencies.

Eight community groups brought to my attention their concerns about the adverse impacts of ActewAGL activities in Canberra Nature Park. I subsequently attended a meeting between representatives of the eight groups and ActewAGL as an independent observer. At this meeting, ActewAGL officers agreed to work further with the groups to address their concerns. In June 2005, another community group raised concerns about the proposed dragway in Majura Valley. I received a formal complaint about the proposed dragway following the release of the draft dragway noise Environment Protection Policy (see below).

### **Formal complaints**

#### **Preservation of Magnolia tree in central Woden**

February 2006—This complaint arose because of the proposed removal of a Magnolia tree outside Juliana House through approved activities associated with the Centraplaza Development. After clarifying relevant issues with officers from ACTPLA and Environment ACT's Tree Protection Unit, I facilitated a meeting between the complainant, ACTPLA and the developer's project manager to explore 'good will' options for retaining the tree. The developer agreed to explore further the most promising option, which would require different arrangements for waste management at Juliana House. At the end of the financial year it appeared this option would be implemented, allowing retention of the tree, but the necessary checks for waste management were still being carried out.

#### **Proposed dragway in Majura Valley**

June 2006—This complaint arose from community concerns related to the assessment process for the proposed dragway, and to the specific content of the draft dragway noise Environment Protection Policy released for public comment. A meeting with representatives of the complainant group was organised for early July to allow me to decide the nature and level of investigation that was warranted.

**s12(1)(b) (Minister-directed investigations)**

There were no directions from the Minister for the Environment during 2005–06 to conduct an investigation. There were no such investigations pending completion at the commencement of the reporting year.

**s12(1)(c) (Commissioner-initiated investigations)**

The Commissioner commenced no new investigations under this paragraph of the enabling legislation during the year. There were no such investigations pending completion at the commencement of the reporting year.

**Special annual reporting requirements**

Section 20 of the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* reads:

*A report presented, or information provided, by the Commissioner under section 8 of the Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 1995 in respect of a period shall include particulars of:*

- (a) any special factor which the Commissioner believes had a significant impact on the environment during the period;*
- (b) any measures taken during the period by or on behalf of the Territory in relation to the implementation of any recommendation in a State of the Environment Report under section 19 or a special report under section 21; and*
- (c) any recommendation in such a report which the Commissioner believes is still to be implemented or fully implemented.*

Only recommendations from state of the environment reports are addressed in this annual report. All recommendations from previous ‘special reports’ under the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* have been dealt with in previous annual reports.

**Significant impacts on the environment**

During the year, water conservation measures became a permanent feature of water management in the ACT. This is a positive step by the ACT Government towards sustainable water management.

**Progress on implementation of recommendations from state of the environment reports**

For this report, I sought update on ten remaining recommendations from the 2003 SoE Report; these included one recommendation not endorsed by the ACT Government. I consider three of the nine remaining endorsed recommendations to be fully implemented at the end of June 2006, and two mostly implemented. My comments on implementation progress are summarised in Table 2 and appear in full in the subsequent text.



**Table 2: Summary of progress on implementation of recommendations from the 2003 SoE Report**

Recommendation	Summary of Topic	Summary of Progress on Implementation
2003.1	Use of mobile air quality monitoring instruments for airborne particles and other pollutants	Considered implemented as at 30 June 2006—to be reported under 'Air quality (outdoor)' in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.2	Examine how indoor air quality may be monitored	Mostly implemented—to be followed up and reported under 'Air quality (indoor)' in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.6	Implement post-fire works and management program	Mostly implemented—to be followed up in my next annual report and in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.7	Effectiveness of pest plant control programs for control, biodiversity conservation and catchment management	Implementation progressing—to be followed up in my next annual report and in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.9	Include extreme event scenarios in policy and management plans	Considered implemented as at 30 June 2006—no specific further follow-up required
2003.10	Adopt recommendations from ACT Greenhouse Strategy 2002 Review	Recommendation not endorsed by the ACT Government. I will report on greenhouse gas emissions in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.13	Programs to reduce gaps in health outcomes for Aboriginal people	Considered implemented as at 30 June 2006—to be reported under 'Community health' in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.16	Access to support services and dedicated acute care and accommodation for mentally ill children and adolescents	Partly implemented—to be reported under 'Community health' in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.17	Implement the Sustainable Transport Plan 'principles for managing change' to assist sustainable transport outcomes	Partly implemented—to be followed up in my next annual report and reported under 'Transport' in the 2007 SoE Report
2003.18	Develop data records for 'Community participation' and 'Heritage' that meet needs for reporting purposes	Ongoing, but no further annual report update required

### Codes for assessment of government progress

ACT Government progress in implementing each recommendation has been rated as follows:

*Implemented:* actions carried out have met the intent of the recommendation

*Mostly implemented:* most actions have been taken, but some remaining actions flagged for undertaking have not yet commenced, or the effectiveness of actions in meeting the intent of the recommendation warrants assessment

*Partly implemented:* some actions taken but quite a few others still to be completed (e.g. draft reports not yet finalised, or activities government has flagged are in their early stages)

*Implementation progressing:* relevant actions being taken to meet the intent of the recommendation but these actions are ongoing and some actions warrant further assessment of progress

*Limited progress:* actions reported by government address a limited part of the intent of the recommendation

*Ongoing, but no further annual report update required:* appropriate policies and programs are in place, but the timeframes for measuring their effectiveness in meeting the intent of the recommendation are beyond the annual reporting timeframe; these policies and programs will be assessed in the 2007 SoE Report.

**Recommendation 2003.1**

2003.1 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should use mobile air quality monitoring to measure and record air quality at busy intersections, near known point sources, and in other parts of Canberra that may be susceptible to high levels of airborne particles and other pollutants

Endorsed government response

AGREE

The ACT Government currently operates two major air quality monitoring stations, which have recently been upgraded to measure particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5). An additional \$50,000 has been set aside in 2004–05 to purchase additional monitoring equipment. It is envisaged that this equipment will be relocated periodically to give a more detailed understanding of particulate pollution across Canberra taking account of busy intersections, known point sources and areas that may be susceptible to high levels of airborne particles and other pollutants. Mobile air quality monitoring equipment would require substantial additional investment.

Government action to 30 June 2006

The ACT Government has now completed the installation of three laser continuous particle samplers. These instruments have been installed at the ACT Government monitoring stations in Monash, Civic and Belconnen and have been in operation since February 2006. Data collected from these instruments will provide a better understanding of fine (less than 2.5 microns) particle pollution. These instruments are reasonably mobile and it is envisaged that in the future they could be periodically relocated to give a more detailed understanding of particulate pollution in other areas of Canberra.

This recommendation is considered implemented.

Commissioner's comments

*Implemented.* These are logical initial locations for these three instruments. Even though the period will be short, as indicated in my *Annual Report 2004–05*, I will request data on findings from these instruments for reporting in the 2007 SoE Report.

**Recommendation 2003.2**

2003.2 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should examine how indoor air quality may be monitored in the ACT

Endorsed government response

AGREE

ACT Health undertakes routine monitoring of air pollutants in the ambient environment. Indoor air quality is monitored on a case-by-case basis if a specific issue is identified in the ACT, as in all jurisdictions in Australia. For example, the ACT Health Protection Service recently undertook an examination of indoor air with special reference to environmental tobacco smoke.

Indoor air quality is not routinely monitored in Australia. The Environmental Health Council (enHealth) has established a working party to examine indoor air quality issues on a national basis. Recommendations from this working party are expected in 2004–05. The ACT is represented on this Council, and is participating in its deliberations on indoor air quality.

