

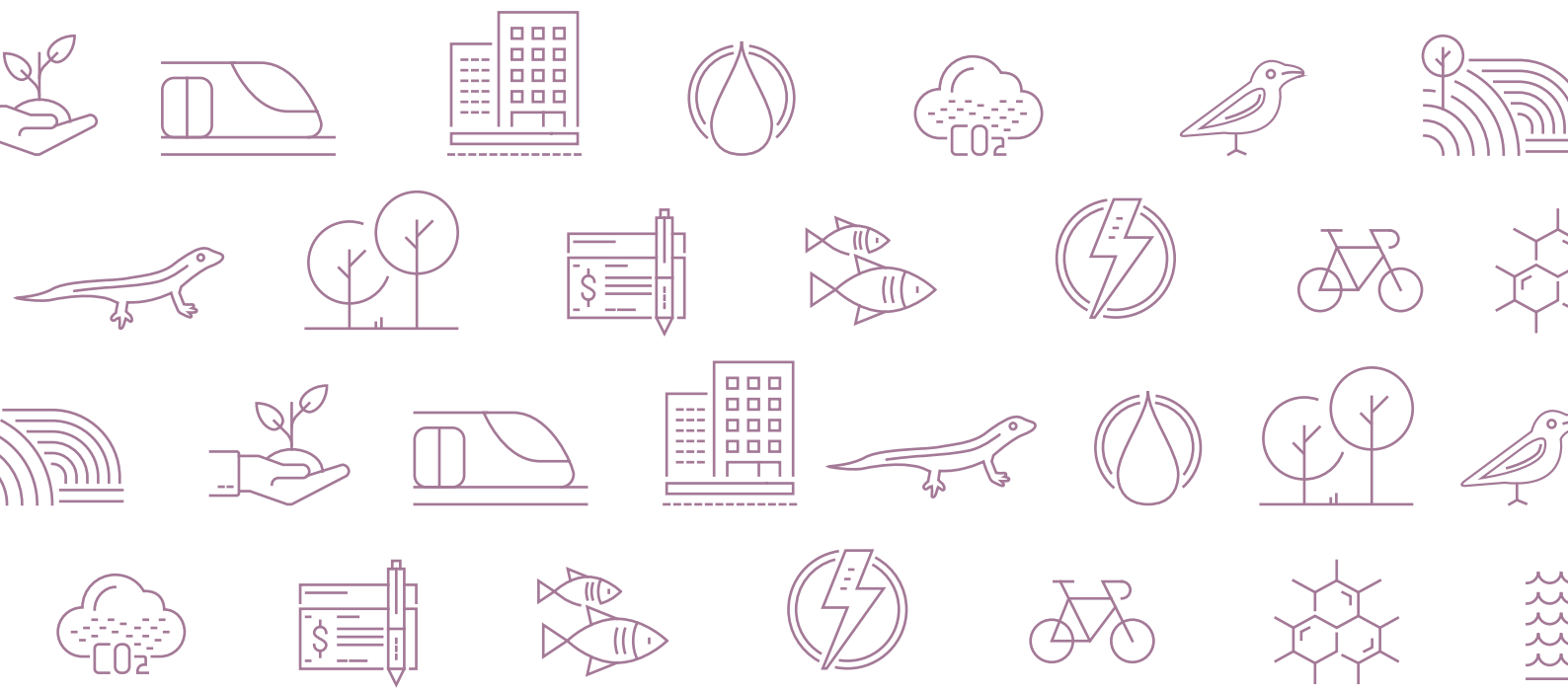


COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

# ACT COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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ANNUAL REPORT  
**2016–17**



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# List of Acronyms

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AAQ	Ambient Air Quality	NRM	Natural Resource Management
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	PMS	Performance Monitoring Station
ACAT	ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal	PTWL	Pink-tailed Worm-lizard
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	SDOPSF	Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Service	SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
ASC	Adaptation Steering Committee	SERREE	the South East Region of Renewable Energy Excellence
ANU	Australian National University	SES	Senior Executive Service
BPP	Basin Priority Project	TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services
CEMP	Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program	UC	University of Canberra
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design
CSD	Community Services Directorate		
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation		
ELIANZ	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand		
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement		
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate		
ESOs	Environmental Significance Opinions		
ESP	Enterprise Sustainability Platform		
FTE	Full-time Equivalent		
HGL	Hydrogeological Landscape		
ICT	Information and Communication Technology		
JACS	Justice and Community Safety		
MIS	Municipal Infrastructure Standards		
NCRIS	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy		
NCS	Nature Conservation Strategy		
NEPM	National Environmental Protection Measure		

# Section A. Transmittal Certificate





COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
AND THE  
ENVIRONMENT

## TRANSMITTAL CERTIFICATE

Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA  
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 6(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements under the 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 Sustainability and the Environment.

I certify that information in the attached annual report, and information provided for whole of government reporting, is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has been included for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

I hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006*, Part 2.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you present the report to the Legislative Assembly within 15 weeks after the end of the reporting year.

Yours sincerely

Professor Kate Auty (Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne)  
Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

29 August 2017

Commissioner: Professor Kate Auty (Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne)  
GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601  
ABN: 66 893 463 785

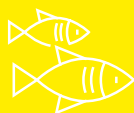
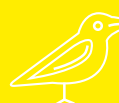
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*This Office is independent of, but funded by, the ACT Government.*



# Section B.

## Organisational Overview and Performance



## B.1 Organisational Overview

### B.1.1 COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (the Commissioner) is appointed under the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993* (the Act) and is accountable to the Legislative Assembly through the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is an independent statutory position.

No other legislation is administered by the Commissioner who also has no other statutory functions.

### B.1.2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

#### VISION:

An environmentally sustainable ACT, region and Australia.

#### MISSION:

To act as an independent voice for the environment and sustainability in the ACT, and promote community engagement.

#### VALUES:

Transparency, integrity, independence, research rigour, inclusion.

### B.1.3 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Commissioner undertakes the following functions (these are discussed at greater length in **Section B.2**):

- State of the Environment Reporting for the ACT (s19 of the Act),
- investigations as directed by the Minister (s12(1)(b) of the Act),
- investigations, at the discretion of the Commissioner, into agencies where actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT (s12(1)(c) of the Act), and
- investigations of complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a territory authority, or about issues relating to ecologically sustainable development (s13 of the Act).

### B.1.4 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPORTING

The Commissioner is not required to report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

However, the Commissioner and her staff undertake the following:

- contribute as a member of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group,
- commence every team meeting with an acknowledgement of country and seek Indigenous people's contribution where appropriate,
- use social media to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, and
- report on Aboriginal heritage in the State of the Environment Report.



*Blue Range Panorama, Lower Cotter Catchment, August 2017. Source Kirilly Dickson*



B.1.5 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Commissioner is an SES 2.5 ministerial appointment. The Commissioner’s remuneration is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

The current Commissioner, Professor Kate Auty, holds the following additional roles:

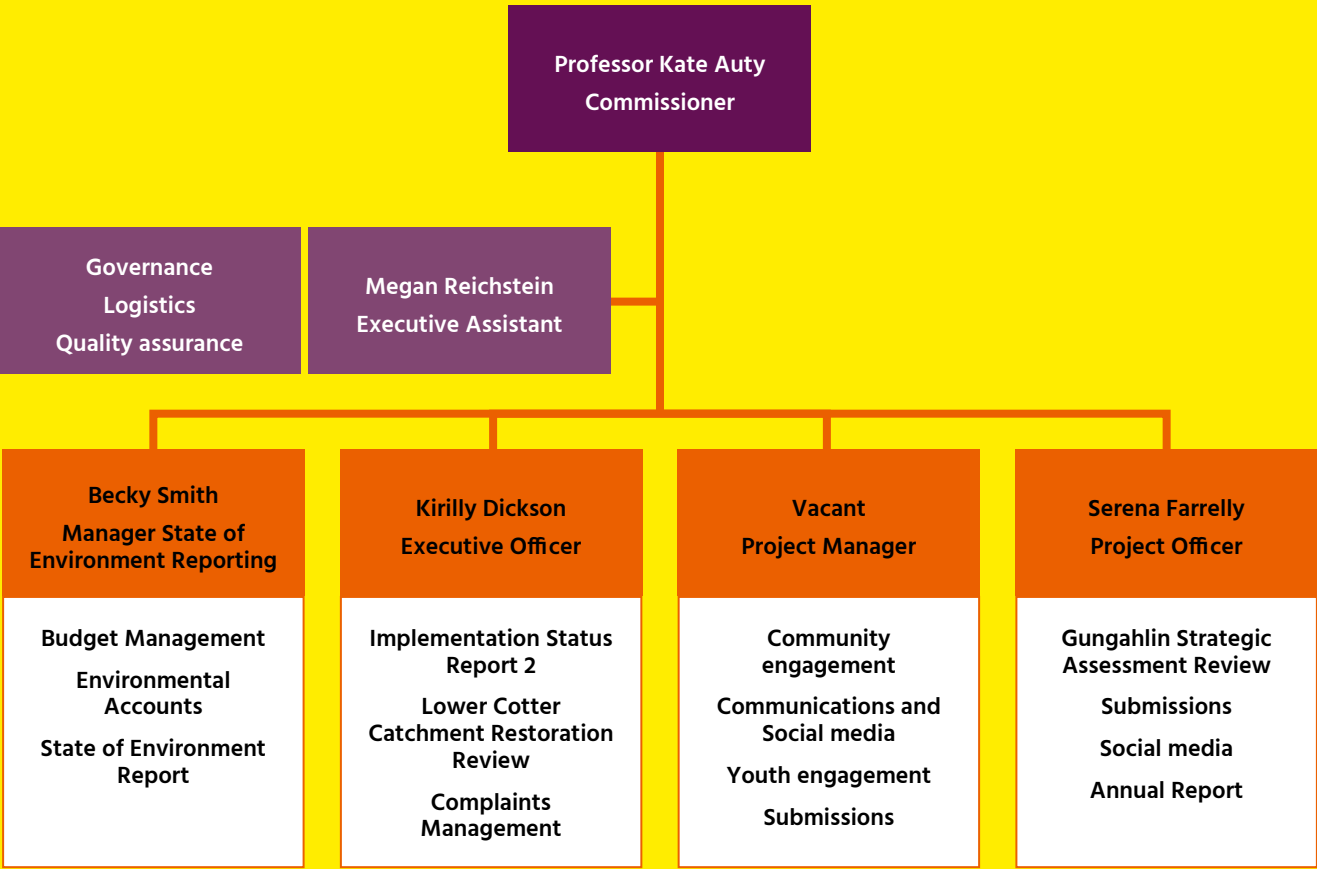
- an Honorary Professorial Fellow with the Faculty of Architecture’s Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, University of Melbourne,
- an advisory board member of the:
  - Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network (NCRIS funded, University of Melbourne lead agent),
  - Institute of Applied Ecology (IAE) (University of Canberra (UC)) External Advisory Panel,
  - Murray Darling Basin Authority Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences,
  - Future Earth Australia Advisory Council (Australian Academy of Science), and

- Environment and Society Synthesis Program (Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University (ANU)).
- a director of:
  - Australian Women in Agriculture Board,
  - Rescope Project, and
  - Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation.

The Commissioner also undertook the role of Independent Chair of the ACT National Park Feasibility Reference Group in 2016–17, chairing and facilitating meetings of this multi-party community forum. No voting rights were attached to this role.

The Commissioner is supported by a core team of two full-time senior managers (SOG B equivalent), two project managers (SOG C) and one office manager (ASO 6). This is the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (the office) – see **Figure 1**.

FIGURE 1: COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT ORGANISATIONAL CHART



4  
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The staff of the office have professional expertise in a wide range of skills including engineering, law and environmental management. Having these skills in the office means a reduction in costs associated with contracting external consultants.

Office staff members are employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and observe the *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*.<sup>1</sup>

When workloads increase the Commissioner employs additional temporary staff.

The office pays for corporate support from EPSDD for matters such as:

- accommodation,
- financial reporting,
- records management,
- recruitment, and
- other personnel services.

Shared Services ICT – located within Commerce and Works of the Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) – provides:

- information management,
- procurement, and
- information technology support.

## B.1.6 STAKEHOLDERS

The Commissioner engages in consultation with, and receives briefings from:

- government directorates (including the federal Department of Environment and Energy and the Department of Defence), agencies and organisational structures (e.g. National Capital Authority, Threatened Species Commissioner, ACT Human Rights Commission (Public Advocate, Children and Young People Commissioner)),
- universities (e.g. Crawford School of Public Policy and Fenner School, ANU) and disciplinary experts (e.g. Institute of Applied Ecology, UC and EPSDD Conservation Research),
- educationalists (e.g. Merici College; Australian Association of Environmental Educators) and technical skills trainers (e.g. Canberra Institute of Technology),
- non-government organisations with environment and sustainability interests (e.g. Conservation Council, Canberra Ornithologists Group, Friends of Grasslands, Landcare), and
- steering committees and working parties which are established as necessary for reporting, and which operate in respect of specific organisational functions (see **Appendix 1** and **2**).

The Commissioner attends and presents at forums, in accordance with invitations, and in respect of matters of interest. These consultations have included:

- business and industry groups such as Canberra Business Chamber and the South East Region of Renewable Energy Excellence (SERREE),
- professional bodies such as Engineers Australia, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the Green Building Council, and the Australian Institute of Architects, and
- interest groups such as Pedal Power, SEE-Change, Council of the Ageing, ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS), community centres (Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden), hospitals and women's associations across a range of issues.

For a full list of conferences, presentations, forums and launches attended by the Commissioner, please refer to **Appendix 3**.

## B.1.7 THE COMMISSIONER'S ACHIEVEMENTS

A summary of the Commissioner's achievements in 2016–17 against each key function follows.

### B.1.7.1 MONITORING THE ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE 2015 ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Response of the ACT Government to the Recommendations of the *ACT State of the Environment Report 2015*<sup>2</sup> was tabled towards the end of the last reporting year. This document can be found on the Commissioner's website.

Progress reports which reflect this monitoring are detailed in **Section B.1.7.1**

### B.1.7.2 COMMISSIONING OF SPECIAL REPORTS

The office received a Ministerial direction pursuant to ss12(1)(b) and 21(1)(a) of the Act to investigate and report on three matters on 8 June 2016. These are:

- the implementation of ACT Government climate change policies, as detailed in *AP2: a new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*,<sup>3</sup>
- the implementation of the commitments in the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*,<sup>4</sup> and
- evaluation of the restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment.

The Special Reports are discussed in **Section B.2.1.2**.

<sup>1</sup> ACT Government, 2010: *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*

<sup>2</sup> ACT Government, 2015: *State of the Environment Report 2015*

<sup>3</sup> ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the Australian Capital Territory*

<sup>4</sup> Umwelt, 2013: *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan, Final*

### B.1.7.3 OTHER SUBMISSIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commissioner regularly provides input into government consultation processes to promote environmental sustainability.

A list of the submissions provided in this reporting year is outlined in **Section B.2.4.4**.

### B.1.7.4 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADDRESSED

The Commissioner responds to complaints from the public. The Act provides the Commissioner with a discretion not to investigate certain complaints (s14 of the Act).

Typically only a few complaints are received each year.

The Commissioner routinely forwards complaints to the appropriate directorate for attention. If the response is unsatisfactory, the Commissioner explores the issues raised or undertakes an investigation.

Details of complaints received and how these were addressed are outlined in **Section B.2.1.3**.

### B.1.7.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY IN FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE

The community engagement activities of the office have been expanded with the adoption of an informal social media strategy and the establishment, continuation or recommencement of a number of initiatives. These include the Young Professionals Reference Group and the Parliament of Youth.

All of these initiatives are discussed in **Section B.2.4.2**.

