

2020–2021

Annual Report



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

Ngunnawal Translation

Dhawura nguna ngurumbangu
gunanggu Ngunnawal

Nginggada dindi dhawura
Ngunnawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin

Mura bidji mulanggaridjindjula

Naraganawaliyiri yarabindjula.

English Translation

This country is Ngunnawal ancestral,
spiritual homeland

We all always respect elders, male
and female, as well as Ngunnawal
country itself

They always keep the pathways of
their ancestors alive

They walk together as one.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

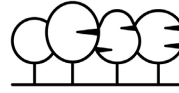
AANP	Australian Alps National Parks	ESA	Emergency Services Agency
AAQ	Ambient Air Quality	FOI	Freedom of Information
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	FTE	Full-time equivalent
ACTHD	ACT Health Directorate	GSA	Gungahlin Strategic Assessment
ANU	Australian National University	IJSC	Inter-jurisdictional Steering Committee
AP2	ACT Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2 2007, now the Climate Change Strategy	JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
ARR	Australian Rainfall and Runoff	MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
ATO	Active Travel Office	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
BOP	Bush Fire Operations Plan	NCA	National Capital Authority
CEMP	Construction and Environmental Management Plan	NEPM	National Environment Protection Measures
CHIP	Catchment Health Indicator Program	NESP	National Environmental Science Programs
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology	NLP2	National Landcare Program Phase TWO
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	NRM	Natural Resource Management
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas	NSW	New South Wales
CRJO	Canberra Region Joint Organisation	OCSE	Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
CSD	Community Services Directorate	PCD	Policy and Cabinet Division
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	PCS	Parks and Conservation Service
DER	Distributed Energy Resource	RFMP	Regional Fire Management Plan
EDU	Education Directorate	SoE	State of the Environment
EHW	Environment, Heritage and Water	TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services
EPA	Environment Protection Authority	UC	University of Canberra
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation	UNSW	University of New South Wales
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	URECAA	Urban Ecosystem Accounting in Australia
		WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design



SECTION A

Transmittal Certificate





OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MP
Minister for the Environment
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

2020-21 Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 7(2) for public sector body] of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements under the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Directions 2021*.

I certify that the information in the attached report and information provided for whole of government reporting, is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has been included for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

I hereby certify that fraud and prevention has been managed in accordance with Part 2.3 of the *Public Sector Management Standards 2006* (see section 113 of the *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. However, under section 14, the Chief Minister has granted an extension of the time when the report must be presented by you to the Legislative Assembly. The Chief Minister has granted the extension to 18 December 2021.

The annual report must be provided to the Speaker on 18 December 2021 for distribution to each Member of the Legislative Assembly. The annual report must then be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on the next sitting day.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sophie Lewis
Commissioner for Sustainability and
the Environment

6 October 2021



SECTION B

Organisational Overview and Performance

B1. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

B1.1 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 the Environment.

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

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

B1.2 Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: An environmentally sustainable ACT, region and Australia

Mission: To act as an independent voice for the environment and sustainability in the ACT

Values: Transparency, integrity, independence, rigour, inclusion

B1.3 Role and Functions

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

- › State of the Environment Reporting for the ACT (s19 of the Act),
- › 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
- › 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).

B1.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reporting

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting, the Commissioner and team undertake the following:

- › consider Aboriginal perspectives and seek Aboriginal people's contribution where appropriate in all projects and office work

- › follow up measures undertaken by directorates on Aboriginal heritage and land management in the State of the Environment Report
- › commence events and reports with an Acknowledgement of Country
- › use social media to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and peoples
- › commit to priority procurement from Aboriginal providers (e.g., Scope 3 report graphic design), and
- › active participation in 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness' training.

B1.5 Organisational Structure

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

Two people served in the role of Commissioner over the reporting period of 2020–21.

Dr Sophie Lewis was Commissioner from May 2020 to May 2021. Dr Margaret Kitchin was appointed Acting Commissioner in June 2021 for a period of two months.

The current Commissioner, Dr Sophie Lewis, holds the following additional roles as of 30 June 2021:

- › ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Governance Committee
- › ANU Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions, Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU, Honorary Fellow, and
- › Commission for the Human Future Board.

The Commissioner is supported by a core team. As of 30 June 2021, this team comprised of one director (SOG B), two assistant directors (SOG C), an office manager (ASO 6), a communications manager (ASO 6) and a project officer (ASO 6). As of 30 of May 2021, a graduate joined the team for a three-month period.

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

The office pays for corporate support from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) for matters such as:

- › 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:

- › accommodation
- › procurement, and
- › information technology support.

1. ACT Government, 2010: *ACT Public Service Code of Ethics*

B1.6 Stakeholders

The Commissioner engages with a suite of stakeholders, including:

STAKEHOLDERS	
Federal Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bureau of Meteorology 2. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation 3. Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Territory Government	All ACT Government Directorates as required
Other Government Agencies, Statutory Authorities, Office Holders and Corporations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. National Capital Authority 5. ACT Auditor-General 6. ACT Human Rights Commission (Public Advocate, Children and Young People Commissioner) 7. ACT Chief Engineer 8. ACT Chief Architect 9. Icon Water
Universities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Australian National University 11. University of Canberra 12. University of New South Wales
Education Groups and Skill Trainers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Australian Association of Environmental Educators 14. Canberra Institute of Technology 15. Orana Steiner School 16. Ainslie School 17. Black Mountain School 18. Lake Ginninderra College 19. Canberra College 20. Charles Weston School 21. Dickson College
Non-Government Organisations with Environment and Sustainability Interests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. SEE-Change 23. Conservation Council ACT Region 24. Canberra Environment Centre 25. Canberra Ornithologists Group 26. Friends of Grasslands 27. Landcare ACT 28. ACT Wildlife 29. Ginninderra Catchment Group 30. Molonglo Conservation Group 31. Southern ACT Catchment Group 32. National Parks Association ACT 33. Canberra Indian Myna Action Group 34. Canberra Nature Map

B1.7 The Commissioner's Achievements

A summary of the Commissioner's achievements in 2020–21 against each key function follows.

B1.7.1 MONITORING THE ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE ACT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2019

The Response of the ACT Government to the Recommendations of the ACT State of the Environment Report 2019 was tabled in July 2020. This document can be found on the Commissioner's website (www.envcomm.act.gov.au). Progress reports on the recommendations are detailed in **Section B2.3.2**.

B1.7.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

Special Reports are discussed in detail in **Section B2.1.2**.

Minister Directed Investigations

There were two new special reports commissioned under Ministerial direction pursuant to ss12(1) and 21(1)(a) of the Act in 2020–21:

- › Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT Investigation Report, and
- › State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report.

Commissioner Initiated Investigations

There were no Investigations initiated by the Commissioner during the 2020–21 financial period.

B1.7.3 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).

The Commissioner routinely forwards complaints to the appropriate directorate for attention. If the response requires further inquiries, 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**.

B1.7.4 OTHER SUBMISSIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commissioner regularly contributes to government consultation processes to promote environmental sustainability and ecologically sustainable development where appropriate. A list of the submissions provided in this reporting year is outlined in **Section B2.4.3**.

B1.7.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY IN FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTS OF THE ACT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE

The Office is committed to ongoing endeavours to increase engagement in sustainability and environmental matters, such as climate change. The Office is actively involved in using digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The Office reports represent key information in infographics, replacing heavy text, to ensure inclusivity in the messages delivered. For further detail refer to **Section B2.4.2.**

B1.8 Outlook: Current and Future Priorities and Challenges

B1.8.1 THE TICKING CLIMATE CLOCK

Climate change is the most significant environmental challenge the ACT and the world is facing.

In 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported on rapid and intensifying climate change, a 'code red for humanity'.² The human influence on warming of our ocean, atmosphere and land is now unequivocal and this is changing the nature of extremes, such as droughts, heavy rainfall, heatwaves and fires. Limiting global warming will require reaching net-zero carbon dioxide emissions as rapidly as possible. On our current greenhouse gas emissions trajectory, we are likely to hit 1.5C of warming by about 2030.

The impact of climate change is global, including here in the ACT. The fingerprint of climate change was detected in the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.³ The bushfires in 2019-20 have long-term environmental impacts in the ACT, affecting both Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. They had significant consequences for our animals, plants and ecological communities.

The Gang-gang Cockatoo, which is the faunal emblem of the ACT, was detrimentally affected by the bushfires, and their populations are declining mostly due to loss of suitable tree hollows, their breeding habitat. The 2019-20 bushfires – one of the worst environmental disasters in the Territory – must reinforce the ACT's commitment to climate action.

2. Carmody, J. 2021. 'Climate change report from IPCC a 'code red for humanity', United Nations chief warns'. ABC news. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-09/coal-climate-change-global-warming-ipcc-report-released/100355952>. Accessed on August 27, 2021

3. van Oldenborgh, G. J., et al., 2021. Attribution of the Australian bushfire risk to anthropogenic climate change. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, 21, 941–960.



Namadgi fires view from Fadden. Photo Kate Shaw

B1.8.2 GROWTH WITHOUT GROWTH

Economic growth is the increase in production of economic goods and services over time. Growth of this narrowly defined nature has significant costs, including in terms of environmental and human wellbeing. The enhancement of prosperity without economic growth is gaining increasing support and academic attention, particularly in building circular economies. The aim of the circular economy is to minimise the resources consumed (including fossil fuels) and waste generated (including greenhouse gas emissions). It is based on principles of designing out waste, keeping products in use for longer, and regenerating natural systems.

Until recently, the ACT has been focused primarily on waste management (reduce, reuse, recycle) and this focus has not unlocked the economic potential through an active business transition. Opportunities are apparent in the development of a comprehensive economic strategy to transition to the circular economy.

The Office published a preliminary analysis of the potential for a circular economy in the ACT in 2019. Using examples of coffee, beer and riding, the background report outlined opportunities for Canberra to implement circular initiatives including uptake of renewables, reusing and recycling to close the waste loop.

Circular economy development and greenhouse gas emissions reductions are interconnected. In September 2020, Minister Rattenbury directed the Office to investigate the ACT's scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions and reduction strategies. As a consumer city rather than a producer city, the vast majority of Canberra's greenhouse gas emissions result from goods and services brought into the Territory.

Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions are inextricably linked to the usage of energy, resources and raw materials. Therefore, whole-of-economy decarbonisation, dematerialisation and the circular economy are equally important strategies to reduce scope 3 emissions.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to sharpen our focus on how we live and work. As individuals, businesses and government grapples with this global challenge here in Canberra, this disruption provides key opportunities to invest in our circular economy.