Government action to 30 June 2006

ACT Health has placed priority upon implementation of amendments to the *Smoking (Prohibited in Enclosed Public Places) Act 2003*. The amendments aim to remove tobacco smoke impacts upon indoor air quality. The amendments will prohibit smoking in enclosed public places within the ACT from 1 December 2006. The implementation program includes consultation with affected property owners and community interest groups.

Removal of tobacco smoke for indoor enclosed public spaces is identified as providing a significant improvement of the air quality in areas to which the general community may be present. Monitoring of indoor air quality within public places may be reconsidered at a later date.

The National Health and Medical Research Council planned to hold a workshop in July 2006, focusing upon ambient indoor air quality standards.

Commissioner's comments

*Mostly implemented.* The status of this recommendation remains as it was in my *Annual Report 2004–05*. Monitoring of indoor air quality would be a challenging task and the National Health and Medical Research Council appears to be moving slowly in this regard.

In the meantime, the ACT Government's focus on removal of tobacco smoke for indoor enclosed public spaces appropriately targets an environmental health risk.

I will include indoor air quality in my 2007 SoE Report on the principle that it is a significant, though difficult-to-measure, feature of environmental health.

### **Recommendation 2003.6**

2003.6 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should implement an appropriate post-fire works and management program to protect water supply catchment, aquatic habitat and nature conservation values of the upper Cotter River, Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River valleys, and their tributaries

Endorsed government response

AGREE

Expert advice is being provided on the most appropriate post-fire works and management program to protect water supply catchments. Advice received thus far has emphasised that it will be a long-term recovery process. Significant works have been undertaken in the water supply catchments. These works include rehabilitation of roads, tracks and stream banks, removal of sediment slugs and stabilisation of undercut bank areas, rehabilitation of sphagnum bogs and replacement of damaged monitoring infrastructure. Monitoring of the aquatic environment has increased with cooperative research measuring sediment loads and sediment movement, and fish and macro-invertebrate occurrence.

Research workshops have been undertaken to enable researchers in the post-bushfire catchment to interact and access other work. Works undertaken outside the water supply catchments include road, track and streambank stabilisation and revegetation.

The ACT Government has undertaken aerial seeding in some of the burnt areas previously under production forestry management to stabilise soil and reduce erosion. A monitoring program is being developed with the Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology for water quality.

Strategic planning by ACT Government land management agencies has resulted in a significant fraction of roads being identified to be removed to reduce potential sediment loads. Riparian zones within forestry land have also been reviewed and increased relative to landform.

Substantial revegetation programs are underway in collaboration with Greening Australia and other community groups.

#### Government action to 30 June 2006

The main areas of post-fire works were drainage improvement on roads and tracks, revegetation and alpine bog rehabilitation.

The roads and tracks maintained in the main catchments were a particular focus of work. A program to improve drainage and thereby reduce sediment loads in waterways was in its second of three years. Table drains, culverts and stream crossings are being improved and roll-over water diversion structures are being constructed. The works are guided by expert external advice.

The upper Cotter River vegetation has regenerated and regrown well since the fires and no supplementary revegetation was undertaken there. In other areas, large numbers of riverine casuarinas have been a casualty of the fires and drought, with some finally succumbing during the 2004–05 summer. A riverine vegetation replacement program has been put in place. Elsewhere, revegetation has been limited by the ongoing drought, although some large-scale community planting events have proved successful. Native grass seedlings have been successfully established after even light showers.

Alpine bog restoration is an ongoing program. Sites identified for restoration are located in the Cotter Catchment and Ginini Flats wetlands. The project aims to retain and pond water in the bog systems by constructing barriers from naturally found materials and straw bales and to protect living sphagnum from the effects of ultraviolet exposure by shading it from the sun using shade cloth and straw mulch. Despite the ongoing drought, there is evidence of good recovery in bogs where restoration has been undertaken. Treated sites are now much wetter, stream incision has been halted, flow is much slower and there is more ponding of water.

Baseline studies in the bushfire-affected catchment areas have been established to examine the effects of buffers on the rehabilitation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Since the fires, there has been extensive work carried out in the catchment to address water quality issues. Progress has been made in parts of the fire-affected areas to address soil erosion, with heavy rainfall continuing to cause movement of soil and sediment into the Cotter River and reservoir.

The government's decision to bring ACT departments including ACT Forests and Environment ACT together in one organisation—the Department of Territory and Municipal Services—will allow a greater focus on water catchment issues as all of the ACT's water supply catchment areas will be under a single

management group. One of the primary benefits of the new arrangements is the integration of land management in the Cotter Catchment, and this will facilitate the delivery of better catchment, conservation and land management outcomes.

The rehabilitation work in the areas affected by the fire will take many years (up to 100 years) before the situation is totally addressed. Soil erosion in native forest areas and former plantation areas continues to occur despite the concerted efforts by agency staff in conjunction with Ecowise Environmental Services. Priority areas have been identified and significant work has been undertaken in an attempt to reduce the ongoing problem, including the building of significant sediment structures and extensive road re-alignment and decommissioning. Revegetation is continuing and former plantation areas that are now deemed to be too steep or in newly declared riparian zones are being treated for weeds, debris removal and revegetation. Many areas that have been cleared of pine debris are showing good natural regeneration of native species and now require extensive weed control and ongoing management.

Agency staff will continue to undertake extensive work in the burnt areas with the only restriction being the high cost of such operations and the question of ongoing funding. The *Lower Cotter Catchment Draft Strategic Management Plan, Clean water, Healthy landscapes* has been launched by the Minister and once in place will guide operations to revegetate the lower Cotter River catchment.

#### Commissioner's comments

*Mostly implemented.* Good progress has been made on revegetation and restoration in alpine bogs and riverine corridors after the 2003 bushfires to complement natural regeneration more generally within the affected catchments. Ongoing monitoring of both natural regeneration and the effectiveness of rehabilitation and restoration work will remain important.

It is of concern that erosion in the Cotter River catchment has continued, despite concerted efforts to stop it. Targeting of priority areas, especially in the lower Cotter River catchment, is appropriate. The proposal to change land use in the latter area to one that protects existing and future water supply, natural and cultural heritage conservation and recreational use, as outlined in the *Lower Cotter Catchment Draft Strategic Management Plan, Clean water, Healthy landscapes*, released in late May 2006, is consistent with the thrust of this recommendation. I support the general direction of the draft plan, and look forward to its finalisation during 2006–07.

The structural changes in the ACT Government during the year to integrate land management—particularly forestry and conservation management—are also consistent with the thrust of this recommendation.

During 2006–07, I will be obtaining detailed information on the condition of the catchments, particularly those affected by fire, for the 2007 SoE Report. I will also briefly report on further progress on implementing this recommendation in my 2006–07 annual report.

**Recommendation 2003.7**

2003.7 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should assess the contributions of existing ACT Government pest plant control programs to achieving pest plant control, biodiversity conservation, and catchment management objectives and, if appropriate, trial alternative programs

Endorsed government response

AGREE

The ACT Weeds Strategy outlines principles for determining priority weed control programs. The ACT Government reports annually on implementation progress. A Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy being prepared to support delivery of the ACT Natural Resource Management Plan will provide a framework for assessing weed control program outcomes against natural resource management objectives.

Specific management plans have been developed for declared pest plant species and include targets for control over the next five years. Annual weed programs aim to ensure progress is made against these targets.