## B.1.8 OUTLOOK: CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The issues which will continue to present challenges and opportunities to the ACT include climate change, transport policy and practice, sustainable land development, ecological footprint and community engagement.

## B.1.8.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

### National and subnational alignment of policy questions on climate change

Climate change is an issue that has the potential to affect national security. The increase in severity of natural disasters that are expected under climate change has the potential to effect security through an increase in climatic refugees from people in our region affected by these events. In addition, climate change is likely to have indirect effects such as impacting human health through reduced availability of freshwater and food, and exposing people to new diseases. It could also negatively impact national wealth, while exacerbating the inequalities already present.<sup>5</sup>

The implications of climate change for Australia's national security are currently under consideration in a Senate inquiry.<sup>6</sup>

### Local issues relating to climate change

The ACT population is predicted to grow to 500,000 by 2033.<sup>7</sup> The populations of the satellite cities of Yass and Queanbeyan will continue to act as feeder cities and residents in those towns will continue to be users of ACT roads, transport, health, sporting, schools and other infrastructure.

It becomes increasingly important to engage this ever-growing population with the ecosystems which sustain them.

The ACT has set climate change targets, demonstrating leadership in Australia.

We know that we are facing grave climate change challenges including – hotter, drier days and nights and more extreme weather events, heat related illness and deaths, increased bushfire risks, water resource threats, changes to the distribution of species (creating winners and losers) impacts on agricultural productivity and undermining of the built fabric. The work of climate scientists like Dr Sophie Lewis (ANU) illustrates the record breaking events with which we have been contending.

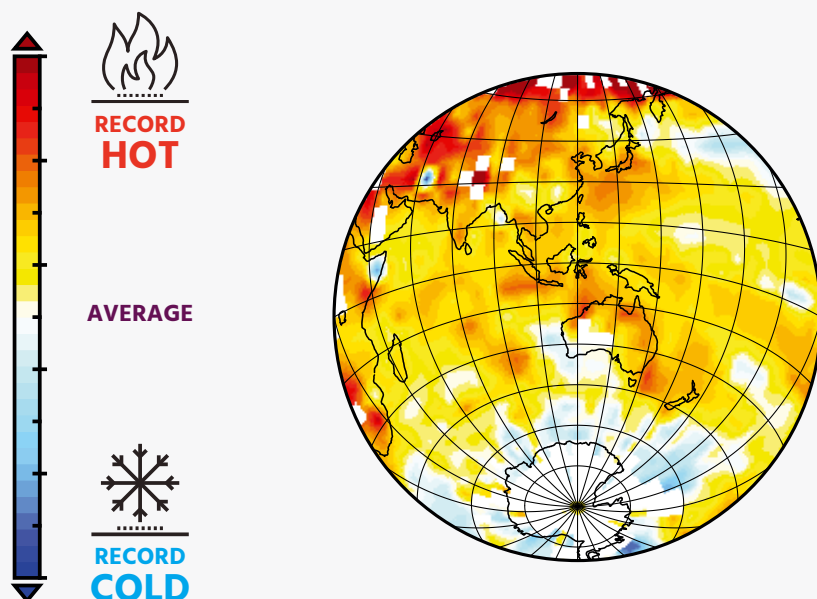
<sup>5</sup> Barnett, J., 2003: *Security and Climate Change*, Global Environmental Change, Volume 13, Issue 1, pp.7–17

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/Nationalsecurity](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity) accessed 13 July 2017

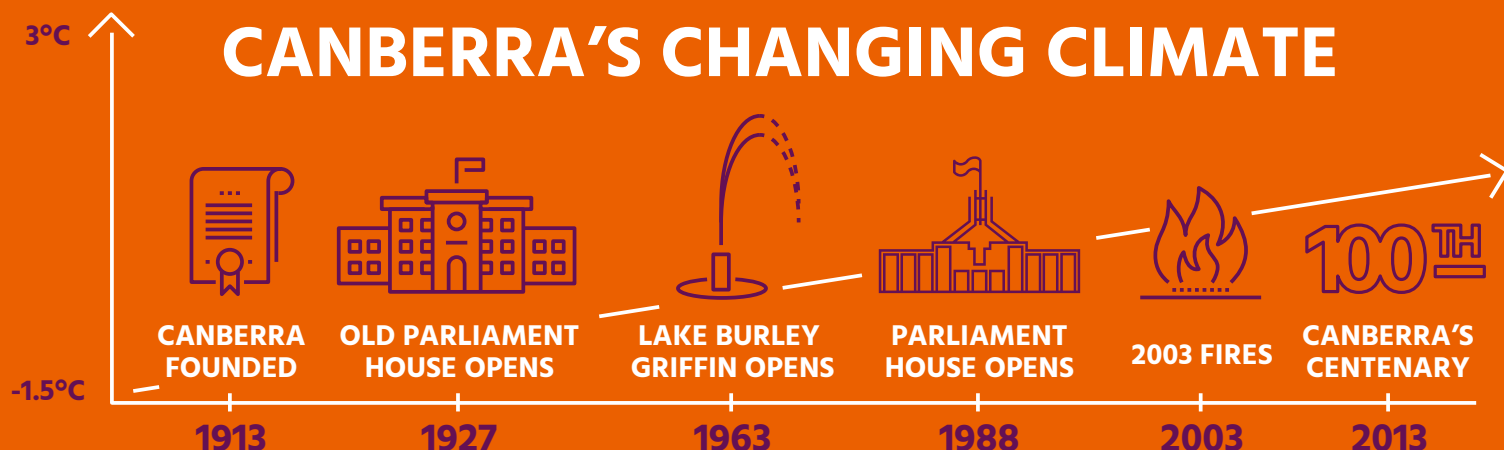
<sup>7</sup> <http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/demography/projections/act/total> accessed 27 June 2017



# GLOBAL CHANGE – LOCAL IMPACT



## CANBERRA'S CHANGING CLIMATE



## CANBERRA IMPACTS



INCREASE IN EXTREME  
TEMPERATURES



INCREASE IN SEVERITY, FREQUENCY,  
INTENSITY OF HEATWAVES



INCREASE IN SEVERE  
FIRE WEATHER



DECREASE IN  
WINTER RAINFALL



DECREASE IN COLD WEATHER  
AND FROST DAYS



INCREASE IN HEAT STRESS  
AND HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS



Climate change impacts will be felt by biodiversity and humanity.

**‘Direct health effects from an unstable climate are readily identifiable, and community awareness is increasing. However, recovery from extreme climatic events is commonly protracted, frequently poorly understood, poorly planned, and poorly funded. The result is mental stress super-imposed on the initial loss, which is reinforced by the large scale, and significant erosion of community cohesion and relationships.’<sup>8</sup>**

Dr Liz Hanna, ANU

Our current level of infrastructure provision may not meet the need.

**‘Over the last decade, severe heatwaves around Australia have resulted in deaths and an increased number of hospital admissions for heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease and acute renal failure.’<sup>9</sup>**

We will need to take a much more strategic approach to conserving vegetation and improving habitat connectivity. As the City of Melbourne illustrates in its recent report – *The Future Urban Forest: identifying vulnerability to future temperatures*<sup>10</sup> – the urban forest we have today may not be resilient in the face of climate change. The ACT Government’s work with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) about the Urban Heat Island Effect is significant in providing an evidence base for the development of policy.<sup>11</sup>



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*Haig Park, an urban forest, June 2017. Source Kate Auty*

<sup>8</sup> Parkinson D and Zara C, 2013: *The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster*, The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. 28(2)

<sup>9</sup> Climate Council, 2017: *Cranking Up the Intensity: Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events*

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.nesurban.edu.au/publications-resources/research-reports/CAULRR02\\_CoMFutureUrbanForest\\_Nov2016.pdf](http://www.nesurban.edu.au/publications-resources/research-reports/CAULRR02_CoMFutureUrbanForest_Nov2016.pdf) accessed 27 June 2017

<sup>11</sup> ACT Government, 2016: *ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy: Living with a Warming Climate*

## CELEBRATING WOMEN IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Climate change effects exacerbate existing gender inequalities, often resulting in more negative impacts for women. The United Nations reports that during and after disasters, women are at greater risk of sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>12</sup>

These facts formed the basis of the presentation the office gave at the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand's (EIANZ) forum for women in the environmental profession held on 7 December 2016 at the ANU.

The forum featured a range of presentations about women in the environmental profession and covered topics about the role of women in the profession, job opportunities and career prospects, and how to become a leading environmental practitioner.

Our presentation linked our work on environmental and sustainability reporting to the effect such reporting can have on policy and decision making around complex issues such as climate change and gender inequity. The presentation was of relevance to all women – experienced environmental practitioners, new graduates and especially those women most affected by society's environmental challenges.



*Women carrying their fishing nets along a dry river bed. Source Flickr*

### B.1.8.2 TRANSPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE

As the city of Canberra grows, the pressures on transport will require ongoing attention.<sup>13</sup> In the last ten years the major greenfield developments in Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley have demonstrated that our current approach to transport needs to be more responsive to demand.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the transport sector contributes significant greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>15</sup>

ACT households are highly dependent on private vehicles, with each household having 1.7 vehicles per household.<sup>16</sup>

Planning and development regulations allow developments to be built with minimal or no car parks, however without demonstration sites, it is difficult to determine how such a policy would be accepted by Canberrans.

The development of the light rail and urban renewal underway along the light rail route presents a unique chance to change our behaviours and transport paradigms. Interest in carless households is emerging. Share-car companies, reliable and functional public transport options, functional cycleways and a society that desires clean and healthy living, are all promoting a shift to no car homes.

The *Transport for Canberra Policy*<sup>17</sup> is under review and provides the opportunity to meet these challenges and improve the sustainability of our transport practices. It will require both good policy and community engagement to achieve the best outcomes.

<sup>12</sup> *Climate Change and Gender Based Violence in the Pacific 2016* <http://www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/unwomen701.pdf> accessed 10 May 2017

<sup>13</sup> <https://the-riotact.com/future-of-cotter-road/50970> and <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/canberras-traffic-hotspots-how-much-time-are-you-wasting-in-traffic-20160628-gptjwc.html> accessed 5 July 2017

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.wccc.com.au/cotter-road-stage-2-duplication/> accessed 5 July 2017

<sup>15</sup> ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the Australian Capital Territory*

<sup>16</sup> ABS Census 2011

<sup>17</sup> ACT Government, 2012: *Transport for Canberra Policy*





*Proposed design for Alinga St stop. Source Canberra Metro Construction*

### B.1.8.3 SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT – A LIVEABLE AND RESILIENT CITY

The way we develop our city is critical to the environment and our community. A city built well is a healthy city that provides all residents the opportunity to live in areas with all the essential elements of a liveable community. Population growth and climate change require innovative solutions to create cities that are resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges which are a growing part of the 21st century.

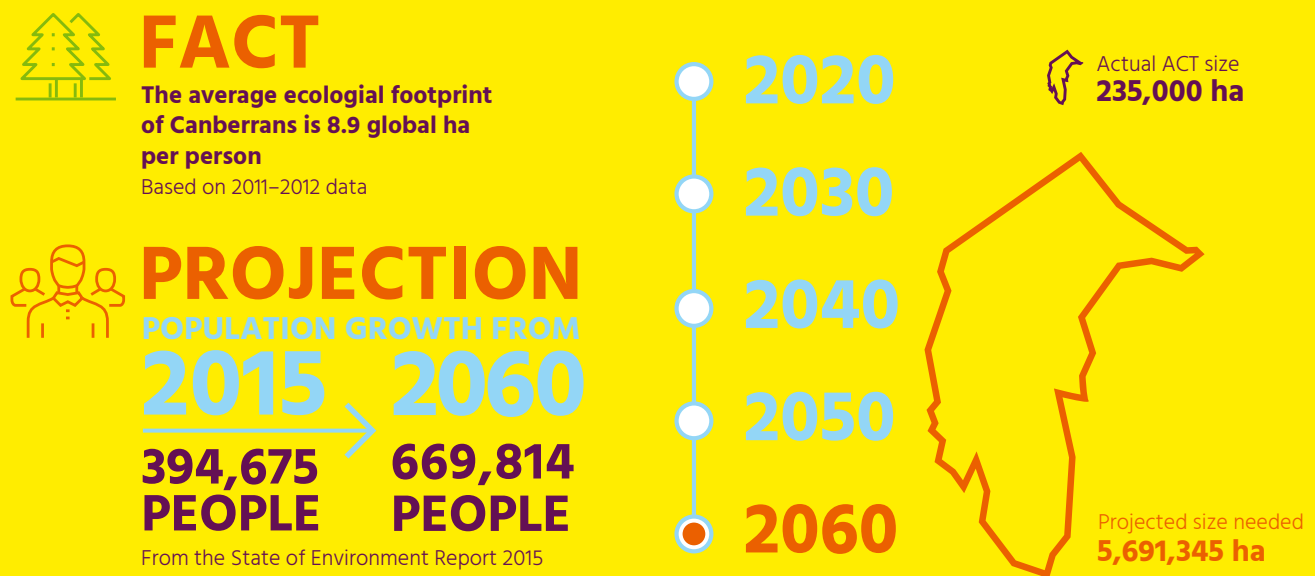
We need access to affordable and diverse housing options linked via public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, to employment, education, local shops, public open space and parks, health and community

services, leisure and culture. Research has been undertaken in Australia into the potential for greyfield development which takes advantage of physically, technologically and environmentally failing houses by replacing them with higher density residential development.<sup>18</sup>

Land development in the ACT needs to continually evolve to meet these challenges and provide a city that is healthy, happy and socially equitable.

### B.1.8.4 OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

The ACT continues to exhibit the largest average per person ecological footprint of any Australian jurisdiction (8.9 hectares) – this is about three and a half times the global per person average.



*Ecological Footprint of people in the ACT. Source Alex Garret*

18 Newton, Peter 2012: *Unlocking the greyfields to inhibit urban sprawl*, <https://theconversation.com/unlocking-the-greyfields-to-inhibit-urban-sprawl-7748> accessed 14 August 2017

Our total ACT ecological footprint is about 14 times the land area of the ACT.

Action to reduce the ecological footprint of Canberrans will need to be intergenerational and across all demographics and sectors.

To this end it is good to see the work being done in the ACT Parliament of Youth, with which the Commissioner is aligned. This involves children and young people, their parents, school communities, teachers, principals and non-government organisations with an interest in environmental sustainability.

Actsmart's work on sustainability in schools is of paramount importance in encouraging young people to address energy, transport, waste and water conservation challenges. All ACT schools are signed up to the Actsmart program. In August 2016, Actsmart ran an inaugural Primary Schools Carbon Challenge. The initiative was a great success with almost 1,600 people participating, collectively saving 2,290 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. This is the equivalent to taking 7,633 cars off the road for a month.<sup>19</sup> 22 schools were involved and students were asked to help their parents reduce emissions by hanging the washing out, growing their own herbs and making sure the heater was not used unnecessarily.



*Superhero pegs made by students in the Carbon Challenge, August 2016. Source ACT Government*

To be effective in reducing the ecological footprint of our community we need to improve community engagement. This is not only a practical challenge but also a theoretical one. Further exploration of this concept can be found in the 2017 *Implementation Status Report of ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*<sup>20</sup> produced by our office.

#### **B.1.8.5 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Commissioner is committed to engage in community discussion about the need for best practice environmental sustainability. Relationships with community, business, disciplinary experts and a wide range of community organisations are constantly being built and enhanced. The extent of this engagement is outlined in **Section B.2.4.2**.

The Commissioner will continue to engage with and foster the commitment and input of:

- educational institutions across a wide spectrum,
- non-government organisations, and
- specialist bodies.

