



COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ACT COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ANNUAL REPORT
2018–19



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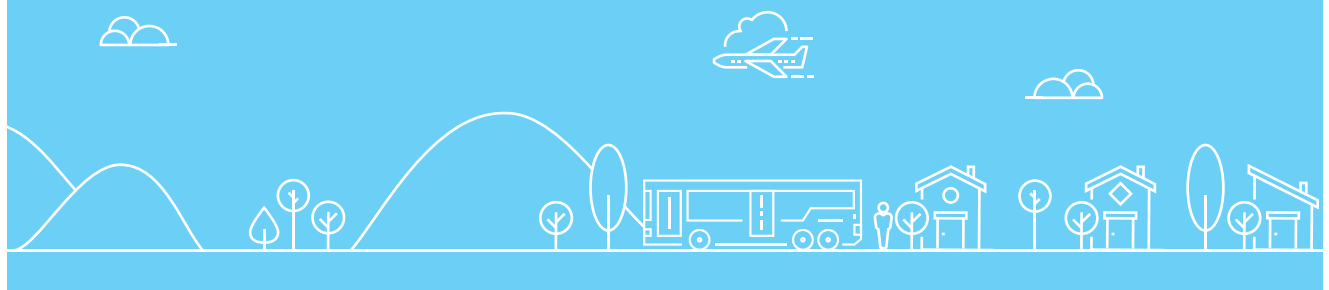
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List of Acronyms

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ANU	Australian National University
CEMP	Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CSD	Community Services Directorate
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EDU	Education Directorate
EEIS	Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
LCC	Lower Cotter Catchment
NSW	New South Wales
PCS	Parks and Conservation Service
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services
UC	University of Canberra
UNSW	University of New South Wales
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

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 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 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has been included for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

I hereby certify that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006 (repealed)*, Part 2.3 (see section 113, Public Sector Management Standards 2016).

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

16 September 2019

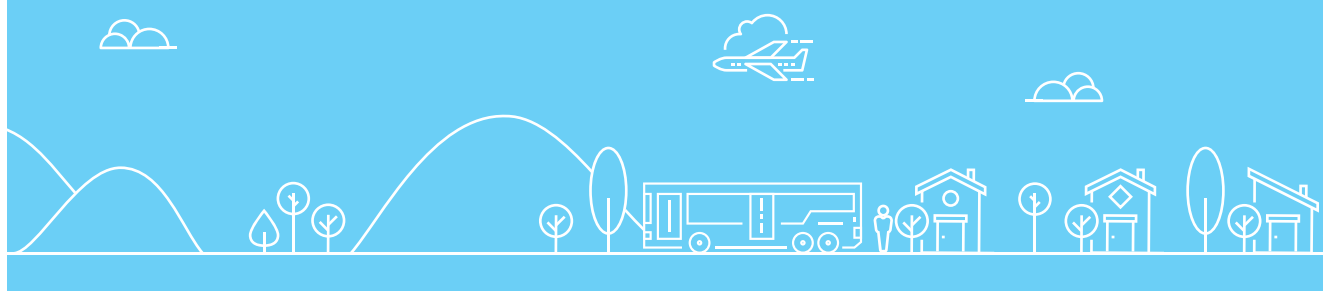
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This Office is independent of, but funded by, the ACT Government.



Section B. Organisational Overview and Performance



B.1 Organisational Overview

B.1.1 COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) 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.

The Commissioner administers no other legislation and has no other statutory functions.

B.1.2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION:

That Canberrans embrace transformative change, drive inter-generational equity, and create a just transition to an environmentally sustainable future.

MISSION:

To deliver rigorous, informative and innovative science communication which guides and informs the ACT community and government, reflecting our community's aspiration to lead the country in environmentally sustainable action.

VALUES:

Integrity, transparency, research rigour, inclusiveness, independence.

B.1.3 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Commissioner undertakes the following functions (these are discussed at greater length in **Section B2**):

1. State of the Environment Reporting for the ACT (s19 of the Act),
2. Investigations:
 - a. as directed by the Minister (s12(1)(b) of the Act), or
 - b. 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
3. 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).

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING

INVESTIGATIONS

COMPLAINTS

B.1.4 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPORTING

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting, the Commissioner and office 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,
- 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.

NGUNNAWAL LANGUAGE COMES TO LIFE

Throughout the 2018–19 year the Commissioner participated in Ngunnawal language events including a forum run by the Federal Parliamentary Friends of AIATSIS and the Ngunnawal Welcome to Country launch at Canberra Airport during NAIDOC Week.

“Our language is the key to all our relationships and how we interact with each other. It is the salient ingredient to spirituality, lore, law and retaining our cultural identity and connection. However,

growing up we could never share our language with non-Indigenous people. Language was to be kept secret to keep us safe. They took children away if you spoke language.”¹ – Caroline Hughes, Ngunnawal Traditional Owner and Director (Indigenous Education) at the CIT Yurauna Centre.

Through the office’s connection with the Yurauna Centre, we have been able to learn about local Ngunnawal artwork techniques and storylines.



Artworks from the CIT Yurauna Centre. Source: Kate Auty.

In addition to the business as usual items listed above, the office is committed to pursuing a vision of reconciliation that promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and values. This includes the ability for Aboriginal people to partake in cultural practices on Country and actively participate in planning and management of land and water.

The office is committed to supporting Aboriginal self-determination and systems of governance, facilitating an ongoing dialogue with government and research institutions to find the balance between traditional practices and accepted scientific approaches to environment and sustainability issues.

In the development of publications, respectful and early engagement with Traditional Custodians is undertaken at every possible opportunity and followed with appropriate citation, remuneration and recognition of intellectual property.

B.1.5 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Commissioner is a Senior Executive Service 2.3 Ministerial appointment. The Commissioner’s remuneration is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal.

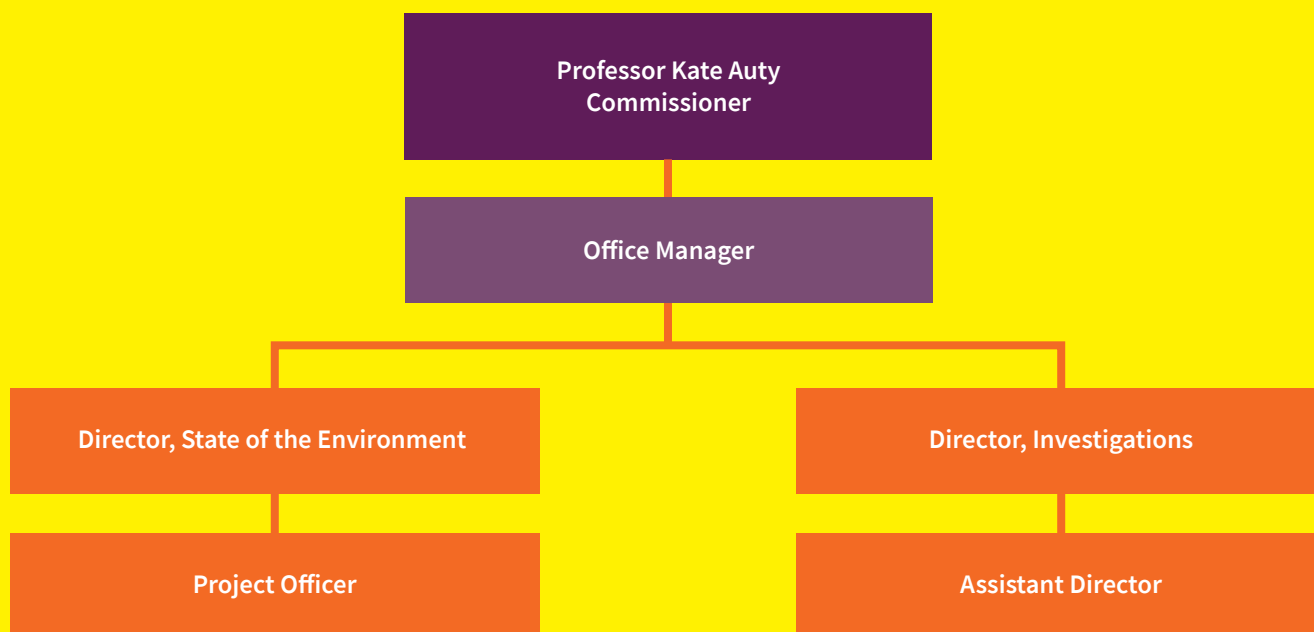
The current Commissioner, Professor Kate Auty, holds the following additional roles as at 30 June 2019:

- Honorary Professorial Fellow with the University of Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute,
- Associate of the University of Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute,
- Chair of the Banksia Foundation Board,
- an advisory board member of the:
 - Institute of Applied Ecology (University of Canberra) External Advisory Panel,
 - 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)).

The Commissioner is supported by a core team of two full-time directors (SOG B equivalent), an assistant director (SOG C), project officer (ASO 6) and office manager (ASO 6) – see **Figure 1**. Please note as at 26 June 2019 one additional FTE senior officer was on maternity leave.

¹ <https://www.canberraairport.com.au/news/ngunnawal-language-to-greet-visitors-to-canberra-airport/>

FIGURE 1: OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT ORGANISATIONAL CHART AS AT 26 JUNE 2019.



The staff of the office have professional expertise in a wide range of skills including engineering, law, water expertise, environmental management, auditing, risk management, human ecology, mapping and GIS. Having these skills in the office means a reduction in the 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*.²

When workloads increase the Commissioner can employ 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, located within Commercial Services and Infrastructure 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:

- Federal Government
 - Department of Environment and Energy, and
 - Department of Defence.
- Territory Government
 - EPSDD,
 - Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and
 - Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).
- Other government agencies
 - Icon Water,
 - National Capital Authority,
 - Threatened Species Commissioner,
 - ACT Human Rights Commission (Public Advocate, Children and Young People Commissioner), and
 - ACT Auditor-General.
- Universities
 - Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU,
 - Fenner School of Environment and Society, and
 - Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra.
- Educationalists and skills trainers

² ACT Government, 2010: *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*

- Australian Association of Environmental Educators, and
- Canberra Institute of Technology.
- Non-government organisations with environment and sustainability interests
 - SEE-Change,
 - Conservation Council ACT Region,
 - Canberra Ornithologists Group, and
 - Friends of Grasslands, Landcare and catchment groups.
- Experts as necessary for reporting and specific organisational functions in respect of
 - the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for the Proof of Concept,
 - the 2017 Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy, and
 - the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation.
- The Commissioner attends and presents at forums, in accordance with invitations and in respect of matters of interest. These have included:
 - 2018 Defence Environment Conference: Environment as an enabler, keynote speaker,
 - CIT ZeroC02 Renewable Energy and Sustainability Industry Forum: Keeping pace with ACT's changing climate – from transport to health, Hackathon team member and judging panel, and
 - ANU Climate Change Institute: Explaining the COP24 Katowice Climate Change Conference, panel chair.

Office staff presented at a number of seminars and forums relating to reports produced. This has engaged new audiences and received positive feedback.

For a more extensive list of presentations by the Commissioner and staff at conferences, seminars and forums please refer to **Appendix 1**.

B.1.7 THE COMMISSIONER'S ACHIEVEMENTS

A summary of the Commissioner's achievements in 2018–19 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*³ was tabled towards the end of the 2016. This document can be found on the Commissioner's website (www.envcomm.act.gov.au).

Progress reports on the ten recommendations are detailed in **Section B.2.3.2**.

B.1.7.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

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

Minister Directed Investigations

There were no new special reports commissioned under Ministerial direction pursuant to ss12(1)(b) and 21(1)(a) of the Act in 2018–19.

Special reports previously commissioned under Ministerial direction and now completed in 2018–19 are:

- *Unfantastic Plastic – Review of the ACT Shopping Bag Ban*,⁴ September 2018, and
- *The Heroic and the Dammed – Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation*,⁵ December 2018.

During the 2018–19 reporting year, the office continued to work with the government in relation to implementing recommendations from the following Ministerial directed reports:

- Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy 2017
- Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment 2017, and
- Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment 2018.

Commissioner Initiated Investigations

Under ss12(1)(c) of the Act, one of the Commissioner's functions is 'conducting, on the Commissioner's own initiative, investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT.'

In 2018–19 the Commissioner initiated three Issues Papers to inform these statutory requirements.

Details of the Issues Papers are outlined in **Section B2.1.3**.

B.1.7.3 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADDRESSED

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

Typically only a few complaints are received each year.

³ Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2015: *State of the Environment Report 2015*

⁴ <https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/investigations/unfantastic-plastic-review-of-the-act-plastic-shopping-bag-ban-august-2018>

⁵ <https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/investigations/the-heroic-and-the-dammed-lower-cotter-catchment-restoration-evaluation>

The Commissioner routinely forwards complaints to the appropriate directorate for attention. If the response requires further elaboration, the Commissioner explores the issues raised and may determine to undertake an investigation.

Details of complaints received and how these were addressed are outlined in **Section B2.1.4**.

B.1.7.4 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 B2.4.3**.

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

The office is strategically committed to ongoing endeavours to increase engagement on critical matters such as climate change. The office actively uses modern digital techniques such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. OCSE reports now include key information in infographics, replacing previous text heavy information.

In 2018–19, reports and messages were communicated through the use of ARCGIS Story maps (a geospatial web based narrative platform) for the first time with great results. These initiatives aim to increase community accessibility and engagement across all socio-demographic and industry sectors. For further detail refer to **Section B2.4.2**.



Staff attended the Women's Environmental Leadership Australia forum with Senator Larissa Waters and posted live from the event on the office Facebook Page, Living Sustainably ACT. Source: Caitlin Roy

B.1.8 OUTLOOK: CURRENT AND FUTURE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

The issues which will continue to present challenges and opportunities to the ACT include climate change, including heat and human health, transport policy and practice, sustainable land development, our ecological footprint, and water.

B.1.8.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate outlook

The ACT Government declared a climate emergency in May 2019.⁶

“Making this climate emergency declaration is an important step. It says that we give particular recognition to the enormous existential threat posed by climate change and that we will prioritise climate action.” ACT Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Shane Rattenbury.

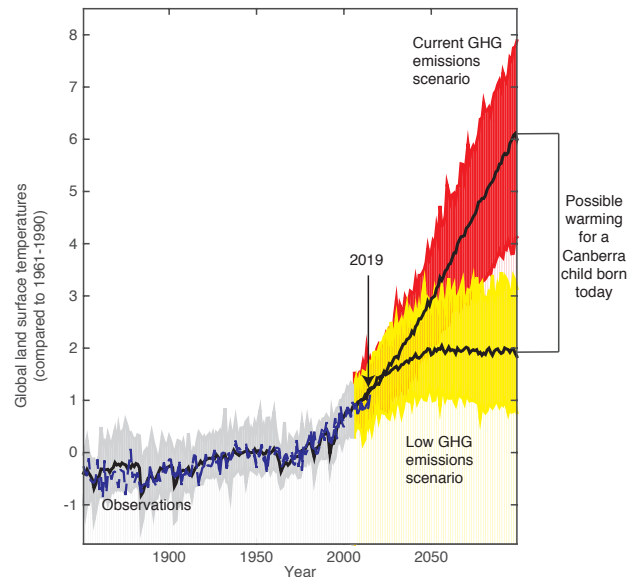
We know that we are facing grave climate change challenges, including:

- higher maximum temperatures – hotter days, hotter evenings, and hotter nights,
- more bushfire days rated as high, extreme, and catastrophic across a longer timeframe,
- increasing heatwaves and extreme events,
- higher minimum temperatures,
- changes in frequency of frost occurrence,
- decreases in snow cover by up to 40 per cent,
- decreases in rainfall, particularly in winter,
- increases in drought frequency and severity,
- water resource threats,
- changes to the distribution of species (creating winners and losers),
- impacts on agricultural productivity, and
- undermining of the built environment.

These impacts will have far reaching social, health and economic implications.