The ACT Government will discuss with the Commissioner the establishment of a long-term study to further examine the contribution of pest plant control programs to achieving biodiversity conservation and catchment management objectives.

Government action to 30 June 2006

A long-term approach is necessary for success in controlling weed species. For many weed species, the priorities should not fluctuate markedly from year to year if progress is to be made. A flow-on of priorities from previous years should therefore be expected, with some new items reflecting changing community priorities or new information. The ACT Weeds Strategy provides a basis to apply a long-term approach to the control of weed species. The strategy identifies that weed control requires a multiple factor approach to be effective. This includes total community involvement. The membership of the Weeds Working Group reflects this, with all ACT and Commonwealth land management agencies, community groups and the rural community being represented in the group.

The ACT Weeds Strategy (1996) has recently been reviewed and is currently being revised to reflect the direction that the management of weeds will undertake over the next ten years in the ACT.

ACT Weeds Working Group representatives met with the Commissioner for the Environment in March 2006 to discuss the recommendation in the state of the environment report. The deficiencies associated with monitoring and evaluation were identified. It was agreed that the new strategy would identify that biodiversity outcomes should be a measurable outcome of weed control.

The strategy will also reflect changes in priorities related to weed control and catchment management since the first strategy was produced. Issues that influence these priorities include:

- the ACT Natural Resource Management Plan,
- threatened species and communities legislation and listings
- the importance of targeting weed control for biodiversity, landscape and productivity outcomes.

On 5 May 2005 the Legislative Assembly passed the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*. The purpose of the Act is to protect the ACT's land and aquatic resources from threats from pest plants and pest animals, and to promote a strategic approach to pest management. The Act provides enhanced mechanisms for the management of weeds including prohibiting the propagation and supply of certain declared pest plants.

Programs undertaken to control weeds include physical removal, herbicide treatment, biological control, grazing, targeting of sites of conservation significance, education and awareness, liaison, facilitation of research and undertaking monitoring to assess the effectiveness of weed control programs. These are discussed below in more detail.

#### Non-chemical approaches to weed control

Non-chemical approaches to weed control are as follows:

- although herbicides form an important method of control of weed species, the Weed Control Program's aim is for an integrated approach of replacing weed species with useful competitive species
- implementation of strategic grazing in the Molonglo River Corridor to suppress growth of St John's Wort
- monitoring of the crown weevil (*Mogulons larvatus*), a biological control agent for Paterson's Curse that was released in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Isaacs Ridge. The distribution of this agent is now widespread in the Weston and Cotter Road area of the ACT and is active on Paterson's Curse infestations
- the ACT Parks and Conservation Service is continuing to assess the impact of the release of the biological agent, the Flea Beetle (*Longitarsus echii*) on Paterson's Curse, following its release at six sites in 2004
- monitoring at Googong of the weevil *Larinus latus* and the stem boring weevil *Lixus cardui*, both biological control agents for Scotch Thistle. The weevils have established, but have not reproduced sufficiently to produce noticeable reduction in weed density
- continuing cooperative research effort between CSIRO Entomology and Environment ACT into the biological control of Onopordum Thistle, with monitoring of the trial site established at Jerrabomberra Wetlands
- mechanical and physical removal of pine wildings, African Boxthorn and larger woody weeds using low impact earthmoving equipment, particularly in areas of high conservation value.

#### Sites of conservation significance

Control of weeds in sites of conservation significance is identified as a high priority. The control program is designed to manage problem weed species while protecting the values of sites of conservation significance:

- particular weed species are targeted where they are identified as impacting threatened species, endangered ecological communities, or other species of concern
- the weed control activities undertaken to date have resulted in a reduced concentration of key weed species in areas of high conservation value; however, continued effort will be required to maintain the results, particularly given the prolonged dry periods that have been experienced over the past couple of years.



### Education and awareness programs

The principal educative and awareness activity for this year was the reprinting and distribution of a pamphlet that identifies weeds of horticultural origin in the ACT. This pamphlet has proved a useful interpretation tool for a number of years with approximately 5000 copies being distributed annually.

Other important activities included:

- the ACT has worked proactively with retail nursery outlets in the promotion of the Bush Friendly Scheme. This initiative has resulted in nurseries promoting bush friendly plant species and not stocking invasive species that have the potential to invade bushland. Local nurseries were visited by the Conservation Council Weeds Officer (supported by ACT Government) to promote the scheme
- Environment ACT has worked very closely with the rural community in the ACT in providing an extension and advisory role on weed control and sustainable land management matters
- Weedbuster Week was held in October 2005. This program has been held for a number of years to promote weeds awareness in the local community. Weedbuster activities that were particularly successful were the weeds display at Floriade, the Weed Swap at West Belconnen and Mugga Landfills and a display at the Lanyon Garden Open Day.
- distribution of the weeds pamphlet, which has been extended to include all schools, garden centres and shopfronts in the ACT
- distribution of aquatic weed information to all nurseries, aquarium suppliers and other garden retail outlets
- workshops were held for contractors and their staff, targeting the identification of key weed species and the importance of vehicle hygiene.

### Monitoring and evaluation: monitoring the effectiveness of treatment programs

Currently there are mapping, monitoring and eradication programs in place by ACT Government agencies to address those weed species for which eradication is both desirable and practicable. These species are Broom, Gorse, Alligator Weed and Spotted Knapweed. The one known Knapweed site had been monitored for the past four years following detection and eradication of the plants. No reinfestation has been found.

The Broom, Gorse and Alligator Weed infestation sites are mapped and treated on an annual basis by 'seek and destroy' action. Apart from Alligator Weed, these species are at manageable levels, at known sites, and with information readily accessible.

The Alligator Weed infestations in public areas are generally in lakes. The weed is more mobile than the land-based species and more difficult to locate and, therefore, to control. ACT Government agencies are working with other states in the development of a nationally funded program with an education and awareness focus on the detection and management of backyard infestations of Alligator Weed. A community education and awareness program was conducted in 2006 by ACT Parks and Places. The focus of the program was to raise the awareness of the potential spread of Alligator Weed from backyards, and to treat infestations in these areas on a needs basis.

Surveys were also conducted to ascertain whether Alligator Weed infestations were present in Lake Burley Griffin and Lake and Lake Tuggeranong. No infestations were detected.



### Monitoring and evaluation: monitoring the impact of weed control on biodiversity

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the weed program is increasing desired biodiversity. This includes:

- volunteers, ACT Government staff and contractors have removed large quantities of woody weeds from Mt Ainslie. Native grasses, herbs and forbs, shrubs and eucalypt regeneration, have replaced these plants naturally
- removal of dense willow coverage of many streams and creeks has allowed light to penetrate and many native species have naturally regenerated denuded banks. For example, at Ginninderra Creek, aquatic life has increased and other wildlife (for example, white face herons and other waterbirds) have returned to the waterways.

Undertaking monitoring and evaluation to determine the level of biodiversity change that has occurred as a result of weed control is potentially a resource hungry activity. However, whilst the resources do not currently exist to undertake additional monitoring and evaluation programs by ACT Government agency staff, other opportunities are being explored. Examples of this include using existing community programs such as Waterwatch and Frogwatch, undertaken in the Ginninderra Creek, to provide information on changes in biodiversity as a result of willow removal. Existing data from the Canberra Ornithologists Group bird monitoring program may be used to identify changes to bird biodiversity in relation to weed control.