The challenge and the opportunity is how to reach hard-to-engage people. The office will continue to pursue this objective through the promotion of co-benefits for sustainable practices, including promoting active living principles which will improve the environment and people's health.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/esdd/2016/local-schools-act-ing-smart-to-save-the-environment](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/esdd/2016/local-schools-act-ing-smart-to-save-the-environment) accessed 5 July 2017

<sup>20</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2017: *Implementation Status Report of the ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*





*Young Professionals Group at Haig Park, March 2017. Source Serena Farrelly*

## B.2 Performance Analysis

### B.2.1 REPORT ON STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE ACT

#### B.2.1.1 STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

This section relates to statutory functions under s19 of the Act.

The 2015 ACT State of the Environment reported from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2015.

The 2019 ACT State of the Environment Report is currently under development.

The reporting period for the next State of the Environment Report ends on 30 June 2019. The report will be delivered to the Minister on 21 December 2019. The Minister then has six sitting days to present the report to the Legislative Assembly.

The 2019 State of the Environment Report will be based on an internationally recognised environmental accounting and biophysical modelling framework. This information will allow evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of environmental management in the Territory as required by s19 of the Act and will therefore provide the basis for the Commissioner's recommendations.

This environmental accounting work is being undertaken pursuant to the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) 2012 Central Framework<sup>21</sup> and System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Experimental Ecosystem Accounting 2012<sup>22</sup> which promotes consistency, continuity and comprehensiveness of data and analysis.

A working group of national and international experts (including statisticians, economists, ecologists and environmental scientists) has been convened to assist in the development of the environmental accounts for the ACT. The Commissioner is scrutinising the environmental accounts work of other jurisdictions, including Victoria, the Netherlands and internationally, the World Bank. The membership of this working group is set out in **Appendix 1**.

The SEEA accounts developed by the office are being peer reviewed by Carl Obst (Director at the Institute for the Development of Environmental-Economic Accounting & Consultant Editor, System of Environmental-Economic Accounting United Nations Statistics Division) and Mark Eigenraam (Director at the Institute for the Development of Environmental-Economic Accounting & Project Manager, Advancing the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting United Nations). These accounts will be provided as a 'proof-of-concept' exposure draft in the second half of 2017 before further work is undertaken.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations from The World Bank, 2014: *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012*, No 23959 in World Bank Publications

<sup>22</sup> United Nations European Union & Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & the World Bank Group, 2014: *System of Environmental- Economic Accounting 2012— Experimental Ecosystem Accounting*



# THE ACT'S FOUR TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS

UNDER THE SEEA FRAMEWORK

ECONOMY **ENVIRONMENT** SOCIETY

## ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS



**WATER**

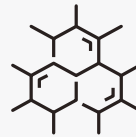


**EMISSIONS**



**ENERGY**

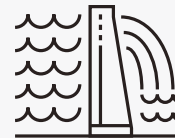
## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES



**CARBON  
SEQUESTRATION**



**TOURISM**



**WATER FILTRATION**

## ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSACTIONS



**EXPENDITURE**



**GRANTS**



**TAXES AND FEES**

## ECOSYSTEM ASSETS



**LAND**



**WATER**



**BIODIVERSITY**

## MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT INTEGRAL TO ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING

In order to understand and manage human impacts and dependencies on the natural environment, we need to think about human economic activity as an integral aspect of ecosystem health.

Environmental scientists have developed a myriad of ways to measure the type and extent of human impacts and dependencies on ecosystems, including measures of ecosystem capacity to sustain the flow of ecosystem services.

Decision-makers who rely on traditional economic models to justify, assess and manage policies, programs and practices have struggled to credibly and consistently integrate information from these environmental science measurement outputs.

Environmental Economic Accounting<sup>23</sup> serves as the bridge that enables scientific outputs to be translated into a standardised, integrated and internally consistent metrics for use in economic or financial modelling and reporting.

Our office is developing a set of pilot environmental economic accounts to inform state of the environment reporting in the ACT. This is a significant project involving collaboration with the ANU, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the World Bank and Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystems Services – a United Nations Initiative, the Commonwealth and all Australian states and territories, and a range of international experts and tertiary institutions.



Ginninderra Falls, May 2017. Source Kirilly Dickson

### B.2.1.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

This section relates to the statutory functions under s12 of the Act.

In 2016, the Commissioner received a Ministerial direction to conduct specific investigations and prepare reports on the following:

- Implementation of ACT Government climate change policies, as detailed in *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*<sup>24</sup> through Implementation Status Reports in 2017 and 2020. This report is due 30 September 2017. A list of experts consulted on for this report is included in **Appendix 2**.
- An audit of the implementation of the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*<sup>25</sup> (pursuant to a direction from the Australian Government in the Plan under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)). The first report is due 20 December 2017. Scope and criteria for the audit have been developed.
- Evaluation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration (pursuant to the Auditor-General's Recommendation 12 in the *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment – Auditor General's Report*).<sup>26</sup> This report is due 30 December 2018 and is currently in its final stages of planning.

The requirement of the office to audit the implementation of the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan* has led to a further reporting requirement, pending Ministerial direction, to audit the implementation of the Molonglo Strategic Assessment. This report is due 7 May 2018.

23 *The System of Environmental Economic Accounts (SEEA) Central Framework 2012* <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/Brochure.pdf> accessed 10 May 2017

24 ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*

25 Umwelt, 2013: *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan, Final*

26 ACT Auditor-General, 2015: *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment*, Report No. 3





*Rabbit pest control works in Kenny Broadacre, June 2017. Source Kirilly Dickson*

### B.2.1.3 COMPLAINTS

Complaints may be made to the Commissioner about the ACT Government's management of the environment or about issues relating to ecologically sustainable development in the ACT (s13 of the Act). All complaints must be on a prescribed form (available on the ACT Legislation Register AF2017–157).

In addition to prescribed complaints, individuals and groups have over time indicated their concerns and opposition to government actions in a manner of other ways. Simple inquiries which have resulted in complaints

being formulated are addressed directly. Some of these inquiries are referred to the ACT Government and resolved. Telephone inquiries have not always resulted in complaint investigations. Some complainants express ongoing concern about continuing issues – such as the cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

The level of interest in lodging complaints about environmental sustainability issues has varied and complaints have not, in recent times, formed a large part of the work of the office. The first responsibility of the office is to inform the relevant directorate of the complaint.

**TABLE 1: COMPLAINTS AND THEIR STATUS AT 30 JUNE 2017**

COMPLAINT RECEIVED	COMPLAINT STATUS AT 30 JUNE 2017	TOPIC
12 May 2015	Closed	Foul smell in Tuggeranong
10 September 2015	Closed	Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos
28 September 2015	Closed	Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos
10 July 2016	Closed	Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos
29 July 2016	Closed	Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos
22 June 2017	Received – under investigation	Little Eagle and Development Application at Ginninderry

## COMMENTARY ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADDRESSED IN 2016–17

### Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos

A number of representatives of the community and animal welfare organisations complained about the:

- efficacy of culling in open systems,
- impacts of kangaroo grazing on threatened species,
- methods used to measure biomass to gauge biodiversity,
- grazing pressures, and
- desirable kangaroo densities.

Challenging the scientific basis upon which the annual cull has been conducted has been central to complaints.

The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) accepted the science on which the Conservator and ACT Government relied on in 2009 and 2014.

Commissioner Auty sought information from the relevant government directorates. Recent doctoral research specific to the issues under challenge has been examined. In 2016 Commissioner Auty also examined all of the transcripts of each of the ACAT decisions.

The Commissioner determined that no further investigation was necessary in relation to the complaints about the cull and the ACT Government's management of Eastern Grey Kangaroos. The Commissioner also determined that there was no basis on which to keep a 'watching brief' on these matters.

### Foul smell in Tuggeranong and management of community concerns

This complaint was received in May and June 2016 as Commissioner Ann Lyons Wright retired and Commissioner Auty was appointed. Community concerns about a foul smell in the Tuggeranong area and efforts on the part of the complainant to have the issue resolved by EPSDD were the subject of the complaint.

The complainant acted as a representative and sought a response from the relevant ACT Minister.

The complainant received a response from the Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services. The Commissioner was copied into the Ministerial response.

Inquiries were made and upon receiving advice as to the actions taken by the relevant government directorates, Commissioner Auty considered the response and determined that no further investigation was necessary. Commissioner Auty invited the complainant to resubmit in the event of ongoing concerns.

### Little Eagle at Ginninderry

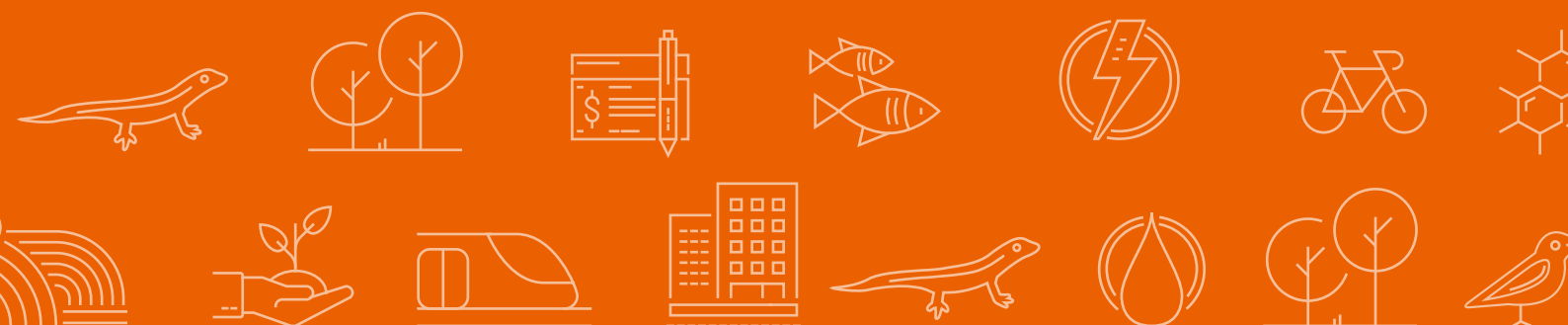
This complaint was received from an individual on behalf of the Ginninderra Falls Association in late June 2017.

The Ginninderra Falls Association complained that the development of Ginninderry Stage 1 is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact on the Little Eagle which is listed as a Vulnerable Species under the Nature Conservation Act 2014.

The complainant also expressed concerns about:

- the rezoning of areas in northern ACT for residential development that would impact on rich biodiversity habitat,
- the ACT Government acting contrary to the Little Eagle Action Plan, including in relation to the size of the buffer around the Little Eagle habitat,
- the ACT Government accepting the lodging of the development application in the Merit Track rather than the Impact Track, and
- the ACT Government ignoring the advice of experts on the impact of this and other developments on the Little Eagle.

As at 30 June 2017, this complaint was under investigation.



## B.2.2 PERFORMANCE AGAINST INDICATORS

This section of the report provides an assessment of the Commissioner's performance against our key statutory functions as indicators:

- ACT State of the Environment Report Recommendations,
- scoping, investigating and drafting Ministerial or Commissioner-initiated investigations, and
- responding to community complaints.

**TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS** <sup>27</sup>

ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS <sup>27</sup>	ORIGINAL TARGET 2016–17	ACTUAL RESULT 2016–17	VARIANCE FROM AMENDED TARGET
a. Report on the uptake of recommendations on the ACT State of Environment Report as part of the annual report	September 2016	December 2016	–100%*
b. Undertake Ministerial initiated investigations in accordance with the Minister's direction	100%	100%	0
c. Undertake Commissioner initiated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%	0
d. Undertake complaints generated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%	0
e. Report on complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory agency as part of the annual report	September 2016	December 2016	–100%*

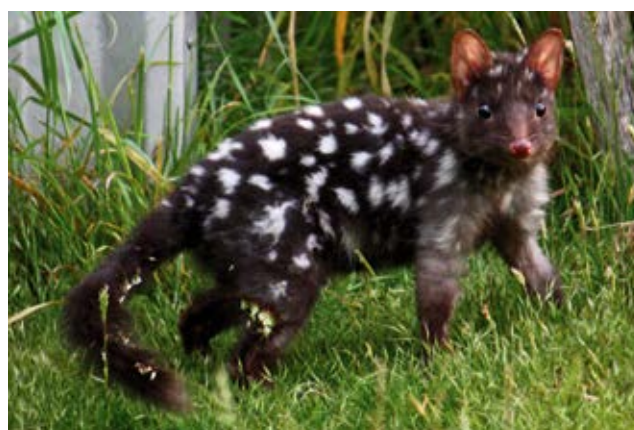
\*The Annual Report was delayed due to the ACT election and tabled in the Assembly in December 2016.

## B.2.3 INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT

### B.2.3.1 SPECIAL FACTORS WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (a) of the Act and must include details of 'any special factor that the commissioner believes had a significant impact on the environment during the year'.

**Section B.1.8** outlines current and future challenges and opportunities for the ACT, and includes national level issues such as climate change. This section addresses local issues specifically relevant to the ACT and the individuals who live here.



*Eastern Quoll. Source Wikimedia*

<sup>27</sup> 2015–16 Budget Statements, Environment and Planning Directorate, p17 [http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/733812/E-EPD-Budget-Statements.pdf](http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/733812/E-EPD-Budget-Statements.pdf)



## Subnational/ACT issues

Positive impact on the environment

- 100 per cent renewable electricity target,
- Mulligan's flat reintroductions and increase of cat containment areas,
- construction on many of the Basin Priority Projects began,
- waste to energy options were proposed, and
- a green waste trial was run.

Negative impact on the environment

- extreme weather events such as the heatwave and severe storm in January,
- light rail construction starting (Note: trees were removed but will be replaced with more suitable species),
- Mr Fluffy asbestos removal, and
- eucalyptus dieback.

## Local/individual issues

- increase in the use of E-bikes,<sup>28</sup>
- encouragement of active travel through improvement of bike paths across the city, and
- the ecological footprint of residents in the ACT as discussed in **B1.8.4** above. This represents a significant impact on the environment, however there has been a slight decrease.

## B.2.3.2 MEASURES TAKEN DURING THE REPORTING YEAR

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (b) of the Act and must include details of 'measures taken during the year by or for the Territory in relation to the implementation of any recommendation in a State of the Environment Report under s19 or special report under s21'.

This includes responses from directorates regarding:

1. actions undertaken between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017 against the ten recommendations from the 2015 State of the Environment Report (s19 of the Act),
2. an update on directorate actions against investigations (s21 of the Act) (**Table 3**), and
3. an update on actions undertaken against recommendations for completed complaint investigations (note this is not required under the Act but it is useful to include this so we can track actions) (**Table 4**).

Responses provided by directorates have been summarised with minimal editing.

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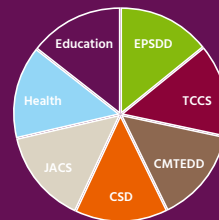
28 Pedal Power ACT, 25 May 2017 <http://www.pedalpower.org.au/news/cbr-lbs-pushys-electric-bike-push/> accessed 14 August 2017

# The SOE Report 2015 Recommendations, Government's Response and Directorate updates

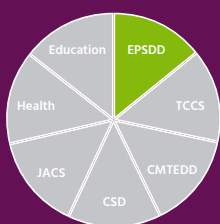
## Recommendation 1 – Climate Change

That the ACT Government ensures that the new Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is best practice, cross-sectoral and integrated into other key strategies, with effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

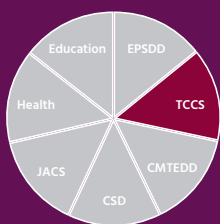
The ACT's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – Living with a Warmer Climate.