The work of climate scientists like ACT 2019 Scientist of the Year, Dr Sophie Lewis (UNSW Canberra), illustrate the record breaking events with which we have been contending with and projected future climate scenarios. This is represented in the following graph:⁷

FIGURE 2: CANBERRA’S PROJECTED FUTURE TEMPERATURES UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIOS



Heat and human health

A failure to act on the elevated risks of a changing climate will be costly and potentially promote unhealthy environments that are hot, oppressive and lacking in amenity.

‘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.’⁸

Dr Liz Hanna, ANU

⁶ <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/australian-capital-territory-declares-a-climate-emergency/>; <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/about>

⁷ Projections provided by Dr Sophie Lewis, climate scientist, School of Science UNSW Canberra

⁸ 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)

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.⁹

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

Heat and the urban environment

We will need to take a much more strategic approach to conserving vegetation and improving habitat connectivity, as this will be under extra pressure due to climate change.

Living infrastructure will reduce heat and provide cool areas for active recreation, facilitating a connection with nature key to improved mental health outcomes.¹⁰ Trees in urban areas play a particularly important role in mitigating the urban heat island effect, as well as providing habitat for animals and birds.

A report released in November 2017 by the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub outlines the expected risks to Australia's urban forest from climate change and urban heat, including Canberra.¹¹ The findings of this study demonstrate that for a business as usual climate scenario in 2070, 40 per cent of trees in the urban forest have a high risk for being vulnerable to future predicted temperatures.¹²

Governments which respond to climate change will proactively implement climate-sensitive urban design and living-infrastructure strategies. Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City is soon to be finalised and will guide the design, planning, development and management of Canberra's living infrastructure.

B.1.8.2 TRANSPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE

As the ACT reaches 100 per cent renewable energy usage the next major challenge will be to reduce our carbon footprint associated with transport. This is recognised in all the policy and planning which is being undertaken in the Territory.

The arrival of the Light Rail service from Gungahlin to Civic has eased some congestion and public transport needs pressures. There is still more to do; Light Rail Stage Two is still in the planning phases.

Infrastructure Australia has just released its 2019 report Urban Transport Crowding and Congestion¹³ which illustrates this problem (even though its data relates to 2016). Canberra can expect more congestion, although our rates of congestion are significantly less than any of the other capitals – including Adelaide and Perth. The costs of congestion are economic, temporal, and environmental.

Pollution along major transport corridors will continue to rise as we remain wedded to our motor vehicles. Our level of use of the bus service in Canberra (and the region which stretches to Queanbeyan and Yass) remains low and indicates the extent of the problem of passenger vehicle use. We have witnessed bus service timetabling issues in this reporting year and this issue requires government and service providers to find flexible ways to respond to community demands and needs.

The 2019 State of the Environment Report will carry data and analysis about transport in the ACT across the reporting years 2015–2019.

B.1.8.3 SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT

The population of the ACT is predicted to grow to 500,000 by 2030. Housing this population in a sustainable manner and limiting the ecological and carbon footprints of the population will require coordinated planning and design.

There is considerable work being done on the issue of biodiversity in the city and the ACT has demonstrated a willingness to be part of the national discussion with the National Environmental Science Program's Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub and with Future Earth Australia (associated with the Australian Academy of Science).

The office has now concluded the Independent Audits of the Gungahlin and Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessments about Matters of National Environmental Significance and received government responses to both corrective action requests and recommendations. The ACT Government has demonstrated a willingness to respond positively to both requests and recommendations. The office explicitly engaged scientific experts in the field of biodiversity conservation in the city to assist in illustrating the extent of the issues and the potential for intervention when corrective action was required.

The developments of West Belconnen and the Eastern Broadacre are now in the planning stages.

The ACT has the best remnant ecological communities of grasslands in the country and the challenge will be to ensure that these developments do not undermine those ecological communities. The office has not been tasked with producing the Independent Audits of those developments but the work done on Gungahlin and Molonglo will provide a guide.

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

10 Health Directorate, ACT Government Response: Productivity Commission's inquiry into the social and economic benefits of improving mental health

11 http://www.nesurban.edu.au/publications-resources/researchreports/CAULRR07_RisksAustralianUrbanForest_Nov2017.pdf,

12 Ibid

13 <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/urban-transport-crowding-and-congestion>

Cities will continue to be both the most capable communities to develop new ideas and innovations and also the most troubling for environmental outcomes. The ACT is in a position to ensure that its developments are compact and that issues such as biodiversity protection, the urban heat island effect and the protection of urban canopy/forest are addressed in planning.

The establishment of the ACT's Design Review Panel (incorporating the work of the ACT Government Architect) provides an opportunity to ensure design meets modern sustainability expectations. The appointment of a Chief Engineer also provides an opportunity to guide development in a more sustainable manner.

The 2019 State of the Environment Report will carry data and analysis about land in the ACT across the reporting years 2015–2019.

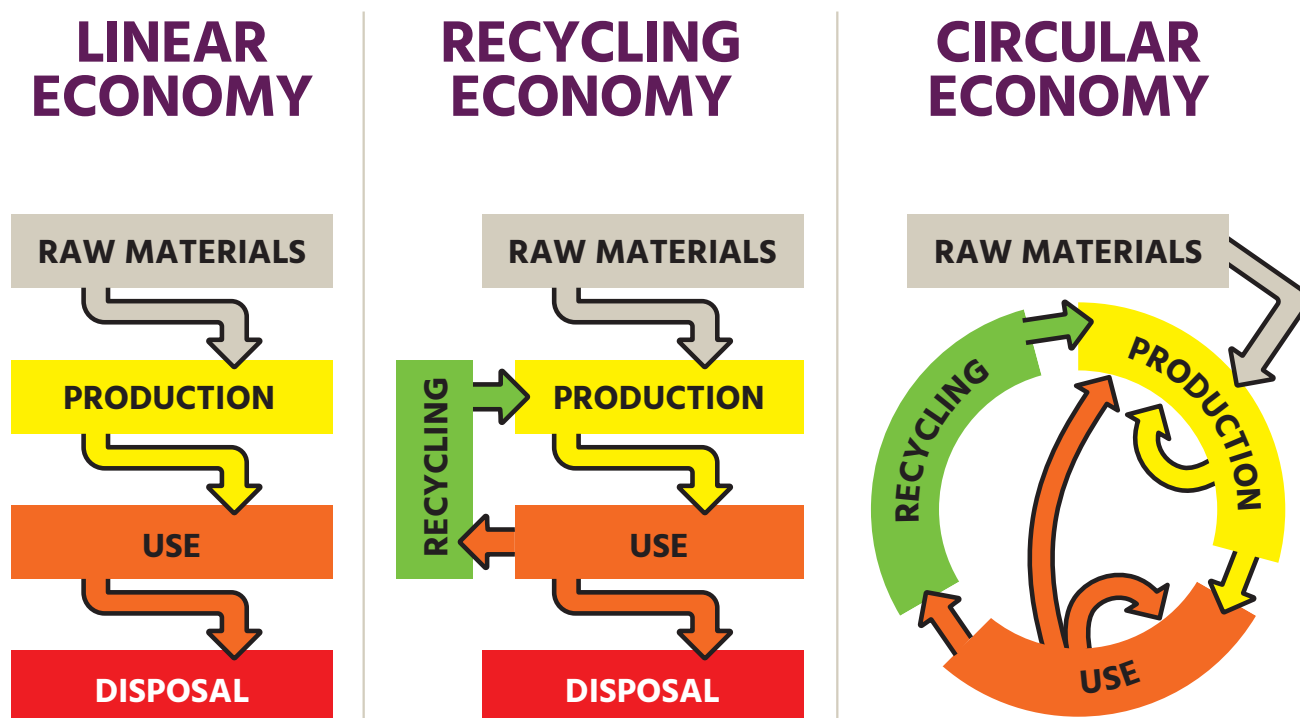
B.1.8.4 OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AND WASTE PROFILE – THE NEED FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY DISCUSSION

Pending the advice of the Minister, the office is being tasked with a waste review pursuant to a motion in the Legislative Assembly, moved by Minister Suzanne Orr. The exact terms of this review are yet to be determined

as this Annual Report goes to print, but the issue is increasingly critical as Australia finds it impossible to export waste to Asia for treatment.

Contemporaneously a number of Australian states (South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales) are engaging in an increasingly urgent discussion about how a circular economy might be implemented. In the ACT the EPSDD has tasked staff with examining the best way forward. This office has produced an Issues Paper which discusses the opportunities in our local economy and that paper is being circulated for comment. Business is increasingly interested in the possibilities of engaging in the circular economy and it will be important that the ACT is involved in this work.

The ACT government is exploring a total ban on single use plastics and has been involving the Canberra community in the discussion to find ways to address our unhealthy dependence on plastic. Surveys of community views in respect of plastic shopping bags (conducted by this office in collaboration with the ANU) illustrated the increasing interest of the Canberra community in being part of the solution to this problem. The commitment of the community to adopting the Container Deposit processes, which removed massive amounts of containers from the general waste stream, shows what can be done when waste is regarded as a resource and a component of the economy.



Source: University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Institute for Sustainable Futures

© Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment 2019

The 2019 State of the Environment Report will carry data and analysis about waste and human settlement issues in the ACT across the reporting years 2015–2019.

B.1.8.5 SUSTAINABLE WATER USE

The work of the office in the Lower Cotter Catchment restoration evaluation process (report titled ‘The Heroic and the Dammed’) focused on the need for long term planning in respect of water management in that catchment. It is clear that as climate change impacts we will find our water reserves increasingly stretched and we will need to plan for this eventuality.

The water available to Canberrans is already at a low ebb and the projections are for hotter drier climate conditions.

The ACT is committed to water sensitive design in respect of its creeks and city water-scapes but we will need to consider both water restrictions and methods of integrating water design into the ways in which we build our city, as has been demonstrated over time by the CRC for Water Sensitive Cities, headed up by Professor Tony Wong at Monash University.

Fortunately for the ACT and surrounding region, the ACT Government is already taking considerable steps to adapt our land and water resources to climate change through the ACT Water Strategy 2014–44 and the H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy program.

The 2019 State of the Environment Report will carry data and analysis about water in the ACT across the reporting years 2015–2019.



Aerial view of the recovering Lower Cotter Catchment. Source: Caitlin Roy



Site visit to the RAMSAR listed Ginini Flats. Source: Kate Auty.

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 2019 ACT State of the Environment Report (SoER) is currently under development. The report will cover the period from 1 July 2015 to 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.

Over the 2018–19 reporting year, the office developed an extensive list of indicators for the SoER. These indicators have been the subject of considerable discussion with data providers to ensure robust assessment and scrutiny. The office has been working with the ACT Government and a range of external experts to determine key data requirements for the 2019 SoER – this included a review of data presented in SoER 2015. The office will continue to work on the development of indicators and content for future reporting.

The SoER 2019 will differ substantially from previous reports which were large printed documents. While the office will comply with the statutory obligation to provide a hard copy report for the Minister to table, this will be a summary document supported by a comprehensive interactive reporting website.

The target audience for the SoER website will be the ACT community. To assist in this process, the office is engaging with a range of experts on science communication, and in website development. This includes the ANU School of Design specialists who have been working with the ANU Climate Institute on climate change communication. The office will actively monitor the level of interest in the 2019 SoER on the dedicated SoER website and all social media.

A consultant has been engaged to produce an update of the ACT ecological footprint for inclusion in the SoER. Ecological footprint assessments have been produced for the four previous SoE reports. The updated footprint assessment for the 2019 report will provide valuable information on the current status of resource demand and consumption, as well as enable an assessment of long term trends.

The office will annually review the government response to the 2019 SoER recommendations through the annual reporting process.

An update on implementation of the ten recommendations from the 2015 *State of the Environment Report* can be found in **Section B2.3.2**.

B.2.1.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

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

In 2016, and again in 2017, the Commissioner received a Ministerial direction to conduct specific investigations and prepare reports on the following:

1. Implementation of ACT Government climate change policies, as detailed in *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*¹⁴ through Implementation Status Reports in 2014, 2017 and 2020. The 2017 report was completed on time (30 September 2017). The Government Response was tabled in early 2018 with agreement to 16 of the 17 Recommendations. An update from the ACT Government on the progress of these recommendations is outlined in **Section B2.3.2**.
2. An audit of the implementation of the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*¹⁵ (pursuant to a direction from the Australian Government in the Plan under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)). This involved an audit of 37 commitments from the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan*.

The first report was due on 20 December 2017 and was submitted to EPSDD on 20 November 2017 to allow timely submission to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy. Five Corrective Action Requests were made in the report and all five were responded to satisfactorily within the required timeframes. An update on implementation of these Corrective Action Requests is outlined in **Section B2.3.2**. The audit report included eight recommendations which were all agreed to in the Government Response.

3. An independent audit of the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance* and its associated actions for the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment. This involved an audit of 60 commitments in the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance*.

The report was due on 7 May 2018 and was submitted to EPSDD on 6 April 2018 to allow timely submission to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy. Four Corrective Action Requests were made in the report and the first one was responded to satisfactorily in the reporting year. Twelve recommendations were given in the report and the Government Response was provided by the due date of 4 November 2018.

4. Unfantastic Plastic – Review of the ACT Shopping Bag Ban was commissioned by Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

¹⁴ ACT Government, 2012: *AP2: A new climate change strategy and action plan for the ACT*

¹⁵ Umwelt, 2013: *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Biodiversity Plan, Final*

The review drew on technical analysis undertaken by the Australian National University¹⁶ earlier in 2018 and investigated the efficacy of the ban, made recommendations on whether improvements could be made to improve overall environmental outcomes, and sought to analyse options where possible through triple bottom line and cost-benefit analysis.

Unfantastic Plastic was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in September 2018 and made four key recommendations for government consideration.

In February 2019, the Minister announced an intent to introduce legislation to ban all single-use plastics. The Government's response was tabled in May 2019 and reflected this change in policy, with two recommendations agreed, and two not agreed.

The ACT Government has commenced a separate process to consider future approaches to a range of single-use plastics, including bags. The Unfantastic Plastic recommendations have been subsumed into this process. As such, there is no requirement to report on the implementation of these recommendations in **Section B2.3.2**.

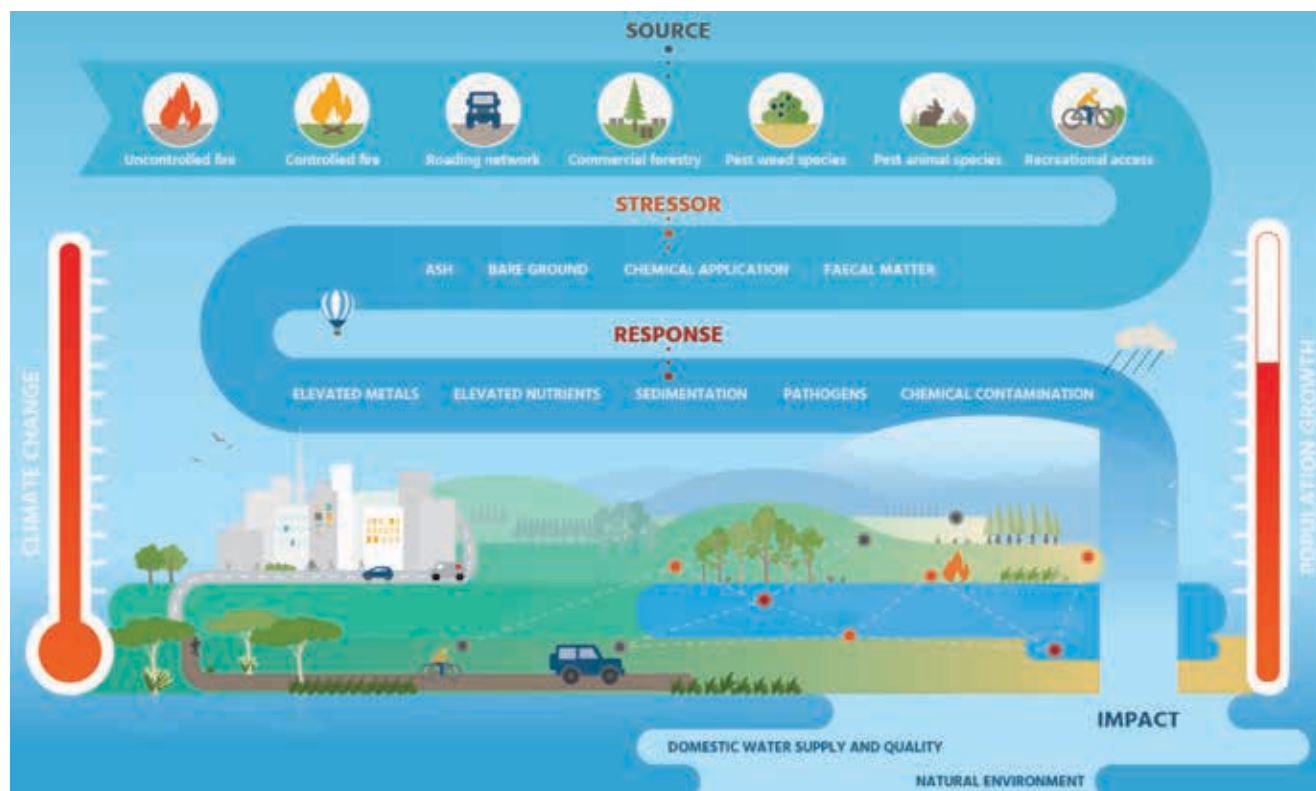
5. An evaluation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration (pursuant to the Auditor-General's Recommendation 12 in the *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment – Auditor General's Report 2015*).¹⁷

The report, *The Heroic and the Dammed – Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation*, was delivered to the Minister by December 2018 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly in February 2019. The ACT Government responded on 6 June 2019 with 13 of 14 recommendations being agreed or agreed in-principle.