B1.8.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS AND CONSERVATION

2021 saw the release of the Samuel's Report⁴, the final report reviewing the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. The report identified multiple points of failure in environmental governance and recommendations sought to overhaul national environmental law.

The Samuel's review coincided with the Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements, established in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019–2020. The Black Summer fires were an ecological disaster.

The Commission's report⁵ notes "Fires affected tens of millions of hectares of land, covering native forests and grasslands that serve as wildlife habitat and house ecosystems. ... The affected areas include sites that are recognised and protected under the EPBC Act for their significant ecological and heritage value."



Mugga Lane solar farm. Photo Mark Jekabsons

4. Graeme, S., 2020. Final Report of the Independent Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). Commonwealth of Australia

5. The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, 2020. Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report. Commonwealth of Australia.

These reports together highlight significant pressure on our natural environment, which is not sufficiently resilient to withstand current, emerging or future threats, including climate change. Aspects of the Territory's natural environment are vulnerable to the threats outlined.

While the reports' recommended reforms fall well beyond our jurisdiction, the unprecedented pressure of human settlements and activities on our natural environments cannot be overstated and should not be overlooked for environments within the Territory and surrounds.



Visiting Downer Microforest with Climate Factory founder Edwina Robinson. Source OCSE



Grassland Earless Dragon. Photo Damien Esquerré

B2 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

B2.1 Report on Statutory Functions Under the Act

B2.1.1 STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

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

The last State of the Environment Report (SoE) was delivered to the minister in December 2019 and was covered in the last Annual Report. The Response of the ACT Government to the Recommendations of the ACT State of the Environment Report 2019 was tabled in July 2020.

Of the 35 formal recommendations from the State of the Environment Report 2019, 33 were assessed in section B2.32, providing an update on their implementation status for the 2020–21 reporting year. Recommendation 22 was not agreed to; and recommendation 27 will be addressed in the State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report, which will be completed by OCSE in 2022.

B2.1.2 SPECIAL REPORTS

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

Two Special Reports directed by the Minister were initiated in the 2020–21 reporting period:

1. Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT Investigation Report:

This Investigation explores emissions linked to the consumption of goods and services consumed in the ACT, but produced outside of it, which are referred to as 'scope 3 emissions'; to be able to account for them and reduce them. This Report was delivered to the Minister in September 2021.

The main aims of this report are to:

- › estimate the ACT's scope 3 emissions (those released outside the Territory as a result of what is consumed within it)
- › consider a methodology to measure scope 3 emissions
- › suggest effective ways to reduce scope 3 emissions within the ACT
- › set appropriate targets for their reduction, and
- › develop potential recommendations for short and long-term action.

DEFINITIONS OF SCOPE 1, 2 & 3 EMISSIONS

SCOPE 1:

Emissions released inside the city as a result of activities occurring in it. This includes emissions from cars, trucks and buses travelling within a city, agriculture, and waste disposal.

SCOPE 2:

Any emissions released in the city from the use of grid-supplied electricity and energy purchased to be used inside the city. This includes the emissions generated from the production of the electricity infrastructure.

SCOPE 3:

Emissions released outside the city as a result of activities occurring inside its boundaries. This includes emissions generated from the production line for imported goods and services, such as consumer goods, food, construction materials, associated transport, and flights.



2. State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report: This investigation explores the health and quality of Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra and Lake Tuggeranong, as well as waterways that flow through the urban area and into the Murrumbidgee River, including urban ponds and wetlands and the Molonglo River and tributaries. It excludes waterways and wetlands that do not flow through the urban area – e.g. those in parks and reserves, water supply catchments etc. and drinking water reservoirs. This report is due in February 2022.

The main aims of this report are to:

- › understand the quality and ecological health of our aquatic ecosystems and the impacts that the urban environment and land development have on receiving waters
- › review existing policies and practices relating to waterway health, and
- › identify actions for Government and the community to improve water quality and catchment health.

An update from the ACT Government on the progress of outstanding recommendations from previous special reports is outlined in **Section B2.3.2**.



Lake Burley Griffin with rowers and hot air balloon, Canberra. Source: Google Creative Commons

B2.1.3 BACKGROUND REPORTS

Background Reports are a preliminary exploration into environmental sustainability matters relevant to the ACT.

Objects of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993⁶, include (s2B (c) – (d)) to:

1. encourage decision-making that facilitates ecologically sustainable development, and
2. enhance knowledge and understanding of issues relating to ecologically sustainable development and the environment.

There is no statutory requirement for Background Reports 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 Background Reports in **Section B2.3.2**.

Environment Volunteering and Citizen Science Background Report:

In 2020–21 OCSE initiated work on a Background Report to explore how volunteer contributions to a healthy environment in the ACT are measured, recognised and valued. It focuses specifically on Landcare-type volunteering, wildlife care and citizen science. The paper will be published as a website in the 2021–22 reporting period.

The purpose of this Report is to:

- › raise awareness and understanding of environment volunteering in the community
- › engage and motivate key stakeholders to take action on identified issues, and
- › inform the Commissioner of the performance status of the ACT, with a view to performance indicators for the next State of the Environment Report.

This Report aims to:

- › clearly communicate to both the public and government/policy-makers what volunteers do for the environment in the ACT, and what the benefits are beyond these immediate outcomes
- › reach new audiences who may not be familiar with environmental volunteering and citizen science in the ACT
- › contribute to securing longer term funding, resources and/or support from government for volunteer groups and programs
- › encourage more consistent, respectful and productive partnerships between volunteers, government and academia
- › encourage better communication and knowledge sharing, and
- › foster genuine collaboration with environmental outcomes as the end goal, and support discussions to identify further opportunities for meaningful volunteer involvement.

6. Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment website
<https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/about/>

B2.1.4 COMPLAINTS

Table 1: Summary of complaints for 2020-21

Issues status	Number	Topic and Status
Formal Complaint received in 2020-21 Complaint due for closure in 2021-22	1	2021-003: Excessive smoke from wood fire heater Received: 28/12/20



Ranger with an agile antechinus. Photo: Mark Jekabsons



Researcher holding a superb parrot. Source: OCSE

B2.2 Performance Against Indicators

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

Table 2: Summary of performance against the Commissioner's accountability indicators

Description		Publication of the State of the Environment Report, investigation of complaints by Ministerial direction, or where a Territory agency's actions may have a substantial impact on the environment.				
		2020-21 Targets	2020-21 Result	% Variance	Explanation of Material Variances (+/- 5%)	
Total Cost (\$'000) *		\$1,552	\$1,515	(2%)		
Payments for Expenses on behalf of the Territory (\$'000) *		\$1,535	\$1,160	(24%)	Payments on behalf of territory is recognised when cash is required. During the year there was an increase in the unpaid liabilities compared to budget. Less cash was drawn and future payments will be required when liabilities are paid.	
Accountability Indicator						
a.	Report on the uptake of recommendations on the ACT State of the Environment and special reports as part of the annual report	Dec-20	Dec-20	0%		Vassarotti
b.	Undertake Ministerial initiated investigations in accordance with the Minister's direction	100%	100%	0%		Vassarotti
c.	Undertake Commissioner initiated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	N/A	N/A	There have been no Commissioner initiated investigations raised or active in the reporting period.	Vassarotti
d.	Undertake complaints generated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%	0%		Vassarotti
e.	Report on complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory agency as part of the annual report	Dec-20	Dec-20	0%		Vassarotti

See notes on page 18

Notes:

The Statement of Performance (Table 2, page 17) should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

The Total Cost and Controlled Recurrent Payments measures were not examined by the ACT Audit Office in accordance with the Financial Management (Statement of Performance Scrutiny) Guidelines 2019.

The Accountability Indicators were examined by the ACT Audit Office in accordance with the Financial Management Act 1996.

The variance is based on the June 2021 actual against the June 2021 Target.

* Total cost (\$1.552 million) and payments for expenses on behalf of the Territory (\$1.535 million) are in relation to the Office of The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. The costs and payments for expenses on behalf of the Territory in the Statement of Income and Expenses on Behalf of the Territory also includes Environment Grants and Heritage Grants in addition to the Office of The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

B2.3 Information to be Included in Commissioner's Annual Report

B2.3.1 SPECIAL FACTORS WITH A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This section relates to the statutory function 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 factors as having a significant impact on the environment during 2020–21:

- › The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an unprecedented impact in Canberra, Australia and the world, affecting employment, education, transport and travel. This disruption has critical environmental and sustainability impacts.
- › Climate change remains a critical environmental challenge faced by the ACT on multiple timescales. In response to this climate emergency, the ACT government has developed initiatives to reduce its direct greenhouse gas emissions. The Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment undertook an Investigation on scope 3 emissions in the ACT in an effort to account for the complete carbon footprint of the city.
- › The effects of the bushfires in 2019–20 have wrought long-term environmental impacts in the ACT, including having significant consequences on flora, fauna, and ecological communities.

The Commissioner also notes that the period of 2020–21 revealed the critical concurrence of factors impacting the environment. Multiple events occurring simultaneously or consecutively, such as each of the factors identified above, can compound in terms of their impact on people and the environment.

B2.3.2 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 2020 and 30 June 2021 against 33 recommendations from the 2019 State of the Environment Report (s19 of the Act)
2. an update on directorate actions taken between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 against investigations (s21 of the Act), and
3. an update on actions undertaken against recommendations for completed complaint investigations.

Responses provided by directorates have been minimally edited.

Table 3– Summary of all Recommendations

Minister Directed Investigation or State of the Environment Report	Year	Recommendations Open in OCSE Annual Report 2020–21
State of the Environment 2019	2019	33
Heroic and the Dammed: Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation	2018	8
Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment	2018	11
Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment	2017	7
Implementation Status Report: review of the ACT's climate change policy (AP2)	2017	5
Lake Burley Griffin Investigation	2012	1
Canberra Nature Park (nature reserves), Molonglo River Corridor and Googong Foreshores Investigation	2011	1

Evaluation of directorate responses

This year, the Commissioner has provided comments on the directorate's response to each recommendation. The evidence provided towards progress in addressing each recommendation was rated. Responses were classified as 'Satisfactory-Closed', 'Satisfactory-Open', 'Insufficient evidence – Open', or 'Unsatisfactory (no evidence towards progress) – Open'. All recommendations classified as 'Open' will require updating of progress in the next reporting period.

The aim of such comments is to guide information that will be provided for the 2021–22 reporting year and to ensure progress towards recommendations is tracked from one year to the next.

State of the Environment Report 2019

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides an update on the implementation status of recommendations from the State of the Environment Report 2019 for the 2020–21 reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 1 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a sustainable funding model for the conservation of biodiversity, environmental protection, water management, the reduction of fire risks, and citizen science initiatives to assist in the planning, prioritisation and acquittal of programs and works.

