

**Commissioner for the Environment
Australian Capital Territory**

Annual Report 2006–07



Contact Officer
Ms Pauline Carder
Acting Manager
Office of the Commissioner for the
Environment
Email: pauline.carder@act.gov.au
Government implementation of
recommendations made by the
Commissioner for the
Environment can be traced through
previous annual reports, which are
available from the Office of the
Commissioner for the
Environment, PO Box 356,
Dickson ACT 2602.
Telephone: 02 6207 2626
Fax: 02 6207 2630
Email: envcomm@act.gov.au
Website:
<http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au>

©Australian Capital Territory,
Canberra 2007
ISSN 1322-8056
This work is copyright. It may be
reproduced in part or whole for
study or training purposes subject
to an inclusion of an
acknowledgment of the source and
no commercial usage or sale.
Reproduction for purposes other
than those listed above requires the
written permission of the Office of
the Commissioner for the
Environment, PO Box 356
Dickson ACT 2602.

TRANSMITTAL CERTIFICATE



Mr Jon Stanhope
Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change
ACT Legislative Assembly
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

This Report has been prepared under section 6(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 2006 to 30 June 2007 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 2, Part 2.4.

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,



Darro Stinson
Commissioner for the Environment
9 August 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSMITTAL CERTIFICATE	I
SECTION A: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORTING	1
A.1 The organisation	1
A.2 Overview	2
A.3 Highlights	4
A.4 Outlook	4
A.5 Management discussion analysis	5
A.6 Fraud prevention	5
A.7 Risk management and internal audit	5
A.8 Internal accountability	5
A.9 Financial reporting	6
A.10 Statement of performance	6
A.11 Analysis of agency performance.....	6
A.12 HR performance.....	17
A.13 Staffing profile	17
A.14 Workplace health and safety.....	17
A.15 Learning and development	17
A.16 Workplace relations	18
A.17 Strategic asset management	18
A.18 Capital works.....	18
A.19 Government contracting.....	18
A.20 Community grants/assistance/sponsorships	18
A.21 Territory records.....	18
PART B: CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY REPORTING	19
B.1 Community engagement.....	19
B.2 Internal and external scrutiny.....	19
B.3 Legislative Assembly committee inquiries and reports	19
B.4 Legislative report.....	19
PART C: MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION	20
C.1 Strategic Bushfire Management Plan	20
C.2 Public interest disclosure	20
C.3 Freedom of information.....	20
C.4 Human rights act.....	21
C.5 Commissioner for the Environment.....	21
C.6 ACT multicultural framework.....	21
C.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting	21
C.8 Ecologically sustainable development	22
C.9 Act Women’s Plan.....	22
GLOSSARY, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	23
INDEX	24
COMPLIANCE INDEX	27

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Complaints and inquiries received by the Commissioner 2006–07	7
Table 2: Summary of progress on implementation of recommendations from the ACT 2003 SoE.....	9
Table 3: Staffing profile	17

SECTION A: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORTING

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, this Office aims 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*.

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. These values 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, Water and Climate Change
 - 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

The Office for the Commissioner for the Environment (the Office) continued to meet its legal and other functions during the year. A number of challenges were presented, specifically the departure of a senior staff member in August 2006 and the resignation of the previous Commissioner in December 2006. An interim Commissioner was appointed in May 2007. These departures and the time taken to fill the Commissioner's position delayed commencement of the *2007 ACT State of the Environment Report* for the reporting period ending 30 June 2007.

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 that delivers our statutory accountabilities as well as other responsibilities. Regular planning meetings are held to review overall priorities in light of available resources. For major projects, such as the preparation of a state of the environment report, a project timeline is developed and regularly monitored to track progress.

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 employees 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.

The role of the Commissioner and the Office must 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 responsibilities. 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*
- inquiries and complaints lodged with my Office
- government documents released for public comment.

These interactions were predominantly with officers in the Environment and Recreation Network of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) 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, this Office is supported by a major agency—TAMS—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 A and C of this report.

Significant organisational change and/or revision to administrative arrangements

There were two administrative arrangement changes during the year. In July 2006, reporting functions for the Office were transferred from the Chief Minister's Department to TAMS, with Minister Hargreaves taking on the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment. On 17 April 2007 Chief Minister Jon Stanhope

became Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change and therefore the Minister to whom the Commissioner for the Environment reports.

The Manager, Dr Helen Sims, went on extended leave in August 2006; Commissioner Dr Rosemary Purdie resigned in December 2006; and Project Officer Tania Laity left in February 2007 to take up a position in the Commonwealth Government.

Role in administration of legislation or other regulatory activities

The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* is the enabling legislation. The Office administers no other legislation and, as Commissioner, I have no regulatory activities.

A.3 HIGHLIGHTS

This past year has been one of organisational change and uncertainty in a number of areas. Dr Helen Sims, Manager of the Office since 1993, was on leave from August 2006 until she left in June 2007. The Commissioner, Dr Rosemary Purdie, resigned in December 2006. Clearly this has left an enormous gap in terms of corporate knowledge and expertise for such a small organisation.