As part of the evaluation, an Expert Reference Group was established to provide technical advice in fields such as hydrology, geology, fire and restoration ecology.

Contracts with the University of Canberra and Arup were undertaken to support the office to develop a long term monitoring and evaluation framework to consistently assess water quality and ecological restoration in the Lower Cotter Catchment over time.

The monitoring and evaluation framework considers risk factors outlined below:



An update from the ACT Government on the progress of these recommendations is outlined in **Section B2.3.2**.

¹⁶ A Macintosh, A Simpson and T Neeman (ANU), 2018: *Regulating Plastic Shopping Bags in the Australian Capital Territory: Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010 Options Analysis*, Canberra.

¹⁷ ACT Auditor-General, 2015, *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment*, Report No. 3/15

B.2.1.3 ISSUES PAPERS

In 2018–19 the office commenced three Issues Papers:

1. Environmental Offsets,
2. Circular Economy, and
3. Climate Change and Sport.

Issues Papers are a preliminary exploration into matters of environmental significance to the ACT, informing the Commissioner and/or Minister on matters to be considered for investigation.

Under Section 12 (1)(c) of the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*,¹⁸ one of the Commissioner's functions is "conducting, on the Commissioner's own initiative, investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a *substantial impact* on the environment of the ACT."

Issues Papers are linked to these statutory requirements.

There is no statutory requirement for Issues Papers to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, or for recommendations to be presented. This is only required if the matter is elevated to an investigation. As such, there is no requirement to report on Issues Papers in **Section B2.3.2**.

B.2.1.4 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 formalised are addressed directly. Some of these inquiries are referred to the ACT Government and resolved. Telephone and email inquiries have not always resulted in complaint investigations. Some complainants express ongoing concern about continuing issues – such as the cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos and the management of urban trees.

The first responsibility is to forward the complaints to the appropriate agency for their attention.

Since July 2018, two formal complaints have been closed and six potential complaints addressed with an inquiry.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS FOR 2018–19

ISSUES STATUS	NUMBER	TOPIC AND STATUS
Complaints continuing from 2017–18	0	No complaints open on 1 July 2018.
Potential Complaints received in 2018–19 (no complaints form received)	6	1819–001 – Molonglo EIS Exemption – Military Ordinance Waste 1819–003-A – Tree Removal Gosse Street Kingston 1819–003-B – Tree Removal London Plane Tree Manuka 1819–003-C – Trees in Barton 1819–003-D – Tree Removal – Curtin and Forest 1819–006 – 2019 Kangaroo Cull
Formal Complaints received in 2018–19	3	1819–002 – Annual cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroo Received: 27/7/19 CLOSED: 31/8/19 1819–004 – Ginninderry development south and west of Stockdill Drive Received: 28/5/19 CLOSED: 22/8/19 1819–005 – Planning decisions on Urban Trees in Civic Received 1/6/19 UNDER INQUIRY

¹⁸ https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/about/our_role

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:

- reporting on the ACT State of the Environment Report recommendations,
- scoping, investigating and preparing reports on Ministerial or Commissioner-initiated investigations, and
- responding to community complaints.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS

ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS ¹⁹	ORIGINAL TARGET 2018–19	ACTUAL RESULT 2018–19	VARIANCE FROM AMENDED TARGET
a. Report on the uptake of recommendations on the ACT State of Environment Report as part of the annual report	October 2018	October 2018	0
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%	Not Active*	Not Active
d. Undertake complaints generated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	Not Active*	Not Active
e. Report on complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory agency as part of the annual report	October 2018	October 2018	0

* Please note that there have been no Commissioner initiated or complaints generated investigations in 2018–19.



Wanniasa Scar Tree. Photo: Kate Auty

¹⁹ 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

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

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

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

The Commissioner identified the following as having a significant impact on the environment during 2018–19:

Every international scientific report presented in the last twelve months has warned of the impending environmental and sustainability crisis we face as a function of climate change and the pressures our human settlements impose on biodiversity.^{20 21 22 23 24 25}

These special factors will have a significant impact on the environment.

The ACT has led the discussion and action at the sub-national level about the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Other states have now adopted ACT best practice in respect of reverse auctions for wind and solar developments.

The ACT will have reached its 100 per cent renewable energy target by 2020. At that time other challenges will present – including our habits of consumption and waste, our water use and our transport preference for the personal passenger vehicle.

The action required will be both governmental and personal.

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 government directorates regarding:

1. actions undertaken between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 against the ten recommendations from the 2015 State of the Environment Report (s19 of the Act),
2. an update on directorate actions taken between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 against investigations (s21 of the Act), 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 so we can track actions).

Responses provided by directorates have been summarised with minimal editing.

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20 World Health Organisation, Climate change and human health, <https://www.who.int/globalchange/summary/en/>

21 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Human health and adaptation: understanding climate impacts on health and opportunities for action <https://www.who.int/globalchange/summary/en/>

22 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report, Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>;

23 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

24 <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

25 International Rivers reports <https://www.internationalrivers.org/publications>.

State of the Environment Report 2015

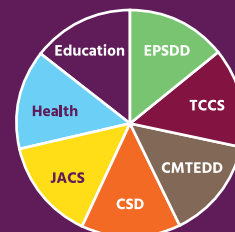
Recommendations, Government's Response and Directorate updates

Below are the updates on implementation of the recommendations from the State of the Environment Report 2015 for the 2018–19 reporting year. The State of the Environment Report 2019 is due to the Minister in December 2019.

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 for 2018–19



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

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

- The Adaptation Strategy has been substantially completed but we know that to continue to adapt to the impacts of climate change there is a lot of ongoing effort required.
- Remaining actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan, including climate-wise homes, resilient plants that will help the ACT adapt to climate change and demonstration projects showcasing climate-wise activities that can be undertaken by developers, builders and homeowners.
- Reviewed the current trees species list for Canberra (Municipal Infrastructure Standard (MIS) 25) to ensure future plantings will be fit-for-purpose for the different climate.
- Developed the "Climate Ready" webtool to help the community identify ways that they can increase their preparedness to climate change impacts.
- Delivered the "Climate Risk Health Check", an interactive online tool for ACT Government infrastructure managers to identify climate risks and develop strategies to manage vulnerabilities to climate impacts.
- Hosted the "Canberra: A perfect storm" Climate Challenge for Young Professionals, on the day a dust storm hit Canberra, similar to the scenario the audience was pondering, to engage with future decision makers. Partnering with the NESP Hub (National Environmental Science Program) and the Commonwealth Department of Energy and Environment we showcased the ability to work together to identify and solve problems.
- Demonstrated the benefits of innovative projects to combat climate change by the ACT Government by publishing the "Adaptation Innovation" factsheets. These highlighted a range of actions that have been delivered to help the ACT adapt to climate change.
- Released the "Living well with a changing climate: Findings of the 2018 ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change" report, giving a comprehensive insight into the awareness and ability to act by Canberrans to the impacts of climate change. This has enabled us to better plan for the future and develop ways to increase resilience and provided a useful baseline for monitoring community resilience over time.
- Actsmart developed the 'Creating a Fire Wise Garden' factsheet which is freely available online and at relevant public events. The factsheet was developed in consultation with Climate Change Policy and Emergency Services Australia, who also promote and share the educational tool with relevant stakeholders.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Active Travel Framework and Strategic Cycle Network Plan, ACT No Waste

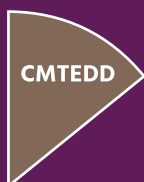
Active Travel Framework and Strategic Cycle Network Plan

- Transport Canberra and City services launched new cycling and walking maps to showcase the strategic cycle network. This was coordinated with the launch of the TCCS journey planner and the ongoing management of the Active Travel Practitioner's Toolkit.
- Delivery of active travel infrastructure progressed as per 2018–19 budget allocation, including significant progress made on development of the Belconnen Bikeway, Age Friendly Suburbs and town centre improvement works.
- The draft transport strategy, *Moving Canberra*, was released which includes a chapter focused on becoming Australia's cycling capital and most walkable city.
- The Schools Program was expanded to bring the total number of schools engaged to 52, and the School Crossing Supervisor program was expanded to a total of 25 supervised crossings in the Territory.

Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025 and Waste Feasibility Study Roadmap and Recommendations

- Supported EPSDD to achieve the outcomes of AP2 and the *Climate Change Adaption Strategy*, and in their development of a new ACT Climate Change Strategy.
- Actions continue towards the *Waste Management Strategy* goal of a carbon-neutral waste sector facilitated by the *Waste Feasibility Study* recommendation to reduce waste sector emissions by diverting organics from landfill:
 - the green bin program trial for garden organics commenced in April 2017 as a pilot in Weston creek and Kambah, and will progressively rollout out across the rest of Canberra in 2018 and 2019. Early planning commenced to expand the green bin program to include both food and garden organics, supported by funding in the 2019–20 Budget for investigating organics recovery options and a food waste avoidance campaign pilot.
 - landfill methane gas capture at the West Belconnen and Mugga Lane landfill sites continues, reducing emissions while also generating electricity that is sold to the national electricity network. A new landfill gas management contract was executed in June 2019 which will see additional investment in gas capture and power generation capacity over the coming years.
- Represented the ACT Government at national level on various inter-jurisdictional forums related to climate change, examples include but are not limited to:
 - the National Food Waste Strategy Implementation Working Group; and
 - working groups related to problematic waste streams resulting from Australia's renewable energy boom, such as photovoltaics and batteries, of significance as the ACT transitions to 100 per cent renewable energy during 2019–20.
- Release of the *Phasing Out Single-use Plastics Discussion Paper* in April 2019, focused on avoidance to reduce Canberrans' consumption of single-use plastics. Feedback from consultation will inform development of a policy, providing certainty to the community and industry on Government's position on single-use plastics.
- Provided education and behaviour change programs to empower Canberrans to make better choices. Education focused on the waste hierarchy prioritises avoidance, followed by reuse and recycling.

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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.

Renewable energy is a key capability of the ACT. The ACT Government continues to pursue investment opportunities and support innovation and industry growth across the sector.

The ACT Government's Priority Investment Program is a competitive grant program aimed at driving research and industry collaboration to generate ongoing investment opportunity. In the 2018–19 funding round, \$1 million over three years was allocated to a project to develop a commercially focused research and development capability for distributed energy resource (DER) applications. DERs are small-scale units or devices such as home solar panels on rooftops and home batteries which feed back into the electricity grid of commercial providers. This program provides funding for a lab to enable industry to develop and test smart controllers, metering devices and software to manage and control the supply of energy back into the grid.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Energy Efficiency Program for public housing properties.

During the 2018–19 financial year the Community Services Directorate (CSD) worked to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the ACT Government's Carbon Neutral Government Framework, which aims to achieve carbon neutrality across ACT Government operations by 2020.

In late 2018–19 Housing ACT commenced its review of the current design brief that guides design and construction of new residential buildings. The review is intended to inform the development of a new design brief that is consistent with the ACT Climate Change Strategy and will ensure climate change adaptation is a key design element.

- During the financial year CSD reduced transport fuel-related carbon emissions by reducing the transportation fleet from 101 vehicles to 96 vehicles.
- CSD reduced natural gas-related carbon emissions by implementing another stage of a multi-year program to upgrade natural gas boilers at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Once completed, it is expected that this project will reduce carbon emissions from boilers by approximately 15 per cent.
- CSD also started the first stage of an external lighting upgrade that will significantly reduce electricity usage. This upgrade will see existing lighting upgraded to Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting which has a longer lifespan of up to 20 years, more efficient energy usage and lower maintenance requirements. LED lighting was installed at Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre during the 2018–19 financial year.
- After the successful trial in 2017–18 that saw 240 existing inefficient gas heaters in public housing replaced through the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme, the ACT Government committed further funds to enable the program to continue on a larger scale.
- Housing ACT is utilising this funding to improve energy efficiency in public housing by providing an estimated 2,200 highly efficient heaters and hot water units over the life of the project. In 2018–19 this initiative replaced 470 heaters and hot water systems with highly efficient systems, resulting in an estimated \$5.5 million in lifetime energy bill savings for tenants. In addition to benefitting low income households through bill savings, this initiative will improve tenants' health and comfort, and will also assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- This funding was also used to inform tenants on how to better manage energy consumption and reduce their energy bills, with the assistance of the Actsmart energy audits and education programs.
- During 2018–19 new properties constructed by Housing ACT conformed to six star energy ratings with energy efficient appliances and products such as double glazing, window treatments and draft sealing. Water saving sanitary fixtures to reduce potable water consumption such as water tanks, dual flush systems and water efficient shower heads are also standard in new construction and major upgrade work.



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.

Strategic Bushfire Management Plan

Version 3 (2014) of the *ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan* has undergone an extensive review in preparation for the release of Version 4 due for release in September 2019.

The review of the Plan, which has included extensive intergovernmental and community consultation, considers 5 key areas including:

- the impact on climate change on the fire landscape
- recognition of heritage and indigenous values and practices
- community partnerships
- effective use of technology; and
- recovery.

The Canberra Be Bushfire Ready Campaign

In November 2018, the ESA oversighted the delivery of a door knock campaign which targeted residents residing in Bushfire Prone areas of Canberra. The campaign:

- was delivered by ESA volunteer and salaried staff and cadets from the Australian Defence Force Academy
- 5000 homes doorknocked
- Main message focused on steps residents could take to improve their bushfire preparedness and where they could obtain further information.

Territory Wide Risk Assessment

EPSDD oversights the ACT Climate Change Adaptation Plan and reports to government on progress against agreed recommendations arising from the Plan on a Directorate wide basis.

Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan

The review of flood doctrine by the ACT Emergency Services Agency has been separated into 2 phases.

- Phase I – The ACT Flood Sub Plan has been updated. The amended Sub Plan is currently being reviewed by all ACT Government Directorates and will, pending agreement, be submitted to the authorised signatories for endorsement.
- Phase II – The completion of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan was reprioritised to 2019/20 to ensure the completion of the review of the Flood Sub Plan.

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Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Health contributes to multiple jurisdictional and inter-agency discussions to improve health outcomes in the face of climate change, including being an active contributor to the cross-government Climate Change Working Group responsible for implementation of the ACT's Climate Strategy.

ACT Health also supports climate change strategies in the planning and preparedness arrangements across the emergency management sector. A primary example of this is the Territory Wide Risk Assessment (TWRA). The purpose of the TWRA is to provide a strategic level analysis of the natural disasters and emergency risks facing the ACT, including the impact of climate change.