Government response **AGREED**

The Government is committed to providing sustainable funding for important environmental initiatives such as conservation, fire management, and water management. EPSDD is, in consultation with a range of stakeholders, currently investigating several national and international investment models that could be used as a basis for developing a sustainable funding model for improved environmental management in the ACT.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- EPSDD, in consultation with a range of stakeholders, is currently developing a new Natural Resource Management Investment Plan, which will be used to investigate a sustainable funding model for improved environmental management in the ACT.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 2 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish data management architecture, especially for environmental issues, to address cross-portfolio communication needs.

Government response **AGREED**

In line with the ACT Government's open government policy, a considerable amount of environmental data is publicly available on the ACTmapi web platform, within the ACT Geospatial Data Catalogue. Environmental data available on ACTmapi include data on vegetation, threatened species habitats, soils, hydrogeological landscapes, groundwater bores and heritage. Rainfall and streamflow data are also available on the ACT Government Open Data Portal, through a collaboration between ACT Healthy Waterways and the Office of the Chief Digital Officer.

To enhance cross-portfolio communication needs, EPSDD will set up data management architecture for environmental data, through establishing the appropriate schema, data dictionary and custodianship for managing and disseminating data.

A curated "enviro-portal" of datasets will be made available through the ACTmapi and/or ACT Government Open Data Portal so the community can learn more about the environment in a particular area, see the data used to make environmental and planning decisions, and access data for research and advisory purposes. This will expand opportunities for improved data integration to make more strategic and tactical contributions to policy and planning cycles as part of the overarching ACT Wellbeing Framework (i.e. beyond operational use of data). It will also enable near-real-time data capture and dissemination between government agencies.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS, HEALTH, CMTEDD



EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The Environment, Heritage and Water (EHW) Division in EPSDD is working collaboratively with the ACT Data Analytics Centre to implement the ACT Government Data Governance and Management Framework. This Whole-of-Government approach outlines the steps to be undertaken in developing appropriate data culture, governance and management activities, assigning roles and responsibilities, and identifying the technological solutions required to deliver the identified governance and management activities.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS will play an advisory role and supplier of data. TCCS will also contribute to the initiatives in any practical way, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.
- The ACTPS Data Governance and Management Framework has been developed in consultation with Directorates. It was endorsed by Strategic Board on 5 August 2020.
- TCCS is developing a data strategy. The underlying data work plan will investigate the frequency of reporting and real-time access to transport data sources. In addition, TCCS will continue to publish data as part of its open data policy.
- TCCS is building capability and promoting information sharing of environmental issues including development of a Climate Change and Sustainability Register (the register). This centralised register will hold details of all TCCS initiatives that relate to the environment, sustainability and climate change. Awareness, information sharing and decision making will be enhanced or informed through an interactive dashboard of the register.

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

Nil response

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X (Wellbeing)	

Comments on status

- Environment, Heritage and Water (EHW) in EPSDD is working collaboratively with the ACT Data Analytics Centre to implement the ACT Government Data Governance and Management Framework. This whole of government approach outlines the steps to be undertaken to develop appropriate data culture, governance and management activities, assign roles

and responsibilities, and identify the technological solutions required to deliver the identified governance and management activities. A data governance taskforce has been established in EHW to advance the adoption of the framework over the next 12 months, as well as review potential sources of funding to support environmental data management initiatives.

- The Government released an initial data dashboard for the ACT Wellbeing Framework on 1 April 2021. The dashboard includes data and accompanying information in relation to the Environment and Climate domain. The dashboard will be updated periodically as a basis for measuring the ACT's wellbeing progress over time.

Commissioner's response 2021

EPSDD and TCCS Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

Health no response – Insufficient evidence – Open: No evidence towards progress or consideration of recommendation.

CMTEDD Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 3 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a mechanism to ensure the alignment of ACT ministerial arrangements and the promotion of information sharing on the basis that environmental issues are the concern of 'one government' and across portfolios.

Government response AGREED

There are a variety of existing ways in which cross-portfolio information sharing is embedded into the process of developing policies and programs that require the consideration of environmental issues. Cabinet submissions require evidence of how environment issues have been considered and addressed, where relevant to the matter for decision.

Portfolio arrangements demonstrate alignment between development and infrastructure impacts and conservation outcomes – combining planning and the environment portfolio promotes sustainable development. Close working relationships between Directorates with portfolio cross-over enable early identification of environmental issues for consideration in policy, program and project delivery.

A recent and significant development is the *ACT Wellbeing Framework*, which further strengthens the "one government" approach to the environment by recognising the importance of:

- › a healthy and resilient natural environment;
- › connection to nature; and
- › a climate resilient environment and community;
- › in a liveable city and thriving community.



EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

No changes or updates, recommendation ongoing.

TCCS

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- CMTEDD – PCD lead agency.
- TCCS is building capability and promoting information sharing of environmental issues including development of a Climate Change and Sustainability Register (the register).
- The register will embed centralised reporting of initiatives against environment, sustainability and climate related policies within TCCS and across ACT Government.
- Information sharing and decision making will be enhanced through an interactive dashboard.

HEALTH

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- The ACT Government has now joined the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals Network (the Network). The Directorate will facilitate ongoing dialogue with the Network, and liaison with Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce to support sustainability approaches in the Health System.
- The Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan sets the foundations for reducing the prevalence of chronic disease and supporting good health across all stages of life. It aligns with a range of other ACT policies and strategies, including the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025 and the ACT Wellbeing Framework, illustrating the importance of public health and wellbeing across government. The implementation of this plan is coordinated by the Preventive Health Coordinator who leads Health's cross-directorate involvement.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- A key focus of the ACT Wellbeing Framework is the early consideration in policy and program development of linkages across the Framework domains. A process of embedding the Framework in the work of government has commenced, framed by a commitment in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement to a 'holistic approach to government budgets, decision-making and reporting, including consistent, meaningful and measurable strategic and accountability indicators based on wellbeing'. As an initial key step in this process, wellbeing will be a focus of the 2021-22 ACT Budget.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 4 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify opportunities to improve collaboration with the NSW Government on cross-jurisdictional natural resource management. This should include participation in data collection programs and active management of natural resource management pressures.

Government response **AGREED**

There are various collaborations on natural resource, water, environmental and fire management with NSW at project and program level, including:

- › the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy 2016-46, Implementation Plan, and ongoing operation of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group which demonstrate the commitment of the ACT Government to improved catchment governance to protect the natural resources of the ACT and region;
- › on water trading as per commitments under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan;
- › ACT Natural Resource Management (NRM) regularly partners with South East Local Land Services and the NSW Department of Primary Industries in the delivery of a range of NRM programs in the ACT, including Australian Government/ACT Government funded National Landcare Program projects;
- › Australian Alps Liaison Committee – coordinated research and management programs with ACT, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania in relation to the management of the Australian Alpine Parks;
- › cross-border fire management planning and operations;
- › cross-border pest animal and invasive plant surveillance and control programs;
- › cross-border biosecurity action planning; and
- › the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch program which engages community volunteers to undertake water quality monitoring in the ACT and region.

In 2020, the ACT and NSW Governments renewed the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Regional Collaboration (first signed in 2011 and re-committed to in 2016). The renewed MoU continues to promote a regional approach to environmental issues, including on natural resource management.

The ACT Government will continue to identify new cross border collaborative opportunities based on a continuous improvement model.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X		

Comments on status

- EPSDD continues to partner with NSW Government stakeholders on a range of activities.
- ACT NRM is also a member of NRM region Australia. This assists with coordinated approaches to natural resource management issues related to the Commonwealth's NLP2 program.
- All members of the inter-jurisdictional Catchment Management Coordination Group provide annual updated input (feeding into the Annual Report) on progress against the recommendations of the Implementation Plan to facilitate annual review and re-alignment.
- Water trading with NSW is still in the negotiation phase, however considerable progress is being made with the support of the commonwealth.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 5 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure community participation in the design of all new Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 strategic assessments and ensure that information flow about offsets, implementation plans, and programs is publicly accessible and understandable, regular, targeted, and subject to community and other consultation.

Government response AGREED

EPSDD will continue to raise awareness of engagements around EPBC matters and around information identified during EPBC assessments, offsets assessments, and other projects and programs. Different communication channels will be used to encourage a variety of audiences to participate, including appropriate whole-of-government channels and directorate channels.

In the ACT, strategic assessments have been undertaken to support and approve urban expansion (i.e. greenfield areas). The next area after Eastern Broadacre that may be considered for a new strategic assessment is the Western edge investigation area, which forms part of the implementation of the ACT Planning Strategy (Action No. 1.2.1). However, at this stage, only preliminary background investigations are being undertaken. If a strategic assessment is to be progressed, the agreement and terms of reference for the strategic assessment are appropriately a matter between the ACT Government and the Commonwealth. Once signed, the agreement is published. Notwithstanding, community consultations on the draft strategic assessment documents are required under the EPBC Act.

Each endorsed strategic assessment includes requirements for monitoring and auditing, as part of the proponent's commitments, and for those initiated by the ACT Government, are published together with other information on the EPSDD website.

The ACT Offsets Register publishes online all ratified Commonwealth approvals, Offset Management Plans, Matters of National Environmental Significance management plans, Annual Compliance Reports and Strategic Assessment Annual Reports. Monitoring reports indicating site condition will be published as soon as possible.

The EPBC Act is currently being independently reviewed by Professor Graeme Samuel AC (supported by an expert panel). The review's final report is due in October 2020. The recommendations of the review, including any amendments made to the EPBC Act, may impact the design process of all new EPBC strategic assessments.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment – Public consultation under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* was on hold during 2020 due to the Covid-19 public health emergency. The draft strategic assessment documents and the proposed commitments to protect Matters of National Environmental Significance are being reviewed for currency, together with consideration of the recommendations of the Commonwealth's finalised Independent Review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Following this, public consultation will commence. It is anticipated to occur in 2021/22.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 6 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Lead collaborative networks where regional policy and operational matters require cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

Government response **AGREED**

Recommendation four and this recommendation seek to achieve greater coordination and cooperation between jurisdictions. Significant work is already occurring and will be built on in response to these two recommendations.

The MoU will support continued collaboration between the ACT and NSW on operational matters that require cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

The ACT is also an associate member of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO), which provides a forum for councils, NSW and ACT Government agencies and other stakeholders to work together at a regional level on shared priorities and opportunities. The Memorandum of Understanding between the ACT Government and the CRJO was last recommitted to in 2018.

The ACT Government plays a lead role in ensuring Australian Alps National Parks are managed cooperatively. The Australian Alps National Parks include national parks and nature reserves across Victoria, NSW and the ACT including Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. This partnership encourages cross-jurisdictional collaboration in relation to policy and operational matters for the management of natural and cultural values and recreation and tourism opportunities.