#### Actions to be completed

The Strategy was adopted by Government and released in August 2016. Further, an *Implementation Plan* for the actions in the Strategy for 2017 to 2020 was developed and endorsed by the Adaptation Steering Committee (ASC) in March 2017. The ASC has oversight of delivery of the Implementation Plan and members comprise Directors-General and Executives from across all directorates. Technical aspects of the Implementation Plan delivery are discussed and progressed through the Adaptation Working Group, with membership at the senior officer level from across government.

#### Status of Actions

Ongoing. The ASC and Adaptation Working Group meet four times per year and will be considering a progress report on actions in year one, for inclusion in the Minister's annual report on climate change action.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Active Travel Framework and Strategic Cycle Network Plan.

#### Actions to be completed

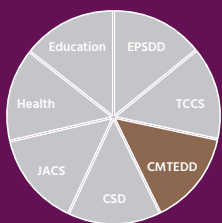
Active Travel Framework: support healthy living through expansion of pathways with appropriate support infrastructure such as drinking fountains, bike parking, seating and shower facilities. Strategic Cycle Network Plan: a program of shade tree planting for walking and cycling routes.

#### Status of Actions

A recent health check on the Active Travel Framework has shown that progress against each action item is tracking well.

On 23 May 2017, the Adaptation Steering Committee agreed to incorporate the Strategic Cycle Network Plan into the overall Living Infrastructure Strategy on the basis that shade tree planting along active travel routes will increase canopy cover. Remote sensing data on canopy cover has been collected and is being analysed.





## Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

The objectives of the ACT Climate Change Adaption Strategy are integrated into Innovate Canberra's key strategies on investment, trade, innovation and business development.

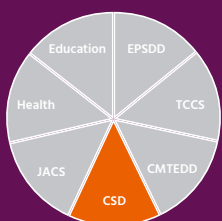
## Actions to be completed

Examples include activities stemming from local investment outcomes achieved from the two wind power reverse auctions (2014 and 2015):

1. establishment of the Renewable Energy Investment Fund and the Renewable Innovation Hub,
2. delivery of renewable energy start-up investment through Innovation Connect, a competitive grants program providing matched-funding support for smaller, technology-focused start-ups and entrepreneurs to accelerate viable, innovative ideas along the commercialisation pathway, and
3. targeted analysis and consultation to identify and address workforce capacity issues relative to meeting the ACT Government's renewable electricity targets.

## Status of Actions

Ongoing.



## Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Energy Efficiency Program for public housing properties.

## Actions to be completed

Building and fabric improvements and improving the energy efficiency of hot water systems and heating appliances.

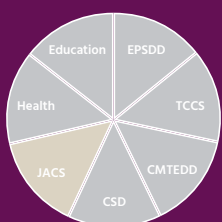
## Status of Actions

Ongoing.

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## Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

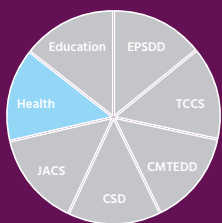
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, Territory Wide Risk Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan and the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework.

## Actions to be completed

1. Bushfire Prone Areas Mapping,
2. reducing impacts from the warming climate,
3. climate risk assessments, and
4. Framework for Flood Management.

## Status of Actions

1. review of bushfire prone areas has been completed and will be incorporated into legislation,
2. ongoing – the Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign will continue,
3. territory Wide Risk Assessment has been updated and risks to critical infrastructure will be assessed, and
4. a draft of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan has been prepared.



## Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

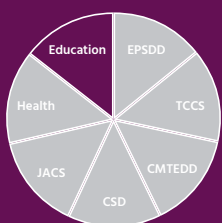
ACT Health contributes to multiple interjurisdictional and inter-agency discussions to improve health outcomes in the face of climate change. Under the ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Implementation Plan 2017–2020 ACT Health is the “overview agency” for actions 6 to 9.

## Actions to be completed

1. increasing healthy living,
2. identify heat refuges,
3. review ACT Government workplace health and safety policies, and
4. regional collaboration.

## Status of Actions

Ongoing: whilst ACT Health has oversight of these actions other agencies are responsible for implementation.



## Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

The Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities Output Specifications (SDOPSF). These guide the development and refurbishment of school facilities. The specifications integrate sustainability performance alongside other design requirements.

## Actions to be completed

1. implement Preschool to year 6 SDOPSF Output Specifications, and
2. trial the Draft years 7–10 (High Schools) SDOPSF Output Specifications.

## Status of Actions

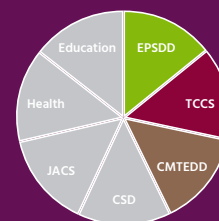
1. P–6 output specifications are being applied to the primary school in North Gungahlin, and
2. 7–10 output specifications are being trialled in the planning and design of Caroline Chisholm Centre for Innovation and Learning and the Belconnen High School upgrade.



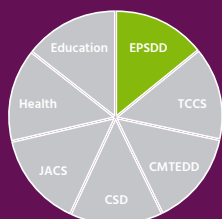
## Recommendation 2 – Human Needs

That the ACT Government implements the monitoring, reporting and evaluation commitments in the ACT Planning Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy, and details those for the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

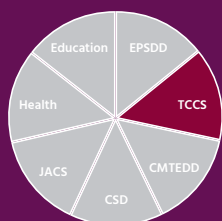
ACT Nature Conservation Strategy (NCS) 2013–23.

#### Actions to be completed

The ACT Government released a NCS Progress on Implementation 2015 Report. A mid-term report will be released after 2018, and a second implementation plan for the period 2018–23 will be developed in 2018.

#### Status of Actions

Current and Ongoing.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

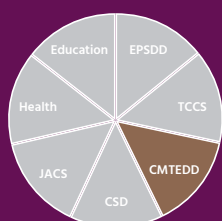
Waste Management Strategy 2011–2023.

#### Actions to be completed

The first of the new waste audits will commence in 2017–18.

#### Status of Actions

The first of the new waste audits will commence in 2017–18.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Climate Change Adaption Strategy – Innovate Canberra is supporting the establishment of an Agriculture and Plant Sciences Precinct at ANU/CSIRO Black Mountain which brings together the world class research capabilities of both organisations. The Precinct is likely to play a significant role in future food security, including how it relates to climate change adaptation. Its relationship with Data61 is also relevant as agricultural informatics and high through-put data analysis becomes increasingly important. We are in the initial phases of developing actions in this space.

#### Actions to be completed

Actions with ANU/CSIRO Black Mountain/Data61 to be developed.

#### Status of Actions

In initial phase of action development with stakeholders.

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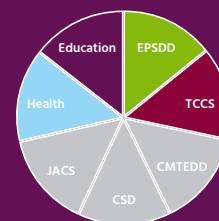
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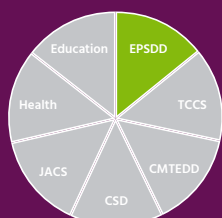
## Recommendation 3 – Human Needs

That the ACT Government considers integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation of all the key strategies to guide achievement of improved sustainability outcomes for the ACT, including the ACT Planning Strategy, AP2, Transport for Canberra, the ACT Water Strategy, the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy and the ACT Waste Management Strategy.

**Government response: Supported in principle**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Water Strategy 2014–44: Striking the Balance.

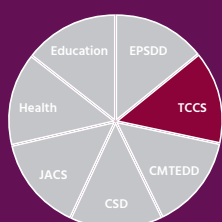
#### Actions to be completed

The ACT Water Strategy was designed to guide the changing needs of the Territory over 30 years, with implementation reviews every five years to adapt to shifting drivers and circumstance. To date, eight actions of the first implementation plan are complete, and 22 are progressing.

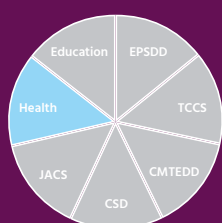
EPSDD is undertaking a mid-term review of Implementation Plan 1 (2014–18) of the Strategy. This will inform the development of the second five year implementation plan (2019–23) of the Strategy. This will include capturing any actions arising from the first implementation plan, assessing the effectiveness of current target indicators, and considering opportunities to align actions with other ACT Government strategies.

#### Status of Actions

A progress report on implementation of the Strategy is to be completed and released in the second half of 2017.



Coordination of this recommendation will be undertaken by EPSDD. TCCS will provide any requested input in relation to Transport for Canberra and the ACT Waste Management Strategy.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

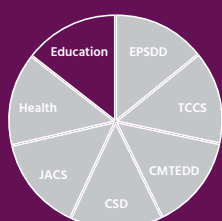
ACT Water Strategy, ACT Planning Strategy, and ACT Waste Management Strategy.

#### Actions to be completed

ACT Health provides information and supports policy development, in relation to these strategies.

#### Status of Actions

Ongoing.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Parliament of Youth.

#### Actions to be completed

The Education Directorate is a significant contributor to ensuring the education of future generations. This role places Education Directorate in a unique position to engage youth in key strategies to guide improved sustainability outcomes for the ACT. The Education Directorate, through the Teaching and Learning Branch, are an active sponsor of the ACT Parliament of Youth, an annual event that engages school students in developing their ideas for a sustainable ACT.

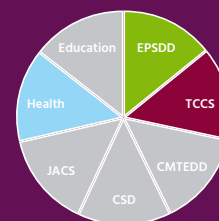
#### Status of Actions

Education Directorate will continue to identify opportunities for engagement of schools through developing a Sustainability Strategy in 2017–18.

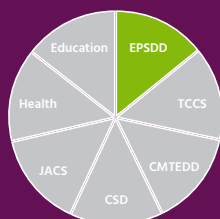
## Recommendation 4 – Air

That the ACT Government requires that the air quality impacts of future urban developments are explicitly considered – in particular, the impact of pollution from domestic wood heaters in greenfield developments.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Air quality assessments are undertaken for major greenfields development as part of the strategic planning process. These assessments have resulted in management protocols for domestic wood heaters where the assessment has determined there may be a detrimental impact on human health and the environment.

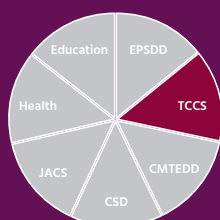
The Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) National Environmental Protection Measure (NEPM) is assessed via the Performance Monitoring Station (PMS) network in the ACT which consists of three monitoring stations: at Monash, Civic and Florey. The ACT is compliant with the AAQ NEPM.

#### Actions to be completed

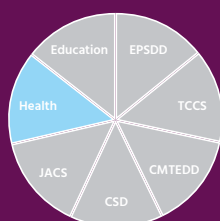
Continued monitoring of the PMS network to ensure compliance with the AAQ NEPM.

#### Status of Actions

Current.



Following machinery of government changes, the responsibility for wood heaters was transferred from TCCS to EPSDD. TCCS has no ongoing responsibility for this recommendation and refers the Commissioner to the EPSDD response.



ACT Health continues to provide technical support and advice to Environment Protection and Policy and the EPA on ambient air quality issues.

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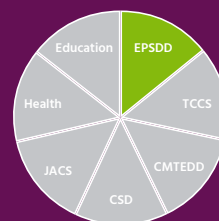
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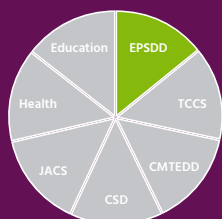
## Recommendation 5 – Land

That the ACT Government provides resources to fully implement priority actions in the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy, particularly actions aimed at developing foundation knowledge of landscape function and soils in the ACT.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) Framework and Vegetation mapping.

#### Actions to be completed

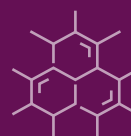
The ACT Government has completed a HGL Framework using information on soils, geology, lithology, slope, soil depth, vegetation and climate. Twenty-five HGL units with management areas have been identified and mapped for the ACT, and reports for salinity hazard, erosion risk, and wetland vulnerability have been finalised.

The ACT vegetation map has been completed over the Namadgi National park region and data is being published on ACTMapi. The final mapped area is due to be completed and published on ACTMapi by the end of 2017.

#### Status of Actions

Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) Framework: completed.

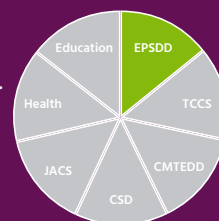
Vegetation mapping: in progress.



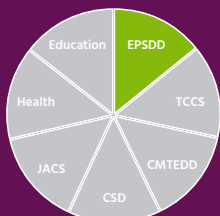
## Recommendation 6 – Land

The ACT Government uses strategic environmental assessments as provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2007 to reduce and manage cumulative and cross-sectoral impacts on the environment.

**Government response: Supported in principle**



### Update from Directorates



### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, Strategic Assessments, Environmental Significance Opinions (ESOs).

### Actions to be completed

The EIS process has been used in the last year to assess a waste to fuel proposal. The process assessed the environmental, economic and social risks and also looked at the cumulative impacts of other hazardous facilities within the area.

There are two strategic assessments being prepared for future development of Eastern Broadacre and West Belconnen.

### Status of Actions

Ongoing. The ACT Government has continued with its EIS process, which is based on a triple bottom line risk assessment approach and considers cumulative and off-site impacts. It helps inform the Minister of these risks and proposes mitigation measures to help reduce any impacts.

There have also been a number of EIS exemptions under s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* over the last year. An EIS exemption utilises the same triple bottom line risk assessment as an EIS and considers whether the cumulative and offsite impacts have already been considered adequately. Since 1 July 2016, three EIS exemptions have been processed by the ACT Government for urban development in Denman Prospect, electrical transmission line construction at Williamsdale and the removal of an underground petroleum storage system in Mitchell.

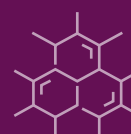
The ACT has two approved strategic assessments, relating to the urban development of Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley.

The ESOs are also utilised by the Territory for proposals that are considered to have less of an environmental, social and economic risk. ESOs can be granted by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and the Heritage Council. If granted, ESOs state that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the matter being considered. These entities are required under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* to take into account cumulative and offsite impacts.

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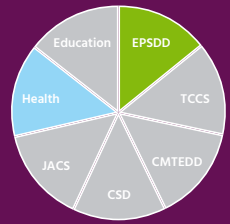
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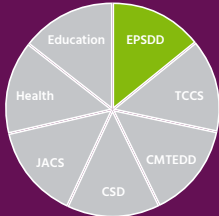
## Recommendation 7 – Water

That the ACT Government assess the consequences of, and understand the driving mechanisms behind, the poor condition of water resources as shown by the indicators for total nitrogen, turbidity, chlorophyll-a and ecological biodiversity, and assess the need for collecting more information for indicators with little available data.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Wide Water Quality Monitoring Framework.

#### Actions to be completed

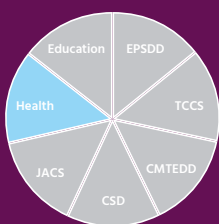
Under the ACT Healthy Waterways project, a major in-lake research program is proposed. This program is aimed at improving our understanding of the drivers of water quality in our urban lakes and ponds, with a strong focus on providing new management options for improving water quality.

Another advance in water quality monitoring and management is the development of an eWater SOURCE catchment model. This model provides the basis for assessing the likely impacts of changes in climate and landuse of both water quantity and quality in a transparent framework. This tool can be used for predicting impacts, as well as prioritising actions to improve water quality. Current and future water quality monitoring programs will support the evaluation and updating of the model, to ensure it is informative and fit for purpose.

An output of the integrated water quality monitoring plan is to provide recommendations for the existing monitoring network, including data capture and analysis, towards improving water quality throughout the Territory. This is being driven by a need to better understand water quality processes in our catchments, and move into a more proactive rather than reactive response cycle to changes in water quality.

#### Status of Actions

The SOURCE model will be completed by the end of 2017 and the research programs will continue until the ACT Healthy Waterways completion in June 2019.



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Wide Water Quality Monitoring Framework.