Existing biodiversity monitoring programs being undertaken for other purposes (such as threatened species and ecological community monitoring) will, where possible, be adapted to assess the effectiveness of weed control in achieving biodiversity outcomes. For example, the impacts of fire on biodiversity (wildfire and control burns) are already being monitored. Vegetation change in natural grassland sites have been monitored for over ten years. Data exist within these monitoring programs to analyse changes to weed populations, and identify impacts of weeds on biodiversity.

The identification of introducing other effective and practical monitoring and evaluation techniques will be addressed by the Weeds Working Group during the next year.

Further discussions between the Commissioner for the Environment, the Weeds Working Group and catchment groups will be held to ensure there are positive outcomes regarding this matter.

### Catchment management objectives

Pest plants have been identified as a priority in the new catchment management plan for the Molonglo Catchment (July 2005). This plan illustrates the integrated approach to target and priority-setting, relating the actions to address weeds in the catchment to wider ACT targets and to the targets for the Murrumbidgee River catchment as a whole. The Southern ACT Catchment Group has also commenced work to amalgamate their three subcatchment plans into a single document that will address issues such as pest plants on a catchment-wide basis.

Similarly, the Ginninderra Catchment Group has recognised the impending threat of increasing urban settlement on neighbouring parks, reserves and urban open space. The group has developed a project with the Conservation Council to raise the awareness of the occupants of new suburbs to the values their neighbouring natural areas and what actions they can take to care for these areas.

### Mapping

The majority of the ACT's environmental and agricultural weeds are widespread. There is no recognised standard for mapping these weeds and the ACT does not have the resources to develop a standard. While some use of global positioning system methods have been used for weed mapping, it has been found that, in most cases, it is easier and much quicker for field-based staff and contractors undertaking broadscale weed control to mark areas of control on a paper map at 1:10,000. This information is then documented on a digital map database.

The Department of Defence is currently using a newly developed weed mapping global positioning and geographic information field system. It has been found that this data collection process is labour intensive and does add some cost to control programs. ACT Government land management agencies, through the Weeds Working Group, are monitoring the progress of this program and will consider the costs and benefits of investing in this type of system when the Defence program is more advanced.

### Commissioner's comments

*Implementation progressing.* I acknowledge the ongoing effort to manage priority weeds and eradicate them or maintain them at manageable levels. It is good that weeds are now being addressed in catchment management plans, and it is pleasing there is informal evidence that weed control in some areas of conservation significance appears to be improving native biodiversity. The review of the ACT Weeds Strategy provides an important opportunity to better identify priorities and objectives for weed control in sites of significance and integrate biodiversity outcomes in overall monitoring programs. A future review of the ACT's Natural Resources Management Plan will also provide the opportunity of assessing the extent to which weed control activities carried out at a catchment level are helping to meet overall catchment objectives in the plan.

The outcomes of ongoing weed management will be an important component of the 2007 SoE Report. I will seek an update on these outcomes in my next annual report and on the revised ACT Weeds Strategy.

### **Recommendation 2003.9**

2003.9 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should extend existing policy and management plans to include extreme event scenarios

### Endorsed government response

AGREED—In the light of recent fire and drought events in particular, the ACT Government is paying particular attention to accommodating the implications of these events in policy and management planning. This includes active collaboration at a national level.

### Government action to 30 June 2006

The establishment of the Emergency Services Authority (ESA) under the *Emergencies Act 2004* provides a cohesive framework for the management of natural and manmade hazards. The revitalisation of the ACT Emergency Management Committee has provided a forum in which extreme event scenarios can be analysed and discussed with all the emergency services, support services and the community.

Key activities that improve the ability to manage extreme events are:

- the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, which details the strategies for managing the wildfire risk within the ACT
- the ACT Emergency Plan, which provides the structure by which a range of agencies both within and outside government prepare for and respond to emergencies
- the ACT Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Response Plan (*restricted circulation*) provides a detailed response plan for CBRN incidents
- the All Hazards Warning System, which is used to alert the community and responders to potential impacts of extreme hazards. This system has been used for a number of extreme weather events since its inception in November 2005
- the acquisition of a computer-based simulation system for exercising extreme event scenarios. This capability allows strategic management exercising with stimuli, which is both realistic and testing
- the revision of functional plans for health, recovery, animal health and public information further improves the ability to respond to extreme events.

The ACT is also actively engaged in national bodies to improve the capability of Australia to respond to extreme incidents. The ACT has been a key stakeholder in the national ‘Catastrophic Disasters Working Group’ under the auspices of the ACT Emergency Management Committee and is actively engaged in the formulation of the National Catastrophic Emergency Management Plan.

Through the management (and engagement) of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, the ACT is in the forefront of bushfire, community engagement, and education research. On a local level, the retention of a highly skilled and dedicated risk management team within the ESA allows for risk to be assessed at both a macro-scale and micro-scale. This information is shared across ACT Government and with regional emergency management partners.

#### Commissioner’s comments

*Implemented.* The protection of ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities, for current and future generations is behind this recommendation. The establishment of the ESA has resulted in planning for extreme events. In an ideal world I would review all plans—particularly environmental plans of management—in terms of such protection, but that is beyond the capabilities of my office at this stage, and would not be a first priority.

I note that concerns have been expressed about the ACT Government’s 2006–07 budget decision to place the ESA back under direct administration of the Department of Justice and Community Safety, following the ACT Government’s *Strategic and Functional Review of ACT Public Sector and Services* (the Costello Review). The independent ESA had been established in 2004–05 in response to a recommendation in the *Inquiry into the Operational Response to the January 2003 Bushfires in the ACT* (the McLeod Report). Gains have been made in the last two years to put in place systems to avoid a repetition of the 2003 emergency situation. The ACT Government must ensure the revised structure does not adversely affect in any way the ESA’s ability to respond to an emergency, either now or into the future.

**Recommendation 2003.10**

2003.10 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should adopt the six recommendations in the *ACT Greenhouse Strategy: 2002 Review of Performance and Options for the Future*, released in March 2003.

Endorsed government response

DISAGREE

On the 23 June 2004, Ms Tucker MLA and representative of the ACT Greens political party moved the following motion in the ACT Legislative Assembly:

*That this Assembly calls on the Government to:*

- (1) Reaffirm the Territory's commitment to meeting the Greenhouse Gas Reduction target of reducing net greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels by 2008, and reducing them by 20% by 2018; and to this end;*
- (2) Commit to:*
  - (a) introduce Greenhouse Benchmarks as a Retail Licence Condition for electricity retailers, in line with NSW;*
  - (b) introduce a no-interest, low-interest or CPI-interest only loan scheme to facilitate house owners increasing the energy efficiency of their properties, and installing solar water heating, with particular attention to landlords;*
  - (c) introduce an energy efficiency and water use rating system for commercial buildings, drawing on the best available Australian models;*
  - (d) develop a program to retrofit current public housing to four star energy ratings in the short term, aiming for five stars in the medium term;*
  - (e) introduce annual targets specifically for greenhouse emissions from transport in the ACT; and*
  - (f) establish an additional dedicated position within Environment ACT (or other appropriate agency) to drive implementation of government targets and timelines for government agency reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.*

This motion was passed, with the support of Mr Brendan Smyth MLA, Ms Vicki Dunne MLA, Mr Steve Pratt MLA, Mr Bill Stefaniak MLA, Mr Greg Cornwell MLA and Ms Jacqui Burke MLA from the ACT Liberal Party; Ms Roslyn Dundas MLA from the Australian Democrats Party; and Ms Helen Cross, an Independent member.