The ACT Government also has a significant role in regional biosecurity, including through cross-jurisdictional cooperation. In 2019, an ACT Biosecurity Risk Workshop was held in Canberra and included a wide range of participants from the Australian and NSW governments and from across ACT Government Directorates. EPSDD has extensive representation, liaison and advisory input to cross-jurisdictional committees regarding primary industries, animal welfare, biosecurity risks (e.g. African Swine Fever, Hendra virus, COVID-19) and biocontrol planning (e.g. invasive plant species). The ACT Biosecurity Strategy 2016–26 recognises the location of the ACT within NSW, hence its goals and outcomes are closely aligned with those of NSW.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X (Biosecurity)		X (AANP)

Comments on status

- The ACT Government continues to maintain a high level of biosecurity preparedness, including collaboration with other jurisdictions. Biosecurity and Agriculture Policy staff continue to develop and refine legislation and policy, such as drafting a new biosecurity bill and invasive plants strategy as well as contributing to the agenda of national biosecurity committees. Biosecurity and Rural Services staff are also managing surveillance for emergency responses and undertake

a coordinated invasive species management program for invasive plants and pest animals across all ACT land tenures in collaboration with other directorates and rural lessees.

- The ACT Government has maintained its strong and long-term commitment to the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program. The Memorandum of Understanding was updated and re-signed by the heads of the four partner agencies in early 2021.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 7 INDIGENOUS MATTERS

Continue consultation with Ngunnawal people to:

- explore the potential of developing a unified Framework for Cultural Indicators in respect of cultural water and cultural burning;
- explore the management potential of an Indigenous Seasonal Calendar;
- consider the establishment of an Indigenous River Rangers program; and
- establish a specific category of Indigenous heritage grants.

Government response AGREED

This recommendation is in line with the EPSDD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028 Action Plan. A key action of the Plan under the focus area of community leadership is to initiate programs with the Ngunnawal people to value their traditional knowledge and build capacity in the delivery of fire management, water management, natural resource management, wildlife management, traditional ecological knowledge and language initiatives.

During 2019–20, there has been considerable consultation between the EPSDD and Ngunnawal people through the Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee. This has included regarding development of (initiated in 2014) and recent agreement to the ACT's revised Water Resource Plan – Part 14 as part of progressing accreditation of groundwater and surface water planning for the ACT under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. Also, from late-2015 to early-2020, collaborative implementation of the Aboriginal Waterways Assessment tool has provided good opportunities for the Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians to work together on Country along with other Traditional Owner groups to collect detailed information about cultural values at various waterway sites in the ACT.

The Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee represents an appropriate forum for consideration of cultural indicators, an Aboriginal Seasonal Calendar, the role of an Indigenous Rangers program, an Aboriginal Water Forum, cultural flows, and other issues of concern.

Regarding a specific category of Indigenous heritage grants, a specific Aboriginal heritage priority (category) already exists within the ACT Heritage Grant Program. The category is: 'Aboriginal projects initiated by or involving the local Aboriginal community in local heritage activities'.

The ACT Government acknowledges the unique and distinct cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and this is reflected in section 27(2) of the Human Rights Act 2004.

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X		

Comments on status

- The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and wider Ngunnawal community have commenced activities in identifying Ngunnawal cultural water values to inform the development of a unified framework for cultural indicators relating to cultural water and burning. Information gathered to date has informed ACT's water resource plan and cultural burning programs and other works programs.
- The heritage and environment grants programs continue to provide opportunities to support the protection and promotion of indigenous values.
- Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people continues to be a priority across all levels and functions in the Directorate. Funding was secured for six positions within EHW.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 8 SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND CITIZEN SCIENCE

Continue to explore the use of 'deliberative democracy' for environmental initiatives in accordance with the aspirations of the ACT Whole of Government Communications and Engagement Plan 2019 and in collaboration with the Climate Change Strategy 2019–25 Community Liaison Team.

Government response AGREED

Deliberative democracy is a powerful tool when used appropriately and where the community can make a significant input to policy and programs. EPSDD successfully used this tool for the Housing Choices engagement.

EPSDD will continue to seek to identify suitable opportunities where the deliberative democracy process will be the appropriate tool to gain community engagement and feedback. This work will be guided by the ACT Whole of Government Communications and Engagement Plan 2019 and will include discussions with the CMTEDD's Whole of Government Communications team and Community Engagement Peer Advice Panel.

Further, it is noted that Goal 1A of the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025 commits the ACT Government to encourage community-driven solutions to climate change.

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- The Climate Change Partnerships Team has gathered evidence-based reviews and surveys to create new partnerships with businesses and organisations. Further, the development of design concepts for a digital interactive platform and map is underway. The platform's focus will be on showcasing projects that could be scaled-up and implemented by Government and community
- EPSDD has established the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee to provide Traditional Custodian advice, direction and guidance on the management of Country.
- ACT NRM has used an extensive public consultation program to inform development of a new ACT NRM Plan.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- CMTEDD and EPSDD lead agency

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- Through the use of deliberative democracy and co-design in many of its program design processes, ACT Health's Preventive and Population Health Branch supports communities to incorporate considerations around climate-change in health promotion activities, acknowledging that health and wellbeing includes a healthy environment.

CMTEDD (EPA)

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

Nil input – please refer to EPSDD response.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 9 SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND CITIZEN SCIENCE

Specifically provide for the recognition of citizen science and community environmental action with a targeted awards program.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT Government is committed through the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy 2013–23 to strengthening community engagement. The EPSDD is directly supporting citizen science by enabling tools and applications for example Weed Spotter, Canberra Nature Map (CNM). These tools enable citizen scientists to record the location of new weed incursions, established weed populations and locations of native species including threatened, rare and previously unrecorded species.

Since 2014, CNM has enabled 2472 individuals and community groups to provide the ACT Government with 1,190,000 records of 5388 species. It is supported by a team of 150 volunteers who between them provide thousands of hours each year in species identification and site administration. The CNM volunteers include some of the leading Australian authorities in their field and most are based locally. They include representatives from 25 local wildlife or landcare groups.

The ACT Landcare Awards is a biennial event run by Landcare ACT with support from Landcare Australia and the ACT Government. The awards celebrate citizen scientists and community environmental action. In 2019, the awards recognised the efforts and achievements of various Landcarers, ParkCarers, community volunteers, and farmers, including the volunteer developer of NatureMapr, Aaron Clausen, with a Citizen Science Award. Frogwatch and Waterwatch are other well-known citizen science programs in the ACT that engage hundreds of volunteers annually in monitoring, research and community education.

The Frogwatch Program was recognised for its outstanding achievements by the ACT Government with a 2015 Citizen Science Award and a 2017 Environment Community Award, while the Waterwatch program won the 2017 Citizen Science Award.

EPSDD is currently developing guidelines for environmental volunteering. Reward and recognition is a critical feature of volunteer retention and an important way to thank the many committed individuals helping to make the ACT a better place. The new guidelines will have volunteer reward and recognition as a key aspect of volunteer programs going forward.

EPSDD is also in the process of reviewing the categories of our current business sustainability awards program.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- The ACT Government is maintaining its support for citizen science and community environmental action, as described above.
- The ACT Government also continues to support and fund Canberra Nature Map (<https://canberra.naturemapr.org/>).
- The ACT Government also supports the bi-annual ACT Landcare Awards that acknowledge the efforts and achievements of citizen scientists and volunteers in the Territory. The ACT Government specifically sponsors two awards at this event including one aimed directly at citizen science. The next ACT Landcare Awards is due to be held in November 2021.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Closed.

RECOMMENDATION 10 URBAN TREES

Advance Action 1 of the *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* (2019) by convening an environmental-economic accounts steering committee with representatives from government, academics, and the community.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Through the Inter-jurisdictional Steering Committee (IJSC) for the National Environmental Economic Accounting Strategy, the ACT Government continues to explore opportunities for environmental economic accounting, with a focus on urban living infrastructure.

The IJSC is open to consideration of co-investment and collaboration opportunities, and ACT in collaboration with Victoria and NSW currently has a proposal under consideration by the IJSC to form a working group to investigate urban ecosystem accounting.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- In May 2020, the Interjurisdictional Environmental-Economic Accounting Steering Committee approved the establishment of an interjurisdictional working group on urban ecosystem accounting in Australia (URECAA). By sharing the collective experience of members, URECCA has developed guidance notes to inform the development of urban ecosystem accounts in Australia, recognising the potential of urban ecosystem accounts to inform environmental policy and investment. URECCA has members from Victoria, NSW, the ACT and the Commonwealth. The ACT is represented by the Environment, Heritage and Water Division (Conservation Planning and Policy) on URECCA and the IJSC.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS will play an advisory role and supplier of data. TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 11 URBAN TREES

Continue to collaborate with other jurisdictions and research institutes to generate the evidence base for appropriate urban forest understorey and other plantings, having specific regard to climate change implications.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT Government will continue to collaborate with other jurisdictions and with experts and research institutions to develop an evidence base and policies relating to the urban forest and climate change. An example of a recent collaboration is the Urban Tree Species report, which identified the best tree species to improve Canberra's urban tree canopy and adapt to rising temperatures. The report was commissioned by the ACT Government and undertaken by the ANU Fenner School of Research.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The ACT Government previously commissioned CSIRO to develop a tool and provide underlying methodology to enable the conversion of eligible alternative forms of living infrastructure into measurable "equivalents" of tree canopy cover. The ACT Ecosystem Services Equivalence (AESE) Tool, which was delivered in October 2020, enables the conversion of selected types of living infrastructure into measurable ecosystem service "equivalents" of tree canopy cover.
- In 2021, the ACT Government commissioned a study from CSIRO to add the cooling effects of the urban forest to the equivalence tool for the ACT.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS is collaborating with EPSDD to inform Urban Forest planting.
- TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 12 CLIMATE CHANGE

Engage the community in consultation about and the design of the Social Cost of Carbon mechanism under consideration in the Climate Change Strategy 2019–25.

Government response **AGREED**

The 'social cost of carbon' is an estimate of the actual economic, social and environmental cost of emitting greenhouse gases, measured in dollars per tonne of carbon pollution. While research has been done globally on determining a price, there is an opportunity to engage the local community in discussion about the social cost of carbon. The social cost of carbon is not a commonly known or understood term and there is an opportunity to increase understanding of this important concept and promote climate action with the community.

The ACT Government will consider approaches for community consultation in the development of a Social Cost of Carbon mechanism, noting that its development is undertaken by an independent body and does not come into place until 2025.

Engagement could be guided by the relevant ACT Whole of Government Communications and Engagement Plan and include collaboration between the Directorate and any external consultants.