The implementation of recommendations of the functional review created TAMS, which is now providing corporate support to this Office. This resulted in Mr John Hargreaves becoming our Minister for nine months. A further change of administrative arrangements in April 2007 resulted in Mr. Jon Stanhope becoming the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change and consequently our Minister.

Mr. Darro Stinson was appointed Commissioner towards the end of the reporting period in May 2007.

The New South Wales (NSW) Government initiated a review of their planning and reporting processes, which is expected to impact on regional state of the environment reporting. The results of this review are not yet known, but continue to leave local councils in a state of uncertainty concerning the long-term future of regional reporting.

Through this year of change, the *2004 State of the Environment Report – Australian Capital Region (2004 Regional SoE Report)* continued to occupy this Office until the report was published in December 2006. Since that time, there has been increasing interest by councils in the content and processes for the next report. This Office continues to be committed to providing expertise and organisation of the upcoming 2008 report.

A.4 OUTLOOK

This will be a challenging year for this Office, with a review being completed and presented for consideration late in 2007. It is anticipated there will be increased responsibilities for this Office, resulting in the appointment of a full-time Commissioner and provision of additional resources to carry out an expanded role. Our priorities are to finalise the roles and responsibilities of the Office pending the outcome of the review, complete staffing of key positions, finish the *ACT 2007 State of the Environment Report*, initiate the 2008 regional report and continue to fulfil other statutory responsibilities. Staffing of key positions in this Office will be a priority; this is essential to deliver the required outcomes for the coming reporting period.

The staffing issues facing this Office are expected to delay the completion of the *ACT 2007 State of the Environment Report*; however, the report will be completed during the 2007–08 financial year.

Although the NSW guidelines for state of the environment reporting have yet to be finalised, this Office will initiate gathering of relevant information from councils to facilitate the timely completion of their reports.

A.5 MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION ANALYSIS

The budget allocation of the Commissioner for the Environment for 2006–07 was \$435,000. Due to the late start to the *ACT 2007 State of the Environment Report*, not all funds allocated in that financial year for its production were expended and have been rolled over into 2007–08. As has been noted in previous annual reports, the funding that the Office receives to cover basic administrative costs puts considerable strain on our budget.

A.6 FRAUD PREVENTION

No risk assessments were conducted. This Office is covered by fraud control plans of TAMS. No fraud awareness training was conducted. There were no reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received in this Office, and consequently no investigations.

A.7 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL AUDIT

This Office is covered under the TAMS annual report.

A.8 INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment consists of a small team. The Commissioner, Mr Darro Stinson, is responsible for the functions of this 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 2007, the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment staff comprised a part-time Commissioner and two full-time permanent staff. (See section 'A.13 Staffing profile' on page 17).

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

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

A.9 FINANCIAL REPORTING

The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* does not establish the Commissioner for the Environment as a body corporate. Consequently the financial reporting provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1996* that apply to ACT corporations do not apply to the Commissioner for the Environment. All expenses for this Office are reported in the TAMS annual report as a part of the Expenses on Behalf of the Territory.

A.10 STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The statement of performance for the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment is included in the TAMS annual report as an Expense on Behalf of the Territory.

A.11 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 that were received but 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 the previous annual report, preparation of the *2004 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 NSW Government Boundaries Commission. This report has been finalised and ongoing discussions with councils are expected in the coming year for their 2008 state of the environment reports.

Detailed planning and preliminary work for the *ACT 2007 State of the Environment Report*, scheduled for the second half of the financial year, was delayed because of the delayed appointment of the Commissioner and Office staffing issues. Since that time, all agency heads have been contacted and data are being prepared for analysis.

Key result area—investigations

Section 12(1)(a) (Investigations arising from complaints)

No new investigations commenced during 2006–07. My Office continued to act as facilitator for inquirers and people who rang 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 the Office received during the year is shown in Table 1. This is a much larger number than usual. It is thought to be mostly due to changes in listings in the White Pages that resulted in this Office being the only government contact point with the word ‘environment’ in its title. It may also indicate a growing concern within the community with respect to environmental issues in the ACT.

Table 1: Complaints and inquiries received by the Commissioner 2006–07

Formal complaints	3
Formal complaints on hand at the end of the previous financial year	2
Matter resolved without formal investigation	2
Formal complaints received during the financial year	1
Matter resolved without formal investigation	1
Decision to investigate pending at end of financial year	0
Resolution still pending	0
Inquiries and potential complaints received	98
Inquirer directed to appropriate contact	78
Action facilitated by the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment	20
Matter resolved	20
Resolution still pending	0

Complaints on hand at 1 July 2006: 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 that had been released for public comment. A second complaint was received in early July. Resolution of this matter is treated under the heading ‘Formal complaints’.