ACT Health is a supporting agency for heatwave emergencies under the ACT Extreme Heat Plan. The Plan recognises that climate change has resulted in worsening heatwaves that are hotter, last longer and occur more. ACT Health works closely with the ACT Ambulance Service and relevant agencies to manage the public health impacts of heatwaves, including vulnerable groups (e.g. young children and babies, the elderly, pregnant women, individuals with a disability etc.).

- ACT Health developed the ACT Health Sector Summer Season Action Plan. The purpose of the Summer Action Plan is to provide guidance to the ACT health sector on appropriate preparedness and response actions towards emergencies associated with the summer season. ACT Health acknowledges that climate change will lead to an increased likelihood of singular or multiple natural disasters occurring within the same period (e.g. heatwave, bushfires, dust storms etc).
- ACT Health implemented a comprehensive communications strategy at the beginning of the 2018–19 summer season, and during periods of hot weather throughout the summer. The purpose of the communications strategy was to reduce the number of incidences of heat-related stress through preventative messaging.
- ACT Health also participated in the development of a whole-of-government communications plan to cover different ACT Government summer-based communications strategies. Specific examples include the Summer Bushwalking campaign (EPSDD) and Canberra Bushfire Ready (ACT Emergency Services Agency ([ESA])). This plan promoted the community's resilience in adapting to climate change.
- ACT Health has developed protocols for the natural phenomenon of Thunderstorm Asthma. Thunderstorm asthma is a form of asthma that is triggered by an uncommon combination of high pollen (usually during late Spring to early Summer) and a certain kind of thunderstorm. ACT Health acknowledges the need to consider climate change in the planning and delivery of emergency management systems to respond to natural disasters.
- ACT Health has also developed a communications strategy to formalise public health messaging around asthma, hay fever, and the ACT pollen season (predominately September-November each year).
- ACT Health continues to promote AirRater, a free app that provides real-time, geographically-specific data on pollen, air quality and temperature. This information assists people with asthma and hay fever to know their triggers for symptoms and take steps to manage their condition.
- ACT Health facilitates the ACT Health Sector Emergency Management Committee (HSEMC). HSEMC provides a forum for discussion and collaboration across the ACT health sector in the area of emergency management, including the impact of climate change on natural disasters. HSEMC comprises representatives from the ACT Health Directorate, all ACT hospitals, Capital Health Network and other ACT Government stakeholders.
- ACT Health has collaborated with the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) in developing forecast modelling for various weather conditions. ACT Health participate in a weekly weather forecast hosted by the BoM to receive intelligence and data monitoring of weather conditions and consider possible related public health impacts.
- ACT Health has developed and published a Blue Green Algae factsheet and participated in community meetings to discuss health concerns regarding Blue Green Algae. Climate change will have impacts in extending periods of hot weather thereby exacerbating Blue Green Algae outbreaks. ACT Health also participates in the Aquatic Monitoring Advisory Group to provide health input into water strategies to manage Blue Green Algae risks.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

The Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities Output Specifications. The specifications integrate sustainability performance alongside other design requirements and inform new school and refurbishment design.

Heat mitigation, building tuning and tree planting programs. These are synergistic programs to improve the resilience of school buildings to extreme temperatures while enhancing operational and energy efficiency.

- Sustainable Development of Public School Facilities Output Specifications were integrated into the Margaret Hendry School (preschool to year 6). The school is the first ACT public school to use electricity for its operational requirements, allowing the school to take advantage of the ACT's 100% renewable electricity to achieve zero emission operations.
- The Heat Mitigation Program commenced in 2017–18. Heat mitigation works were conducted throughout 2018–19 for high priority learning spaces at several schools to improve summer comfort. Works continue into 2019–20.
- Building envelope improvements and mechanical plant efficiency measures were implemented across the highest intensity gas users by school type, (college, high school, primary school) as part of the Building Tuning Program. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning audits were also conducted at six schools to inform future works.
- A Draught Proofing Program commenced in 2018–19 and targeted external doors. 21 schools benefitted from this program of works which continues in 2019–20.
- The Heating System Renewal Program was established to target the replacement of aged gas heating systems with high efficiency heating systems and building controls. The four-year program preferences electric heating systems to reduce emissions and includes building envelope improvements and building controls to maximise cost efficiencies. Works will commence in 2019–20.
- A Tree Canopy Survey Program commenced in 2018–19 to determine the contribution of ACT public schools to Canberra's urban forest. Drone surveys were conducted at eleven schools.
- A Tree Planting Program commenced in 2017–18 to provide long term passive cooling to buildings and playgrounds. In 2018–19 ninety-eight (98) trees were planted at nine schools.

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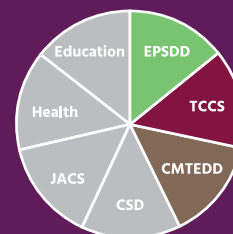
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Recommendation 2 – Human Needs

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 for 2018–19



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23

Progress report for 2013–18 and the new implementation plan for 2019–23 have been developed and are nearing finalisation.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025

Waste Feasibility Study Roadmap and Recommendations

Per the recommendations of the Waste Feasibility Study:

Diverting organics from landfill:

- the green bin program trial for garden organics expanded to a full collection service for all Canberrans on 1 April 2019.
- early planning commenced to expand the green bin program to include both food and garden organics, supported by funding in the 2019–20 Budget for investigating organics recovery options and a food waste avoidance campaign pilot.

Industry development and support:

- release of an updated *Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management in the ACT*, ensuring waste infrastructure is designed to provide the effective, safe and efficient storage and collection of waste and recyclable material for all residential, commercial and industrial premises.
- implementation of an interim reporting system to support data collection from licenced waste facilities.
- commencement of development of a new mobile application to facilitate waste activity reporting by registered waste transporters.
- commencement of development and implementation of a permanent and enhanced waste levy. The levy sends a strong price signal encouraging industry to maximise recovery options prior to landfilling.
- Support to the ACT Planning and Land Authority, providing feedback on the Environmental Impact Statement process for proposed waste facilities in the ACT.
- The ACT Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) commenced on 30 June 2018. While focused on litter reduction, the CDS encourages recycling industry development and utilisation of recycled materials in government and private projects. During 2018–19 18 network collection points were established and 26.7 million containers were collected, providing a clean resource stream for the ACT Material Recovery Facility (MRF).
- Work continued on developing products from the glass cullet collected at the ACT Materials Recovery Facility. The ACT MRF is manufacturing sand from glass cullet, which has the potential to be used across a range of civil works.

TCCS – ACT NoWaste

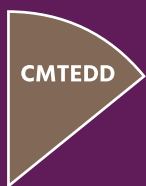
Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025 and Waste Feasibility Study Roadmap and Recommendations.

Energy from waste:

- An information paper on waste-to-energy (WtE) in the ACT was released for consultation in October 2018, providing the community and industry with an opportunity to have their say on whether WtE forms part of the solution to recover waste that cannot otherwise be diverted from landfill. This consultation is informing development of a WtE Policy for the ACT to provide certainty on the Government's position on this matter.

Per the Waste Management Strategy waste hierarchy:

- Release of the *Phasing Out Single-use Plastics Discussion Paper* in April 2019, focused on avoidance to reduce Canberra's consumption of single-use plastics. Feedback from consultation will inform development of a policy, providing certainty to the community and industry on Government's position on single-use plastics.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

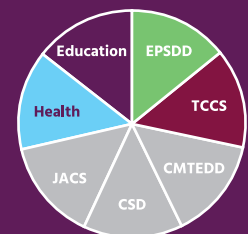
Innovation, Industry and Investment Canberra continues to support development for agri-tech and food tech capability across research, teaching and industry in the ACT.

The ACT Government awarded competitive grant funding to support the ongoing growth of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology to include an innovation hub for ACT based startups and agri-tech SMEs, regional collaboration to support Canberra Region agri-tech innovation, and to continue research translation to address industry needs.

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 for 2018–19

*Note: Since the last review the responsibilities for these strategies has moved across directorates. EPSDD is responsible for the ACT Planning Strategy, AP2 – now the Climate Change Strategy, ACT Water Strategy, and the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy. Transport for Canberra and the ACT Waste Management Strategy are now led by TCCS. These strategies continue to align in achieving common sustainability outcomes.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Water Strategy 2014–44: Striking the Balance

A report card on the ACT Water Strategy was prepared in 2018 to show progress against Implementation Plan One. This shows good progress with implementing the Strategy, especially:

- Establishment of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group
- Commencement of the ACT and Commonwealth funded ACT Healthy Waterways Project
- In-principle agreement to water trading with NSW
- Delivery of the regional H2OK stormwater education and behaviour change program
- Continued delivery of the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Program

Following a series of workshops with key government and community stakeholders, Implementation Plan 2 for the ACT Water Strategy was released on 20 June 2019. The key actions for 2019–23 are:

- Ensuring a long-term sustainable funding environment for ACT water resource management
- Reviewing the ACT Water Resources Act 2007 to ensure it reflects best practice and the functional arrangement of water management in the Territory
- Continuing to move towards Canberra becoming a water sensitive city
- Continuing to use best practice science to guide on-ground actions to protect and manage our water estate.

The report card and Implementation Plan 2 are both available on the EPSDD website at: https://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/water-strategies-and-plans/act_water_strategy



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Transport for Canberra

TCCS will provide any requested input in relation to the Transport for Canberra and the ACT Waste Management Strategies.

Transport for Canberra

- TCCS released the draft transport strategy, *Moving Canberra: Integrated Transport Strategy*, on 19 December 2018 for community consultation.
- Consultation closed at the end March 2019. A 'What We Heard' report was published in April 2019.
- TCCS continues to work closely with EPSDD to ensure alignment with the Planning and Climate Change strategies. The framework for alignment of these strategies is also explained in the draft *Moving Canberra* strategy.

Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025 and Waste Feasibility Study Roadmap and Recommendations.

- Cross-Directorate engagement, ensuring that activities under the *Waste Management Strategy* and *Waste Feasibility Study* support the shared sustainability goals of Government, including but not limited to supporting:
 - the EPSDD with AP2 and the *Climate Change Adaption Strategy* and development of the new ACT Climate Change Strategy;
 - the City Renewal Authority with precinct-based revitalisation initiatives towards the four key principles of their *Sustainability Strategy*, particularly the sustainable use of resources.
- Collaboration with the Actsmart education team within EPSDD to provide education and behaviour change programs to empower Canberrans to make better choices, focused on the waste hierarchy which prioritises avoidance, followed by reuse and recycling.
- Representation on behalf of the ACT Government through regular interfacing and heavy engagement with inter-jurisdictional partners at the national level on key policy activities including but not limited to the:
 - Meeting of Environment Ministers;
 - National Waste Policy and Action Plan;
 - National Food Waste Strategy;
 - Review of the Commonwealth *Product Stewardship Act 2011*; and
 - Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

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

ACT Health provided health input through consideration and conditioning of Development Applications along with input into Environment Impact Statements, Environmental Significant Opinions and Waste Facility License Applications.

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

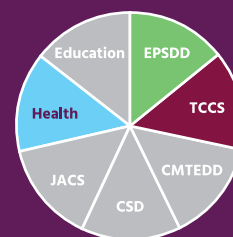
ACT Parliament of Youth, AP2, ACT Water Strategy 2014–44, Transport for Canberra 2012–2031, ACT Nature Conservation Strategy, ACT Waste Management Strategy

- EDU support the ACT Youth Parliament with an annual event that engages school students in developing their ideas for a sustainable ACT.
- EDU Sustainable Transport Strategy – construction of end of trip bicycle storage facilities at two schools including commercial bicycle pumps. Bicycle infrastructure site planning has been completed through to 2020–21.
- The Landscape Masterplan Program commenced in 2017–18 to identify opportunities for supporting learning activities in schools, improve microclimates, water quality and mitigate the impact of high temperatures. The Masterplans include a condition audit of the grounds which informs grounds management and sustainable development. In 2018–19 landscape masterplans were completed at five schools.

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



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Update from Directorates for 2018–19

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

The ACT's ambient air quality is measured in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environmental Protection Measure (NEPM) via the Performance Monitoring Station network in the ACT. The ACT is compliant with the NEPM which is reported annually in the National Environment Protection Council Annual Report available at: <http://www.nepc.gov.au/publications/annual-reports> and the ACT Government's Annual Air Quality Report available at: https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1320/~/-/air-pollution#!tabs-4

- Air quality impacts from emissions including wood heaters will continue to be considered as part of (draft) variations to the Territory Plan to rezone non-urban land to urban purposes (such as residential). In the 2018–19 financial year there were no rezoning's of non-urban land to urban purposes.
- The ACT Government continues to regulate firewood merchants under the Environment Protection Regulation 2005 after removing the administrative cost and burden to businesses and government of requiring an environmental authorisation in 2017.
- The ACT Government continued the annual Burn Right Tonight public education campaign on the correct use of wood heaters over the winter of 2018. The 2019 campaign commenced on 1 June 2019 and includes bus advertising, radio interviews, social media posts, whole of government and shopfront messaging including video content. The campaign was launched as part of the ACT response to World Environment Day which has the theme of 'Beating Air Pollution'.

- The ACT Government's Wood Heater Replacement Program aims to reduce winter air pollution from wood smoke by offering a financial incentive to remove wood heaters and replace them with an energy efficient electric alternative. A total of 26 wood heater replacement claims were made during 2018–19.
- A review of the Air Environment Protection Policy and associated regulations under the *Environment Protection Act 1997* was initiated. The review seeks to contemporise the ACT's policy for assessing air quality impacts from industrial emissions and setting contemporary industrial emissions standards including criteria for odour emissions.



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Transport for Canberra and the ACT Waste Management Strategy

N/a



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

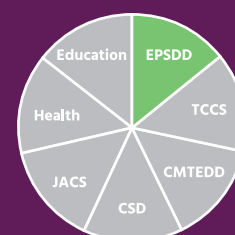
ACT Health continues to provide technical support and advice to Environment Protection and Policy and the EPA on ambient air quality issues.

ACT Health is also seeking to establish a network of particulate sensors to monitor wood smoke in areas of Canberra not covered by the current network. Recent and further pending changes to the AAQ NEPM result in the ACT currently being unable to meet the current and further proposed measure in full. Options to address this gap in capability are being investigated.

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 for 2018–19



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Hydrogeological Landscape (HGL) Framework and Vegetation mapping.

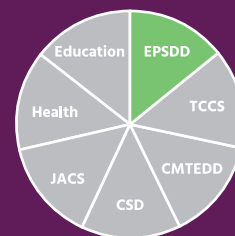
ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23, in particular Action 1.1 Develop baseline information on landscape function.

- The ACT Hydrogeological Landscapes Framework was completed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage in 2016, funded by the ACT Government and with the support of the Australian Government Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change Fund (Stream 1). The information is publicly available through ACTMapi and helping to inform decision making about land management, urban planning and environmental research.
- The ACT Vegetation Map was completed in 2018 and was made available on ACTMapi Significant Plants and Animals Map and the ACT Geospatial Catalogue under CCBY 4.0 licence for free download. The dataset was supplemented with height and cover information at the polygon scale, using the 2015 LiDAR data (Canopy Height Model). Refined mapping of the High Country Bogs and Fens will be completed in the second half of 2019 and updated in the ACT Vegetation Map.