Engagement could:

- › increase understanding in the community of the wide-ranging effects and societal costs of carbon pollution;
- › reinforce the importance of reducing emissions;
- › encourage the community to take action to reduce emissions; and
- › lead to the development of an ACT-specific mechanism to determine the social cost of carbon that reflects what is important to the community and helps the community take ownership of emissions.

Responsible Directorates

EPSDD, TCCS, HEALTH, CMTEDD, EDUCATION, JACS, CSD



EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- To undertake this action, the ACT Government engaged leading climate economist Nicki Hutley to provide advice on the theory and practice of the use of a social cost of carbon in Government decision making. The advice included the application and limitations of a social cost of carbon and an estimated social cost of carbon for the Act Government's decision making, based on best practice and experience globally. In 2021, the ACT Climate Change Council also updated their earlier 2018 advice about the value of social cost of carbon for use in ACT Government decision making.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS will collaborate with EPSDD in the design of the Social Cost of Carbon in delivering on the Zero Emissions Government Target to ensure that future funding accommodates any additional cost pressures.
- TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.
- Under Action 5.11 of the Climate Change Strategy 2019-25, 'Invest an interim price of \$20 per tonne of emissions from Government operations into measures to meet the Zero Emissions Government target from 2020-21, and arrange for an independent body to develop a social cost of carbon for application from 2025.'
- TCCS notes that this recommendation represents a significant financial impact for TCCS with over 60% contribution (~69kT) of ACT emission profile.
- The social cost of carbon, payable annually represents an estimated cost of \$1.4m (based on \$20/tonne) to \$3.7m (based on \$54 per tonne as costed in 2017 in US).

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- With carriage of the ACT Government's approach to supporting healthy food environments across the community, the Population and Preventive Health Branch's health promotion programs recognise the need to integrate messaging around health with messaging around climate change. For this reason, concepts such as "food miles", food waste and food/water packaging, and reducing carbon emissions (as well as improving health) are incorporated. By incorporating this information, health promotion programs support the increased community understanding of the cost of carbon pollution.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- Nil input - please refer to EPSDD response.

EDUCATION

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- Education has not undertaken direct consultation regarding the design of the Social Cost of Carbon mechanism, however, has engaged internal directorate staff and the school community in actions to reduce emissions. The Education Directorate has established a five-year emission reduction target of 33 percent. Current actions are outlined in the response to the Implementation Status Report on ACT Government's Climate Change Policy (2017).

JACS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- JACS will continue to work with EPSDD as the project develops.

CSD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- Nil response

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient evidence – Open: Provide further relevant evidence regarding progress towards recommendations, for the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 13 CLIMATE CHANGE

Investigate opportunities to increase carbon uptake and storage in natural ecosystems and urban environments.

Government response **AGREED**

Priorities in the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025 include to “Identify and enable opportunities for carbon sequestration in trees and soils and for adaptation innovation”, and to “Encourage sustainable farming practices which are fit for the current and future climate and enhance soil and water quality, and work with farmers to identify opportunities for net zero emissions farming and innovation to increase resilience.”

In 2017–19, EPSDD conducted soil testing programs on ACT farms to understand soil health and to use this farm specific soil data to inform management to increase Total Soil Carbon and increase soil pH. Under the National Landcare Program 2, ACT NRM has been specifically funded under its Better Land Management program to achieve demonstrable improvements in soil health including improvements in Total Organic Carbon, ground cover and increases in soil pH (thereby reducing soil acidity) on ACT farms. To date, ACT NRM has partnered with South East Local Land Services to run workshops across ACT and south-east NSW to communicate best practice soil management and the role of organic carbon in soil management.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- In 2020–21, ACT NRM established two trials and eight paddock-scale demonstrations on 10 farms across the ACT in partnership with ACT farmers and the NSW Department of Primary Industries. Soil testing on each site established baselines for understanding soil pH, soil carbon and other soil chemical attributes. Across the trial and demonstration sites, soil pH was found to be low to very low. Using these data, NSW DPI recommended liming rates across the 10 sites to improve soil pH. These 10 sites will be monitored in 2022–2023 to determine the impact of different liming rates on soil pH, soil carbon and other attributes.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- *Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045* has been released. The Strategy will guide the growth of our urban forest and maintain a resilient, diverse and sustainable tree canopy. The Strategy provides a framework to achieve this while working towards the target of 30 per cent canopy cover or equivalent by 2045
- Work has recommenced on the review of the Tree Protection Act. Drafting for policy approval is underway with the Bill expected to be introduced in December 2021.

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient evidence – Open: Provide further relevant evidence regarding progress towards recommendations (exploring carbon uptake and storage in natural ecosystems and urban environments), for the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 14 CLIMATE CHANGE

Encourage and provide incentives for the development and uptake of distributed energy storage and microgrid technology in domestic, commercial, and government buildings and infrastructure.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT Government currently provides targeted policy and program initiatives, such as the Next Generation Energy Storage Program, to support the uptake of distributed energy resources in the ACT. Establishing the ACT as a 'living laboratory', including how to enable innovative ideas, business models and technology such as distributed energy storage and microgrid technologies, has been considered during the development of the Sustainable Energy Policy 2020-25, which will likely be released later this year.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS, CMTEDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- While development of an updated Sustainable Energy Policy has been delayed, a number of relevant projects are underway to address this recommendation. In particular, this includes development of a Big Canberra Battery, which will provide 250 MW of power, supporting uptake of battery storage in government buildings and support the Territory's goal of becoming a net zero emissions city. The Next Generation Energy Storage Program has provided rebates for over 1800 batteries and the panel of approved installers has recently increased from 7 to 15.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- CMTEDD lead agency
- TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The 2020-21 Budget allocated funding to establish a \$150 million fund for the Sustainable Household Scheme which will offer zero-interest loans of up to \$15,000 to help households with the upfront costs of investing in rooftop solar panels, household battery storage, zero emission vehicles and efficient electric appliances. The Scheme guidelines were publicly released on 21 June 2021. The scheme is on track to commence in July 2021.
- The Directorate, through Economic Development, supported the Distributed Energy Resources Laboratory project that was funded through a \$1.5 million Priority Investment Program grant in 2019, to support growth opportunities in the renewable energy sector.
- The new Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Laboratory is scheduled to open at the Australian National University (ANU) in July 2021, cementing Canberra's position as the national leader in renewable energy innovation and collaboration. The DER Laboratory is an Australian first, delivered in partnership between the ANU, UNSW Canberra, IT Power and Evoenergy. It builds on the significant investments that industry and the ACT Government have already made to grow Canberra's renewable energy sector. The state-of-the-art facility mirrors the electricity grid, offering an environment that will enable manufacturers to test devices such as solar panels, batteries and wind generating units through a real time network before connecting them to the grid. The facility will unlock new opportunities around renewable energy capability that will ultimately translate into new investments, economic growth, lower energy bills and new jobs for Canberrans. The DER Lab is another example of how our transition to a sustainable energy future creates jobs. The ACT Government supported collaboration between local industry, research and tertiary sectors to undertake innovative projects that contribute towards attracting investment and growing the established and emerging priority sectors of Canberra's economy.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 15 WASTE

Advance its contribution to adopting a circular economy in accordance with the National Waste Strategy.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT is committed to delivering on the National Waste Policy and Action Plan 2019, with a primary focus on waste as a resource within a circular economy. The ACT is taking key circular economy actions by improving resource recovery through improvements to the Hume Materials Recovery Facility. TCCS is also looking to establish a Recycled Materials Working Group to increase the use of recycled material in infrastructure.

At whole-of-government level, the ACT's new Wellbeing Framework embeds the circular economy through the Environment and Climate domain, with its "climate resilient environment and community" indicator. This indicator encompasses waste alongside other critical circular economy measures, such as greenhouse gas emissions. A proposal to report the waste indicator as the ratio of per capita gross domestic product to total waste generation is being reflected in a national project to develop circular economy indicators.

At directorate level, circular economy principles are embedded in the Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025, the Waste Feasibility Study 2018, and in work that is underway to phase out of single-use plastics. Related documents such as the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25, the ACT Waste-to-Energy Policy 2020-25, and plans to deliver a Food Organics and Green Organics service combine with Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City to discourage waste and promote and support maintenance of natural systems in the Territory.

TCCS is regularly engaging with the OCSE on circular economy matters. This includes support for Office issues papers and events related to the circular economy. TCCS will continue engagement towards establishing a clear circular economy governance structure for the ACT into the future. TCCS also collaborated with the Canberra Institute of Technology in actively supporting a 2020 'Trade Hack' event which tackled waste in trades.

Responsible Directorate **TCCS**

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- Early planning is underway in TCCS to examine the creation of circular economy legislation to, amongst other things, phase out single use plastics and require businesses to have a separate collection for co-mingled recycling and organic waste collection and a food waste reduction plan from 2023, in accordance with priority reform areas listed in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement of the Tenth Legislative Assembly.
- TCCS has established the Recycled Materials Working Group to increase the use of recycled material in infrastructure.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 16 TRANSPORT

Explore incentives to increase the uptake of public transport, car and ride sharing options, and active travel, including cycling amongst women and girls.

Government response **AGREED**

Increasing the use of sustainable transport modes, such as public transport and active travel, is an important policy goal of the Government.

Priorities in the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–25 include to “Support higher uptake of public transport by continuing to improve services to meet community travel needs”, to “Trial new ways of using roads that most efficiently move people and goods and better support sustainable transport modes,” to “Encourage active travel by continuing to improve cycle paths and walkability”, and to “plan for a compact and efficient city to improve access to public transport and active travel options, reduce travel distances and reliance on private car use.” The Government will continue to explore a range of actions and incentives to implement these priorities, and increase the uptake of public transport, car and ride sharing, and active travel.

The ACT Government continues to develop the Transport Strategy that supports the long-term shift of transport modes towards walking, cycling and public transport. Concurrently, we are reviewing the related Active Travel Framework. Both of these are consistent with the planning, climate change and preventive health strategies. These all work together towards a compact urban form with more options to work and recreate closer to where people live while providing incentives for people to reduce private vehicle dependence where possible.

The ACT continues to use a range of options to increase public transport uptake and reduce access barriers, including free off-peak travel periods, better stop and station infrastructure and interchange facilities, simplified timetabling, route classification and passenger information services, expanded park and ride facilities, improved lighting, integrated ticketing between public transport modes, as well as marketing aimed at attracting more users, more often.

The ACT ran a successful trial of car share between 2016 and 2018. Building on the results of this trial, the ACT is working with car share operators to facilitate expansion in the ACT.