#### Actions to be completed

1. monitor, assess and provide advice to recreational managers in relation to water quality issues,
2. continue to provide advice on the health effects of particular recreational and drinking water contaminants, and
3. regulate the use and implementation of grey water and septic systems in the ACT to minimise ecological and human health impacts.

#### Status of Actions

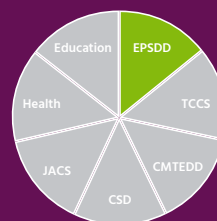
Ongoing.



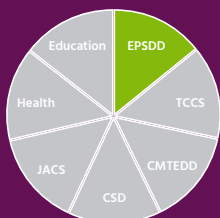
## Recommendation 8 – Biodiversity

That the ACT Government provides the necessary resources to complete the next phases of the Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP).

#### Actions to be completed

The CEMP lowland grasslands and aquatic ecosystem monitoring plan has been drafted and will be completed later this year.

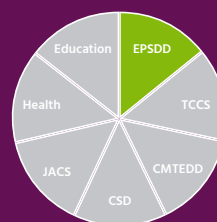
#### Status of Actions

The review and framework of the CEMP program is completed and the publication of the Technical Report 'Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program – an Overview' is on the EPSDD website.

## Recommendation 9 – Biodiversity

That the ACT Government formalise biodiversity conservation data collection and storage protocols and procedures, to integrate reports commissioned by different agencies with existing government data.

**Government response: Supported**

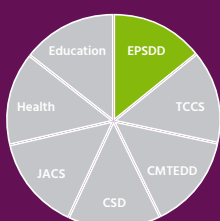


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### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

The ACT Government has integrated the spatial data for biodiversity for public access through ACTMapi. These data are freely available via the internet and enhanced tools will enable downloading of the data set in the future.

#### Actions to be completed

Protocols within contracts for the collection of conservation data in digital formats are being drafted by the directorate to enhance the ability to integrate biodiversity data with existing digital spatial and thematic layers.

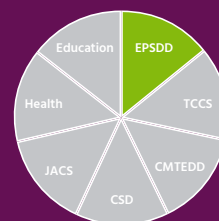
#### Status of Actions

Ongoing.

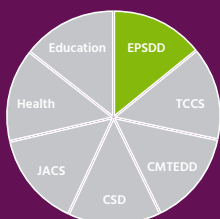
## Recommendation 10 – Heritage

That the ACT Government and the ACT Heritage Council commence a program of audits to assess and monitor the condition of heritage places and objects on the ACT Heritage Register.

**Government response: Supported**



### Update from Directorates



#### Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Program of heritage audits, ACT Heritage Strategy.

#### Actions to be completed

1. Program of heritage audits – in accordance with Part 16 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, public authorities are to report to the ACT Heritage Council on registered heritage places and objects they have responsibility for.
2. ACT Heritage Strategy – to be developed.

#### Status of Actions

1. Program of heritage audits – government agency audit work will commence in 2017–18.
2. ACT Heritage Strategy – public consultation on the Heritage Strategy discussion paper has closed. What priority is afforded to condition monitoring of all places on the register is still to be determined in the development of the strategy.



The following table sets out the Commissioner's reporting requirements for the 2016–17 annual reporting period on directorate updates for actions in relation to the audit undertaken by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment for the 2013–14 annual reporting period.

**TABLE 3: UPDATE ON DIRECTORATE ACTIONS AGAINST THE 2013–14 AUDIT ITEMS**

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN INVESTIGATION	
LAKE CLOSURE PROTOCOLS	
<b>Recommendation 3</b>	
In line with the current guidelines, the ACT Government and the Queanbeyan City Council, should identify and map sources of faecal contamination entering urban stormwater systems, the significance of the sources, and long-term strategies for reducing loading. In addition, a rigorous and comprehensive procedure for rapid 'sanitary surveys' in the event of elevated indicator concentrations should be established.	
<b>Commissioner's comment</b>	
Progress has been reported. Deemed adequate. No further inquiries are being undertaken by this office.	
OPTIONS FOR 'IN LAKE' MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY	
<b>Recommendation 5</b>	
The National Capital Authority and the ACT Government undertake a feasibility study, including a triple bottom line analysis, of macrophyte restoration across the Lake. Priorities for consideration should include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. construction of a wetland in the Lake between Springbank Island and the mouth of Sullivans Creek,</li> <li>b. construction of a wetland in the Lake at East Basin, and</li> <li>c. restoration of macrophyte beds in Lotus bay, Orana Bay, and at Weston Park East Beach.</li> </ul>	
<b>Commissioner's comment</b>	
Progress has been reported. Deemed adequate. No further inquiries are being undertaken by this office.	
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE LAKE'S WATER QUALITY	
<b>Recommendation 7</b>	
The ACT Government should develop a strategic approach to water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. identifying sites where installing catchment intervention, such as wetlands and pollution control ponds, would improve water quality entering Lake Burley Griffin. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. initial feasibility studies into the construction of pollution control ponds or wetlands on the Yarralumla drainage line and Jerrabomberra Creek should be undertaken. Any installations should be designed to be of an appropriate size to treat the catchment area they service, and</li> <li>ii. identifying WSUD that complements current programs of installing wetlands and water control ponds in both new urban areas and retrofitting in existing suburbs where applicable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Ensuring that WSUD requirements are enforced in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ensuring that wetlands and ponds are of appropriate sizes to service their catchments, and</li> <li>ii. undertaking auditing/compliance arrangements to ensure that temporary pollution control ponds for sediment control during the construction phase in new estates are maintained and functioning effectively.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Improving monitoring of the effectiveness of WSUD in urban developments to determine whether water quality meets WSUD general code targets. Results should be used to inform improvements in WSUD standards.</li> <li>d. Comparison of ACT approaches to WSUD with those of other Australian urban areas to help the Territory remain consistent with developing technology and best practice.</li> <li>e. Reviewing the efficacy of existing gross pollutant traps. The review should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. effectiveness in pollutant reduction,</li> <li>ii. effectiveness of current maintenance of pollution control measures,</li> <li>iii. capital costs,</li> <li>iv. ongoing maintenance costs to ensure the current drainage infrastructure remains high-standard and is in line with current best practice, protecting downstream environments,</li> <li>v. reduction of polluted leachate water; and</li> <li>vi. the capacity to manage requirements of future urban growth and development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Working with the National Capital Authority and NSW councils.</li> </ul>	
<b>Commissioner's comment</b>	
Progress has been reported. Audits were foreshadowed. Request outcomes/status of actions against findings.	

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**ACT Government response**

EPSDD	TCCS
RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT	
ACT Healthy Waterways	Municipal Infrastructure Standards (MIS)
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED	
<p>ACT Healthy Waterways is a \$93.5 million joint initiative of the Commonwealth and ACT Governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and the Murrumbidgee River system by reducing the level of sediment and nutrients entering ACT lakes and waterways. The project is now in the implementation phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Phase 1, a large number (188) of water quality improvement options were tested with the community in July 2015. In prioritising options – criteria such as water quality performance, cost, amenity value, feasibility, environmental and heritage values were taken into account.</li> <li>• A short list of priority and reserve sites including new wetlands, rain-gardens and channel naturalisation, were then chosen across six priority ACT catchments for detailed evaluation including detailed design and development approvals. 36 priority projects have been identified which are now being developed through the preliminary design phase.</li> <li>• Consultation with the community has been vital. Outcomes from the six-week community consultation in August-September 2016 have been incorporated into the infrastructure design plans. Over 3,000 people took part in the Project's community consultation process, with most visiting the ACT Government's new Your Say website to view the plans or make a comment. More than 80 submissions were received. Submissions were generally supportive, as was verbal feedback at the drop-in sessions. The consultation report was released in February 2017 and is available on the website.</li> <li>• The consultation report flagged that the proposed rain garden on Reynolds Street, Curtin (YA012) would not be progressed. This decision takes into account the concerns of residents and the relatively close proximity of the proposed rain garden to homes. A potential risk of obstruction to airport flight paths was another key issue arising from consultation. The project team is currently working through these issues in consultation with Canberra Airport.</li> <li>• The final selection of projects for construction within the fixed budget and timeframe will be based on thorough site investigation and planning, community engagement, and comprehensive cost assessment.</li> <li>• To complement this work, a comprehensive regional education program, H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy, was launched earlier this year.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the ACT Healthy Waterways Project, an in-lake research program is being conducted in Lake Tuggeranong which is to be completed by June 2019. This research program aims to improve our understanding of in-lake processes related to water quality, and to trial possible interventions to improve water quality in the lake. The findings from this research program should be broadly translatable to the management of other lakes and ponds in the ACT and region.</p>	<p>TCCS has recently completed a draft update of several MIS, including bio-retention basins, wetlands and ponds and also stormwater harvesting systems. These draft standards are currently out for comment and will help industry deliver successful cost effective water quality infrastructure.</p> <p>In addition to MIS standards to guide industry, TCCS has a dedicated position to coordinate with the Basin Priority Project (BPP) staff, consultants and other TCCS stakeholders. This position is ensuring standards and TCCS requirements are being implemented.</p> <p>TCCS has completed an assessment tool that can be used to determine operation and maintenance costs of proposed WSUD assets that will be handed to TCCS from the BPP, these costs will be finalised once the BPP detailed design process has been completed.</p>

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN INVESTIGATION	
STATUS OF ACTIONS	
EPSDD	TCCS
Construction commenced earlier this year on the Isabella Pond wetlands, in the Lake Tuggeranong Catchment, which is the first project to be constructed as part of ACT Healthy Waterways. As at 14 June 2017, 15 development applications have been approved. Detailed design is currently being undertaken on projects that are DA approved. The concept designs may need altering to accommodate technical and physical constraints. This may affect cost and cost effectiveness and ultimately determine the feasibility of specific projects. Research program initiated mid-2017.	TCCS is currently working closely with the design consultants undertaking the detailed design of the proposed WSUD assets being constructed by the BPP. TCCS is currently meeting with Calibre and Indesco on a weekly basis.
<b>Recommendation 8</b> <p>The ACT Government, Queanbeyan City Council and National Capital Authority work collectively to raise awareness of the impact of organic matter, and other household or commercial materials (for example, garden and lawn fertilisers) on the Lake Burley Griffin catchment. Information should include the contribution that all sectors of the community can make to improving water quality by appropriately using and disposing of such materials.</p> <p><b>Commissioner's comment</b></p> <p>Progress has been reported. Update on strategy implementation and outcomes is required.</p> <p><b>ACT Government response – EPSDD</b></p>	
RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT	
<p>The ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group released the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy in August 2016. This Strategy includes Action 13:</p> <p>Improve water quality, protect and restore aquatic ecosystem health, and reduce nutrient, sediment and pathogen loads and enhance aquatic ecosystem health at key sites across the catchment.</p>	
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop understanding of source, activities and threatening processes generating nutrient pollutant load,</li> <li>• develop and implement a benchmarking framework for priority waterways including targeted remediation strategies, and</li> <li>• identify high priority aquatic ecosystems for management interventions that may include environmental flows and aquatic pest management.</li> </ul> <p>In conjunction with the development of the regional catchment strategy, EPSDD worked with the University of Canberra to undertake a comprehensive survey of community attitudes and values of our regional waterways. This survey identified that there were quite low levels of 'catchment literacy' across the board in the regional population. Drawing on the survey results a comprehensive regional stormwater education and behaviour change program was designed. The program, badged as H2OK: Keeping our Waterways Healthy was launched in February 2017. The program uses a combination of media campaigns, site demonstrations, engagement activities (DrainART and drain stencilling) as well as training and workshops, to target urban and rural residential homeowners and the building and construction industry.</p> <p>This is the first comprehensive campaign to address the generation of common pollutants at the source across the ACT and region. H2OK is working closely with the National Capital Authority, Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council and the community to ensure that Lake Burley Griffin benefits from the education and behaviour change program.</p>	
STATUS OF ACTIONS	
Continue to roll out the H2OK program, including seasonal media campaigns (focussing on issues like leaves and organics, gross pollutants and litter and fertilisers), targeted training on erosion and sediment control in partnership with the Master Builders Association, drain stencilling with schools across the region as well as rollout of a demonstration site grants program to establish a series of good practice examples of domestic scale stormwater management. This project is being delivered in partnership with Open Gardens Canberra.	

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<b>LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN INVESTIGATION</b>	
<b>RURAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Recommendation 10</b>	
That the ACT and NSW governments and the National Capital Authority support planning and implementation of on-ground actions to reduce the potential for soil erosion in the upper Queanbeyan River, upper Molonglo River and Jerrabomberra Creek. In doing so active involvement of Palerang Council, the Molonglo Catchment Management Group, ACTEW (now Icon Water) and other natural resource management (NRM) groups should continue to be strongly encouraged and supported.	
<b>Commissioner's comment</b>	
Progress has been reported. Update on strategy implementation and outcomes is required.	
<b>ACT Government response – EPSDD</b>	
<b>RELEVANT STRATEGY</b>	
The ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, released in August 2016, included Action 18: Mitigate soil erosion at priority sites. This will be achieved by activities such as identifying and prioritising significant erosion hotspots across the catchment and developing implementation responses as appropriate. The implementation plan indicated that this action is currently unresourced and was considered a longer term priority.	
<b>ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED</b>	
<p>The operational report to the 27 June 2017 meeting of the Coordination Group indicated that work on the Action was yet to commence, however the Commonwealth has indicated that planning for National Landcare Program 2 funding has begun and that they will run a competitive tender process that allows any organisation (including existing regional bodies) to 'bid' to be the regional body for a region.</p> <p>ACT NRM, with the NRM Council, is developing an Investment Plan (finalised fourth quarter 2017) which will be the basis for ACT NRM's proposal to the Australian Government as the NRM Regional Body for the ACT.</p> <p>ACT NRM is seeking to explore opportunities for cross border investment through jointly funded projects, such as Regional Delivery, joint grant funding rounds and training for rural landholders. ACT NRM has had initial discussions in 2017 to identify further collaboration with cross-border stakeholders, including South East Local Land Services, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (Saving our Species), Land for Wildlife, Greening Australia and Kosciuszko to Coast.</p>	
<b>STATUS OF ACTIONS</b>	
Yet to commence.	
<b>Recommendation 11</b>	
That the ACT Government finalise and implement the Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management. The plan should include adequate monitoring, reporting and review, and mechanisms to ensure effective cooperation between ACTEW (now Icon Water), NSW and ACT in the management of the Googong Foreshores.	
<b>Commissioner's comment</b>	
Progress has been reported. Update on implementation of plan of management and outcomes is required.	
<b>ACT Government response</b>	
<b>EPSDD</b>	<b>TCCS</b>
<b>RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT</b>	
Googong Foreshores Plan of Management.	Following machinery of government changes effective 1 July 2016, Parks and Conservation Services transferred from TCCS to EPSDD. As a consequence, TCCS has no ongoing responsibility for this recommendation and refers the Commissioner to the EPSDD response.
<b>ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED</b>	
Publish the endorsed Plan.	
<b>STATUS OF ACTIONS</b>	
The Googong Foreshores Plan of Management will be re-published in 2017 when resources are available.	

## MANAGEMENT OF OTHER RECREATIONAL WATERWAYS

**Recommendation 16**

A comprehensive assessment of environmental, social and economic value of key ACT lakes be undertaken and take into account current and predicted challenges to water quality. This assessment should inform:

- a review and update of Canberra's Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management involving extensive community consultation and taking into account the long-term challenges to water quality in the urban catchments,
- the need for government investments in water quality,
- decisions regarding trials of appropriate in-lake and catchment management measures, with the results assessed from scientific (environmental), social and economic perspectives, and
- decisions regarding implementation of lake and catchment management options.

**Commissioner's comment**

Progress has been reported. Update on implementation of plan of management and outcomes is required.