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 for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process

Strategic Assessments

Environmental Significance Opinions (ESOs)

- The ACT Government has continued with its EIS process, which is based on a triple bottom line and risk assessment approach and considers cumulative and off-site impacts. The EIS process helps inform the Minister of risks and proposes mitigation measures to help reduce any impacts. During 2018–19 financial year, four ESO scoping documents were issued, with six EISs currently under assessment.
- There have also been a number of EIS exemptions under s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* granted over the last year. An EIS exemption utilises the same triple bottom line and risk assessment framework as an EIS and considers whether the cumulative and offsite impacts have already been considered adequately through other recent studies. The Ginninderry Urban Stage 2 and subsequent stages urban development and the Canberra Brickworks Precinct Access Road and Dudley Street Upgrade EIS exemptions were granted in the 2018–19 financial year.
- 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, the Heritage Council and the Planning and Land Authority. 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. Thirty-five ESOs were issued during the 2018–19 financial year.
- The ACT has two approved strategic assessments, relating to the urban development of Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley. The ACT Government and Riverview Projects (ACT) Ltd received approval for the West Belconnen Strategic Assessment for proposed urban development at West Belconnen under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).
- During 2018–19, the Directorate continued preparing the draft Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment documentation under Part 10 of the Commonwealth's EPBC Act. The strategic assessment is assessing Matters of National Environmental Significance in the context of future employment-related development in parts of the Eastern Broadacre area. The Eastern Broadacre area is located on the eastern side of Canberra and extends from the Majura Valley, around Fyshwick, through the Jerrabomberra Valley to Hume and Tuggeranong. It is expected that consultation of the draft strategic assessment will commence in the 2019–20 financial year. The draft strategic assessment documentation is also considering ACT listed flora and fauna.
- Subject to the approval of the strategic assessment by the Commonwealth, a subsequent environmental approval under the ACT's Planning and Development Act 2007 and rezoning(s) to the Territory Plan will be required.

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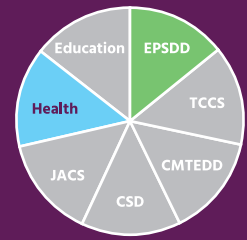
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Recommendation 7 – Water

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 for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

ACT Integrated Water Monitoring Plan

- The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan (IWMP) is complete and implementation is ongoing. The IWMP provided recommendations regarding, monitoring, modelling and data management.
- Procurement was undertaken in 2018 for two new waterway monitoring programs. These programs will collect data to inform the calibration of catchment models for the ACT and provide empirical data on the performance of WSUD infrastructure in the ACT. These monitoring programs with run into 2019–20.
- A SOURCE model is being developed to inform on water quality in the ACT. This model will be used to identify future stressors on water quality in the ACT and identify plausible interventions and management actions to maintain and improve water quality. Further calibration of the SOURCE model is planned and is identified in the IWMP.
- In-lake research in Lake Tuggeranong to clarify the major sources and timing of in-lake pollutant release to inform specific management action trials is ongoing.
- Research in ACT urban ponds in order to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality has been completed. Outcomes will inform management of these assets.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information is ongoing. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible.

Health

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

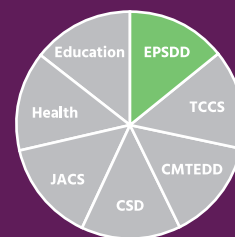
ACT Wide Water Quality Monitoring Framework

ACT Health participates in the multiagency Aquatic Monitoring Advisory Group to provide health input into water strategies

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 for 2018–19



Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

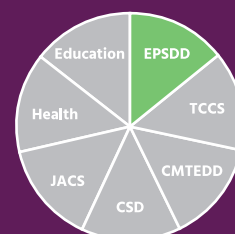
Conservation Research and the Parks and Conservation Service in EPSDD continue to develop monitoring plans and condition analysis reports for the eight broad ecosystems within the CEMP.

- Completion of CEMP Upland Grassland Ecosystem Monitoring Plan and condition report
- Draft of CEMP Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Monitoring Plan and condition report

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



Update from Directorates for 2018–19



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.

Canberra Nature Map.

- All ACT Biodiversity Core datasets (threatened and rare flora and fauna, habitat, vegetation communities including ACT Vegetation Map, High Country Bogs and Fens, Grasslands and Important Wetlands), connectivity and restoration tools and urban vegetation structure are available for free download via ACTMapi and the Geospatial Catalogue.
- The ACT Wildlife Atlas and the ACT Protected Plants Database are integrated with Canberra Nature Map and the Atlas of Living Australia (data is shared in both directions)
- The Environment Division has also requested support from the ACT Government's Data Lake which will:
 - better integrate Environmental data storage across EPSDD
 - implement ACT Government Open Access policies
 - increase the availability of data to inform evidence-based decision making
 - increase communication with key external stakeholders (e.g. Commissioner's Office, Federal departments, Conservation Council, researchers and the community).

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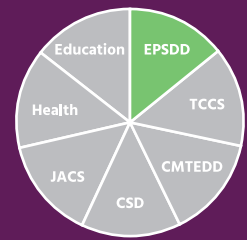
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Recommendation 10 – Heritage

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 for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, Plan of Management or audit

Program of heritage audits

ACT Heritage Strategy

- The concept of a program of an audit monitoring the condition of heritage places is supported in-principle however this cannot be implemented in the current climate as resourcing has had to respond to a 51% increase of heritage advice and approval applications (since 2014) and community expectation to reduce the nomination list and legislative amendments to increase heritage compliance tools.
- In reviewing the priorities of ACT Heritage, following its restructure from the Strategic Planning Division to the Environment Division in 2017, the further development of a Heritage Strategy has ceased. The ACT Heritage Council (the Council) met on 15 November 2018 where it agreed to develop a Strategic Plan to focus on priority issues and deliver a strategic vision for the Council. This work continues in 2019.
- No public authority heritage reports were due to the ACT Heritage Council during 2018–19.

Other strategic work for the 2018–19 period includes:

Internal review of heritage offence and compliance provisions

Commenced internal review of heritage offence and compliance provisions to ensure tools and legislation required for effective compliance and enforcement action are suitable, leading to good heritage outcomes.

Heritage Festival analysis and review

ACT Heritage engaged an external researcher to develop a demographic profile of attendees and to measure their experiences; an understanding of their behaviours and insights can be used to help shape the Festival for future years. This work was completed in 2018.

Reducing the list of nominations awaiting assessment

ACT Heritage and the Council has reduced the list of nominations awaiting assessment. Since reaching a peak of 320 in 2008 the current number of nominations awaiting assessment (as at 1 July 2019) is 88.

- At the beginning of each reporting period, the Council decides on its annual priority list of nominated places and objects to be assessed.
- Council decides its priorities for assessing nominated places and objects based on resourcing, community expectations, and land development pressures and threat to a heritage place or object and appeal risk.
- The Council completed 36% of its priority list assessments for the reporting period as well as making decisions on two other places additional to the list, which were identified as additional priorities as the year progressed.
- 36% is a sound result, as the Council must balance the requirement to make heritage decisions in addition to its other functions, such as the provision of statutory advice and assisting with ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal appeals.

Increased and new ways of public consultation and engagement

On behalf of the Council, ACT Heritage has adopted practices and taken additional measures to engage further with stakeholders and increase clarity surrounding heritage issues and decisions. Specifically:

- In early 2018, ACT Heritage contacted nominators of places that have been nominated longer than one year to inform them of assessment status. Nominators were also invited to provide new or additional information on nominations to assist the Council with expediting assessments in the future.
- ACT Heritage updated the Register to include detailed contextual information on nominated places/objects to provide clarity for property owners and nominators.
- ACT Heritage worked with EPSDD Communications to boost outreach and publicity surrounding Council decisions on provisional registration. Specifically, Council decisions to provisionally register are now publicised on social media to increase community 'buy in' on heritage matters.

Review of ACT Heritage processes

Developing effective and efficient ways of operating where possible. This is ongoing.

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Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy (2017), the Government's Response and update on actions

In the 2017 *Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy*, the Commissioner made 17 recommendations which are listed below with the Government's response to each one and an update from directorates on actions achieved during 2018–19.

Recommendation 1. Budget appropriation for climate change mitigation and adaptation policies will be significant, cannot be postponed and must be consistent.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19



EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

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

The Adaptation Strategy has been substantially completed and is entering its final year of funding in 2019–20. Remaining actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan, including climate-wise homes, resilient plants that will help the ACT adapt to climate change and demonstration projects showcasing climate-wise activities that can be undertaken by developers, builders and homeowners.

AP2

The ACT continued to work towards its 40% emissions reduction target by 2020 (on 1990 levels). This target will be achieved by transitioning to 100% renewable electricity by 2020. The contracts for delivering this target are all established. Additionally, the ACT Government recently legislated the target of retaining a 100% renewable electricity supply indefinitely into the future.

Budget

Ongoing funding has been secured for core programs from 2019–20 FY onwards to provide consistency of effort in addressing climate change. The EEIS has secured funding until 2030 to continue delivering energy efficiency upgrades to businesses and households. EPSDD has also secured funding to develop policy and provide advice in relation to reducing emission from Government operations under the Carbon Neutral Government Framework.

Recommendation 2. Energy efficiency initiatives are crucial in delivering climate change outcomes and must be prioritised in policy development.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS)

Since the EEIS commenced on January 2013, around 74,000 households and businesses have participated in the Scheme, including close to 19,000 priority low income households. Over 1.3 million energy saving items have been installed, delivering more than 6.5 million GJ of lifetime energy savings, about \$400 million of lifetime energy bill savings and is estimated to achieve lifetime emission reductions of around 500,000 tCO₂-e, equivalent to taking approximately 161,000 cars off Canberra roads for a year.

- During the 2018–19 financial year, over 88,000 energy saving items were installed in more than 3,600 households and businesses, including household activities such as replacement of inefficient heaters and hot water units with high efficient systems, decommissioning of refrigerators and freezers, as well as lighting upgrades to help ACT businesses reduce their energy consumption and save money on electricity bills. The ACT Government plans to extend the EEIS to 2030 with policy settings that optimise environmental and social outcomes to reduce energy poverty and progress towards achieving the ACT Government's interim climate change targets.
- The ACT Government plans to extend the EEIS to 2030 with policy settings that optimise environmental and social outcomes to reduce energy poverty and progress towards achieving the ACT Government's interim climate change targets.
- The ACT Government's Actsmart suite of programs are designed to complement the activities delivered under the EEIS. A range of support is available to businesses, schools, households (including low income households) and the community to improve their energy efficiency.

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Recommendation 3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies must be embedded and integrated across whole of government functions.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (under development)

- Individual agencies are accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions through Director-General Key Performance Indicators and agency carbon budgets. All Director's-General report emissions reductions and activities undertaken as part of the Carbon Neutral Government Framework. Director's-General report progress to the Head of Service annually. These measures allow high-level executive oversight and ensure incorporation of sustainability and emissions reduction into the Government's strategic policy direction.
- Both climate change adaptation and mitigation actions are being incorporated in the new climate change strategy and living infrastructure plan.

Recommendation 4. Transport is the biggest climate change mitigation challenge for the ACT and significant commitment to policy development, action and targets will be central to the ACT continuing its reputation as a climate change policy leader and driver of change.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan (2018–2021)

- The ACT Government launched its Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan (2018–2021) to reduce transport emissions with actions aimed to increase active travel and public transport, while incentivising new electric vehicle purchases and establishing the second-hand electric vehicle action plan.
- Reducing transport emissions will be a priority in the ACT's New Climate strategy.
- Roll out of 51 new charging stations across government in 2018–19

Recommendation 5. Community engagement in discussions about climate change policy is fundamental to effective interventions in respect of mitigation and adaptation.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Action Plan 2 (AP2)

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

- Government remains committed to working closely with the community to implement climate change solutions.
- The new ACT Climate Change Strategy has been informed by extensive community and stakeholder consultation. Government will partner with the community and businesses in the next stage of our efforts to further reduce ACT emissions and build resilience to climate change impacts. Implementing the Strategy, and successfully meeting our interim emission reduction targets, will require broad community participation. Government will look for innovative ways to encourage and support behaviour change and community and business leadership on climate change.
- The community was consulted in 2018 and early 2019 on the extension of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) to 2030 which will support further energy cost reductions, reduce energy poverty and progress towards achieving the ACT Government's interim climate change targets.

Recommendation 6. Commitment to social equity in the face of climate change challenges must be strengthened in all new policy initiatives.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) Priority Household Target

Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing initiative

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) Priority Household Target

- The EEIS Priority Household Target was set at 20% in 2019 and has been increased to 30% for 2020 to encourage electricity retailers to increase opportunities for low income households to benefit from the scheme.

Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing initiative

- After the delivery of a successful pilot program in 2017–18, the ACT Government initiated the Energy Efficiency Improvements in Public Housing initiative in partnership with ActewAGL. This initiative consists of a \$7.0 million investment to improve the energy efficiency of 2200 public houses, from 01 July 2018 to 30 June 2021.
- In 2018–19 this initiative replaced approximately 470 heaters and hot water systems with high efficiency systems, with estimated lifetime emission reductions of 12,445 t CO₂ –e and \$5.5 million in lifetime energy bill savings.

Recommendation 7. To effectively meet immediate and evolving climate change challenges, policy must be timely, focused by means of multi-sectoral short, medium and long term targets.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (2010)

- Interim targets of 50–60% by 2025, 65–75% by 2030 and 80–90% by 2040 have been legislated.
- Net Zero emissions target has been brought forward to 2045 at the latest
- The Government has committed to not purchasing carbon offsets. It will ensure abatement is achieved in a manner that reinvests in the local economy.

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Recommendation 8. Climate change policy actions and targets must continue to be monitored and evaluated in open, transparent and independent review and audit processes.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

- In 2018 the ACT Government commissioned the University of Canberra to undertake a longitudinal survey to measure the respective levels of climate risk awareness and resilience throughout the ACT. This survey is intended to be repeated in five years' time to measure progress.
- An independent review of the scheme was undertaken in 2018 and confirmed that EEIS remains appropriate and has been efficient and effective in tackling its original policy problems and scheme objectives by reducing household and business emissions and energy costs with an overall positive benefit–cost ratio.

Recommendation 9. Engage the community in meaningful conversation about the credibility and validity of investing in offsets to support carbon neutrality against other investment options.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

- The ACT Government is actively considering advice from the ACT Climate Change Council on using a Social Cost of Carbon in development of the strategy to 2025.

Recommendation 10. Develop a Basis of Preparation end to end process manual for the ACT emissions inventory to ensure ongoing accuracy and repeatability of ACT emissions monitoring and reporting.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

- The ACT Government’s annual greenhouse gas inventory is undertaken by external consultants who, as part of the process, develop and submit a proposed methodology. This methodology is approved prior to the quantifying of the ACT’s emissions to ensure its accuracy and consistency with previous methodologies.

Recommendation 11. Conduct an audit of ACT emissions inventory to ensure accuracy and facilitate continuous improvement, initially in 2 years’ time and at regular intervals thereafter.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Climate Change Strategy (under development).

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010

- The ACT Government regularly reviews the ACT emissions inventory, prepared by external consultants to ensure accuracy and facilitate continuous improvement.
- The ACT emissions inventory has not been the subject of an external review arranged by the ACT Government in the last two years.

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Recommendation 12. Identify energy productivity and/or efficiency targets in conjunction with emissions reduction targets at 5 to 10 year intervals out to 2050 to optimise sustainability outcomes.

Government Response: Noted

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS)

The EEIS establishes a Territory-wide Energy Savings Target (EST) defined as a proportion of a retailers' total electricity sales. Tier 1 electricity retailers must deliver energy efficiency savings to their customers' equivalent to the EST as well as a Priority Household Target.

National Energy Productivity Plan (NEPP)

The NEPP is an overarching initiative of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Energy Council, aiming to improve Australia's energy productivity by 40% between 2015 and 2030.

- An independent review of the EEIS in 2018 confirmed ActewAGL has consistently met both the Energy Saving Target and Priority Household Target in every compliance period since 2013.
- The ACT Government contributed to NEPP measures through the COAG process.

Recommendation 13. Ensure that adequate and permanent resources are committed to the Carbon Neutral Government Program, both in the central facilitation team and within agencies.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

- The ACT Government committed to ongoing funding for the Carbon Neutral Government team in the 2019–20 budget.
- All ACT Government directorates employed Sustainability Managers during 2018–19 to undertake a range of activities relating to the CNG Framework including development of applications to the CNG Fund, developing agency emissions targets and engagement activities within their own directorates.