Within the compact form, the ACT Government is improving the performance of Canberra's extensive active travel network to make walking and cycling safer, more convenient and comfortable. The 2018–19 ACT Budget included \$21.7 million for priority active travel infrastructure improvements over three years. These include:

- › projects to improve walking and cycling in town centres such as Tuggeranong Town Centre, active travel improvements, Belconnen Bikeway and the Woden Cycle Loop; and
- › cycling network improvements, such as building missing links, installing priority crossings, and the development of an integrated wayfinding strategy including maps, signage and the Transport Canberra Journey Planner.

A detailed evaluation of the ACT's reforms to the on-demand transport industry was undertaken in 2018 to help guide the ACT Government response to the changes in that industry. The ACT Government continues to review the on-demand transport market (including taxis and rideshare) to ensure greater consumer choice, accessibility, safety, industry viability, sustainability and long-term competitiveness.

Increasing participation in cycling, walking and running will help achieve objectives in the areas of public health, sustainable transport and the environment. One example includes minimum passing distances, which were introduced in 2015 to protect cyclists on our roads. Installation of signage will soon commence across the ACT road network to remind motorists of the relevant distance required when overtaking a cyclist in those speed zones. These signs will be put up in stages at specific sites where there is anticipated high cycling traffic, and in areas of lower compliance rates with passing distance laws, before the Spring 2020 cycling season.

Responsible Directorate TCCS

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- A new Transport Strategy was delivered in 2020 that supports the long-term shift of transport modes towards walking, cycling and public transport. The Strategy identifies a number of factors influencing transport choice including travel time, cost, convenience and reliability, safety, legibility/ navigability, and comfort. The Strategy commits to delivering the following policies, plans and guidance related to active travel:
 - a. An updated active travel policy framework
 - b. A strategic CBR cycle routes network plan
 - c. Best practice active travel infrastructure guidance; and
 - d. A Movement and Place Framework.
- In addition, a number of projects to encourage walking and cycling as a choice including in Tuggeranong Town Centre, Belconnen Bikeway and the Woden Cycle Loop were completed in 2020–21.
- Minimum passing distance signage has been rolled out at specific sites where there is high cycling traffic, and in areas of lower compliance rates with passing distance laws.
- Future cycling network improvements continue and will be expanded including missing links on Sulwood Drive, Stage 2 of the Belconnen Bikeway, Heysen Street and Flemington Road. Feasibility studies for development of other corridors include the Garden City Cycle Route and Lake Ginninderra path widening. The network will also be strengthened with further installation of priority crossings, and rollout of integrated wayfinding strategy including maps, signage and the Transport Canberra Journey Planner.
- Shared micromobility services were expanded with two operators entering the Canberra market to provide 1500 e-scooters (in addition to 200 dockless bikes and a number of docked bike stations) to provide an additional transport choice for short trips.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress on uptake by women and girls in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 17 TRANSPORT

Consider implementing innovative community engagement programs which encourage active travel, including the establishment of car-free streets and car-free dates as a part of the ACT festival calendar.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT Government has identified that active forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, can deliver benefits across a number of policy areas including transport choice, mental and physical health, environment, recreation and economic development.

The ACT Government is continuously exploring opportunities for innovative programs to further encourage active forms of transport. Some examples include:

- The Active Travel Office (ATO) undertakes community engagement activities to raise the profile of active travel such as Canberra Walk and Ride Week and Women's Health Week (with an emphasis on increasing cycling participation for women and girls) and attends community events to increase the reach of audiences. Actsmart programs, in close collaboration with the ATO, are beginning to incorporate transport choices into their outreach programs.
- Our award-winning School Safety Program delivers a number of initiatives to encourage and support walking, riding and scooting to and from school. The programs include the Ride or Walk to School and It's Your Move Safe Cycle programs, which educate and upskill teachers and students in bike riding skills, the Active Streets for Schools program, which delivers infrastructure improvements around schools and the School Crossing Supervisor program, which provides supervisors at busy road crossings to assist children to safely cross. These initiatives combine to provide comprehensive support in and around schools to allow more children to walk or ride to school.
- Workplace travel is the largest area of travel for ACT residents. The ACT Government is finalising the End-of-Trip Facilities General Code to encourage improved bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities in commercial developments, including workplaces as well as developing a guide for workplace travel planning.

While being a challenging time, the current COVID-19 emergency has provided an opportunity for the ACT and Australian Governments to bring forward investments in active travel infrastructure. These rapid interventions were targeted initially to protect against transmission but also to support and sustain the surge of interest in walking and cycling for transport and health. Below are some of the highlights of a suite of initiatives undertaken by the ACT Government with a particular focus on active forms of transport:

- promoting the Slower Streets and Clockwise is COVID-wise campaigns in concert with the community to better share roads and paths for people who choose to walk and cycle;
- re-programming the pedestrian call buttons in the CBD to have an automatic pedestrian cycle;
- repurposing and reallocation of road spaces with parking to support inclusion of bike lanes in active travel infrastructure projects;
- allocation of funding for active travel infrastructure in the COVID-19 stimulus package; and
- championing a discussion at the 13th Transport and Infrastructure Council meeting on a process for developing a longer-term national strategy to encourage public transport use following recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Australia.

The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025 also outlines a number of actions to reduce car use, including:

- 3.12** Trial and evaluate innovative approaches to planning and development that prioritise active travel and public transport.
- 3.13** Implement car free days and consider car free areas, shared zones and traffic calmed streets. Car free days are temporary events held in specific locations. Similar to existing events like the Multicultural Festival and Enlighten, entertainment or market stalls could be set up in a limited public area to allow people to enjoy the public space in a different way for a short period of time.
- 3.14** Support car share schemes and transport-on-demand solutions across the ACT region.
- 3.15** Investigate and implement options for encouraging a shift to public transport and active travel through planning and a smarter approach to parking.

EPSDD and TCCS will work together to implement these actions as outlined in the strategy.

Responsible Directorate TCCS

TCCS

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- The Active Travel Office continues to undertake community engagement activities to raise the profile of active travel such as Canberra Walk and Ride Week and Women's Health Week (with an emphasis on increasing cycling participation for women and girls) and attends community events to increase the reach of audiences (COVID permitting).
- Our award-winning School Safety Program delivers a number of initiatives to encourage and support walking, riding and scooting to and from school.
- The programs include:
 - Ride or Walk to School and It's Your Move Safe Cycle programs, which educate and upskill teachers and students in bike riding skills.
 - Active Streets for Schools program, which delivers infrastructure improvements around schools.
 - School Crossing Supervisor program, which provides supervisors at busy road crossings to assist children to safely cross.
 - Initiatives to slow traffic to make streets more welcoming for walking and cycling included the "Smiley" signs and Slower Streets.
- Disruptions such as the COVID-19 emergency and the implementation of Stage 2 of Light Rail will both provide an opportunity for people to change travel habits and for the ACT Government to influence travel choices through targeted investment in paths, park and pedal/ ride infrastructure and other initiatives.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 18 TRANSPORT

Hasten the electrification of the ACT bus fleet.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

As outlined in the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025, the ACT Government is aiming to achieve a zero emissions bus fleet by 2040, by progressively phasing zero emissions buses into the fleet to provide clean and sustainable transport for the community. Transport Canberra is currently preparing a zero-emission transition plan to transition its current diesel and CNG bus fleet to zero-emissions. The Plan will act as a road map for the transition and considers a range of existing and future zero-emission fuel technologies to achieve this objective including hydrogen and electric. Transport Canberra has one electric vehicle in service following a trial of two electric vehicles over 2018–19. The Government will consider options for potentially hastening the transition as technology and markets evolve.

Responsible Directorate **TCCS**

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- Work has continued on implementing the zero emission transition plan for Transport Canberra including: workforce engagement; market sounding for the first tranche of 90 battery electric buses; energy and power modelling; technical specifications; and business case development.
- Design amendments and electrical investigations for Woden bus depot commenced.
- Market sounding for first 90 battery electric buses commenced. Procurement is underway for the provision of off-site charging facility and electric buses. Replacement of 34 diesel buses commenced in 2021.
- Work will progress in 2021 in relation to developing a pathway for zero emissions on garbage trucks, taxis and rideshare vehicles.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 19 TRANSPORT

Promote the use of digital technology applications to streamline the uptake of public transport options.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT continues to promote its MyWay ticketing system as well as third party platforms to access service information. Passenger information at stops has been upgraded to digital at key locations and the ACT continues to pursue options for account-based ticketing solutions that spread a variety of technology platforms.

Responsible Directorate **TCCS**

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- TCCS is continuing investigations to improve public transport customer information and passenger services with procurement of a new generation ticketing system to commence in 2021–22. A public transport customer strategy, as well as data analytics and surveys will also commence in 2021–22.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 20 AIR

Build on the incentives to encourage the replacement of wood heaters, specifically targeting the Tuggeranong Valley.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

The Government recognises air quality issues related to smoke from wood heaters, particularly in the Tuggeranong Valley. Actsmart administers a Wood Heater Replacement Program to support householders to replace wood heaters with energy efficient electric heating options. The Government will consider potential further options to support the replacement of wood heaters with less polluting options.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, CMTEDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The Actsmart Wood Heater Replacement program offers the following rebates:
 - \$250 – wood heater removal
 - \$750 – wood heater removal and installation of electric reverse cycle system
 - \$750 – wood heater removal and upgrade of electric reverse cycle system
 - \$1250 – wood heater removal and installation of electric ducted reverse cycle system.
- Since commencing in 2004, a total of 1231 rebates have been provided, of which 35% (427) were for residents of Tuggeranong.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- The EPA supports EPSDD to promote the Wood Heater Replacement Program, and in undertaking audit and compliance activities will use this opportunity to promote programs to replace wood heaters with energy efficient electric heating options to improve the ACT's air quality.

Commissioner's response 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: No evidence towards progress.

RECOMMENDATION 21 AIR

Increase the number of National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure compliance monitoring stations.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

The ACT Government recognises the importance of air quality monitoring, and notes in particular the importance of accurate and timely monitoring during events such as the bushfire smoke pollution that occurred during the 2019–20 Summer. The Government is currently developing an air quality strategy, taking into account the lessons from the 2019–20 Summer, and it is expected to make further recommendations in this area.

The ACT Government has been undertaking ambient air quality monitoring in Canberra since the early 1990s. The AAQ NEPM monitoring network in the ACT currently consists of two NEPM monitoring stations at Monash and Florey and an additional monitoring station in Civic. The ACT monitors four of the six NEPM pollutants:

- carbon monoxide (CO);
- nitrogen dioxide (NO₂);
- photochemical oxidants as ozone (O₃); and
- particulate matter (particles less than 10 microns in diameter – PM₁₀ and particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter – PM_{2.5}).