**ACT Government response**

EPSDD	TCCS
RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT	
<p>ACT Water Strategy (Strategy 2: Protect and restore aquatic ecosystems in urban and non-urban areas)</p> <p>Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Land Management Plan.</p>	<p>TCCS has provided extensive input to EPSDD on their update of Canberra's Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management.</p>
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED	
<p>As part of the ACT Healthy Waterways program, the ACT Government is developing an Integrated Water Quality Monitoring Framework. This framework aims to re-evaluate all water-related monitoring programs in the ACT, with the goal to improve surveillance and our understanding of the current condition of water resources. In addition, ACT Government is procuring a SOURCE model (a hydrological model of our catchments, which models water flows and water quality). This model will enable the ACT Government to better predict changes in condition of resources due to a range of stressors (e.g. climate change, land-use change), and the possible benefits of management actions (e.g. impacts of WSUD, improving riparian condition etc).</p> <p>EPSDD has identified a strategic need for a better appraisal of the environmental, social and economic values of water resources in the ACT. A body of work is currently being examined which will identify the strategic pathways to improve our understanding of the true values of our water resources in the ACT. An improved understanding of values will support rational and cost-effective investment in maintaining our water resources in the ACT.</p> <p>The current version of the Canberra Urban Lakes and Ponds Plan of Management (now referred to as a Land Management Plan) is due for a review and potential update. The Environment Protection Policy unit has drafted a revised Management Plan and will be seeking agreement for its release for public consultation in the near future. Major updates to the Management Plan include incorporating likely future climate change implications, incorporating the many ponds and wetlands that have been established since the document was last updated and ensuring that it reflects current best management practices.</p>	<p>The draft plan is currently under review and will be released for public comment in the coming months.</p>
STATUS OF ACTIONS	
<p>An integrated water quality monitoring framework is currently being developed. Recommendations should be concluded by December 2017. Work on the social, economic and environmental value of water will continue over the next couple of years.</p>	

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**Recommendation 17**

The ACT, Australian, NSW and local governments establish a Burley Griffin-Molonglo-Queanbeyan catchment management agreement. Such an agreement should outline:

- a. strategic objectives for the integrated and coordinated management of the Lake and catchments, to encompass water quality, environmental flows, potable water, land use, wastewater, and future urban and climate change impacts on the catchment,
- b. each party's responsibilities for water quality in the Lake and its catchments,
- c. a long-term catchment planning framework, and
- d. an evidence-based, adaptive, management work plan.

To avoid past challenges of multi-jurisdictional catchment management co-ordination, such an agreement should include a dedicated governance group with representation from all jurisdictions, a consistent and persistent mechanism to ensure implementation and accountability, and reporting requirements.

The National Capital Authority, as Lake manager, should in the first instance convene a meeting of relevant jurisdictional representatives to guide the above recommendations.

**Commissioner's comment**

Progress has been reported. Update on strategy implementation and outcomes is required (see Recommendation 8).

**ACT Government response – EPSDD**

RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT
ACT and Region Catchment Strategy
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED
Refer to Recommendation 8. Progress on the implementation of all recommendations is tracked at every meeting of the Coordination Group. Attached is the most recent update provided to the 27 June 2017 meeting.
STATUS OF ACTIONS
Ongoing



*Lake Burley Griffin. Source Pixabay*



## Recommendation 4.2

Reviewing the Canberra Nature Park Management Plan 1999 as mandated under the Planning and Development Act 2007 and in so doing include:

- nature reserves added to the reserve system since 1999,
- addresses categorising nature reserves (recommendation 3.4),
- policies to address current issues and those developed since 1999, particularly:
  - Action Plan No. 27 – ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy,
  - Action Plan No. 28 – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy,
  - Action Plan. No 29 – ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy, and
- consideration of climate change (including Impacts of Climate on the Canberra Nature Park: Risks and responses by Dr Bob Webb – Appendix E) and connectivity (including Ecological Connectivity for Climate Change in the ACT and surrounding region by Manning et al.).

## Commissioner's comment

Report on progress requested.

## ACT Government response

EPSDD	TCCS
RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT	
<p>The Canberra Nature Park Management Plan 1999 has been reviewed and a new draft plan prepared. The new draft plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes reserves added to the reserve system since 1999,</li> <li>• categorises nature reserves,</li> <li>• includes policies to address current issues,</li> <li>• includes requirements to manage woodlands, grasslands and riparian zones in accordance with the strategies in Action Plans 27, 28 and 29, and</li> <li>• includes consideration of climate change and connectivity.</li> </ul>	<p>Following machinery of government changes effective 1 July 2016, Parks and Conservation Services transferred from TCCS to EPSDD. As a consequence, TCCS has no ongoing responsibility for this recommendation and refers the Commissioner to the EPSDD response.</p>
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED	
Release of the draft plan for public comment in 2017.	
STATUS OF ACTIONS	
Public release of the draft Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan has been deferred until the feasibility study into the possible creation of a new northern national park for the ACT's lowland grassy woodlands is completed and a decision made on whether to proceed with establishment of the park. The feasibility study is a requirement of the Parliamentary Agreement between the ACT Greens and ACT Labor.	

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**Recommendation 3**

That the Molonglo Riparian Strategy is released publicly on the ACT Planning and Land Authority website, along with an explanation of how it will be incorporated into the Molonglo River Park Plan. This should be updated regularly. The Directorate that has carriage of implementing the NES plan should also host this information on their website.

**Commissioner's comment**

Progress has been reported. Details as to the current status of the Molonglo River Park Plan are requested.

**ACT Government response**

EPSDD	TCCS
RELEVANT STRATEGY, PLAN OF MANAGEMENT OR AUDIT	
<p>A Draft Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan is complete.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Molonglo River Reserve (MRR) is a proposed new reserve comprising approximately 1,280 hectares that follow the Molonglo River from Scrivener Dam to the intersection with the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Reserve. The MRR will aggregate two current reserves, Lower Molonglo River Corridor Nature Reserve and Kama Nature Reserve and will add additional land surrounding the new urban areas of the Molonglo Valley.</li> <li>2. In September 2008, the ACT and Commonwealth Governments agreed to a strategic assessment of the potential impacts of the urban development at Molonglo Valley, under Section 10 the EPBC Act. On 4 November 2011, the Commonwealth Minister, the Hon Tony Burke MP, announced the endorsement of the Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance September 2011 (the NES Plan).</li> <li>3. The NES Plan commits the ACT Government to develop the draft reserve management plan within three years of endorsement of the Molonglo NES Plan or prior to commencement of the Molonglo Group Centre Infrastructure Stage 1, whichever occurs first. A draft Plan was prepared by November 2014 meeting this timeframe; however the fire management approach required further consultation to bring the draft Plan into line with the new 2014 Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. This delay was reported to the Commonwealth and an extension of time agreed.</li> <li>4. The preparation of the draft plan has been a collaborative exercise with the community and government. A Community Reference Group was formed comprising recreation user groups, environmental groups and land users. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate was represented on the Molonglo River Park Coordination Committee and has reviewed this and several earlier versions of the draft Plan.</li> </ol>	<p>Following machinery of government changes effective 1 July 2016, Parks and Conservation Services transferred from TCCS to EPSDD. As a consequence, TCCS has no ongoing responsibility for this recommendation and refers the Commissioner to the EPSDD response.</p>
ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED	
Release the draft Plan for Public Consultation.	
STATUS OF ACTIONS	
To be released for public consultation during 2017–18.	

**TABLE 4: DIRECTORATE REPORTING ON COMMISSIONER COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

DETAILS	COMMISSIONER'S COMMENT	ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
<b>WODEN GREEN DEVELOPMENT – REPORT INTO COMPLIANCE WITH PLANS OF MANAGEMENT</b>		
Received March 2013 Completed 3 June 2015 The Commissioner received a complaint alleging the public was not adequately consulted on the Woden Green Development, and that there were issues of non-compliance with various plans of management during development.	A Master Plan was being developed and a request is made for an update on progress.	<b>EPSDD</b> <i>Relevant strategy, plan of management or audit</i> The Master Plan for Woden Green Development became the responsibility of the developer (Hindmarsh Group) when the Land Development Agency, finalised the sale of the precinct in 2014. <i>Actions to be completed</i> Nil. <i>Status of actions</i> No action required.
<b>ALLEGED DAMAGE TO PUBLIC UNLEASED LAND ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT WORK ON BLOCK 20, SECTION 28 (99 RIVETT ST) ADJOINING HELMS PLACE, HACKETT</b>		
Received August 2014 Completed 26 April 2016 Key issues: 1. trucks accessing construction materials on Helms Place, 2. access through the gate into the nature reserve (to rear of private dwelling), 3. heavy machinery travelling over tree roots compacting land, and 4. sediment and run-off management/control.	The Commissioner notes that action has been taken and requests TCCS provide a copy of the report which was foreshadowed in the TCCS 2015–16 Annual Report.	<b>TCCS</b> <i>Relevant strategy, plan of management or audit</i> A report outlining the development of procedures and policies to improve the management of Public Unleased Land Act 2013 (PULA) permits and other land use complaints has been prepared. TCCS has implemented a PULA permit bond system to mitigate damage to public land. A long-term solution to these issues has also been developed, providing a whole of government legislative approach to improving regulatory capacity, led by TCCS, which will improve collaboration between government agencies and seeks to streamline regulatory legislation. Development of this legislation included inter-agency consultation and a review of PULA. <i>Actions to be completed</i> Community engagement for the Improved Municipal Services legislation will take place in 2017–18 to inform policy development and areas of focus. <i>Status of actions</i> Recruitment for a senior policy officer is underway to lead community engagement and to further develop the legislation in conjunction with PULA and other relevant existing legislation. A Statement of Intent has been drafted in consultation with other relevant areas of Government.
<b>BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE PLANNING AND THIRD PARTY APPEAL INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPMENT DECISION NOTICES</b>		
Received February 2013 Completed 26 April 2016 The complaint raised two issues in relation to a Development Application: 1. impact of proposed high-rise buildings in Belconnen town centre on the environs of Lake Ginninderra, and 2. lack of clarity regarding ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal and third party appeal rights provided in Part 4 of the Development Decision.	In response to this particular complaint, progress has been reported in the 2015–16 Annual Report. No further action will be undertaken on this particular complaint.	No action required.

### B.2.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS STILL TO BE IMPLEMENTED

This section relates to the statutory functions under s20 (c) of the Act and must include details of ‘any recommendation in a report mentioned in paragraph (b) that the commissioner believes is still to be implemented or fully implemented’.

Having reviewed the answers provided by directorates and agencies, there is nothing to be reported under this section.

### B.2.4 ACTIVITIES UNDER THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT

This section relates to the objects of the Act under s2B (a) – (e) in the Act.

#### B.2.4.1 SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT

The objects of the Act are to ensure regular and consistent reporting on matters relating to the condition and management of the environment and progress towards ecologically sustainable development in the Territory. This is outlined in **B2.4.2**, **B2.4.3** and **B2.4.4** below.

#### B.2.4.2 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

##### Social media – to reach a broader audience and export the message of ecologically sustainable development

The Commissioner is actively pursuing a policy of building a social media profile to strategically promote ecologically sustainable development. Whilst no formal media strategy has been developed, all members of the office staff are involved in promoting environmental sustainability by electronic media.

The office’s Facebook profile, Living Sustainably ACT had 850 followers at 30 June 2017 and continues to grow. Two-thirds of our followers are women and one-third are men. Over half of our Facebook followers are based in the ACT. The remainder are from across Australia with a smattering from other countries.

The office ran two competitions during the reporting year – a photo competition to find Canberra’s most amazing tree and a cycling logo competition #CBR Women Ride. Both of these competitions were well subscribed. Students were actively involved in the cycling logo competition.

#### Case study

### #CBR WOMEN RIDE

Five of our six staff ride bikes to work and to meetings. While we have two office bikes some of us prefer to ride our own. Our office is based at Macarthur House, Lyneham which has a secure bike cage, outdoor bike racks, showers and lockers.

Bicycles are used to get to meetings and lunch-time appointments, particularly for journeys under five kilometres.

One of our social media campaigns focused on encouraging women and girls to ride their bikes, as evidence showed only 1 in 3 commuters are women. To address this we ran a logo competition called #CBR Women Ride. Students from Year 9 St Clare’s College entered the competition and we received good coverage of our initiative.



*One of the joint winners of the logo competition.*

Pedal Power, Canberra’s largest cycling organisation, interviewed staff about our riding habits and produced a short video on our travel choices. The video reached a broad audience and was widely shared. We emphasised that we didn’t need special equipment to ride and wore our work clothes on bikes.

We are partnering with organisations like Pedal Power and the Active Travel Office, Transport Canberra and City Services to continue engagement with the community to encourage more people to adopt active travel options.

The office's Twitter feed, @EnvComm\_ACT had over 1,200 followers at 30 June 2017.

Events which involve the office, the staff and the Commissioner are routinely posted and statistical insights are monitored to determine which issues are of interest to the public.

The office has made 11 short videos in-house to promote issues like active travel, the importance of trees, better streetscapes, the Canberra Bicycle Repair Café and tips to reduce consumption and waste. Videos were posted on social media. Production and publication of original video content, as part of a broader communications strategy, have proven to be highly effective in capturing the attentions of social media users. The success of this video content is reflected in higher engagement metrics; video posts have typically yielded 200–300 per cent higher engagement numbers than the best performing non-video social media posts.

The Commissioner also wrote an article that featured on the Pedal Power website about the role of the bicycle in Canberra.

A blog, Living Sustainably ACT was instituted in the first months of Commissioner Auty's appointment. To encourage cross-cultural engagement a UC intern was encouraged to complete a blog (Lebanese Environmentalist) in French and Arabic. This received a good reception.

### Youth Technology Sustainability Forum

This was held on 1 September 2016 and was attended by 40 people. The purpose of this forum was to engage Canberra's university students and young professionals

to answer the question 'How can technology solve our local sustainability challenges?'. This was done through a series of presentations, workshops, an expert panel discussion and other collaborate exercises.

### Young Professionals Reference Group

The Commissioner has established a new ad hoc working group with younger people and university students, which is simply titled *The Young Professionals Reference Group*. This group has participated in a range of activities including forums on biodiversity and technology, design and city fabric, and the redesign and development of Haig Park. The Commissioner has, to further her capacity to engage with this demographic, been actively involved in career information sessions with Fenner School and other students, and discussions about the role of the office and presentations to groups of students at both University House (ANU) and Bruce Hall (Sustainability Team, ANU).

### SEE-Change and Parliament of Youth

The office continues to work with SEE-Change and Australia21 in the Parliament of Youth, presenting to teachers, attending the Parliament and promoting the understanding of the work the office has done in respect of the Ecological Footprint of Canberrans.

At professional development sessions for teachers arranged by SEE-change, the office presented on the ACT's ecological footprint. An Ecological Footprint factsheet was produced that was more relevant to teachers and students with a focus on the top 10 items that Canberrans buy that impact our footprint. Suggestions were provided on ways to reduce our footprint and how to engage students.

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Cherry and Montana, ANU students from the Fenner School volunteered to help out with the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability.  
Source Edwina Robinson

## Direct engagement

Forms of direct engagement included meetings with the Commissioner, presentations, launches, seminars and project support with a wide range of individuals and groups as outlined in **Appendix 3**.

One example of this was in the consultation on the Haig Park Masterplan. As a result of the Commissioner raising climate change as an issue that had yet to be considered in the development of this plan, expert advice was sought from a distinguished early career climate scientist at the ANU.

## Messages of Appreciation

Feedback provided on an ad hoc basis gives an indication of the work the office has been undertaking with community and individuals:

“this planet needs visionaries that can formulate, communicate & lead a motivating path forward; motivating particularly for all young generations; a path that defies our luxuries of self-interest.”  
Dr Andreas Luzzi, CEO of Laros Technologies.