The government opposed the motion.

The government is currently considering the implications of this motion. The cost of implementation is estimated at \$114 million. The government is also concerned that the motion has no scientific basis and was passed with no community consultation and may have no community support.

Government action to 30 June 2006

On 13 March 2006, the ACT Government released *Avoid Abate Adapt*, which is a discussion paper for a new ACT climate change strategy, and *Reliable Responsible Renewable*, which is a discussion paper for an ACT energy policy. The discussion papers raised issues that will be of importance in developing the climate change strategy and energy policy, including the issue of greenhouse abatement targets. The release of the two papers was followed by a six-week consultation period, including a series of public

meetings on climate change and energy held in town centres, as well as special briefings for peak organisations. The government received 44 submissions on the two discussion papers, from businesses, peak organisations, academic and research institutions and the community, and is in the process of developing a draft climate change strategy and energy policy for further consultation. While this process is proceeding, programs under the current *ACT Greenhouse Strategy* are continuing, including the Home Energy Advice Team, Act Energy Wise and the ACT Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme.

#### Commissioner's comments

I will endeavour to report on this topic in the 2007 SoE Report in terms of how greenhouse gas emissions have changed over time and what has been done during the reporting period to reduce such emissions. This will include assessing progress in developing the climate change strategy and energy policy and any known effectiveness of the programs listed above.

#### Recommendation 2003.13

2003.13 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should implement programs aimed at reducing gaps in health outcomes for Aboriginal people

#### Endorsed government response

#### AGREE

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Forum, a joint forum with membership from Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, the ACT and Australian governments, is currently developing a new ACT health plan for 2004–08.

A three-year funding agreement has been negotiated and signed with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service (2004–05 to 2006–07), for the provision of an expanded Aboriginal Midwifery Access Service, a Hearing Health Program, a Dental Health Program, a Mental Health Liaison Service, a Dual Diagnosis Program, and a Youth Detoxification Support Service.

Refurbishment of the Narrabundah Health Centre has commenced to prepare for the relocation of Winnunga Nimmityjah from Ainslie to Narrabundah in late 2004.

A feasibility study is being undertaken into the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation service in the ACT, using national and international models of drug and alcohol rehabilitation to inform the process.

A Health Information Project has commenced, to address problems with the availability and quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health information and statistics in the ACT. The project will improve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit's ability to meet its national reporting obligations, and establish a repository for the ongoing collection of evidence to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy development.

#### Government action to 30 June 2006

The Aboriginal Midwifery Program provided support to approximately 60 mothers and babies in 2004–05, with a second midwife being employed in December 2004 to assist with the increasing workload and develop the postnatal care aspect of the service.

More than 200 clients were screened under the Hearing Program. Screening was conducted at five Koori preschools and at 33 ACT primary schools. Nineteen patients were referred to ACT Hearing for further support.

The Dental Health Program began operation in late 2005, having undertaken capital works during 2004–05 to establish and fit-out appropriate premises.

The mental health and substance abuse programs are operated by the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team, and involved 782 client contacts during 2004–05.

The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Family Wellbeing Plan for 2006–11* was finalised in January 2006. The plan is expected to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT by taking a family-centred and holistic approach. The plan aims to initiate coordinated cross-government action to address not only primary and acute health care, but also health issues relating to housing, education, justice, disability and aged care.

ACT Health's ongoing funding commitment to Winnunga Nimmityjah continued to help the Aboriginal Health Service meet the needs of its clients during 2005–06.

The feasibility study for a Bush Healing Farm in the ACT has been completed by ACT Health, and visits were made to a number of possible sites.

The Health Information Project was completed in March 2005, and identified a number of initiatives to improve the quality and availability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health data in the ACT. Legislation has been amended to enable data to be shared between health organisations for research purposes, and to promote the recording of Aboriginality on death certificates. A study into the feasibility of recording Aboriginality on pathology request forms is due to commence early in the new financial year.

A key strategy of the *ACT Health Cultural Respect Implementation Plan* is the introduction of Aboriginal health impact statements, which must now accompany all new strategies and policies presented to the portfolio executive for approval. A series of training seminars has been held to ensure the relevant ACT Health staff are aware of this requirement and able to comply.

#### Commissioner's comments

*Implemented.* I note that progress has been made against all of the actions identified in the ACT Government's endorsed response. The overall thrust of planning and provision for monitoring and reporting looks good.

As noted in my *Annual Report 2004–05*, I will report again on community health (including Indigenous health) in the 2007 SoE Report and follow up on further action for that report.

**Recommendation 2003.16**

2003.16 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should improve access to support services and provide dedicated acute care, day and long-stay accommodation for children and adolescents with a mental illness

Endorsed government response

AGREE

The *ACT Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan 2003–2008* outlines the need to investigate the accommodation and inpatient options for young people. The strategy focuses on improving the partnerships between the community and government sector, and planning effectively for the provision of these services.

Specific actions included in the plan relevant to this recommendation include:

- establishing a plan and feasibility study to assess the demand for inpatient services, including child and adolescent inpatient services
- enhancing coordination between inpatient and community-based mental health services
- establishing a peer support system for young people and their families experiencing their first admission in a mental health inpatient facility
- improving the awareness and understanding of mental health issues in accommodation providers
- collaboration with government and community agencies to ensure equitable access to supported accommodation for consumers with mental illness
- more active specialist mental health support for accommodation providers, where consumers with mental illness reside.

The ACT Government provided \$60,000 in the 2004–05 budget for a feasibility study into the provision of a child and adolescent inpatient unit. Funding of \$105,000 was also allocated in the *2002–03 Respite Care Budget Initiative for Carers of People with a Mental Illness*. This funding has now been made recurrent.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has a day program that caters for adolescents aged 12 to 18 years with moderate to severe mental illnesses. This program runs during school terms, and provides educational, group and individual therapy to all participants.

The Eating Disorders Unit also runs a part-time day program for young people suffering from an eating disorder. The program runs for three half days per week and includes group therapy and meal supervision.

Government action to 30 June 2006

The feasibility study for child and adolescent mental health services is complete, with the recommended option being a 20-bed youth facility that would include two separate wings to accommodate 12- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 25-year-olds. Once endorsed, the proposed model will require significant additional consultation and planning to prepare a full procurement feasibility and business plan for the unit for consideration by government. The procurement of a consultant to undertake the development of a Mental Health Services Plan is underway. This plan will address the range and format of mental health service provision for the ACT and address the infrastructure and resources required to support the service framework.



The Mental Health Services Plan will incorporate a new life-stage model, which will include services for children, youth, adults and older persons. The new model will allow for services based on readiness and milestones, in contrast to strict age eligibility. This will primarily benefit younger consumers, who will have more flexibility in care delivery as appropriate to their maturational needs.

The Mental Health Services Plan is due for completion by the end of 2006 and further development of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and supported accommodation will be addressed in line with the outcomes of the plan.

Mental Health ACT has also developed an education and training program to provide education and training within Mental Health ACT and to other agencies, including supported accommodation providers. Community mental health providers are invited to attend any sessions provided by the Mental Health ACT core education program at no cost, with the exception of information technology topics that incur a small fee.

A part-time psychologist is now located at the Psychiatric Services Inpatient Unit to provide additional support for young people and their families during their admission. Expanding the role of this position to include the development of an inpatient peer support model is currently being explored.