Complaints on hand at 1 July 2006: Preservation of Magnolia tree in central Woden

The *Annual Report 2005–06* noted that, after liaison with representatives of the developer’s project manager and an officer from ACTPLA, resolution of this matter seemed probable. Liaison continued until February 2007, when this Office was advised that a design solution had been reached that would meet the needs of all the parties involved.

Formal complaints

July 2006: A second complaint about the ACT Government’s dragway proposal was received in July 2006.

Detailed research of the proposal and the status of the draft Environment Protection Policy ensued, as well as liaison with the complainant groups and officers in the Environment Protection Authority. In August, the Commissioner, Dr Purdie, wrote to the Chief Executive Officer of TAMS outlining two areas of general concern and seven specific issues that she felt needed to be addressed before any further action was taken in relation to the dragway.

The matter went into abeyance until December 2006 when the ACT Government announced that it had considered a report on the environmental and financial viability of the proposed dragway in Majura Valley. The report raised significant concerns and concluded the project was not feasible. This announcement from the ACT Government meant that no further action was necessary by this Office.

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 urban and commercial noise
- industrial and urban pollution
- protection of threatened ecological communities

The 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 TAMS, ACTPLA and other relevant sections of the ACT Government. Interstate matters were referred to the relevant regional councils or appropriate state government agencies.

Section 12(1)(b) (Minister-directed investigations)

There were no directions from the Minister for the Environment during 2006–07 to conduct an investigation. There were no such investigations pending completion at 1 July 2006.

Section 12(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 1 July 2006.

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

Drought has continued during 2006–07. Some of the impacts on the environment of continuing drought are reported in the following section dealing with implementation of recovery programs for areas affected by the January 2003 fires. Stage 3 water restrictions came into force in December 2006, and the likelihood of Stage 4 restrictions before the end of the financial year became a distinct possibility. They were delayed for the time being by rain in May and June. Unless the catchments receive good rainfalls in the near future, ACTEW has indicated further restrictions will be introduced later in 2007.

Progress on implementation of recommendations from state of the environment reports

For this 2006–07 report, I sought updates on three remaining recommendations from the *2003 ACT State of the Environment Report* (the *ACT 2003 SoE*).

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

Recommendation	Summary of topic	Summary of progress on implementation
2003.6	Implement post-fire works and management program	Ongoing, but no further annual report update required—to be followed up in the <i>2007 ACT State of the Environment Report</i>
2003.7	Effectiveness of pest plant control programs for control, biodiversity conservation and catchment management	Ongoing, but no further annual report update required—the new draft weed strategy is going out for public consultation in July 2007
2003.17	Implement the Sustainable Transport Plan 'principles for managing change' to assist sustainable transport outcomes	Partly implemented—to be reported under 'Transport' in the <i>2007 ACT State of the Environment Report</i>

Codes for assessment of government progress

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

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)

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 ACT State of the Environment Report*.

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 2007

Lower Cotter Catchment

Public submissions to the *Lower Cotter Catchment Draft Strategic Management Plan* closed at the end of July 2006, with 15 submissions having been received.

While the public submissions resulted in some changes to the final draft *Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan*, the overall intent and strategies for the management of the Lower Cotter Catchment have not altered from the first draft; that is, to protect the existing and future water supply, natural and cultural heritage, conservation and recreational use. The final draft *Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan* is ready for consideration by the ACT Government. In the intervening time, a series of implementation plans for management of the lower catchment have been developed and are being actively implemented.

Governance and cooperative arrangements between the various ACT Government agencies and ACTEW have been working smoothly in general. The key driver of implementation is the Lower Cotter Catchment Management Group, comprising a core of Parks, Conservation and Lands and ACTEW staff, with input from Emergency Services Agency/Rural Fire Services and others as required for specific issues.

Soil erosion control works have continued, funded mainly by ACTEW, and focusing on the construction of sediment dams and rock gabions in gullies to prevent sediment entry into watercourses. A series of trials to halt erosion at the source were implemented with promising results. These trials will be extended in 2007–08 if they prove successful. Soil erosion control has also been assisted by upgrading of roads required for management purposes. This has been completed, although ongoing maintenance and refinements are continuing. This work was carried out by ACTEW and involved a variety of works designed to improve drainage and minimise sediment movement into watercourses.

A major ACTEW-funded program to close and rehabilitate unwanted roads is well underway. In 2006, approximately 37 kilometres of non-required roads were made inaccessible to vehicles and erosion control structures were installed. The majority of these roads will be left to regenerate naturally but will be monitored to identify whether revegetation or other intervention is required.

Two major revegetation programs were undertaken in 2006–07. In spring 2006, contractors planted around 130,000 native seedlings over an area of approximately 250 hectares. Survival rates were low due to the dry summer, and so most of the area planted will require refill in spring 2007. In addition, a large community-based project with Greening Australia commenced and has so far planted 1000 native species over 25 hectares in strategically important riparian areas of the Lower Cotter Catchment. Survival rates for these plantings are not yet known but, judging by past experiences and good early winter rains in 2006, are likely to be very high. Some 900 community volunteers have been involved in the plantings.