Recommendation 14. In line with national best practice, consider reporting significant Scope 3 emissions associated with ACT Government operations and clearly document their inclusions or exclusions in carbon neutral aspirations.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

- In February 2018 the EPSDD received advice on the inclusion of Scope 3 emissions from the contractor responsible for producing the ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010.
- This advice noted that reporting of Scope 3 emissions would require the systematic and comprehensive collection of a much wider range of data than what is currently required for reporting Scope 1 and 2 emissions. In light of the considerable administrative burden, in the form of extensive data collection and reporting, the report recommended that the Whole of ACT Government reporting of greenhouse gas emissions be confined to Scope 1 and Scope 2.

Recommendation 15. Produce an emissions boundary diagram for each agency to improve transparency and rigor in reporting emissions and developing mitigation strategies.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

- EPSDD introduced a formal ACT Government Emissions Boundary in consultation with Directorates in 2018–19.
- The ACT Government Emissions Boundary determines which greenhouse gas emissions are within the operational control of the ACT Government and therefore need to be addressed under the CNG Framework. This document provides clear direction to Directorates on which assets (e.g. vehicles and facilities) are within their emissions boundaries.
- Assets included in Directorate emissions boundaries are recorded in the Enterprise Sustainability Platform, the online platform for measuring and reporting ACT Government emissions, and in annual Directorate carbon budgets. The list of assets in a Directorate's emissions boundary is reviewed each year when Directorates develop annual carbon budgets. Directorate assets can also be added or removed from the ESP throughout the year as assets come online or are retired.

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Recommendation 16. Ensure ongoing improvement to document processes for government agency greenhouse gas inventories to ensure integrity and efficiency of initiatives.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

- The contractor responsible for producing the ACT greenhouse gas inventory under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* has been contracted to produce an annual inventory for ACT Government operations.

Recommendation 17. Improve awareness and ease for applications to the Carbon Neutral Government Loan Fund.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Carbon Neutral Government Framework

- Significant work has gone into encouraging greater utilisation of the CNG Fund in 2018–19.
- CNG Fund guidelines and application documents have been updated and simplified to reduce the administrative burden to agencies.
- In 2018–19 the CNG program hired three Energy Project Officers (EPOs) to provide technical expertise to assist Directorates to identify projects, quantify emissions and financial savings and facilitate applications to the CNG Fund.
- The CNG Fund previously required that all cost savings generated by a project be repaid until the loan was paid back in full to the CNG Fund. The guidelines have been updated so only 80% of the annual savings are repaid to the fund each year. While this extends the length of time over which a loan is repaid it allows Directorates to receive financial savings from the project immediately rather than only after the loan is repaid.

Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Audit update on Corrective Action Requests

All 5 Corrective Action Requests were responded to satisfactorily and within the specified timeframe (extensions granted for external factors). These have been closed.

The ACT's first Draft Cat Plan was released for comment in 2018–19 demonstrating progress against CAR 1.

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS COMPLETION REPORT

	CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS	COMMITMENT	(ORIGINAL DUE DATE) AMENDED DUE DATE	COMPLETED
CAR 1	Provide a plan on how to address the compliance and enforcement for cat containment.	5	(20 December 2017)	20 December 2017
CAR 2	Review the Taylor Stage 1 CEMP, and work undertaken in relation to this CEMP, to identify whether any breaches in relation to MNES have occurred.	11a	(20 January 2018) 9 March 2018	9 March 2018
CAR 3	Prepare a process document outlining the steps required to document or report investigations into any real or potential breaches of commitments of the Plan.	15	(20 January 2018)	29 January 2018
CAR 4	Ensure the fire hazard management strategies are completed.	28	(20 February 2018) 1 March 2018	1 March 2018
CAR 5	Prepare and provide educational documentation for residents moving into Throsby and for people buying the remaining blocks in the suburb.	30	(20 December 2017)	20 December 2017

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Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment Audit update on Corrective Action Requests

All 4 Corrective Action Requests were responded to satisfactorily and within the specified timeframe (extensions granted for external factors). These have been closed.

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS COMPLETION REPORT

	CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS	COMMITMENT	(ORIGINAL DUE DATE) AMENDED DUE DATE	COMPLETED
CAR 1	Provide the final draft Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan to the Minister.	9 & 36	(31 July 2018) 30 November 2018	29 November 2018
CAR 2	Finalise the operational plan for Patch P to ensure appropriate management is occurring.	16	(31 December 2018) 31 December 2018	21 December 2018
CAR 3	Incorporate actions and monitoring requirements into relevant Land Management Agreements for the protection of the ecological condition of MNES within Patches I, L & M.	16	(31 December 2018) 30 April 2019	30 April 2019
CAR 4	Finalise the operational plan for the Pink-tailed Worm-lizard Conservation Area in the Molonglo River Reserve.	41	(30 April 2018) 30 April 2018	19 April 2019

Review of the ACT Shopping Bag Ban – Unfantastic Plastic

Unfantastic Plastic – Review of the ACT Shopping Bag Ban was commissioned by Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability in December 2017 and completed in August 2018.

This investigation looked at the efficacy of the *ACT Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010* and made recommendations to improve environmental outcomes.

The review drew on technical analysis undertaken by the Australian National University²⁶ earlier in 2018.

Similar to previous reviews, the 2018 review grappled with a lack of data, lack of clarity around the rationale for the ban and a lack of defined objectives within the Act.

Unfantastic Plastic was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in September 2018 and made four key recommendations for government consideration:

- Recommendation 1: Introduce a mandatory plastic bag disclosure regime.
- Recommendation 2: Introduce minimum plastic bag pricing.

- Recommendation 3: Improve government's governance on plastic bag regulation.
- Recommendation 4: Research synergies for compostable plastic and the proposed household organic collection scheme.

Following a change in Ministerial Administrative Arrangement, in February 2019, the newly appointed Minister for waste and the plastic bag ban, Minister Steel, reflected on the *Unfantastic Plastic Report*. Minister Steel announced an intent to introduce legislation to ban all single-use plastics, which was generally supported by the assembly.

The Government's response was tabled in May 2019 and consistent with this change in policy, two recommendations were agreed, and two not agreed.

The ACT Government has commenced a statutory process to reduce use of a range of single-use plastics, including bags.

The Unfantastic Plastic recommendations have been subsumed into this process and will not be subject to further inquiry at this stage.



Australian Dance Party signage put up by the office around CIT. Photo: Caitlin Roy

26 A Macintosh, A Simpson and T Neeman (ANU), 2018: Regulating Plastic Shopping Bags in the Australian Capital Territory: Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010 Options Analysis, Canberra.

Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation – The Heroic and the Dammed

Recommendation 1.1 The Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework be implemented urgently

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP)

Catchment health and water quality monitoring in the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) will primarily be captured under the CEMP framework, EPSDD's overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework. The forthcoming release of the Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Conservation Strategy contains several monitoring metrics designed specifically for the LCC to better inform management effectiveness and improve water quality outcomes.

Recommendation 1.2 All existing and future Lower Cotter Catchment data should be stored in a secure central database

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Government Data Lake

Discussions are progressing for EPSDD to access the ACT Government's Data Lake to better integrate environmental data storage and implement the ACT Government Open Access policies. When access provisions are finalised, all relevant Lower Cotter Catchment data, including that collected and synthesised through the CEMP framework, will be incorporated into the Data Lake.

Recommendation 1.3 Improve consistency and coordination of monitoring, mapping and modelling resources across government

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

See actions related to recommendation 1.2.

Whole of EPSDD discussions are ongoing to determine the most suitable, widely applicable and cost-effective remote sensing tools to inform protected area management strategies, including the LCC.

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Recommendation 2.1 Allocate discrete annual funding from the Water Abstraction Charge (WAC) directly to catchment management for the life of the Reserve Management Plan 2018. This is in addition to existing recurrent funding. Financial year budget rollover is necessary to reflect the contract management cycles for land management works.

Government Response: Noted

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

The government did not accept this recommendation. No additional funding has been allocated to the Lower Cotter Catchment to date.

Recommendation 2.2 Distribute Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) funding discretely for core ongoing operational and strategic long-term management. Allocation of resources between business units within PCS should reflect reserve management responsibilities outlined in the implementation plan.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 (RMP)

The completed Implementation Plan forms the basis for the preparation of an annual works plan for holistic management of the LCC. Annual works plan for the 2019–20 financial year, and ensuing years, will apportion funding that is consistent with the priorities of the Reserve Management Plan actions, including monitoring requirements.

Recommendation 2.3 Allocate funding specifically for the implementation and ongoing costs of Recommendation 1 (Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation) across PCS, Conservation Research, Water Policy, and the Environment Protection Authority respective of their individual contributions.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

See actions related to recommendation 2.2.

Recommendation 3.1 Complete outstanding Auditor-General's recommendations, specifically recommendations 1, 3 and 4, as a matter of priority by no later than 30 June 2019. This includes undertaking an internal review to confirm completion of all recommendations in consideration of observations made in this report.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Code of Sustainable Land Management

PCS is working to finalise the Code of Sustainable Land Management Practices to guide its activity across the whole conservation estate, the majority of which is potable water catchment. This will involve consultation with key stakeholders including throughout Government, with Icon Water and the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. A Working Group of PCS staff has been established to further develop and finalise Code of Practice; completion time has been revised to December 2019 to allow for adequate input and consultation from stakeholders.

Recommendation 3.2 Review and update the Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Treatment Plan quarterly as per ACT Insurance Authority requirements. Include risk management as a standing agenda item on the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group meeting agenda.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Lower Cotter Catchment Risk Assessment and Risk Treatment Plan

Reviewing the LCC Risk Assessment and Risk Treatment Plan has been added as a standing agenda item on the LCC Implementation Coordination Group.

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Recommendation 3.3 Develop the Reserve Management Plan 2018 Implementation Plan as outlined in the plan and under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* by no later than 30 June 2019. This should include the strategic long-term management of commercial pine plantations, non-commercial pine plantations, and pine wildling regrowth.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018

The Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 has been completed and forms the basis on how actions in the Reserve Management Plan are executed.

Recommendation 4.1 Review the Terms of Reference for the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group, including relevant attendees, and revert to 'Phase 1' until all high and medium priority management actions outlined in the Reserve Management Plan 2018 are complete. This Group will then be critical to review and assess the Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework at set intervals over time to facilitate adaptive management.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

The Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Coordination Group was established to operate in two phases. Phase 1 was written into the Terms of Reference of the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Group to enable the prioritisation of the delivery of the Auditor-General's recommendations. As this task is still being completed (three of the 12 recommendations remain outstanding), the Committee remains in Phase 1.

Once the Committee has addressed the three remaining recommendations, it is proposed the Committee will move into Phase 2, which will be amended in acknowledgement of the intent of Recommendation 4.1 to read as follows: Phase 2: Key stakeholder liaison group for source water protection and land management within the Lower Cotter Catchment with an emphasis on consultation on the implementation of the Reserve Management Plan 2018 and monitoring and evaluation work.

As outlined in the Nature Conservation Act 2014, the custodian retains the responsibility for the delivery of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan and it is not appropriate for this task to fall to a committee. This change to the Terms of Reference of the Lower Cotter Catchment Implementation Group meets the intent of the recommendation.

Recommendation 4.2 The Lower Cotter Catchment be placed as a standing agenda item on the Director's-General Water Group meeting for the life of the current Reserve Management Plan 2018. The Implementation Coordination Group Chair or a delegate should report to the meeting.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

The Director's-General Water Group is the appropriate senior official's forum to oversee implementation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan, the group should receive regular progress reports from the Implementation Coordination Group.

The Lower Cotter Catchment will be a standing agenda item on all future Director's-General Water Group meetings.

Recommendation 4.3 The Lower Cotter Catchment become a standing agenda item on the Regional Catchment Management Group meeting schedule, to ensure the consideration of matters concerning water security, climate change, bushfire management, water quality, and feral species, at a regional level.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

N/a

The ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group is established under the ACT Water Resources Act 2007, to promote coordination and collaboration between Government and community stakeholders concerned with catchment management. This includes coordination between agencies in the ACT. Work to restore the Lower Cotter Catchment is an excellent test case in effective collaboration and cooperation in catchment management.

The Lower Cotter Catchment will be a standing agenda item on all future ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group meetings.

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Recommendation 5.1 ACT Government amend the *Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999* to allow for the immediate removal of abandoned vehicles by government authorities.

Government Response: Agreed in-principle

Update from JACS for 2018–19

JACS

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Implementation Plan of the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (Emergency Services Agency) is convening a working group to strengthen operational arrangements to identify and quickly remove abandoned vehicles that pose fire risks, noting that the current legislation gives authorised officers the power to remove abandoned vehicles if they are causing a danger to the public. This includes arrangements around the sharing of information, reporting of abandoned vehicles and ensuring all relevant staff are fully aware of their existing powers. The working group will consider what operational and/or legislative changes may be needed to clarify the existing powers that the ACT holds to immediately remove abandoned vehicles and address issues with storage of such vehicles. The working group will include representation from Access Canberra, Environment, Planning and Sustainable development Directorate (EPSDD), Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and ACT Policing.

Further, since the release of the OCSE report, three trial closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras have been installed on roads leading to rural areas of the ACT. These cameras are expected to act as a deterrent to people abandoning vehicles as well as an aid in the investigation of such incidents.

Recommendation 5.2 ACT Government amend the *Lower Cotter Catchment Activities Declaration* to allow the restriction of public vehicular access to ecologically sensitive and isolated parts of the Lower Cotter Catchment.

Government Response: Agreed

Update from EPSDD for 2018–19

EPSDD

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Nature Conservation (Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve) Activities Declaration 2019

Nature Conservation (Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve – Uriarra Village) Activities Declaration 2019

Two new Activities Declarations covering the LCC are now enforceable as notifiable instruments (NI2017–417 and NI2019–418). These significantly improve the public clarity around prohibited and restricted recreational activities, including several changes to public vehicular access to sensitive areas of the LCC, and are more consistent with the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 policies and objectives.

Updates on actions in relation to recommendations from investigations by the Commissioner

The following sets out the Commissioner's reporting requirements for the 2018–19 annual reporting year on directorate updates for actions in relation to recommendations resulting from investigations by the Commissioner.

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN INVESTIGATION

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE LAKE'S WATER QUALITY

Recommendation 7

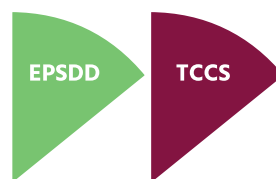
The ACT Government should develop a strategic approach to water-sensitive urban design (WSUD). This should include:

- 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:
 - 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
 - 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.
- b) Ensuring that WSUD requirements are enforced in particular:
 - i) ensuring that wetlands and ponds are of appropriate sizes to service their catchments; and
 - 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- e) Reviewing the efficacy of existing gross pollutant traps. The review should include:

- i) effectiveness in pollutant reduction;
 - ii) effectiveness of current maintenance of pollution control measures
 - iii) capital costs;
 - iv) ongoing maintenance costs to ensure the current drainage infrastructure remains high-standard and is in line with current best practice, protecting downstream environments;
 - v) reduction of polluted leachate water; and
 - vi) the capacity to manage requirements of future urban growth and development.
- f) Working with the NCA and NSW councils.

Commissioner's comment

Progress has been reported. Provide an update on actions achieved in 2018–19 and a reference to how each of the specific recommendations are being achieved, e.g. a specific committed action from a plan or strategy.



ACT Government response (EPSDD, TCCS)

Relevant strategy, plan or program

ACT Healthy Waterways Project

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Code and Guidelines

Actions completed in 2018–19 by EPSDD

Recommendation a (i)

- The ACT Healthy Waterways Project (ACT HW) is a joint initiative of the Australian and ACT Governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and further downstream in the Murrumbidgee River system. It involves the construction of a range of infrastructure – ponds, wetlands, rain gardens and swales – designed to 'turn off' or reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment and pollutants entering our waterways. The Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchment are a focus of the ACT Healthy Waterways Project.
- 20 pieces of infrastructure were built in 6 priority catchments across the ACT in 2018–2019. This included assets in the Yarralumla and Fyshwick catchments. Assets are now undergoing establishment for a two year period, in which macrophytes (aquatic plants) are maintained as they develop their water quality improving characteristics.