The Throsby Eating Disorders Program, Cottage Day Program, and the Children of Parents with Mental Illness program reported in previous years continue in accordance with their service descriptors. Similarly, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service continues to provide outreach to all areas of Canberra (including Gungahlin) through two regional teams in north and south Canberra.

Funding was provided for the feasibility study and the proposed Mental Health Services Plan. The other programs are largely ongoing and managed within existing resources.

#### Commissioner's comments

*Partly implemented.* I note that during 2005–06 the feasibility study referred to in my 2004–05 annual report has been completed but the implementation plan is yet to be done. The status of this recommendation therefore remains as it was in my annual report of 2004–05.

While other commendable provisions are now in place, provision of inpatient care for adolescents has not yet commenced, and this could be perceived by the public, and particularly those in need, as being too slow.

I will report again on community health (including mental health, particularly of different age groups) in the 2007 SoE Report, and I will follow up on further action for it.



**Recommendation 2003.17**

2003.17 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should implement *The Sustainable Transport Plan* ‘principles for managing change’ in *The Draft Canberra Spatial Plan* and manage parking to assist in achieving sustainable transport outcomes

Endorsed government response

AGREE

The ACT Government released *The Sustainable Transport Plan* (the Transport Plan) and funded priority projects in the 2004–05 budget.

The Transport Plan provides the direction and actions to maintain the high levels of accessibility of Canberra and, at the same time, achieve a shift towards a more sustainable transport system over the next 20 to 30 years. With the Transport Plan, Canberra will achieve a transport system that has lower overall costs—particularly lower greenhouse gas emissions, lower air pollution, reduced accidents and lower health costs—and more transport options for the community. The proposed transport system will also support the achievement of the economic and social goals for Canberra as outlined in the *Canberra Plan*. Key elements of the Transport Plan feature in the *Canberra Spatial Plan*, and complement the ACT Government’s *Sustainability Framework* and the *ACT Greenhouse Strategy*. The Transport Plan also helps deliver on the nationally adopted Charter for Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning.

The ACT Government has funded the priority initiatives under the Transport Plan in the 2004–05 budget. These initiatives include the identification of a preferred transit route from Belconnen to the City and the construction of the first stage, and design of further stages of a transit route from Gungahlin to the City.

These transit route projects will ultimately include initiatives such as a real time information system for Canberra’s public transport system and the development of new interchanges and stations on these routes.

The Transport Plan recognises the need to manage parking effectively to achieve its goals. The ACT Government has initiated a study of parking strategies and policies to provide recommendations about parking management policies. These parking management policies are one component of a series of interdependent implementation actions in the Transport Plan.

Other relevant components of Transport Plan include a proposal to encourage the use of low-emission vehicles and the purchase of low-emission vehicles for the ACT Government fleet.

Government action to 30 June 2006

Numbers of key priority projects identified in the Transport Plan were progressed during 2005–06. The following provides the summary of the implementation progress.

**Belconnen to City transit**

Belconnen to City transit corridor has high potential for bus patronage. The Transport Plan identified this as a key priority project. Funds were made available to undertake detailed planning for a transit between Belconnen and the City that provides fast, efficient and reliable public transport as a competitive alternative to use of cars. Community and agency consultations were undertaken since route proposals developed in 2005. After continuing consultation—including three public displays—a preliminary assessment report has been prepared as is consistent with Part 4, and in particular Schedule 3, of the *Land*

(*Planning and Environment*) Act 1991 for the ACT. The preliminary assessment report was lodged on 25 July 2006 and is available for public review until 18 August 2006.

#### Gungahlin to City bus priority Stage 1

Considering the growth in Gungahlin, the Transport Plan identified this project is to be synchronised with land development. A three-staged public transport corridor development is proposed. This Stage 1 development involves providing a bus lane at the congested part of Flemington Road. The construction of this first stage was completed in March 2006.

#### Gungahlin to City bus priority Stage 2

A feasibility study on bus priority along Northbourne Avenue was completed in November 2005.

#### Real Time Passenger Information System (RTPIS)

This system provides certainty of bus travel by providing accurate bus travel information together with providing bus priority at traffic lights. Feasibility, requirements specification, and tender documents have been completed. A full survey of electricity power sources adjacent to bus stops has also been completed to support this project. The process identified technical risks associated with the bus fleet's aging ticketing machines that could complicate implementation of the system. A pre-contract review of potential solutions identified an appropriate and cost-effective integration solution to work around this technical issue. The implementation of the RTPIS was deferred and will be considered in the 2006–07 budget.

#### Travel behaviour change projects

This project invites around 11,000 households to participate in the voluntary travel behaviour change project. The aim is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 74,000 tonnes over a five-year period. Steer Davies & Gleave was engaged to undertake the design and implementation of the project. Along with this major consultancy, a panel of five consultants have been engaged to provide expert advice on this project. The project is in progress and due for completion in September 2007.

In addition, a major employer who has around 7000 employees agreed to participate in a travel behaviour change project. Tenders have been called and are now being finalised to commence the project.

A new project targeting schools and commuters, for using alternative transport modes, was initiated in association with the Australian Greenhouse Office in the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage. Funding agreement has been reached and the project is in progress, targeting around 28 schools (in total) and 6000 commuters.

#### Cycling and walking infrastructure network improvements

In 2004, the *Ten Year Master Plan* was completed to achieve an integrated walking and cycling path network. Implementation of this master plan commenced since 2004–05. During 2005–06, a further \$500,000 was allocated for cycle path improvement, and additional funds of \$700,000 were allocated for sustainable transport initiatives in relation to walking and cycling. On-road cycle lanes have been completed on Flemington Road.

### Bus interchange upgrades and bus system improvements in Belconnen

The Belconnen Town Centre Public Transport and Planning Study is underway. The study proposes public transport improvements that include:

- the extension of Cohen Street, including dedicated bus lanes
- construction of three new bus stations replacing the existing single bus interchange
- construction of a bus lounge facility to be integrated with proposed commercial development.

### Demand-responsive feeder services

Booz Allen Hamilton has completed an initial feasibility study of demand-responsive feeder services using small vehicles. ACTION has since introduced new demand-responsive evening services.

### Bike racks on buses

The 2004–05 budget provided funding of \$345,000 for the trial and installation of bike racks on ACTION buses. The trial is an important initiative under the Transport Plan to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport to work. Bike riders and bus users can now combine their travel with ACTION's bike racks on buses, launched on 17 November 2005. The bike racks have been fitted to ACTION buses servicing the Intertown bus route 300 series. The Intertown route provides a high frequency service between Canberra's four main town centres. Between 17 November 2005 to 14 May 2006, ACTION recorded 622 bike rack users. The initiatives and activities identified in the ACT Government's update demonstrate progress in implementing this recommendation.

#### Commissioner's comments

*Partly implemented.* As I noted last year, this is a lengthy and challenging project. Much of the implementation during 2005–06 continued to involve planning and feasibility studies. The trial of bike racks on buses was perhaps the most visible change for members of the community. I have therefore not changed my assessment from last year. I will report again on transport (including progress towards more sustainable transport) in the 2007 SoE Report. I will also follow up on further action for my next annual report, particularly in the context of budgetary constraints and implications for programs and staffing.

#### **Recommendation 2003.18**

2003.18 In consultation with the Commissioner for the Environment, the ACT Government should develop data records for 'Community participation' and 'Heritage' that meet needs for reporting purposes, including State of the Environment and State of Heritage reports

#### Endorsed government response

AGREE

The ACT Governments recently released the sustainability report *Measuring Our Progress – Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*. This report used 29 headline and 50 supplementary indicators to measure progress towards sustainability. Indicators on volunteering, participation in cultural events, participation in physical activity and contact with family and friends were included in this report.