Weed control was undertaken over a substantial area of the Lower Cotter Catchment in 2006. Pine wildings were removed from around 1500 hectares of land, which represents over 50 per cent of the area that requires treatment for pine wildings. Blackberry were killed by spot spraying on 150 hectares of land; this was mainly in areas that have not recovered well from previous disturbance and require intervention in the form of revegetation.

Recovery of the Upper Cotter Catchment forests and ecosystems

The key findings from the monitoring of post-fire recovery in the upper catchment this year included:

- the recovery in the natural native areas of the forested regions since 2003 continues to be vigorous and strong; in particular, the large and small shrubs have recovered well
- there remain a number of areas where the ground cover is still very sparse and the amount of skeletal soil and exposed rock remains high
- there still remains a large proportion of the vegetation species (estimated to be around 40 per cent) that have not yet set seed or have flowered. This indicates that any further disturbance (such as another bushfire or even prescribed burning) would reduce the number of these species in the environment
- the recovery of the fire-sensitive Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) community continues to be strong with abundant numbers of seedlings in a number of areas up to two metres high
- the impacts of the 2003 fires are compounded by the ongoing drought.

Restoration of Alpine Bogs

Most of the major restoration works in the bogs has been completed, and the results are encouraging. Monitoring of recovery will be ongoing over the next few years. So far the recovery of the bogs is showing good evidence that remedial works have restored the ecological functioning of many of the pool/moss systems and underlying peat. Experiments to determine the enhancement effect of shading (using shade cloth) and slow release native-plant fertilisers are winding up. Work over the next few years will concentrate on maintaining the remedial structures that have been put in place (straw bale and coir logs to dam and spread water), minimising any weed incursions, and controlling feral animals (mainly pigs).

Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River valleys

A number of sites are in place along the Murrumbidgee River corridor to monitor post-fire recovery.

Aquatic habitats

Following the severe bushfires of January 2003, aquatic survey work in ACT and regional streams revealed that fish populations had been severely affected. Sampling three months after the fire

revealed that numbers of the threatened Two-spined Blackfish had declined by almost 70 per cent. Surveys in early 2004 indicated that numbers of the Two-spined Blackfish were recovering strongly at some sites, although the prolonged drought continued to stress aquatic communities. The endangered Macquarie Perch was also able to breed successfully in the Cotter River following the release of a modified environmental flow regime.

Surveys in 2006–07 have revealed that the recovery of threatened fish species is continuing, although there are signs that the drought is continuing to be a stress factor. Comparisons between Two-spined Blackfish data from 2005 and 2007 show that throughout the majority of the sites sampled, there was little difference in numbers captured and observed between the two years. There were a couple of exceptions where, at one site, populations had increased and at another, they had decreased. The decline in numbers at the latter site is a direct effect of the drought as there were only very small, patchy pools remaining with no flow.

The recovery of Macquarie Perch populations in the Cotter River is continuing under a drought-modified environmental flow regime. Aided by a fish ladder, Macquarie Perch have spawned above Vanities Crossing for the first time. This is a significant change in monitoring results from previous years. Research and monitoring relating to environmental flows and impacts on threatened fish species and large biota will continue into 2008.

Commissioner's comments

Ongoing but no further annual report update required. The Commissioner's comments last year expressed concern about erosion and the future landuse in the Lower Cotter Catchment. I am pleased to see that the proposed landuse change has been adopted in the final draft *Lower Cotter Strategic Management Plan* and that, although that plan has still not been formally approved, actions to avert further erosion during the year have been based on the change.

The recovery in the Upper Cotter Catchment, the Alpine Bogs and aquatic habitats is encouraging, but I note there are areas where recovery is still not strong and where particular species have not recovered and are particularly susceptible to further disturbance and drought.

I will be reporting in detail in the *2007 ACT State of the Environment Report* on this focal aspect of environmental management in the ACT in the context of continuing drought and hazard reduction burning.

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 during 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 2007

As a result of recommendations from the Flora and Fauna Committee, in 2004 the Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit in Environment ACT prepared a list of sites containing endangered ecological communities, threatened species or uncommon species, together with a list of the weeds that pose critical threats to the values at those sites. These sites occur both on-reserve and off-reserve. This list is updated annually for the agencies to act upon. The sites are under the management of Parks, Conservation and Lands (formerly Parks and Conservation Service, ACT Forests and Canberra Urban Parks and Places), Department of Defence and National Capital Authority.

In the reports submitted annually by the Weeds Working Group to the Flora and Fauna Committee and to the Natural Resources Management Advisory Committee, each land manager reports on the actions undertaken in these sites. The weed control activities taken to date have resulted in a reduced concentration of key weed species in areas of high conservation values. Treatment of weeds in sites of high conservation value has been given the highest level of priority with the limited resources available for this work.