Recommendation c)

- The ACT Healthy Waterways Project has rolled out an asset evaluation monitoring program across the ACT. This monitoring program, called the Asset Evaluation Monitoring program aims to quantify the water quality performance of gross pollutant traps, ponds and wetlands across the ACT. This data in turn will be suitable for comparison to modelled performance from MUSIC, which in turn relates to the asset performance in relation to meeting the WSUD general code targets. This monitoring program will run until June 2020. Monitoring is being undertaken at four ponds and wetlands across the ACT.
- Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch continues to engage with volunteers across the entire catchment to monitor water quality, macroinvertebrates and riparian condition from ~200 sites across the ACT and region, including the Lake Burley Griffin catchment. Results of monitoring are published every year in the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch CHIP report.
- Work is progressing to release for public comment an updated version of the WSUD General Code and supporting Guidelines. The WSUD Code has a series of targets for mains water reduction, water quality and stormwater quantity. The ACT Practice Guidelines for Water Sensitive Urban Design provide guidance and options for compliance with the WSUD Code for both private and public developments

Actions completed in 2018–19 by TCCS

Recommendation e)

- Road Maintenance is currently preparing a scope of works to engage a contractor to oversee the larger proposed audit. It is expected that the proposed GPT audit contract will commence before December 2019.

RURAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

Recommendation 10

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 and other NRM groups should continue to be strongly encouraged and supported.

Commissioner's comment

It is noted that support has been demonstrated through the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy and Implementation Plan. Provide an update on progress.



ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Action 18 of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy specifically addresses the mitigation of soil erosion at priority sites across the broader catchment by identifying and prioritising significant erosion hotspots across the catchment and developing implementation responses as appropriate.

Actions completed in 2018–19

Soil erosion in the Lower Cotter catchment has been reviewed and remediation work commenced, as it impacts on raw water quality of Canberra's drinking water. Icon Water has commenced a 'Googong Actions for Clean Water' project identifying erosion hotspots in the Googong catchment.

Recommendation 11

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, NSW and ACT in the management of the Googong Foreshores.

Commissioner's comment

This recommendation was made in 2012. In the 2016–17 Annual Report, it was reported that a review of the plan would be undertaken in 2018, should resources be available. Provide an update on progress.



ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management

Actions completed in 2018–19

The Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management was approved by the Commonwealth in 2011 as meeting the requirements of a Land and Conservation Management Plan as detailed in the Googong lease. The plan was updated in 2016.

In 2019 a detailed review of the plan commenced. It is anticipated that the revised plan will be sent to the Commonwealth for their comments towards the end of 2019.

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. Provide an update on implementation of the Integrated Water Monitoring Plan.



ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Integrated Water Monitoring Plan

Actions completed in 2018–19

- The Integrated Water Monitoring Plan (IWMP) is complete and implementation has commenced. The IWMP provides a set of recommendations for updating the ACT Government monitoring programs and provides a critical evaluation of future data requirements to inform catchment modelling. A SOURCE model has been developed to deliver an assessment of what water quantity would be at end of pipe for water resource plan compliance. Further calibration of the SOURCE model has commenced, as identified in the IWMP. The calibrated version of the SOURCE model will be used to inform future catchment management actions regarding water quality management.
- Two new monitoring programs began in October 2018. These programs aim to collect water quality data from 1) a range of catchments across the ACT to inform the calibration of SOURCE and MUSIC models, and 2) ACT ponds and wetlands to quantify the performance of WSUD infrastructure in relation to trapping waterborne pollution.

- Stage 2 of the in-lake research in Lake Tuggeranong examined a range of management options to address blue-green algae in Lake Tuggeranong. This is in addition to the 7 WSUD assets built in the Tuggeranong catchment as part of the ACT Healthy Waterways program. Stage 3 of research in Lake Tuggeranong will commence in 2019/2020.
- Research has been completed in ACT urban ponds which aimed to address the impact of wetting and drying regimes on water quality. Outcomes from this research will inform management of these assets.
- Development of a data management system to facilitate sharing of water related data and information has commenced. This system is in line with the ACT Digital Strategy to make data and information publicly accessible. Currently a range of water-related datasets are being added into this database, and the aim being to improve public access to data.

Recommendation 17

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

- 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;
- each party's responsibilities for water quality in the Lake and its catchments;
- a long-term catchment planning framework; and
- 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 was reported on the priority actions in the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group 2017–18 Annual Report. Provide an update on implementation of these actions in 2018–19.



ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Relevant strategy, plan or program

The establishment of ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group and the actions outlined under the Catchment Strategic Operational Plan governed by this group, achieves the integrated regional approach and coordinated challenges of multi-jurisdictional catchment management outlined in this recommendation. NCA is an integral member of this Committee.

Actions completed in 2018–19

Under the catchment Strategic Operational Plan the Committee has progressed measures to;

- Establish an inter-jurisdictional investment and resourcing framework
- Promote evidence based decision making for improved healthy catchments
- Continue to inform a catchment wide assessment of vulnerability to climate change
- Align enforcement between NSW and the ACT on catchment management practices
- Develop an integrated catchment emergency response plan
- Provide an integrated catchment management planning approach for growth and settlement patterns in the ACT and region
- Improve water quality, protect and restore aquatic ecosystem health and reduce nutrient, sediment and pathogen loads at key sites across the catchment
- Develop a regional approach to strategic land and biodiversity management practices

REPORT ON THE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (NATURE RESERVES), MOLONGLO RIVER CORRIDOR (NATURE RESERVES) AND GOOGONG FORESHORES INVESTIGATION – OCTOBER 2011

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),
- polices 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

Provide an update on the review of the Canberra Nature Park Plan of Management.



ACT Government response (EPSDD)

Relevant strategy, plan or program

Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan 2018.

Actions completed by EPSDD in 2018–19

- A review of the 1999 Canberra Nature Park Management Plan has been completed.
- A new draft Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan has been prepared and will be released for public comment in 2019.
- The new draft plan includes updated information on the Commissioner's recommendations.

Complaint investigations and investigation recommendations

There are no active complaint investigations in 2018–19. Several matters from previous years were closed off in the 2017–18 annual report. No new matter have been subject to investigation.

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 that has not yet been outlined in this report.

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**, and **B2.4.3** below.

B.2.4.2 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Forms of direct engagement included meetings with the Commissioner, presentations, launches, seminars and project support with a wide range of individuals and groups. Presentations from the Commissioner and other staff at the office at conferences, seminars and forums are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

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

The aim of using social media in the office is 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. The office does not have the resource base to establish a dedicated communications team. 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 over 1400 followers at 30 June 2019 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’s Twitter feed, @EnvComm_ACT had over 1,600 followers at 30 June 2019.

Analytics (from release to 30 June 2019):

Molonglo Strategic Assessment Audit – 2000+ views

Unfantastic Plastic – 1000+ views

The Heroic and the Dammed – 500+ views

ESRI STORY MAPS: A NEW WAY OF COMMUNICATING SCIENCE

In August 2018, office staff attended ESRI ArcGIS Story Map²⁷ training.

Story Maps combine authoritative maps with narrative text, images, and multimedia content. They make it easy to harness the power of maps and geography to tell a story.

This training has enabled the office to create online interactive Story Maps to accompany investigations,

research reports and community projects, reaching new audiences and enabling a new level of community engagement.

Story maps produced by the office have reached a wide demographic, including being used in several undergraduate courses at the ANU and in the Actsmart school program.



Unfantastic Plastic Story Map. Source: <https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/investigations/unfantastic-plastic-review-of-the-act-plastic-shopping-bag-ban,-august-2018>

Messages of Appreciation

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

"Thank you so much for taking the time to be in our panel session. As you saw from the excellent questions, the students greatly appreciated your presentations and insights."

– Professor Jamie Pittock, Fenner School of Environment and Society

"I compliment you on what I can see is a thorough report which has benefitted from a considerable investment of time both from your own Office and a number of land management practitioners and academics."

– Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for the Environment and Heritage in relation to The Heroic and the Dammed – Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation

"You brought dignity, energy and diversity of contributions to the session and without you the Forum simply would not have achieved its objectives. I am so grateful you were able to do that – I think it made a real difference to the outcome."

– Diane Flett, CSIRO Future Ready Murray-Darling Basin Forum: Beyond 2030

"Very many thanks for the maps, which I have already circulated to the Gardens Committee. The maps are not only full of interesting information, they are visually stunning."

– Elizabeth Truswell, on behalf of the Thursday Talks Committee, Australian Nation Botanic Gardens in relation to the Molonglo Strategic Assessment Audit Story Map.

²⁷ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories>

B.2.4.3 SUBMISSIONS

The office comments and provides input into ACT Government draft documents by specific invitation or through the 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. This is not the case with submissions by invitation.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION MATTERS IN 2018–19

SUBMISSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	SUBMITTED
Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) Priority Household Target Consultation 2018–19	The EEIS Priority Household Target should be retained at a minimum of the existing 20%.	July 2018
Waste-to-energy (WtE) in the ACT	More can be done to reduce waste through education, awareness, cleaner manufacturing, green procurement and embedding a circular economy.	November 2018
Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan	Consider use of infographics and interactive maps to present information. More attention could be given to the following policy themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigate and adapt to climate change • Reduce heat island effect • Design for health and wellbeing • Create healthier ecosystems. 	October 2018
ACT Climate Strategy (Draft)	Improvements to government procurement should be considered to help achieve a circular economy.	January 2019
Moving Canberra: Integrated Transport Strategy (Draft)	Government procurement should be delivered with circular economy principles highly featured. This requires both policy and regulatory commitment. A specific section focused on the circular economy should be included in the strategy to ensure that sustainable procurement is embedded into all initiatives. Government should continue to support community driven initiatives to increase ride sharing and bring in mobility as a service including actions to increase the uptake of car-pooling. Consider use of interactive maps to present information and a social media communications strategy.	March 2019
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (Draft)	Consider use of infographics and interactive maps to present information. While not outlined in the draft, the use of residual risk assessments and predictive modelling are, and should be, at the forefront of future management planning for the ACT.	June 2019

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ANU Honours Student, Rachel Taylor, presenting her research on climate change and fire severity modelling to the office. Source: Caitlin Roy

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 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 year in relation to undertakings made in reports 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 and a risk register has been developed for the office.

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.

Staff in the office are aware that the EPSDD's Audit Committee is available for assistance 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 2018–19 Annual Report.

B.7 Freedom of Information

Section 96 of the *Freedom of Information Act* sets out the reporting requirements for agencies in relation to the operation of the FOI Act during the financial year.

The office does not have anything to report under section 96 (3) of the FOI Act for the 2018–19 financial year as there were no applications received nor managed under the FOI Act.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) manages FOI Act applications on behalf of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

Subject to the FOI Act, every person has an enforceable right to obtain access to government information.

We can assist you to locate the information you are seeking. Please contact the EPSDD Information and Knowledge Management Team on 13 22 81 or email EPSDFOI@act.gov.au.

For more information on making an access application, visit: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/about/access-government-information>

Access applications are recorded in a disclosure log, as required by the FOI Act. To view the disclosure log for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Portfolio (which includes the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment), visit: <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/about/access-government-information/disclosure-log>

B.8 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 2018–19 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.

The office has access to EPSDD E-bikes to cycle to meetings and staff 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 2018–19 Annual Report. Staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant initiatives run by EPSDD.



Office staff riding ACT Government E-bikes to a meeting. Source: Kate Auty.

B.9 Human Resources Management

Further information to that provided in this section can be found in EPSDD's 2018–19 Annual Report.

B.9.1 WORKFORCE PROFILE

B.9.1.1 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) HEADCOUNT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As noted in **Section B1.5**, 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, based on the number of paid staff on the last pay of the financial year, being 26 June 2019.

*Please note as at 26 June 2019 one FTE senior officer was on maternity leave.

TABLE 4: FTE BY GENDER AND HEAD COUNT

HEADCOUNT TOTAL	FTE		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
7	7	FTE by gender	6.0	1.0	7.0
7	7	Headcount by gender	6	1	7
		% of workforce	83.3	85.7%	14.3%

TABLE 5: FTE BY CLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION GROUP	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Administrative officers	2	0	2
Senior officers	3	1	4
Statutory office holders	1	0	1
Total	6	1	7

TABLE 6: HEADCOUNT BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY AND AVERAGE YEARS OF SERVICE

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Casual	0	0	0
Permanent full-time	4	0	4
Permanent part-time	0	0	0
Temporary full-time	2	1	3
Temporary part-time	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	1	7
Average years of service	4.8	1.2	4.3

TABLE 7: 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 8: HEADCOUNT BY AGE GROUP

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

TABLE 9: PERMANENT RECRUITMENT AND SEPARATION RATES

CLASSIFICATION GROUP	RECRUITMENT RATE	SEPARATION RATE
TOTAL	0%	0%

B.9.2 ATTRACTION AND RETENTION INCENTIVES (ARINS)

The office had no ARins arrangements during the 2018–19 reporting year.

B.9.3 PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The office is committed 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.

Diversity and inclusion training is strongly encouraged.

Mentoring options have been discussed with all staff. The office has engaged in mentoring external staff, university students, and early career graduate researchers. The office has accepted placements from ANU and University of Canberra undergraduate students in environmental science related studies and provided local content to several course assessments.

In August 2018, all office staff participated in ARCGIS Story Map training. Several story maps have been produced, engaging a wide demographic.

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,
- heritage, planning and development,
- water and catchment management,
- renewable energy,
- active transport and light rail,
- State of the Environment Reporting, and
- communicating environmental/sustainability issues.

B.9.4 FUTURE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES

Learning and development priorities for all office staff are identified within individual performance plans and in our strategic plan.

B.9.5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Staff are encouraged to participate in Whole of Government Learning and Development Opportunities.

In the 2018–19 reporting year, one staff member completed the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Certificate in Engagement Essentials and commenced the Certificate in Engagement Methods.

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

From September to December 2018, the office accepted a graduate with experience in climate science and policy. During rotation in our office, this graduate gained experience in a range of areas including topical projects, creating digital content, State of the Environment Reporting, as well as representing the office at climate change events and the contentious Kosciusko National Park feral horse science conference.

B.9.6 PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND ACTPS TRAINING CALENDAR

No staff members participated in the study assistance program during 2018–19.

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 2018–19 Annual Report.

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B.10 Ecologically Sustainable Development

B.10.1 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The office is located at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) campus in Bruce.

At this location, the office occupies 137.5 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). Office staff also have access to use Block K – the CIT Sustainable Skills Training Hub.

Staff and the Commissioner have access to free car parking and bicycle parking at CIT Bruce.

Case Study

CONNECTING WITH CIT

In the 2018–19 reporting year, the office engaged with many business areas of CIT including the Sustainability Hub, Renewable Energy Forum and Hackathon, Horticulture, Science and Business and Industry Engagement, and Nursing.

Some of the issues discussed include sustainability, energy, water, waste, active transport, human

settlements and the State of the Environment Report, as well as linking CIT to resources and connections in the environment sector.

The office supports CIT environment and sustainability initiatives wherever possible, actively engaging with and promoting on social media, in reports, and in person.



Top: Meeting with CIT Nursing Bottom: Meeting the Hackathon team behind RePsys active transport app. Source: Kate Auty.

B.10.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The office is covered under the EPSDD Resource Management Plan.

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

‘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 for this reporting year was renewed on 5 February 2019.



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Actsmart accreditation 2019. Source: Caitlin Roy

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

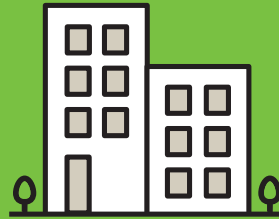
A range of strategies are in place to assist in achieving more sustainable resource management, including:

- 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, as well as developing interactive reports online to reduce the need to print reports,
- collecting household batteries in the office for recycling,
- striving for sustainable procurement through our tendering assessment processes,
- using 100 per cent recycled paper for our printing,
- initiating our own system for composting organic waste,
- collecting soft plastic to recycle through the REDcycle program,
- having three staff members trained in the use of the ACT Government Enterprise Sustainability Platform,
- all staff have their own coffee cups and do not use disposable ones, and
- encouraging staff to ride, carpool or use MyWay bus passes to attend off-site meetings and events where feasible.