The data for these indicators was sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and provided a baseline from which to measure community participation in the ACT. As future reports are prepared, there may be scope to conduct more detailed research into community participation with regard to people with disabilities and the Indigenous community.

Government action to 30 June 2006

#### Community participation

The purpose of developing data records is to ensure that accurate and relevant information is provided to assist the decision-making process. The ACT sustainability report, *Measuring Our Progress—Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, which was first released in 2004, established data records for key indicators of community participation and heritage as part of a suite of sustainability indicators. Future sustainability reports will allow for trends in these data to be established. The ACT Government's original response to this recommendation noted that 'as future reports are prepared there may be scope to conduct more detailed research into community participation with regards to people with disabilities and the Indigenous community'. The scope to conduct this research in future reports still remains, but is dependent on resource availability. The basis for making decisions and monitoring progress in these priority areas under the *Canberra Social Plan* is accurate and relevant information provided through data records. The plan states that the ACT sustainability report 'will allow measurement of the influence of the *Social Plan*' (p. 66). Other data records are maintained by the areas within the ACT Government who are responsible for implementation of particular initiatives under the plan.

#### Heritage

During 2005–06, progress continued in implementing the *Heritage Act 2004* and enhancing systems and data records. Improvements to the *ACT Heritage Register Online* provide for an enhanced search capacity and greater accuracy and scope of data available to decision-makers and the public. During 2005–06, two out of eight conservation management plans prepared by external consultants for places entered in the ACT Heritage Register were submitted to the Heritage Council for endorsement. The Heritage Unit also identified all known conservation management plans for places of heritage significance in the ACT. This list will be updated annually and will improve the ability to report on heritage conservation matters. The Heritage Unit is also working closely with the range of ACT Government owners of heritage assets to audit their holdings, nominate places of heritage significance to the ACT Heritage Register and set up a system for annual reporting on heritage issues from 2006–07 as required under the Act. This data will be available for future reporting.

#### Commissioner's comments

*Ongoing but no further annual report update required.* This was a lower priority recommendation that needed to be addressed between my office and the Office of Sustainability and the (then) Arts, Heritage and Environment.

Some work was done on it during 2004–05, and conversations continued into 2005–06, but other priorities overtook further development as the year progressed. Despite that, the changes that have occurred in relation to heritage legislation, heritage management and data systems look promising for an improved approach to the Heritage indicator for the 2007 SoE Report. I will address this matter with the relevant areas during 2006–07 as part of preparation of the 2007 SoE Report. There will be no need to report on this recommendation in future annual reports.

## **B.2 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

During 2005–06, staff in this office undertook no formal training in relation to human rights principles. In its role as environmental ombudsman, our office embraces the principle of human rights in that people who have complaints that have not been adequately resolved by other agencies may approach the Commissioner in an effort to resolve the matter.

This office has not been required to scrutinise any proposed legislation directly affecting this office's functions.

There has been no audit or any notification of an audit to ensure the compatibility of the Commissioner for the Environment legislation with the *Human Rights Act 2004*. The legislation creating the functions of the Commissioner for the Environment is likely to be compatible with the human rights legislation if our act was audited.

## **B.3 ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment is accessible to people with a disability, and facilities for the disabled are provided.

The website for this office is structured so that a text-only version for all html pages is automatically created by the content management system currently in use by this office. This can be accessed from a single click on the webpage. All html pages meet basic accessibility guidelines. Most downloadable pdf documents are also published as html, which allows the text-only version to be accessed.

## **B.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This office did not need to undertake any formal community consultation during 2005–06.

## **B.5 MULTICULTURAL FRAMEWORK**

This office is covered by the Chief Minister's Department annual report.

## **B.6 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPORTING**

This office is covered by the Chief Minister's Department annual report.

**B.7 ACT WOMEN'S PLAN**

In a small office with reporting functions as our output, one mechanism for contributing towards the ACT Women's Plan is to cover aspects of its objectives in the 'Human settlements' theme of the ACT state of the environment reports. Each objective in the ACT Women's Plan would be considered in the writing of the state of the environment report under the indicators shown below.

Objective one: Representation and recognition—'Community participation' indicator

Objective two: Good health and wellbeing—'Community health' indicator

Objective three: Responsive housing—'Housing' indicator

Objective four: Safe, inclusive communities—'Safety' indicator

Objective five: Economic security and opportunities—'Socio-economic equity' indicator

Objective six: Flexible education and training—'Education' indicator

## PART C: MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION

### C.1 MANAGING OUR PEOPLE

#### C.1.1 HR performance

Two full-time, permanent public servants support the functions of the part-time Commissioner. Human resource management and workforce planning options are severely limited in an office of this size that also has limited financial resources. Additional short-term staff are appointed, as funds allow, to help the office deliver key outputs at an appropriate standard, but deadlines are often missed because of inadequate resources.

The continual use of short-term staff is not cost-effective and is an inefficient long-term method of operation for recurring outputs such as state of the environment reports. Each new, short-term person requires training, time is lost while they establish appropriate networks, they frequently leave before the end of their contract to take up permanent jobs thus creating further delays, and the office loses their experience. The time required to train and supervise short-term staff also diverts permanent staff resources from meeting other responsibilities.

The substantial difficulties of this office in balancing the workforce to meet its reporting requirements (both legal and contractual) has been a major issue throughout its lifetime. This has been consistently noted in earlier annual reports.

#### C 1.2 Staffing profile

The staffing and age profiles are shown in tables 3 and 4 below. The average length of service for staff in the office is 5.46 years (all female).

**Table 3: Staffing profile**

Classification	Employment Status	Employed Under	Category of Employment	Gender
Environment Commissioner	Part-time Statutory Office Holder	s. 4(1) <i>Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993</i>	Disallowable instrument	F
SOG B	1 full-time	<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	Permanent	F
PO2	1 full-time	<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	Temporary	F
ASO5	1 full-time	<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	Permanent	F

**Table 4: Age profile**

Gender	35–39	45–49	55–59	Total
Female	1	1	2	4
Total	1	1	2	4

### **C.1.3 Culture and values**

As an investigating agency, the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment must always adhere to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. These standards are reflected in our statement of culture and values in our corporate plan. Further information on our culture and values is provided in Section A1—‘Mission and values’, and ‘Organisational environment’ (page 1). To achieve objectivity in an ethical manner and with a high level of integrity in both our reports and investigations, staff also adhere to the appropriate standards required of ACT public servants.

There are no formal processes in place within this office to receive and handle allegations of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct. If such an instance were to occur, we would be guided by the ACT Public Service Code of Ethics.

### **C.1.4 Workplace diversity**

This office is covered by the Chief Minister’s Department annual report.

### **C.1.5 Workplace health and safety**

This office is covered by the Chief Minister’s Department annual report for policy purposes. No accidents or dangerous occurrences that required the giving of notices under section 204 of the OH&S Act occurred in this office. No investigations were conducted during the year and no formal injury prevention programs were initiated or implemented during the year.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment does not pay a first tier worker’s compensation premium. For this matter we are a subsidiary of the Chief Minister’s Department.

### **C.1.6 Learning and development**

This office has no formal learning and development plan in place. Learning and development activities are undertaken in response to specific needs of the office and its staff. The corporate plan addresses the learning and development needs of office staff. This is monitored as part of review and planning for the office.