“Edwina and Kirilly just gave a great presentation at the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability session. Really useful summary of top 10 Canberra footprint contributors.” Anne Quinn, Project Officer, SEE-Change.

“Thank you [Kate] again for your visit today. We really appreciate you taking the time to do so and thoroughly enjoyed having you here” Angela Calliess, Operations Manager, ACT and Regional NSW, Greening Australia.

“What a pleasure to meet you [Kate and Becky] and others of a like mind last week...thank you for being such a gracious moderator...thank you for the invitation to connect should I happen your way in the future.” Stella Miria-Robinson, Multicultural Advisor, Uniting Care Queensland, in relation to Oceania and environmental accounts.

## B.2.4.3 REGIONAL STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING

The Commissioner engages with regional groups such as the South East Regional Organisation of Councils and individual Local Governments (Councils) on environmental reporting in the region. Until 2012 the Commissioner worked collaboratively with Councils to develop the SouthEast Regional State of the Environment Report. Changes to NSW reporting legislation in 2012 (via the *Local Government Amendment [Planning and Reporting] Act 2009 No 67*) altered the reporting obligations of local regional councils. Local Councils have since reported on the state and condition of their own local government areas. This information is maintained on the local Council's own websites.

## B.2.4.4 SUBMISSIONS

The office comments and provides input into ACT Government draft documents by specific invitation or public consultation process (often advertised via Your Say on the ACT Government's website).

Submissions to public consultations are made publicly available on the Commissioner's website, however, this is not the case with submissions by invitation.



**TABLE 5:** SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS MADE IN 2016–17

SUBMISSION	DETAILS	DATE
<b>A Day To Celebrate Reconciliation – Your Say Community Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicated support for the ACT Governments' current activities pertaining to Indigenous acknowledgement and inclusion, and</li> <li>indicated support for the proposed Reconciliation Day of 29 May to replace Family and Community Day.</li> </ul>	8 July 2016
<b>Gartside St Improvements Concept Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicated a number of desirable design elements that would increase amenity, encourage sustainable use of the space and reduce environmental impact.</li> </ul>	23 August 2016
<b>Kambah Group Centre Upgrade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicated a number of desirable design elements that would increase amenity, encourage sustainable use of the space and reduce environmental impact, and</li> <li>in addition to the above design elements, the submission also suggested specific climate change adaptation measures, including use of urban forest and Water Sensitive Urban Design.</li> </ul>	26 October 2016
<b>Draft Ginini Flats Wetland Complex Ramsar Management Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enquired whether prescribed burning has been considered as a measure to protect the site,</li> <li>enquired if the potential of cultural burning has been discussed with Indigenous ACT Government officers trained in this field,</li> <li>noted importance of monitoring and recording all animal and plant species at the site, not just the Northern Corroboree Frog, Broad-toothed Rat and Sphagnum bog, and</li> <li>suggested the development of a communications strategy that employs a range of media educating the public about the importance of the site.</li> </ul>	31 October 2016
<b>Pink Tailed Worm Lizard (PTWL) Draft Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>urged caution in relation to the classification of various populations of PTWL throughout the habitat area, noting that literature on minimum viable populations indicated far higher minimum numbers than those in the draft action plan,</li> <li>suggested supplementary and alternative protection measures for PTWL habitats not covered directly by the action plan,</li> <li>urged caution in relation to fire management, and suggested further ecological study of PTWL response to fire, and</li> <li>highlighted the importance of sufficient allocation of park rangers.</li> </ul>	6 December 2016
<b>Public Housing Proposal For Downer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>noted the ACT Government's commitments under Action Plan 2, as they relate to priority households,</li> <li>advocated for best practice in sustainable building design, materials and construction, along with energy efficiency measures and education for proposed public housing residents, and</li> <li>acknowledged the role of negative public perception of public housing in perpetuating social exclusion, and identified a window of opportunity provided by new public housing to challenge the stereotypes associated with public housing tenants.</li> </ul>	20 December 2016
<b>Incorporating Active Living Principles into the Territory Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicated support for the inclusion of Active Living Principles,</li> <li>outlined co-benefits other than health that were not included in the plan, and</li> <li>outlined the barriers that exist to incorporating active travel in daily life.</li> </ul>	10 February 2017

SUBMISSION	DETAILS	DATE
<b>Lower Cotter Catchment Draft Reserve Management Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted the National Water Quality Management Strategy and the National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia as the relevant standards.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply a more comprehensive framework, as set out in the Standards, clearly identifying reference ecosystem(s) and attributes, linking these through to the measurable and time linked objectives,</li> <li>linking objectives explicitly through to the relevant operational management and action plans, and</li> <li>strengthening the commitment and governance regarding research, monitoring and knowledge management.</li> </ol>	14 March 2017
<b>Haig Park Redevelopment</b>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>design for climate change adaptation and mitigation,</li> <li>consider water sensitive urban design opportunities for Haig Park,</li> <li>design play opportunities for children, and active/passive recreation for young people and adults, and</li> <li>link the park to commercial, residential and ecological areas.</li> </ul>	22 May 2017
<b>Response to Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme consultation on the Priority Household Target</b>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extend the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme to public housing,</li> <li>ensure the eligibility criteria for the PHT is accurate,</li> <li>improve community engagement, and</li> <li>bridge the divide.</li> </ul>	5 May 2017
<b>Draft ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans</b>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue funding for monitoring,</li> <li>develop and implement community action plan (including social media, improving signage, engagement activities, engaging indigenous staff and alternative engagement opportunities, e.g. art),</li> <li>ensure management of Natural Temperate Grassland takes into account the threats,</li> <li>maintain category 1 and 2 grasslands and rehabilitate category 3, and</li> <li>ensure the impacts of climate change have been considered in each threatened species action plan.</li> </ul>	12 May 2017
<b>Nomination of the Loss of Native Hollow-bearing Trees as a Key Threatening Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported the nomination made, and</li> <li>Provided additional evidence from two experts as to why this should be nominated.</li> </ul>	9 June 2017

## B.2.5 INFORMATION IN AGENCY ANNUAL REPORTS

This section relates to s23 in the Act.

All agencies responded to the Commissioner's requests for information relating to the state of the environment reporting within a reasonable time.

## B.3 Scrutiny

There were no requests for the Commissioner to report on progress during the reporting period in relation to undertakings made in reports that are produced by entities charged with responsibility for scrutiny, including the Auditor-General, Ombudsman and Legislative Assembly Committees.

## B.4 Risk Management

Risks are considered and addressed appropriately in all activities of the office. Advice is sought on procurement for major commissions on an as-needs basis. Risk is discussed at fortnightly staff meetings.

## B.5 Internal Audit

According to the ACT Government Internal Audit Framework “in the case of a small agency with no board, the governing body may elect not to delegate their ‘conformance’ responsibilities and functions to a committee.” This means that the Commissioner has the responsibility to delegate auditing responsibilities.

In the last financial year, the Commissioner presented on the role of the office to EPSDD’s Audit Committee and is aware that their assistance is available if required.

## B.6 Fraud Prevention

Information on the office’s fraud prevention processes and any reports or allegations are outlined in the EPSDD’s 2016–17 Annual Report.

## B.7 Work Health and Safety

The office is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Occupational health and safety is managed in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (amended and in force as at 1 July 2016).

During 2016–17 the Commissioner did not receive any notices under the revised Act, and there were no notifiable incidents. The Commissioner does not pay a first tier worker’s compensation premium.

Three stand-up desks are available in the office to aid staff health management. We also have two office bicycles which staff regularly use to cycle to meetings. Staff also walk to meetings if the distance is appropriate. Staff are encouraged to bring plants into the office to enhance the quality of the air, as well as improving their mental health.

The office’s workplace health and safety policy is included in EPSDD’s 2016–17 Annual Report. Staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant initiatives run by EPSDD.

## B.8 Human Resources Management

Further information to that provided in this section can be found in EPSDD’s 2016–17 Annual Report.

### B.8.1 WORKFORCE PROFILE

#### B.8.1.1 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) HEADCOUNT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As noted in **Section B.1.5**, while our standard staffing number is six FTEs, at different times variations can occur in response to changing needs and situations. This is reflected in the following tables.

**TABLE 6:** FTE BY GENDER AND HEAD COUNT

HEADCOUNT TOTAL	FTE		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
7	5.9	FTE by gender	5.1	0.9	5.9
7	5.9	Headcount by gender	6	1	7
		% of workforce	85.7	14.3	100.0%

**TABLE 7: FTE BY CLASSIFICATION**

CLASSIFICATION GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Administrative officers	2	0	2
Senior officers	3	1	4
Statutory office holders	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

**TABLE 8: HEADCOUNT BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY AND AVERAGE YEARS OF SERVICE**

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Casual	0	1	1
Permanent full-time	4	0	4
Permanent part-time	1	0	1
Temporary full-time	1	0	1
Temporary part-time	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
Average years of service	3.7	0.4	3.2

**TABLE 9: HEADCOUNT BY DIVERSITY GROUP**

	HEADCOUNT	% OF TOTAL STAFF
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1	14.3%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	0	0.0%
People with a disability	0	0.0%

**TABLE 10: HEADCOUNT BY AGE GROUP**

AGE GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Under 25	0	0	0
25–34	1	0	1
35–44	1	1	2
45–54	3	0	3
55 and over	1	0	1

**TABLE 11: PERMANENT RECRUITMENT AND SEPARATION RATES**

DIVISION	RECRUITMENT RATE	SEPARATION RATE
Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment	59.8%	89.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59.8%</b>	<b>89.7%</b>

Figures on recruitment and separation rates by classification group in **Table 11** are generated as a percentage of the cohort group with the total for the office shown at the bottom of the table.

The effect of these calculations for a very small cohort such as the office is to produce rates that may look a little high or unusual.

## **B.8.2 ATTRACTION AND RETENTION INCENTIVES (ARINS)**

The office had no ARins arrangements during 2016–17.

## **B.8.3 PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

The office has a commitment to strengthening workforce and organisational capacity through building skills and capabilities. This learning and development is guided by individual achievement plans and supported through our strategic plan.

In addition to formal training sessions, office staff attended seminars and forums on various environment and sustainability topics including:

- adaptation to and mitigation of climate change,
- international and sub-national reporting on environmental-economic accounting,
- biodiversity and ecosystems research,
- environmental regulation,
- heritage, planning and development,
- water and catchment management,
- renewable energy,
- active transport and light rail,
- state of the environment reporting,
- communicating environmental/sustainability issues, and
- leadership.

## **B.8.4 FUTURE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES**

Learning and development priorities for all office staff are identified within individual performance plans.

## **B.8.5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

The office actively participates in the EPSDD Graduate Program and has previously benefitted from hosting a number of graduate placements.

From June to September 2017, the office accepted the placement of an environmental engineer with postgraduate qualifications in city planning and development. During rotation in our office, this graduate will gain experience in topical projects and diverse, interesting and challenging work.

The office has also accepted placements from ANU and UC of undergraduate students in environmental science related studies. In this reporting year, UC placed two students in the office, one of whom assisted with the development of new factsheets. UC was very grateful for our assistance and reported that the student gained excellent experience while working at our office. The office has assisted one undergraduate research team of international students from ANU to complete a team research task.

The office has also assisted in making a number of research links for graduates and public servants from across Africa engaged in an exchange program supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## **B.8.6 PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND ACTPS TRAINING CALENDAR**

No staff members participated in the study assistance program during 2016–17.

All staff attended mandatory sessions and took up other ACTPS-advertised training opportunities. Details of learning and development programs offered to all ACT Government staff, including the office staff, can be found in the EPSDD 2016–17 Annual Report.

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## B.9 Ecologically Sustainable Development

### B.9.1 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

During 2016–17 the office has been accommodated at Level 2 WOTSO Workspace, 490 Northbourne Avenue in Dickson and at Macarthur House in Lyneham.

The office shared both of these office spaces with ACT Procurement Services.

The office occupies approximately 100 square metres of floor space (not including shared access to kitchens and public amenities for all staff based on a proportion of the tenancy floor space). The Commissioner does not use a car park. Staff and the Commissioner have access to the bicycle cage facility at Macarthur House.

### B.9.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The office is covered under the EPSDD Resource Management Plan.

Specifically, the Resource Management Plan refers to the office (p7):

*‘Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is located at 490 Northbourne Avenue Dickson.<sup>29</sup> Due to the proportionally small impact of those 6 FTE in their workplace, the Key Performance Indicator for the office is to maintain its full Actsmart Business Accreditation.’*

The office is accredited as an Actsmart business and continues to participate in the program. Accreditation was renewed in October 2016.

The office participates in the EPSDD Green Team. This is an ongoing commitment that allows our staff to be connected to what is going on in terms of sustainability initiatives in EPSDD and across ACT Government.

The office ensures that its facilities are appropriate to maintain independence from relevant government activities.

A range of strategies are in place to assist in achieving more sustainable resource management, including:

- continuing to work towards becoming a paperless office by using electronic data management via Objective Electronic Data Management software for filing and to minimise paper and cartridge use,
- circulating electronic versions of reports for comment rather than hard copies,
- striving for sustainable procurement through our tendering assessment processes,
- using 100 per cent recycled paper for our printing,
- sharing recycling facilities (including organic waste) with co-lessee on our floor,
- having two staff members trained in the use of the ACT Government Enterprise Sustainability Platform (ESP),
- all staff have their own coffee cups and do not use disposable ones, and
- encouraging staff to use the two office bicycles to engage in active travel and to use MyWay bus passes to attend off-site meetings and events where feasible.



*Our office's reusable coffee cups. Source Serena Farrelly*

<sup>29</sup> Note that on 1 February 2017, the office was relocated to Macarthur House

**TABLE 12: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE – CURRENT AND PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR**

INDICATOR AS AT 30 JUNE 2016	UNIT	CURRENT FY 2016–17	PREVIOUS FY 2015–16	% CHANGE
<b>AGENCY STAFF AND AREA</b>				<b>See explanatory note 1 for this column</b>
Agency staff	FTE	6	6	
Workplace floor area	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	98.8 <sup>a</sup>	113.2	
<b>STATIONARY ENERGY USAGE</b>				
Electricity use	Kilowatt hours	13,436	7,238	
Natural gas use	Megajoules	14,605 <sup>b</sup>	0 <sup>c</sup>	
Diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
<b>TRANSPORT FUEL USAGE</b>				
Electric vehicles	Number	0	0	
Hybrid vehicles	Number	0	0	
Other vehicles (that are not electric or hybrid)	Number	0	1 <sup>d</sup>	
Total number of vehicles	Number	0	1 <sup>d</sup>	
Total kilometres travelled	Kilometres	0	166 <sup>e</sup>	
Fuel use – petrol	Kilolitres	0	0.01345 <sup>e</sup>	
Fuel use – diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)	Cubic Metres (m <sup>3</sup> )	0	0	
<b>WATER USAGE</b>				
Water use	Kilolitres	32 <sup>f</sup>	0 <sup>g</sup>	
<b>RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND WASTE</b>				
Reams of paper purchased	Reams	35	45	
Recycled content of paper purchased	Percentage	100	100	
Waste to landfill <sup>h</sup>	Litres	1,600 <sup>i</sup>	960	
Co-mingled material recycled <sup>j</sup>	Litres	600 <sup>i</sup>	460	
Paper and cardboard recycled (including secure paper) <sup>k</sup>	Litres	800 <sup>i</sup>	820	
Organic material recycled <sup>l</sup>	Litres	200 <sup>i</sup>	78	
<b>GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS <sup>m</sup></b>				
Emissions from stationary energy use	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	8.3	5.3	
Emissions from transport	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	0	0	
Total emissions Tonnes	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	8.3	5.3	

See explanatory notes overleaf.