In order to meet the recommendation in the *2003 ACT SoE*, the draft Weeds Strategy (due for finalisation in 2007) identifies that better monitoring and evaluation of weed control is required where weed control is undertaken, to maintain or enhance biodiversity in priority conservation areas.

The draft Weeds Strategy states that the following programs are recommended for integration within the existing monitoring programs. They will incorporate assessments of efficiency (determining whether existing actions can be improved) and effectiveness (determining whether or not actions are having the desired effect). The programs will:

- monitor the effects of weed control as part of the existing reports on weed control undertaken by government agencies (e.g. including a post-treatment report of death rate, replacement species and requirements for follow-up)
- modify existing biodiversity monitoring where possible to incorporate data identifying the effects of weed control on biodiversity attributes
- undertake specific weed monitoring programs to directly and quantifiably measure the benefits of control of particular weeds on biodiversity.

Where appropriate, weed monitoring activities will be integrated with existing monitoring and survey programs to measure whether weed control is impacting biodiversity, productivity and public amenity.

Implementation of more integrated monitoring programs would provide data that will enable a comprehensive and quantitative analysis to determine how well, and in what ways, the annual weeds programs are achieving the objectives of the strategy.

Key activities that will assist in the integration of weed monitoring programs are:

- a review of the existing biodiversity monitoring programs being undertaken by the ACT Government and others to determine how measures of weed control can be incorporated
- a determination of the best way to improve reporting on weed control, including a communication strategy to ensure compliance and provision of results to the ACT Government
- maintenance of existing weed monitoring, such as Alligator Weed infestations in the lakes, Chilean Needle Grass surveys, and gorse and broom monitoring in Namadgi National Park.

A Natural Heritage Trust – National Action Plan project that started towards the end of the financial year will also provide the opportunity to ensure consistency between strategic objectives for control of weeds, relevant targets in the draft revised *ACT Natural Resource Management Plan* and state of environment reporting requirements.

The ACT Government (Parks, Conservation and Lands) is supporting research being undertaken on the biodiversity impacts of *Nassella neesiana* (Chilean Needle Grass). This project is being undertaken as a PhD study from the University of Victoria. Sites have been chosen for detailed studies in Victoria and in the ACT. The study will undertake to study plant and invertebrate biodiversity persistence in areas where Chilean Needle Grass is dominant. The Ginninderra Catchment Group is establishing a project to use volunteers to maintain vigilance for the potential invasion of Chilean Needle Grass and African Love Grass into areas of high conservation value in Gungahlin where they are not yet established.

Commissioner's comments

Ongoing but no further annual report update required. The draft ACT Weeds Strategy was put out for public consultation in July 2007. The final strategy will be released in late 2007 or early in 2008. The ACT Government's uptake of this recommendation will lead to more effective and efficient weed control programs with specific objectives. This is a good outcome.

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 2007

A number of key priority projects identified in the Transport Plan was progressed during 2006–07. The following provides the summary of the implementation progress.

Belconnen to City transit—the preliminary assessment has been completed and approved by the delegate in ACTPLA. This work enables reservation and future provision of the corridor for the transitway.

Gungahlin to City transit—the completed Stage 1 is being effective for buses, specifically in the context of growth of the newer suburbs of Gungahlin, to avoid traffic delays on the southern part of Flemington Road.

The feasibility study for Stage 2 was completed and will be considered for design as part of the future capital works.

Stage 3 involves the 'nodes' and 'stations' developments in conjunction with the land development of the corridor of Flemington Road. A Development Control Plan has already been prepared to mutually support development for transit. The design and construction is subject to further land development along the corridor. The agencies (Land Development Agency, ACTPLA and TAMS) are working together to achieve an integrated outcome for developments to support transit and *vice versa*.

Real Time Passenger Information System—Investigation of the implementation issue with the ticketing system was completed. Upgrade of ACTION's ticketing system would assist the effective implementation of the Real Time Passenger Information System. Hence, a study into replacement of the ticketing system is being undertaken and the project is progressing through to completion, which is planned for 2008–09.

Parking Strategy—The *Draft ACT Parking Strategy* for the city and the town centres was released for public comment in March 2007. The public comment period ended in May 2007. This strategy is integrated with the *Sustainable Transport Plan* and the future developments of the city and town centres.

An ACT Parking Strategy is expected to be finalised, taking account of public comments, before the end of 2007.

Travel behaviour change projects—This project invited 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 has 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. A draft 'Green Travel Option Plan' was prepared for the organisation to consider for implementation.

Another project targeting schools and commuters for using alternative transport modes is in progress in association with the Australian Greenhouse Office in the Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources.

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 2006–07, funds of \$700,000 were allocated for sustainable transport initiatives in relation to walking and cycling.