The majority of staff development undertaken in 2005–06 was in attendance at statistics-based courses and seminars aimed at professional development. The Commissioner made a presentation to *Take the Lead* program participants. No other staff were involved in this or other graduate programs.

### **C.1.7 Workplace relations**

No staff in this office are covered by Australian Workplace Agreements or Special Employment Arrangements.



## **C.2 GOVERNANCE**

### **C.2.1 Internal accountability**

As Commissioner for the Environment, I head a small team. I am responsible for the functions of the office, both legislative and contractual, which are to:

- produce state of the environment reports for the ACT
- investigate complaints from the community regarding the management of the environment by the ACT Government or its agencies
- conduct investigations as directed by the relevant Minister
- initiate investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT
- make recommendations for consideration by government and include in our annual report the outcomes of those recommendations
- produce state of the environment reports for the seventeen member councils and a regional synthesis on behalf of the Regional Leaders Forum.

At 30 June 2006, the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment staff comprised a part-time Commissioner, two full-time permanent staff, and one full-time temporary staff (see staffing profile in section C1.2 on page 33).

Remuneration for the Commissioner is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

There are no senior management or other significant committees within this agency.

### **C.2.2 Fraud prevention**

No risk assessments were conducted. This office is covered by fraud control plans of the Chief Minister's Department. No fraud awareness training was conducted.

There were no reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received in this office, and consequently no investigations.

### **C.2.3 Risk management and internal audit**

This office is covered under the Chief Minister's Department annual report.

### **C.2.4 External scrutiny**

This office has not been notified of any external scrutiny of it during 2005–06.

## C.2.5 Reports required by legislation

### Freedom of Information

#### Section 7 statement

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment was created under the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993*.

The two main functions of the office are investigations and state of the environment reporting. The Commissioner can make recommendations to the ACT Government, but has no power to enforce those recommendations.

This office has extensively used, and continues to seek, people with relevant expertise in supporting the state of the environment reporting process.

Members of the public can make a complaint to the Commissioner if they have a grievance about the way the ACT Government and its agencies are managing the ACT environment, which has been unresolved through other channels.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment produces state of the environment reports. The 1994 edition is available in printed form only. The 1995 edition is out of print. The 1997 and 2000 reports are produced in full on CD-ROM only and can be obtained from this office or sent by post. Executive summaries in print form for the 1997, 2000 and for 2003 ACT SoE reports are also available from this office. Available on our website are the executive summary of the 1997 and 2000 state of the environment reports in full (except for the 'live' maps), and the 2003 SoE Report in full (except for the maps). The 2003 SoE Report for the ACT will be produced in CD-ROM format as part of the 2004 Regional SoE Report, which is due for completion in early 2006–07. The full regional report will subsequently be available on our website.

We have produced a number of investigation reports. All are available from our office, and several from our website. Annual reports are available for each financial year since the inception of the office. The reports since 2000–01 are also available on our website.

All reports are available by phoning our office, and can be posted. Our office is located at Level 6, 220 Northbourne Avenue Braddon; it can be reached by public transport and is wheelchair accessible.

#### Section 8 statement

The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* provides detailed specifications for the conduct of investigations. These form the basis of our operational procedures.

#### Section 79 statement

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment did not receive any Freedom of Information requests in 2005–06.

**Public interest disclosure**

This office is covered by the Chief Minister's Department for the purposes of policies relating to the public interest disclosure. During 2005–06 no public interest disclosures related to the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment were lodged.

**Territory records**

This office had insufficient resources available to complete the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002* during 2005–06. In 2006–07 the office will be considering ways in which to comply with these requirements within the limit of its resources.

**C.3 SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT****C.3.1 Commissioner for the Environment**

Not applicable; I am the Commissioner for the Environment.

**C.3.2 Ecologically sustainable development**

One of the legislated functions of this office is to produce state of the environment reports for the ACT. One report is produced in the life of each ACT Legislative Assembly. The last two reports have provided an assessment of progress towards sustainability to the ACT Government.

Since 1997, all state of the environment reports have been published on CD-ROM and the Internet, with a minimal amount of hard copies of the executive summary produced for tabling and access purposes. We have also adopted this principle for our annual reports.

Our staff enthusiastically embrace initiatives that involve working in an ecologically sustainable way. Since dispensing with the use of the office car in August 2004, we walk, cycle, catch a bus or a taxi to meetings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping to achieve targets set in the *Sustainable Transport Plan*. As an added benefit, this measure has achieved a financial saving to the office. Our staff take home green waste and other recyclable material to reduce the amount of waste to landfill. Our office has a paper recycling bin. We turn off unnecessary lights, use electronic messaging, recycle paper, turn off our computers at night, and ensure that power saving modes are utilised on equipment.

**C.3.3 Strategic Bushfire Management Plan**

This agency does not manage or own any Territory land and is therefore not required to report on its operations in relation to the strategic bushfire management plan or the bushfire operational plans.

## **PART D: ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

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### **D.1.1 Management discussion and analysis**

The budget allocation of the Commissioner for the Environment for 2005–06 was \$406,000. This figure was revised down from an original budget allocation of \$469,000. The reduced amount for the year allowed funding for the ACT state of the environment report to be spread across the life of the report (four years) rather than a two-year period. As I have noted in previous annual reports, the funding that the office receives to cover basic administrative costs puts considerable strain on our budget.

### **D.1.2 Financial report**

The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* does not establish the Commissioner for the Environment as a body corporate. Therefore the financial reporting provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1996* that apply to ACT corporations do not apply to the Commissioner for the Environment. Expenses for this office are reported as a part of the Expenses on Behalf of the Territory in the Chief Minister's Department annual report.

### **D.1.3 Statement of performance**

The statement of performance for the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment is included as an Expense on behalf of the Territory in the Chief Minister's Department annual report.

## **D.2 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT**

This office does not own any assets.

## **D.3 CAPITAL WORKS**

This office has no capital works projects.

## **D.4 GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING**

During 2005–06, the office moved towards completion of the Regional SoE Report. Contractors were employed using funds received from councils in the region. No cost was incurred by the ACT Government for these contracts.

One small contract was let by this office for publishing support.

This office has no overdue debts attracting interest.

## **APPENDIX**

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### **1. LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

This office is responsible for administering the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993*.

### **2. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE INQUIRIES AND REPORTS**

This office was not the subject of any legislative assembly committee enquiries or reports in 2005–06.

## GLOSSARY, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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Australian Capital Region	<p>For the 2000 and earlier reports, the Australian Capital Region included ACT, the City Councils for Goulburn and Queanbeyan, and the Councils for the Shires of Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma-Monaro, Crookwell, Eurobodalla, Gunning, Harden, Mulwaree, Snowy River, Tallaganda, Tumut, Yarrowlunla, Yass and Young.</p> <p>For the 2004 report, three new councils have joined the Australian Capital Region, and several of the original shires have been amalgamated by the New South Wales Government. The Australian Capital Region now includes the ACT and the councils of: Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma-Monaro, Cootamundra, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Gundagai, Harden, Snowy River, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young.</p>
ACTPLA	the ACT Planning and Land Authority
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear [Response Plan]
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
ESA	Emergency Services Authority
HR	Human resources
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
PM2.5	Airborne particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter
RTPIS	Real Time Passenger Information System
SoE	State of the environment
SOG	Senior Officer Grade
UV	Ultraviolet

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## **OUR VISION**

A society with the will to achieve a sustainable high quality environment for all

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