## Explanatory notes for Table 12

- a. This figure is the average of the two areas the office was located in over the reporting year. At WOTSO workspace the office occupied 113.2 m<sup>2</sup> and at Macarthur House the office occupied 84.4 m<sup>2</sup>.
- b. Estimate natural gas consumption at Macarthur House only. The ESP platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO workspace.
- c. The ESP platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO workspace.
- d. This was Commissioner Neil's package vehicle which was returned on 31 July 2016 on his retirement. Total kilometres provided are for one calendar month, business use only.
- e. Figures calculated as work-related travel and fuel consumption based on the Green Vehicle Guide.
- f. Estimate water consumption at Macarthur House only, period from 1 February 2017 to 30 June 2017. The ESP platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO workspace.
- g. The ESP platform generally does not capture utility consumption data if the ACT Government is not formally billed for it either direct from the utility supplier or on-billed from a non-government landlord, as is the case for WOTSO workspace.
- h. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO workspace three 10L hoppers were collected three times per week, at Macarthur House this was reduced to one 10L hopper emptied daily into a 55L hopper shared with two other teams emptied two times a week.
- i. Figures are based on latest Actsmart Audit completed October 2016. The audit reflects waste at WOTSO workspace, however, on 1 February 2017 the office moved locations to Macarthur House. The data will be updated once the next audit is completed after the office moves to its new location.
- j. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO workspace six 8L hoppers were emptied monthly, at Macarthur House this was reduced to one 75L hopper shared with two other teams that was emptied two times a week.
- k. This is an estimate figure. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO workspace and Macarthur House one 120L hopper for secure paper was collected every eight weeks.
- l. This is an estimate figure based on staff contributions to bins managed by a commercial organics waste management company. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected. At WOTSO Workspace one 3L hopper was collected weekly, at Macarthur House this increased to one 18L hopper shared with two other teams.
- m. The ESP platform was reconfigured with changed floor area for WOTSO workspace resulting in changed totals for 2015–16 and 2016–17.

## 1. Percentage change between 2015–16 and 2016–17 financial years

Calculating a percentage change between 2015–16 and 2016–17 does not provide a meaningful comparison. Most figures are estimates based on data for whole buildings or floors. While floor area has been used to calculate our contribution or usage, office is a very small unit and has been accommodated within a floor shared with either one or two other larger ACT Government units whose tenancy, in turn, changed over the financial year.

## 2. Historical data for the Previous FY (2015–16) column

Differences between Enterprise Sustainability Platform (ESP) sourced data in the Previous FY (2015–16) and that in the original 2015–16 Report is due to a variety of sources including updates to agency occupancy and historical consumption data and to annual adjustments to ACT specific electricity emissions factors.

## 3. Greenhouse gas emissions in Previous FY (2015–16) and Current FY (2016–17) columns

Greenhouse gas emissions for electricity consumption have been calculated using the following emissions factors based on the latest (April 2017) ACT electricity Emissions Factor Report:

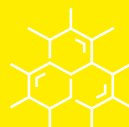
- In 2015–16 a factor of 0.732 kilogram CO<sub>2</sub>-e / kilowatt hour or 0.732 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>-e / megawatt hour. This is based on actual historical data and is a retrospective adjustment of –0.041 (5.3% reduction) of the 0.773 factor originally used for 2015–16 annual reporting.
- In 2016–17 a factor of 0.549 kilogram CO<sub>2</sub>-e / kilowatt hour or 0.549 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>-e / megawatt hour.

The emissions factors include total GreenPower purchases for the ACT calculated in the third quarter of the respective financial years and are specific to the ACT. These emissions factors (Scope 2 + Scope 3) reflect the increasing contribution of renewable electricity generated under the ACT's 100 per cent Renewable Electricity Target. Consequently they are lower than those reported in the latest National Greenhouse Accounts Factors.

## 4. Green Power purchased in 2016–17

ACT Property Group purchased 7,700 Megawatt hours of GreenPower on behalf of the ACT Government, representing an indicative 5% of the ACT Government's electricity consumption for 2016–17.

# Section C. Financial Management Reporting



## C.1 Financial Management Analysis

Further information on the office's financial management is covered in the EPSDD 2016–17 Annual Report.

## C.2 Financial Statements

The ACT Government appropriation for the office in 2016–17 was \$1,754,000.

The financial transactions for the office are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the EPSDD 2016–17 Annual Report as part of 'Expenses on Behalf of the Territory'.

## C.3 Capital Works

The office has no capital works projects.

## C.4 Asset Management

The office does not own or manage any major assets but maintains a portable asset register.

## C.5 Government Contracting

### C.5.1 PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES

Consistent with the provisions governing procurements up to \$200,000, the office continues to work with ACT Procurement Solutions to complete procurement actions where necessary.

### C.5.2 EXTERNAL SOURCES OF LABOUR AND SERVICES: INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000

During 2016–17 the office had two contracts exceeding \$25,000.

**TABLE 13:** CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000

CONTRACT TITLE	PROCUREMENT METHODOLOGY	SOCIAL PROCUREMENT	PROCUREMENT TYPE	EXEMPTION FROM QUOTATION AND TENDER THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS	CONTRACTOR NAME	CONTRACTOR AMOUNT	EXECUTION DATE	EXPIRY DATE	SME
Graphic Design Services	Quotations	No	Services	No	CRE8TIVE	\$32,580.00	6 July 2017	30 December 2017	Yes
Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan	Quotations	No	Consultancy	No	NGH Environmental	\$30,563.50	25 May 2017	20 June 2018	No

## C.6 Statement of Performance

The statement of performance for the office is included in the EPSDD 2016–17 Annual Report as 'Expenses on Behalf of the Territory'.



# Section D. Appendices



# Appendix 1: 2015 ACT State of the Environment Report Experts

## 2015 ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT STEERING COMMITTEE

### **Dr Michael Vardon**

Visiting Fellow  
Environmental Accounting Course Coordinator  
Fenner School of Environment and Society  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment  
Australian National University

### **Mr Peter Burnett**

PhD Candidate  
ANU College of Law  
Australian National University

### **Professor Albert van Dijk**

Fenner School of Environment and Society  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment  
Australian National University

### **Dr David Summers**

Visiting Fellow  
Fenner School of Environment and Society  
ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment  
Australian National University

### **Professor Kate Auty**

ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment

### **Becky Smith**

State of the Environment Manager ACT

## EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

### **Mark Lound**

Director Energy, Land and Water Statistics (ABS)

### **Mark Eigenraam**

Director at Institute for the Development of  
Environmental-Economic Accounting

### **Carl Obst**

Director at Institute for the Development of  
Environmental-Economic Accounting

### **Richard Mount**

Head Environmental Information Services Branch  
(Bureau of Meteorology)

### **Dr Neville Crossman**

Director Natural Resource Economics and Decision  
Sciences Research Team in CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences  
(CSIRO)

### **Peter Cochrane**

Advisor to the Chief Author Commonwealth State of the  
Environment Report 2016

### **Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly**

Program Manager of Environment and Agriculture  
Branch (ABS)

### **Matt Jakab**

Assistant Director in our Geospatial Solutions area and is  
currently in-posted from Geoscience Australia

### **Steven May**

Managing a project on developing an updated ecosystem  
account for the Great Barrier Reef (ABS)

### **Mladen Kovac**

Chief Economist Office of Environment and Heritage  
NSW

### **Dr Heather Keith**

lead author of Central Highlands Experimental Ecosystem  
Accounts and carbon/forest expert (ANU)

### **Dr Chris Dey**

Adjunct School of Physics University of Sydney  
(Footprints)

### **Associate Professor Tommy Wiedmann**

School of Civil and Environmental Engineering

### **Warwick McDonald**

Research Director, Water Resources Management (CSIRO)

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Edwina Robinson**

## OBSERVER

### **Sarah-Jane Hindmarsh**

A/g Director Economics & Productivity Section, Policy  
Analysis & Implementation Division, Department of the  
Environment and Energy

## Appendix 2: Experts Consulted for the Second Implementation Status Report of the ACT Government's Climate Change Policy

**Professor Andrew Blakers**

Australian National University

**Dr Matthew Stocks**

Australian National University

**Anna Nadolny**

Australian National University

**Kirsten Anderson**

Australian National University

**Lauren Bradley**

Woden Community Service

**Dr Sophie Lewis**

Australian National University

**Dr Elizabeth Hanna**

Australian National University

**Dr Evan Franklin**

Australian National University

**Professor David Griggs**

Monash University

**Gordana Marin**

Monash University

**Professor Ian Falconer Australian Order**

**Susan Helyar**

Director, ACTCOSS

**Romilly Madew**

Green Building Council of Australia

**Catherine Townsend**

Chief Architect Act Government

**Dr Hugh Saddler**

**Professor Frank Jotzo**

Australian National University

**Matt Drum**

Ndevr Environmental Consulting

**Claire Bright**

Ndevr Environmental Consulting

**Stephen Christos**

Ndevr Environmental Consulting

**Hannah Meade**

Ndevr Environmental Consulting

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## Appendix 3: Conferences, Presentations, Forums and Launches Attended by the Commissioner

EVENT	HOST
Pinnacle Tour with John Brannan and John Fitz Gerald	Friends of the Pinnacle
Climate and the Arts National Conference evening session with Prof Richard Gough (UK) Food and Sustainability	University of Melbourne
2016 ACT and Region Annual Heritage Partnership Symposium – Commissioner presented	Convened by: Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, Canberra Archaeological Society, Canberra & District Historical Society and National Trust of Australia (ACT)
ACTCOSS Conference: ACT 2020: Citizen Voice, Community Vision	ACT Council of Social Service
USG launch of the Perspective Statement “Right to the City”	Urban Synergies Group
Indigenous Programs Information Session	Deb Melaluca
Lithium-ion battery trial launch	Canberra Institute of Technology
EIANZ AGM – Speaker	Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand
Coast to Coast Conference – Commissioner was presenting	Host – Victorian Coastal Council
Climate Change Risk and Corporate Governance – Legal Symposium	University of Melbourne
Australian Regional Development Conference – Commissioner presenting	Regional Development
Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Multicultural Leaders Reception	CMCF
Australian Women in Agriculture Conference – Commissioner presenting	AWIA
Geoengineering Workshop	University of Melbourne
Mt Ginini and Brindabella Field Trip	EPSDD
A focus on a competitive, digital future for Australia – ‘Internet of Things (IoT) – What’s now, what’s the future – in the sustainability and health sectors’	.au Domain Administration Ltd
International Festival of Landscape Architecture	Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
Mulligans Flat Tour and meeting Zealandia Board (NZ)	Wetlands & Woodlands Trust
ANU Energy Change Institute Open Day 2016	ANU
350.org Climate Change Forum – Commissioner to talk about the complete list of what the ACT is doing (ACT Energy Climate Change Program)	350.org
One Health EcoHealth 2016 – Conference	International Association for Ecology & Health
Women in the Environment Profession	EIANZ
Women in Leadership Summit	AventEdge
	Green Drinks – science communication and the need to use great infographics and digital technologies to tell sustainability stories
Enough Doom and Gloom: Holistic Approaches Bring Hope for People and Ocean	Institute of Applied Ecology
Communications Conversation with ANU	ANU
Satyajit Das – Beyond growth as we know it – How can we stop consuming our future?	Sustainable Living Festival

EVENT	HOST
Bridging science, economics and policy silos – Chief Scientists Roundtable	ANU
Scope the Future for SERREE	SERREE
Tony McMichael's last book – Climate Change and the Health of Nations	ANU
Presentations to teachers – Parliament of Youth – Eco footprint	Parliament of Youth
Australian Rural Leadership Foundation	ARLF
Mapping the Inland: A Centre for the Study of the Inland Symposium	La Trobe University
AAEE ACT AGM	Australian Association for Environmental Education
Climate Action Roundtable	QLD Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
Celebrating Pioneering Communities at Hepburn Wind – presenting with Soren Hermansen (Norway)	Hepburn Community Windpark Cooperative Ltd
Blueprint for ACT to achieve zero net emissions by 2050 at the latest	EPSDD
Imagining Haig Park's Future	Young Professionals Reference Group
Festival of Ambitious Ideas – 'The 100 Year Life'	Lighthouse Innovation
2017 ACT Women's Awards Invitation	Office for Women, CSD
Shaping Spaces for Gen Z – International Forum	Urban Synergies Group
Professor Peter Kanowski, Prof Saul Cunningham (new Director of the Fenner School), Prof Adrienne Nicotra (Biology); Prof Rob Whelan (ex U Wollongong); Dr Lisa Robins; and some of our environment-related students will join us	ANU
International Women's Day	Women Lawyers Association ACT
Site visit	Canberra City Farm
CSIRO National Outlook	CSIRO, Steve Hatfield-Dodds
Hot, hot, hot – Australian future climate extremes	Fenner School of Environment and Society
Women on Farms' West Wimmera	West Wimmera Women on Farms Group
Oceania Ecosystem Services Forum	A Community on Ecosystem Services
Fenner School Careers Expo	ANU
Launching Natural Resources and Environmental Justice Book	ANU
Invite to Ginninderry knowledge sharing event	ANU
Doctors for the Environment Conference	Doctors for the Environment Australia
NRWC Food Security Roundtable	National Rural Women's Coalition
Margaret Hendry Memorial Lecture	Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
Chief Financial Officers Forum	ACT Government
The Economics of Land Degradation – Solutions for Sustaining Natural Capital	ANU / National Australia Bank

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# Appendix 4: Compliance Statement

The *2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* must comply with the 2017 Annual Report Directions (the Directions). The Directions are found on the ACT Legislation Register at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2017-280/default.asp>. The Compliance Statement indicates the subsections, under the five Parts of the Directions that are applicable to the office and the location of information that satisfies these requirements:

## PART 1 DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW

The requirements under Part 1 of the 2017 Directions relate to the purpose, timing and distribution, and record keeping of annual reports. The *2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* complies with all subsections of Part 1 under the Directions.

In compliance with s13 Feedback, Part 1 of the Directions, contact details for the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment are provided within the *2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* to provide readers with the opportunity to provide feedback.

## PART 2 DIRECTORATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODY ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The requirements within Part 2 of the Directions are mandatory for all directorates and public sector bodies and the *2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* complies with all subsections. The information that satisfies the requirements of Part 2 is found in 2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report as follows:

- Transmittal Certificate, see **Section A**, page 2,
- Organisational Overview and Performance, inclusive of all subsections, see **Section B**, pages 3–50, and
- Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of all subsections, see **Section C**, pages 51–52.

## PART 3 REPORTING BY EXCEPTION

The office has nil information to report by exception under Part 3 of the Directions for the 2016–17 reporting period.

## PART 4 DIRECTORATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODY SPECIFIC ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

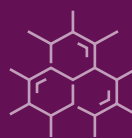
The subsections of Part 4 of the 2017 Directions are applicable to the office and can be found within the *2016–17 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report* at **Section B.2**, page 44.

## PART 5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORTING

All subsections of Part 5 of the Directions apply to the office. Consistent with the Directions, the information satisfying these requirements is reported in the one place for all ACT Public Service directorates, as follows:

- N. Community Engagement and Support, see the *2016–17 Annual Report of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate*,
- O. Justice and Community Safety, including all subsections O.1–O.4, see the *2016–17 Annual Report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate*,
- P. Public Sector Standards and Workforce Profile, including all subsections P.1–P.3, see the annual *State of the Service Report*, and
- Q. Territory Records, see the *2016–17 Annual Report of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate*.

ACT Public Service directorate annual reports are found at [http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/report/annual\\_reports](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual_reports).





Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

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