HOW DID OUR WASTE CHANGE FROM 2017–18 TO 2018–19?



6 Staff members



Paper usage
decreased by
15%



2017–18

2018–19



waste to landfill
remained steady



comingled recyclables
remained steady



recycled paper
and cardboard
reduced by 22%

FACTORS INFLUENCING DATA

Small staff numbers and resource use results in larger percentage increases or decreases relative to small changes in unit amount.

Measurement of waste leaving the office was estimated, thus the data produced is not exact.

2017–18



2018–19



organic matter
increased by 14%

TABLE 10: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE – CURRENT AND PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

INDICATOR AS AT 30 JUNE 2019	UNIT	PREVIOUS FY 2017–18	CURRENT FY 2018–19	% CHANGE
AGENCY STAFF AND AREA				See explanatory notes for this column
Agency staff	FTE	6	6	
Workplace floor area	Area (m ²)	137.5	137.5	
STATIONARY ENERGY USAGE				
Electricity use	Kilowatt hours	14,207.23	9359.74	
Natural gas use	Megajoules	23,264.5	36,466.5	
Diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
TRANSPORT FUEL USAGE				
Electric vehicles	Number	0	0	
Hybrid vehicles	Number	0	0	
Other vehicles (not electric or hybrid)	Number	0	0	
Total number of vehicles	Number	0	0	
Total kilometres travelled	Kilometres	0	0	
Fuel use – petrol	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)	Cubic Metres (Cm ³)	0	0	
WATER USAGE				
Water use	Kilolitres	66.65	81.07	
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND WASTE				
Reams of paper purchased	Reams	48	41 ^a	
Recycled content of paper purchased	Percentage	100	100	
Waste to landfill	Litres	1050	1050 ^b	
Co-mingled material recycled	Litres	900	900 ^c	
Paper and cardboard recycled (including secure paper)	Litres	1500	1160 ^d	
Organic material recycled	Litres	300	342 ^e	
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS				
Emissions from transport	Tonnes CO ₂ -e	0	0	
Scope 1 emissions	Tonnes CO ₂ -e	2.11	1.88	
Scope 2 emissions	Tonnes CO ₂ -e	6.46	2.39	
Total emissions Tonnes	Tonnes CO ₂ -e	8.58	4.27	

See explanatory notes over page.

Explanatory notes for Table 10

- a. 40 reams of A4, 1 ream of A3 were purchased.
- b. The figure for 2018–19 is estimated based on collection from CIT Bruce of a 15L bin filled approximately once a week.
- c. Figures are calculated as pro rata allocation to the office for number of bins collected.
- d. The figure for 2018–19 was calculated by adding secure paper (120L emptied once) and unsecure paper and cardboard (240L bin emptied 6 times).
- e. This figure was calculated by adding up the recorded volume of food taken to the compost each week as a percentage of the 7L bin in our kitchen at CIT Bruce.

Calculating a percentage change between 2017–18 and 2018–19 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, the office is a very small unit and has been accommodated within a floor shared with other government units whose tenancy fluctuated throughout the financial year.

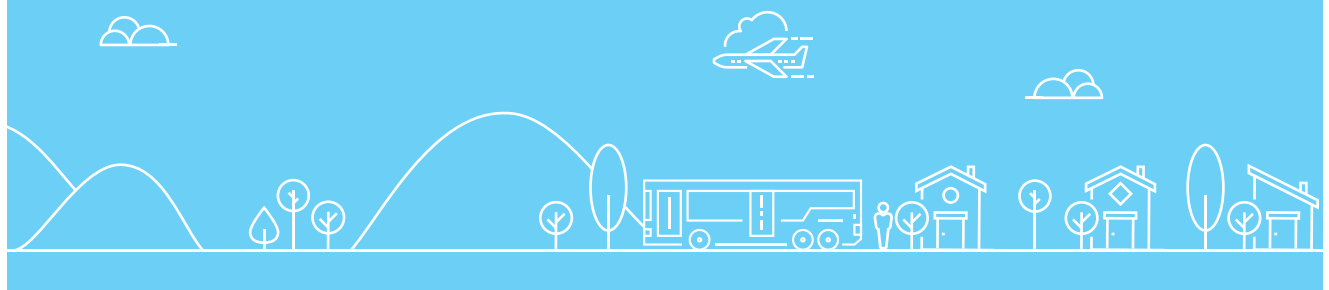
Differences between Enterprise Sustainability Platform sourced data included in the Previous FY (2017–18) column and that in the 2018–19 Annual Report are due to changes such as updates to agency occupancy and historical consumption data, and annual adjustments to ACT specific electricity emissions factors. Where actual data is not available, the Enterprise Sustainability Platform provides estimations using an accruals function. Accruals are calculated from the average annual daily consumption of the most current 12 month period applied for the number of days of missing data.

Emissions reported for stationary energy and transport fuels include Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions only. Scope 1 are direct emissions from sources owned and operated by the government including: emissions from fuel used by the government fleet; fugitive emissions from leaks; emissions from landfill. Scope 2 are indirect emissions from mains electricity used to power light, cool and heat government facilities and street lights.

Emission factors used to calculate natural gas and fleet fuel are based on the latest National Greenhouse Accounts factors. Greenhouse gas emissions for electricity consumption have been calculated using the following emissions factors based on the latest ACT Electricity Emissions Factor Report released in 2019:

- a factor of 0.507 kilogram (kg) CO₂-e / kilowatt hour (kWh) or 0.507 tonne (t) CO₂-e / megawatt hour (MWh) has been used to calculate electricity emissions (Scope 2) for the 2017–18 period. It is based on actual historical data and is a retrospective adjustment of the original 0.455 factor (Scope 2) used for 2017–18 annual reporting; and
- a factor of 0.255 kilogram (kg) CO₂-e / kilowatt hour (kWh) or 0.255 tonne (t) CO₂-e / megawatt hour (MWh) has been used to calculate electricity emissions (Scope 2) for the 2018–19 period.

Section C. Financial Management Reporting



C.1 Financial Management Analysis

Further information on the office's financial management is covered in the EPSDD 2018–19 Annual Report.

C.2 Financial Statements

The ACT Government appropriation for the office in 2018–19 was \$1,668,000.

The financial transactions for the office are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the EPSDD 2018–19 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 2018–19 the office initiated two contracts exceeding \$25,000.

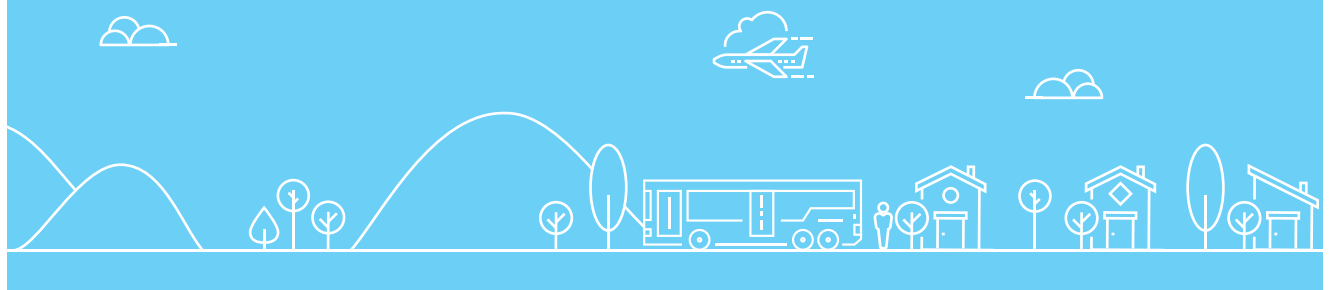
TABLE 11: CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000

CONTRACT NUMBER	CONTRACT TITLE	PROCUREMENT METHODOLOGY	SOCIAL PROCUREMENT	PROCUREMENT TYPE	EXEMPTION FROM QUOTATION AND TENDER THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS	CONTRACTOR NAME	CONTRACTOR AMOUNT	EXECUTION DATE	EXPIRY DATE
EP190423	Environmental Footprint development	Quotation	No	Services (non-consultancy)	No	Arete Sustainability Pty Ltd	\$29,700.00	30 April 2019	30 June 2019
1-2017/35331	Website development for ACT State of the Environment reporting	Quotation	No	Services	No	Icelab Pty Ltd	\$56,916.25	6 May 2019	05 Sep 2019

C.6 Statement of Performance

The statement of performance for the office is included in the EPSDD 2018–19 Annual Report as ‘Expenses on Behalf of the Territory’.

Section D. Appendices



Appendix 1: Staff Presenting at Conferences, Seminars and Forums

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
21 Aug 18	Seminar	Woden/Weston Creek U3A Current Affairs Group – Kate to speak on her role as the Commissioner	University of the 3rd Age	Kate Auty
28 Aug 18	Keynote Speaker	2018 Defence Environment Conference – Environment as an enabler	Department of Defence	Kate Auty
03 Sep 18	Conference	IFA / AFG Joint National Conference – Forests for healthy cities, farms and people	The Institute of Foresters of Australia and Australian Forest Growers	Kate Auty
04 Sep 18	Facilitator	Women's cycling culture – what's different, what do we need to get more women cycling every day	Transport Canberra and City Services	Kate Auty
17 Sep 18	Speaker	CURF Seminar – Green Growth	CURF	Kate Auty
21 Sep 18	Speaker	Spark! Conference (Kate's topic – 'Why Policy Matters')	Moreland Energy Foundation	Kate Auty
28 Sep 18	Interview	Beyond Zero Emissions	Beyond Zero Emissions	Kate Auty
04 Oct 18	Presentation to Board	Creating a dynamic and internationally competitive city	City Renewal Authority	Kate Auty
10 Oct 18	Presentation	Plastic Bag Report and the work of the office	University of the 3rd Age	Kate Auty
16 Oct 18	Presentation	Complex Environmental Problems in Action – Careers (to 3rd Year students)	ANU	Kate Auty
18 Oct 18	Panel member	The Nature of Liveability forum	EPSDD	Kate Auty
24 Oct 18	Presentation	A Vision for Grassland Management and Restoration – Recent achievements and next Steps	ACT Friends of Grasslands, EPSDD	Kate Auty
26 Oct 18	Keynote Speaker	Fiona Wain Oration	Sustainable Business Australia	Kate Auty
01 Nov 18	Panel member	Panel session: Inspirations on City Sustainability	Royal Danish Embassy	Kate Auty
13 Nov 18	Speaker	Blockchain – NAWIC Industry Breakfast	National Association of Women in Construction	Kate Auty
19 Nov 18	Presentation	Urban Systems Transformation: Sustainable Cities workshop	Future Earth Australia, Australian National University and CSIRO	Kate Auty
20 Nov 18	Chair of the Oration	Resilience in the Face of Sustainability Crises: Is Innovation the Problem or the Solution?	MSSI	Kate Auty
29 Nov 18	Launch awards, opening speech, presenting prizes	Banksia Awards and Gala Dinner	Banksia Foundation	Kate Auty
06 Dec 18	Panel Chair	Women in Leadership Summit panel: Gender diversity quotas: Do they do more harm than good?	Women Leaders Institute	Kate Auty
19 Dec 18	Chair	Explaining the COP24 Katowice Climate Change Conference	ANU Climate Change Institute	Kate Auty

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NAME OF CONFERENCE	PROVIDER	ATTENDEE
07 Feb 19	Chair	ANU Climate Update 2019	ANU Climate Change Institute	Kate Auty
25 Feb 19	Panel Member	Transition Film Festival – Mechanics of Change	Moreland City Council	Kate Auty
05–06 March 19	Presentation – Hackathon Team and Judging Panel	Keeping pace with ACT’s changing climate – from transport to health. CIT ZeroC02 Renewable Energy and Sustainability Industry Forum	Canberra Institute of Technology	Kate Auty and Kirilly Dickson
07 Mar 19	Interview	Block K, Sustainability Building – CIT Bruce	ABC	Kate Auty
12 Mar 19	Presentation	Seasonal Talk – Environmental reporting – communicating the science to a general public	Friends of the National Arboretum	Kate Auty
14–15 March 19	Chair session 3 – Resilience to change	Future Ready Murray-Darling Basin Forum: Beyond 2030	CSIRO	Kate Auty
16 Mar 19	Panel member	Art Not Apart – Background: The ACT aims to be carbon neutral by 2045 at the latest. An ambitious and necessary target to ensure safe futures for the environment and our communities.	Australian Dance Party	Kate Auty
20 Mar 19	Panel member	Presenting on ‘Understanding the state of Australia’s environment and shaping the future’ – Lecture for ENVS1001	ANU	Kate Auty
21 Mar 19	Interview	The Grass Ceiling – interview for a podcast	ANU	Kate Auty
1–2 April 19	Speaker	National Sustainability Conference 2019	Association for Sustainability in Business	Kirilly Dickson
09 Apr 19	Interview	Kate Auty with Freya Wrigley (ANU): communicating forest conservation on social media platforms	ANU	Kate Auty
23 Apr 19	Speaker	Graduate class address – elements of transformative change	ANU	Kate Auty
13 May 19	Chair	Building Resilience in Climate Affected Communities	CURF	Kate Auty
15 May 19	Speaker	Salon Canberra – Kate’s role, observations about climate change and sustainability, and advice for women in their respective industries and businesses	Catherine Carter – Salon Canberra	Kate Auty
15 and 17 May 19	Judging Panel	College Climate Change Conference	Actsmart	Kate Auty
28 May 19	Chair	Banksia Ignite at Vivid Sydney 2019	Banksia Foundation	Kate Auty
28 May 19	Presentation	Marist College Year 12 Geography class	Marist College	Caitlin Roy
31 May 19	Presentation	Be the Change Regional Leadership Summit	Lead Loddon Murray	Kate Auty
31 May 19	Speaker	Vision of the Region	Lead Loddon Murray	Kate Auty
18 Jun 19	Panel	Remaking Lost Connections – Panel discussion and awards ceremony	AILA	Kate Auty
18 Jun 19	Presentation	SoER overview	EPSDD	Kate Auty and Sean Grimes
04 Jun 19	Presentation	Presentation to ACT Hydrological Society	ACT Hydrological Society	Caitlin Roy
20 Jun 19	Presentation	ACT Water Matters Conference	Australian Water Association	Caitlin Roy

Appendix 2: Compliance Statement

The 2018–19 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report must comply with the Annual Report Directions (the Directions) under section 8 of the Annual Reports Act. The Directions are found on the ACT Legislation Register: www.legislation.act.gov.au

The Compliance Statement indicates the subsections, under Parts 1 to 5 of the Directions, that are applicable to the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and the location of information that satisfies these requirements:

PART 1 DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW

The requirements under Part 1 of the Directions relate to the purpose, timing and distribution, and record keeping of annual reports. The 2018–19 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report complies with all subsections of Part 1 under the Directions.

To meet section 15 Feedback, Part 1 of the Directions, contact details for the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment are provided within the 2018–19 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 reporting entities and the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment complies with all subsections. The information that satisfies the requirements of Part 2 is found in the 2018–19 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 4–65, and
- Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of all subsections, see Section C, pages 68–69.

PART 3 REPORTING BY EXCEPTION

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has nil information to report by exception under Part 3 of the Directions for the 2018–19 reporting year.

PART 4 DIRECTORATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODY SPECIFIC ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The subsections of Part 4 of the 2019 Directions are applicable to the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and can be found within the 2018–19 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report:

- Ministerial and Director-General Directions, see Section B2, pages 13–54.

PART 5 WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORTING

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

- Bushfire Risk Management, see the annual report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate;
- Human Rights, see the annual report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate;
- Legal Services Directions, see the annual report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Public Sector Standards and Workforce Profile, see the annual State of the Service Report; and
- Territory Records, see the annual report of Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic, Development Directorate.

ACT Public Service Directorate annual reports are found at the following web address: http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual_reports





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