Bus interchange upgrades and bus system improvements in Belconnen—The Belconnen Town Centre Public Transport and Planning Study was completed. The study proposed public transport improvements that include:

- the extension of Cohen Street
- 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.

The design of the Cohen Street extension is under way.

Bike racks on buses—The 2004–05 budget provided funding of \$345,000 for the trial and installation of bike racks on ACTION buses. Launched on 17 November 2005, 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. The bike racks have been fitted to ACTION buses servicing the Intertown bus route 300 series. This includes routes 300, 312, 313, 314 and 315. The Intertown route provides a high frequency service between Canberra's four main town centres of Belconnen, City, Woden and Tuggeranong. Surveys by the ACT peak cycling group, Pedal Power, in late March 2006 and 2007 indicate as many as 300 uses per week. ACTION was due to evaluate the trial during June 2007 and report its findings to Minister Hargreaves.

Commissioner's comments

Partly implemented. More sustainable transport options for the ACT and ways to increase bus use have been on the drawing board for some years now.

During 2006–07, some of the initiatives outlined in *The Sustainable Transport Plan*—the Belconnen to City busway, Gungahlin to City busway Stage 2 and the Real Time Passenger Information System—have changed in ways that are unclear at the time of writing. The Real Time Passenger Information System is now slated for introduction in 2008–09, and the two transit projects appear to be on hold indefinitely.

I understand staff numbers in the Transport Planning team also reduced during 2006–07.

I am concerned at the direction this important program appears to be taking. I hope that more information will be available for reporting on the *Sustainable Transport Plan* in the *2007 ACT State of the Environment Report*.

A.12 HR PERFORMANCE

Two full-time, permanent public servants are employed to support the functions of the part-time Commissioner. Human resource management and workforce planning options are severely limited in an office this size with 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.

As cited in previous annual reports, 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) have been a major issue throughout its lifetime.

A.13 STAFFING PROFILE

The staffing profiles are shown in Table 3 below. For privacy reasons, staffing age profiles are not included.

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	M
SOG B	1 full-time	<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	Permanent	F
ASO5	1 full-time	<i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>	Permanent	F

A.14 WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

This Office is covered by the TAMS annual report for policy purposes. No accidents or dangerous occurrences that required the giving of notices under section 204 of the *Occupational, Health and Safety Act 1989* 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. In this matter we are a subsidiary of TAMS.

A.15 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.

A.16 WORKPLACE RELATIONS

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

A.17 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT

This Office does not own any assets.

Office accommodation

This Office employs 2.4 EFT employees occupying 116 m². Periodically, additional people are employed to help deliver legislation-required outputs, which necessitate the additional floor space and information technology.

A.18 CAPITAL WORKS

This Office has no capital works projects.

A.19 GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

This Office let one small contract for publishing support. This Office has no overdue debts attracting interest.

A.20 COMMUNITY GRANTS/ASSISTANCE/SPONSORSHIPS

This Office did not provide financial support to any community grants, assistance or sponsorships during the reporting period.

A.21 TERRITORY RECORDS

This Office had insufficient resources available to complete the requirements of the *Territory Records Act 2002* during 2006–07.

PART B: CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY REPORTING

B.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This Office did not need to undertake any formal community consultation during 2006–07.

B.2 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

This Office has not been notified of any internal or external scrutiny of it during 2006–07.

B.3 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE INQUIRIES AND REPORTS

This Office was not the subject of any legislative assembly committee enquiries or reports in 2006–07.

B.4 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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

PART C: MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION

C.1 STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Office does not own or manage 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.

C.2 PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

This Office is covered by TAMS for the purposes of policies relating to the public interest disclosure. During 2006–07 no public interest disclosures related to the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment were lodged.

C.3 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. While the Commissioner can make recommendations to the ACT Government, he is not empowered to enforce those recommendations.

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

If members of the public have a grievance about the way the ACT Government and its agencies are managing the ACT environment, which has been unresolved through other channels, then they are entitled to make a complaint to the Commissioner and ask for the matter to be investigated.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment produces state of the environment reports. The 1994 edition is available in printed format only. The 1995 edition is unfortunately out of print. The 1997, 2000 and 2003 reports are produced in full on CD-ROM and can be obtained in person or sent by post. Executive summaries in print form for the 1997, 2000 and for 2003 ACT state of the environment 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 ACT SoE* in full (except for the maps). The *2003 ACT SoE* for the ACT has been produced in CD-ROM format as part of the *2004 Regional State of the Environment Report*. The full regional report is 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 report for 1997–98 and the reports since 2000–01 are also available on our website.

All reports are available by phoning or emailing us, and they can be posted. We are presently temporarily located in accommodation that is not easily accessible to the public and does not have disabled access.

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 2006–07.

C.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

During 2006–07, 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 were to be audited.

C.5 COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

This annual report is for the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment.

C.6 ACT MULTICULTURAL FRAMEWORK

This Office is covered by the TAMS annual report.

C.7 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPORTING

This Office is covered by the TAMS annual report.