Due to a lack of heavy industry, the ACT has never monitored sulphur dioxide (SO₂) as it is primarily an industrial pollutant, and lead monitoring ceased in 2002 with the phase out of leaded petrol.

Monitoring results in 2018 demonstrated that Canberra's air quality is generally excellent, with no exceedances of the AAQ NEPM standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and particles as PM₁₀. The major impacts on Canberra's air quality in 2019 came from the accumulation of combustion particles from dust, hazard reduction burns and wood heaters.

Canberra is a large relatively spread out city with several different topographical regions. The Government agrees there would be a benefit of increasing environmental monitoring for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Increasing the monitoring of other pollutants would be costly and is unlikely to provide any benefit to the community at this time.

The NEPM standard does not require a third performance monitoring station until the population is over 1 million people. An alternative could be to expand the network with several smaller stations around the region that only monitor particulate matter. Several PM monitors dispersed across Canberra would enable comparison of the impacts of bushfire smoke, smoke from woodfire heaters and dust from activities such as construction, in different regions of the ACT. These issues will be further considered through the development of the air quality strategy.

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X		

Comments on status

- ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) has commenced a trial of low-cost air quality sensors. This trial aims to assess equipment options, equipment performance, feasibility and challenges. The trial is expected to continue until the end of 2021. To date, the market has been assessed and sensors have been received from four suppliers. These have been installed and are currently undergoing performance analysis and validation.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- The EPA produces the Annual Air Quality Report based on the data provided from ACT Health's monitoring stations at Monash, Florey and Civic. The EPA will continue to support ACT Health in determining the appropriate location and number of health monitoring stations.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 22 AIR

Urgently undertake an assessment of air pollutant emissions from diffuse sources to update the National Pollutant Inventory data (1999).

Government response NOT AGREED

RECOMMENDATION 23 AIR

In collaboration with health professionals, improve knowledge of the impacts of air pollution on human health and the associated costs to the health system and economy.

Government response **AGREED**

It is important to build the current knowledge on air pollution and the associated impacts on human health and the economy. The ACT Health Directorate prioritises quality research in these areas and participates in research opportunities in line with available resources. The ACT Health Directorate, in consultation with the EPA and the EPSDD, engaged the Centre for Air Pollution, a cooperative research centre funded by the National Health and Medical Research Centre, to undertake more detailed research into the health impacts and costs associated with particulate pollution in the ACT. This work will inform future policy direction.

Responsible Directorates **HEALTH, CMTEDD**

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- ACTHD has adopted the AHPPC endorsed 1-hour and 24-hour categories and associated public health advice for PM2.5 exposure. This information is accessible via ACT Health's online Air Quality Health Advice Portal.
- ACTHD has collaborated on several research projects over the past 12 months.
- Funding has been committed to the National Environmental Science Program's (NESP) Sustainable Waste and Communities Hub which the ACTHD has provide in-kind support through the ACT Government Analytical Laboratory. One of the priorities of NESP is to deliver improved national air quality monitoring and forecasting capability.
- ACTHD continues to work with research partners including the Australian National University in the development of research proposals focused on the health impacts of air quality.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- The EPA works in collaboration with ACT Health to improve knowledge on air pollution and the associated impacts on human health and the economy. The EPA produces Annual Air Quality Report based on the data provided from ACT Health's monitoring stations, and this report provides important baseline information to improve knowledge of the impacts of air pollution on human health.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress on improving health impacts knowledge in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 24 LAND

Improve knowledge on land use change in the ACT. This could be achieved through the development of annual land accounts using the United Nations System of Environmental-Economic Accounting framework.

Government response **AGREED**

The EPSDD is a member of the Inter-jurisdictional Steering Committee (IJSC) for the National Environmental Economic Accounting Strategy, and is seeking to explore opportunities for environmental economic accounting as a means of monitoring and planning for land use change in the ACT. The initial focus is on urban living infrastructure as part of Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City, Action 1 to expand the existing asset management system. A proposal is currently under consideration by the IJSC to form a working group as a collaboration between the ACT, Victoria and NSW to investigate urban ecosystem accounting. Other opportunities for landscape-level assessments and input into land use planning are being explored.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- In May 2020, the Interjurisdictional Environmental-Economic Accounting Steering Committee approved the establishment of an interjurisdictional working group on urban ecosystem accounting in Australia (URECAA). URECCA has developed guidance notes to inform the development of urban ecosystem accounts in Australia, recognising the potential of urban ecosystem accounts to inform environmental policy and investment. The ACT is represented by EHW (Conservation Planning and Policy) on URECCA and the IJSC.
- Staff within EHW have contributed to workshops with Commonwealth officials developing a National land Account and will participate in further presentations and workshops to progress a national account and explore opportunities for a regional land account.

TCCS

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- The TCCS Canberra Strategic Transport Model currently considers land use changes including growth in population and employment and informs assessments of transport network impacts of development intentions in the ACT.
- TCCS will benefit from improved knowledge on land use to achieve sustainable development outcomes.
- TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 25 BIODIVERSITY

Increase the protection of mature and hollow-bearing trees to maintain critical habitat and provide incentives for rural landholders to protect paddock trees.

Government response **AGREED**

Following an assessment and recommendation by the ACT Scientific Committee, the 'Loss of Mature Native Trees (including hollow-bearing trees) and a Lack of Recruitment' was listed in 2018 as a Key Threatening Process by the Minister for the Environment. A threat abatement plan is currently under development, with detailed measures on what actions can be implemented to provide greater protection for mature trees. The threat abatement plan recognises that the costs of improving tree recruitment in agricultural landscapes can be significant and will outline actions to assist rural landholders to protect paddock trees.

Further protection of mature native trees is provided under the 2019 ACT Native Woodland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans. The Strategy identifies conservation objectives to protect, maintain and improve native woodlands, while prioritising effective collaboration with stakeholders, including rural landholders.

EPSDD is undertaking two specific programs to improve the retention of mature and hollow-bearing trees within the ACT. The first is the National Landcare Program funded Protecting and connecting endangered woodlands in the ACT that works with rural leaseholders to protect and restore engaged woodlands on rural lands. The second program is working with the Australian National University and Transport Canberra and City Services to trial different management techniques designed to protect mature trees in the urban environment. The program will monitor a range of different management actions designed to protect mature trees to determine the environmental benefits as well as the costs associated with the different management actions.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- Following the listing of 'Loss of Mature Native Trees (including hollow-bearing trees) and a Lack of Recruitment' as key threatening process under the Nature Conservation Act, EPSDD has drafted a 'Loss of Mature Native Trees' Action Plan. The draft Action Plan is currently being finalised for public consultation.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 26 BIODIVERSITY

Expand its communication strategy in respect of biodiversity and environmental issues and encourage ACT Government employees to make biodiversity reports available to the community in innovative ways.

Government response AGREED

EPSDD currently has a range of outlets to publicise issues around biodiversity and the environment. Most major strategies and reports are published on the EPSDD website, often with a plain English summary document. Where community engagement occurs through the ACT Government's engagement platform, YourSay.act.gov.au, the final reports and summaries are also published on that platform.

EPSDD has prepared short videos on key topics such as macropod management and filmed live events such as some forums. However, there is the opportunity to utilise more innovative methods for making these reports, or summaries of these reports more accessible, particularly using video technology.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X (Ongoing)

Comments on status

- EPSDD publicises milestones, documents, events, consultations and other activity around biodiversity and the environment in different ways as relevant, including on www.environment.act.gov.au, through the directorate's social media platforms (including EPSDD, ACT Parks and Conservation and Tidbinbilla platforms), through media releases and events, [Our Canberra](#) newsletter and [Your Say Conversations](#).
- The new [science platform](#) is a one-stop hub for EPSDD science-related content. It includes innovative use of storymaps and videos. Examples include the storymap that documents the recovery of Namadgi National Park from the 2020 Orroral Valley fire and a link to the new breeding program for [Canberra Grassland Earless Dragons](#).

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 27 will be addressed in the State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report, which will be completed by OCSE in 2022.

RECOMMENDATION 28 WATER

Produce an annual recreational water quality report that includes monitoring results, investigations into the main sources of pollutants, recommended actions to improve water quality, and assessments of management effectiveness.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

EPSDD, as part of the ACT Healthy Waterways project, is investigating the provision of 'real time' access to water quantity and quality and other related water monitoring data and dashboards in partnership with the ACT Government Data Lake initiative.

Real time information on recreational water quality will be provided on NCA and ACT Government websites, with additional public access to data and information through third party apps such as Swim Guide.

Access to water quantity and quality data could be supplemented with key performance indicators including the frequency and duration (number of days) of lake closures due to blue green algae, bacteria levels and any other reasons. Input on fish stocking activities could be included from NCA and EPSDD Conservation Research data.

Within the ACT Health Directorate, the ACT Government Analytical Laboratory's Microbiology Unit analyses water samples from 17 recreational swimming sites. This sampling is done weekly during the Recreational Swimming Season in accordance with the ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality. Water quality assessment data is provided using intestinal enterococci as the indicator organism. This data could be included in reporting.

See response to recommendation 29 for information on annual reporting by the EPSDD.

NOTE

The NCA is responsible for all aspects of Lake Burley Griffin, with the ACT Government responsible for Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra. ACT Government officers in the EPA and TCCS staff monitor Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra (in addition to the Molonglo Reach and Murrumbidgee River Corridor) weekly during the main swimming season for both blue-green algae and microbial pathogens. Lake Tuggeranong, Lake Ginninderra and Molonglo Reach are monitored year-round for blue-green algae.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, HEALTH, TCCS, CMTEDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- EHW in EPSDD is working collaboratively with the ACT Data Analytics Centre to implement the ACT Government Data Governance and Management Framework. It is hoped that this will go some way to providing a broader framework for the assessment of aquatic ecosystem health and water quality. It is anticipated this would capture the requirements of a recreational water quality report.
- The Waterwatch annual report card, the Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP) report, continues to provide an assessment of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The 2020 CHIP report was based upon 1872 water quality surveys, 184 water bug surveys and 219 riparian condition surveys conducted by over 200 volunteers. A total of 229 sites were surveyed. The ACT Government announced ongoing funding for the Waterwatch program in early 2020, enabling this reporting to be secured.

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- Nil response

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- ACT Health and EPSDD lead agencies
- TCCS is continuing to liaise with EPSDD to enable easier sharing of weekly water quality monitoring data.
- TCCS will contribute to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- The EPA monitors Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra for changes to blue-green algae conditions. Samples and subsequent actions taken are in accordance with the ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality. During the swimming season weekly email updates are provided to EPSDD, OCSE, TCCS, NCA, ACT Health, AFP and another 50 stakeholders. Data collected under the EPA program can be used in the provisioning of information to the general public.