C.8 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 continue to embrace working in an ecologically sustainable way. Having no allocated vehicle for the Office saves money and lowers greenhouse emissions. We use public transport or taxis, and walk or cycle when possible. 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.9 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.

The next state of the environment report is due to be finalised in this financial year.

GLOSSARY, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Australian Capital Region (ACR)	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. For the 2004 and 2008 reports, 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.
ACTPLA	the ACT Planning and Land Authority
ASO	Administrative Service Officer
HR	Human resources
NSW	New South Wales
SoE	State of the environment
SOG	Senior Officer Grade
TAMS	ACT Department of Territory and Municipal Services

INDEX

A

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting 21
 ACT Forests 13
 ACT Greenhouse Strategy 14
 ACT multicultural framework 21
 ACT Natural Resource Management Plan (draft) 12, 14
 ACT Parking Strategy (draft) 15
 ACT Planning and Land Authority 3, 7, 8, 15
 ACT Weeds Strategy (draft) 12, 14
 ACT Women's Plan 22
 ACTEW 9, 10
 ACTION 15, 16
 Action facilitated 8
 ACTPLA see ACT Planning and Land Authority
 Aerial seeding 10
 Alligator Weed 14
 Alpine Ash 11
 Alpine Bogs 11, 12
 Analysis of agency performance 6
Annual Report 2005–2006 7
Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 1995 8
 Aquatic habitats 11–12
 Australian Capital Region 1, 3
 Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources (was DEH) 16
 Australian Greenhouse Office 16

B

Belconnen Town Centre Public Transport and Planning Study 16
 Belconnen-City transit (busway) 15–16
 Bike racks on buses 16
 Budget allocation 5
 Broom 14

C

Canberra Plan 14
Canberra Spatial Plan 14
 Canberra Urban Parks and Places 13
 Capital works 17
 Charter for Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning 14
 Chilean Needle Grass 14
 Clients 2
 Cohen Street 16
 Comments on government progress on recommendations 9
 pest plant control 14
 post-fire works 12
 transport 16

Commissioner for the Environment 1, 2
 appointment of interim Commissioner 2
 comments on government progress 12, 14, 16
 expanded role 4
 independence of 3
 remuneration 6
 resignation 2
 to be full time 4
Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 2, 4, 6, 8, 19, 20, 21
 Commissioner-initiated investigations 8
 Community engagement 19
 Community grants/assistance/sponsorships 17
 Community health 22
 Community participation 22
 Complaints 1, 6–8, 20
 Consultation and scrutiny reporting 19
Corporate Plan 2005-06 to 2008–2009 1, 3, 16
 Councils 3, 6
 CRC for Freshwater Ecology 10
 Cycling 16

D

Darro Stinson 4, 5
 Department of Defence 13
 Department of Environment and Water Resources (was DEH) 16
Draft Canberra Spatial Plan 14
 Dragway in Majura Valley 7
 Drought 9, 11

E

Ecologically sustainable development 22
 Education 22
 Emergency Services Authority 19
 Endangered ecological communities 13
 Environment ACT 13
 Environment Protection Authority 7
 Environment Protection Policy 7
 Environment and Recreation Network 3
 Environmental flows 12
 Erosion 10
Eucalyptus delegatensis 11
 Expense on behalf of the Territory 6

F

Financial Management Act 1996 6
 Financial reporting 6
 Fire 9–12
 Fish 11–12
 Flemington Road 15

Flora and Fauna Committee 13
 FOI see Freedom of information
 Formal complaints see Complaints
 Fraud prevention 5
 Freedom of information 20–21
 Functions of the Office 1, 5, 20

G

Ginnderra Catchment Group 14
 Gorse 14
 Government contracting 17
 Green Travel Option Plan (draft) 16
 Greenhouse gas emissions 15
 Greening Australia 10, 11
 Grievance see complaint
 Gungahlin 14, 15
 Gungahlin to City transit (busway) 15, 16

H

Helen Sims (Dr) 4
 Highlights 4
 Housing 22
 HR (human resources) performance 17
Human Rights Act 2004 21

I

Independence of the Commissioner 3
 Indicators 22
 Inquiries see Complaints
 Internal accountability 5
 Internal Audit 5
 Internal and external scrutiny 19
 Investigations 1, 6–8, 20
 reports 20–21

J

January 2003 fires 9
 John Hargreaves MLA 16, see also Minister for the Environment
 Jon Stanhope MLA see Minister for the Environment

K

Key result areas 6–7

L

Land Development Agency 15
 Learning and development 17
 Legislative Assembly Committee inquiries and reports 19
 Legislative report 19
 Liaison with other agencies 3
 Low emission vehicles 15
 Lower Cotter 9–11

Catchment Management Group 10
 draft strategic management plan 10, 12
 revegetation 11

M

Macquarie Perch 12
 Magnolia tree in Central Woden 7
 Management discussion analysis 5
 Management of the organisation 20–22
 Manager of the Office 4
 Minister for the Environment 3–4
 Minister John Hargreaves 16
 Minister-directed investigations 8
 Mission 1
 Molonglo Valley 11
 Murrumbidgee Valley 11

N

Manadgi National Park 14
Nasella neesiana 14
 National Action Plan 14
 National Capital Authority 13
 Natural Heritage Trust 14
 Natural Resources Management Advisory Authority 13
 Noise complaint see Dragway in Majura Valley

O

Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989 17
 Office accommodation 17
 Office of the Commissioner for the Environment
 see the Organisation
 the Organisation 1
 changes 3, 4
 management 20–22
 review of 4
 size of 3, 5, 17
 vehicle 22
 Outlook 4
 Overview 2

P

Parking strategy 15
 Parks, Conservation and Lands 10, 13, 14
 Parks and Conservation Service 13
 Pedal Power 16
 Pest plants 13
 control 11, 12–14
 monitoring 14
 Pine wildings 11
 Post-fire works and recovery 9–12
 Progress on implementation of recommendations see Recommendations
 Public interest disclosure 20

R

Rainfall 9
 Real Time Passenger Information System 15, 16
 Recommendations 3, 8, 9–16
 2006.7 pest plant control 9, 12–14
 2006.6 post-fire works 9–12
 2006.17 transport 9, 14–16
 Regional Leaders' Forum 1, 5, 6
 Revegetation 11
 Review of regional state of the environment reporting by
 NSW Government 4
 Risk management 5
 Roads removed 10
 Role of the Office 1, 4, 5
 Rosemary Purdie (Dr) 4, 6, 7
 Rural Fire Service 10

S

Safety 22
 Section 7 statement 20–21
 Section 8 statement 21
 Section 79 statement 21
 Services provided by the Office 1
 Significant impacts on the environment 9
 Socio-economic equity 22
 Special annual reporting requirements 8
 Staffing issues 4–5, 6, 17
 Staffing profile 17
 Stakeholders 2
 State of the Environment reports 1, 6, 20–22
 ACT 2003 report 3, 9–16
 ACT 2007 report 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 16
 indicators 22
 regional 1, 4, 5, 6
 see also Recommendations
 Statement of performance 6
 Steer Davies & Gleave 15
 Strategic assessment of performance 2
 Strategic asset management 18
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 20

Structure of the Office 2
 Sustainability Framework 14
Sustainable Transport Plan 9, 14–16

T

TAMS see Territory and Municipal Services
 Tania Laity 4
Ten Year Master Plan 16
 Territory and Municipal Services 3, 4, 7, 8, 15, 20
 items included in annual report 5, 6, 17, 21
Territory Records Act 2002 18
 Threatened species 13
 Transmittal certificate i
 Transport planning team 16
 Travel behaviour change 15–16
 Two-spined Blackfish 12

U

University of Victoria 14
 Upper Cotter 11, 12

V

Values 1–2
 Vision 1

W

Walking 16
 Water restrictions 9
 Water supply catchment 9–12
 Weeds see Pest plants
 Weeds Working Group 13
 Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit 13
 Workplace health and safety 17
 Workplace relations 18

COMPLIANCE INDEX

Section	Page Number
Transmittal Certificate.....	i
PART A: PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REPORTING	1
A.1 The organisation	1
A.2 Overview	2
A.3 Highlights	4
A.4 Outlook.....	4
A.5 Management discussion and analysis	5
A.6 Fraud prevention	5
A.7 Risk management and internal audit	5
A.8 Internal accountability	5
A.9 Financial report	6
A.10 Statement of performance	6
A.11 Analysis of agency performance.....	6
A.12 HR performance.....	17
A.13 Staffing profile	17
A.14 Workplace health and safety.....	17
A.15 Learning and development	17
A.16 Workplace relations	18
A.17 Strategic asset management	18
A.18 Capital works.....	18
A.19 Government contracting.....	18
A.21 Community grants/assistance/sponsorships	18
A.20 Territory records.....	18
PART B: CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY REPORTING	19
B.1 Community engagement.....	19
B.2 Internal and external scrutiny.....	19
B.3 Legislative Assembly committee inquiries and reports	19
B.4 Legislative report.....	19
PART C: MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION	20
C.1 Strategic bushfire management plan	20
C.2 Public interest disclosure	20
C.3 Freedom of information.....	20
C.4 Human Rights Act.....	21
C.5 Commissioner for the Environment.....	21
C.6 ACT Multicultural Strategy 2006–2009	21
C.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting	21
C.8 Ecologically sustainable development	22
C.8 ACT Women's Plan.....	22

OUR VISION

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

**Office of the Commissioner for the
Environment**

**PO Box 356
Dickson ACT 2602
Ph: 02 6207 2626
Fax: 02 6207 2630**

**Email: envcomm@act.gov.au
Website: www.envcomm.act.gov.au**