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient evidence – Open: Provide further evidence of progress towards production of an annual recreational report for the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 29 WATER

Establish a government reporting framework for the assessment of aquatic ecosystem health and water quality. This should incorporate work undertaken for the Catchment Health Indicator Program and produce public reports at appropriate intervals to provide meaningful assessments.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

The ACT Water Strategy includes a commitment to report on progress against a number of targets including to maintain or improve the quality of water across all ACT-managed sub-catchments (30-year target), and to improve catchment health in sub-catchments that receive funding for on-ground works through the ACT Healthy Waterways Project (10-year target). Progress will be reported annually through the EPSDD annual report, with more comprehensive and longer-term assessments (ACT Water Report) undertaken to support the review and development of the Strategy's five year implementation plans.

The Waterwatch annual report card, called the Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP), is based upon the data collected by volunteers throughout the preceding year. The purpose of the report is to give the community a better understanding of water quality and riparian health issues in the catchment as well as providing an ongoing baseline assessment of catchment health, to assist natural resource managers and policy-makers in addressing some of these issues. The CHIP is recognised in the ACT Water Strategy 2014-44 as a way to 'enhance knowledge and spatial planning for water and catchment management'.

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EHW in EPSDD is working collaboratively with the ACT Data Analytics Centre to implement the ACT Government Data Governance and Management Framework. It is hoped that this will go some way to providing a broader framework for the assessment of aquatic ecosystem health and water quality.
- The Waterwatch annual report card, the Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP) report, continues to provide an assessment of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment. The 2020 CHIP report was based upon 1872 water quality surveys, 184 water bug surveys and 219 riparian condition surveys conducted by over 200 volunteers. A total of 229 sites were surveyed. The ACT Government announced ongoing funding for the Waterwatch program in early 2020, enabling this reporting to be secured.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 30 WATER

Ensure implementation plans are produced for the Molonglo River Reserve, Lower Cotter Catchment and Googong Foreshore management plans.

Government response AGREED

An implementation plan has been prepared for the Lower Cotter Catchment.

An implementation plan will be prepared for Molonglo River Reserve and for Googong Foreshores when the management plan is finalised.

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The Implementation Plan for the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 was completed before 30 June 2019. However, to date, no additional funding has been apportioned within the PCS budget for reserve management responsibilities outlined in the Implementation Plan.
- The Googong Foreshores Management Plan was updated in 2020. There is not an Implementation Plan; however, there is a Heritage Management Plan (HMP), a Dam Safety Management Plan, and a Protection of Critical Infrastructure Plan as required under the provisions of the Googong Dam Lease.
- Icon Water is responsible for the development and ongoing implementation of the Dam Safety Management Plan and Protection of Critical Infrastructure Plan.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 31 WATER

Provide incentives to increase wastewater recycling and the use of non-potable water by the community.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

EPSDD is investigating, as part of the ACT-led Murray–Darling Basin Water Efficiency Project, options to improve water efficiency within the Territory.

The Australian Government's Murray–Darling Basin Water Efficiency Program provides funding for water efficiency measures in exchange for entitlements for environmental water.

Technical feasibility studies identifying water efficiency measures that could be achieved across four efficiency themes are being progressed. The themes are water sensitive urban design, stormwater harvesting, infrastructure renewal and demand management. Final reports have been received for all except the demand management study.

The outcomes of these studies along with socio-economic modelling will identify water efficiency measures that will be considered for implementation. The Institute of Sustainable Futures has been engaged to develop conservation supply curves that prioritise measures relative to cost, water saving and assessment of additional benefits including social benefits such as urban cooling and greening, and/or environmental benefits such as water quality improvements, energy savings and reduced emissions.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD is in the process of finalising its investigations into opportunities to facilitate non-potable water use. These investigations were conducted as part of the ACT-Led Murray-Darling Basin Water Efficiency Project and considered expanding/introducing stormwater harvesting schemes and updating development codes to strengthen water sensitive urban design. The outcome of this work has identified opportunities to support the optimisation of water use in the ACT by enabling some substitution of potable water. A package of measures is currently being prepared for the consideration of the ACT, and Commonwealth's Governments.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS is currently undertaking feasibility studies on opportunities to decrease the use of potable water via adapting current potable water irrigation systems to use second class water.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 32 WATER

Identify opportunities to develop integrated water cycle management (as well as water-sensitive urban design) across new and existing urban areas, capturing and using stormwater and creating biodiversity habitat.

Government response **AGREED**

EPSDD is investigating, as part of the ACT-led Murray-Darling Basin Water Efficiency Project, diversification of water supply options.

The Australian Government's Murray-Darling Basin Water Efficiency Program provides funding for water efficiency measures in exchange for entitlements for environmental water.

Initial investigations have focused on identifying a pathway to developing a diversification of supply strategy including several localised integrated water management plans based (in part) on mapping the existing infrastructure constraints and the range of water and land management opportunities that exist across the ACT.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD is exploring opportunities to develop integrated water cycle management as part of the investigations required under the ACT-Led Murray-Darling Basin Water Efficiency Project and through a review of water governance within the ACT.
- Investigations conducted through the ACT Water Efficiency Project included water sensitive urban design, stormwater harvesting and reuse, infrastructure renewal and water demand management. The outcomes of these studies, along with socio-economic modelling, has informed the development of a package of measures that is currently with Government for consideration.
- Under the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, the ACT Government committed to "consider the best administrative arrangements to manage new water programs and provide a holistic and coordinated approach to water programs and policy". A review has commenced and will report to Government for consideration in early 2022.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency
- TCCS has been working closely with the EPSDD Healthy Waterway project team to provide input and technical advice on the development of opportunities to implement Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in many locations and to improve codes, standards and the handover process of such assets.
- TCCS currently sits on the cross-directorate Stormwater and WSUD asset steering committee to help improve the design, construction and handover processes for these asset types.
- TCCS has also commenced a WSUD trial at Jamison Centre carpark to assess techniques to improve growth conditions for shade trees in such challenging urban environments.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 33 WATER

Review codes which relate to flooding and finalise the 2016 flood strategy and associated flood mapping.

Government response **AGREED**

The ACT flood mapping for the revised 1% Annual Exceedance Probability was finalised and publicly released on the EPSDD's ACTmapi site in November 2018.

The flood strategy (Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan) is being managed by the ACT Flood Committee, coordinated through the ESA Commissioner. The document is currently in draft.

A review of the Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) code, released in August 2014, recommends significantly expanding the current WSUD measures. The review reiterates the importance of WSUD in our environment to manage our urban water cycle, improve water quality and mitigate flooding.

NOTE

In 2019, the Australian Rainfall and Runoff (ARR) guidelines were reviewed, revised and re-released. ARR is a national guideline document used for the estimation of design flood characteristics. The ACT should now refer to these revised guidelines to update flood mapping across the Territory to ensure improved accuracy of flood information within the ACT and conformity across jurisdictions.

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The ESA re-invigorated the Flood Management Committee in early 2021 with a priority of reviewing and finalising the draft version of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Plan.
- A revised WSUD Code was released in 2018 and revised measures were adopted into the Territory Plan in 2019. However, some inconsistencies and anomalies have prevented full implementation. A further Review was undertaken in 2021 to identify these barriers and work is progressing into amending the guidelines to overcome these.
- Revision of flood mapping across the Territory in line with the 2019 ARR has yet to be undertaken. However, the ARR guidelines are being incorporated into new developments in the ACT.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 34 FIRE

Ensure tolerable fire intervals are considered in decision frameworks for prescribed burns.

Government response **AGREED**

Planning for prescribed burning across the ACT is undertaken in a strategic manner through the Regional Fire Management Plans. These plans look across the whole landscape on a 10-year timeframe and identify priority areas for fuel management based on the impact on risk levels. Ecosystem values, including tolerable fire intervals, extent of vegetation type, and water catchment, and cultural and heritage values are all considered in the planning that identifies agreed areas for treatment.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- The 2019–2023 draft Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP) has been revised in response to the impacts following the Orroral Valley Fire in 2020 and has been through public and key stakeholder consultation in April and May 2021. The revised RFMP considered tolerable fire intervals in relation to placement and timing of proposed fuel mitigation treatments with significant input from Conservation Research and Evaluation. The final RFMP is currently being prepared for approval and publishing on the ACTMapi website by end- August 2021.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 35 FIRE

Regularly evaluate and report publicly on the commitment to ecological and cultural burning and the outcomes of these activities.

Government response **AGREED**

In the ACT, all prescribed burns are undertaken to meet multiple objectives of fuel reduction, ecological outcomes and cultural outcomes. All burns meet these objectives to differing degrees and the annual Bush Fire Operations Plan (BOP) clearly identifies burns where the dominant objective is to achieve either fuel reduction, cultural outcomes or ecological outcomes. The BOP is approved by the Commissioner of the ACT ESA and is subject to extensive internal and external audits. It has a rigorous, detailed and regular process of reporting (to the ESA and the Minister) and auditing, with final results being publicly available in the annual report and on the ESA website.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	X

Comments on status

- The annual Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP) for 2020–21 report was sent through to the ACT Rural Fire Service and ESA on 9 July 2021 and contains details on ecological, cultural and other categories of burning and fuel mitigation activities undertaken during the financial year. The BOP activity completion details will be published as part of the Justice and Community Services (JACS) annual report for 2020–21. This reporting is a well-established annual activity.

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient evidence – Open: Provide further relevant evidence of evaluation of cultural and ecological burns and their outcomes the following reporting year.

Report on the Canberra Nature Park (nature reserves), Molonglo River Corridor (nature reserves) and Googong Foreshores Investigation (2011)

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the recommendation from this the report that remained open for the 2020–21 reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

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

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

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Report progress on the Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan – why is the finalization of the plan on hold?

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- Finalisation of the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan 2020 is in progress. The Plan was revised in consideration of comments received during public consultation and referred to a Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on 22 January 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
- The Standing Committee provided a report on 20 July 2021 available at https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1804826/PTCS-Report-2-Draft-Reserve-Management-Plan-Canberra-Nature-Park.pdf
- The plan will be finalised after consideration of the Standing Committee's recommendations.
- Information on the plan is available on the YourSay website at <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-parks/canberra-nature-park>

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.



Wombat at London Bridge. Photo Damien Esquerré

Lake Burley Griffin Investigation (2012)

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the recommendation from this investigation that remained open for the 2020–21 reporting year.

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.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

What is the status of the Googong Foreshores Plan of Management and the associated Implementation Plan?

Responsible Directorates EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- The Googong Foreshores Land and Conservation Management Plan was finalised and approved by the Commonwealth Government in 2020. The plan is available on the EPSDD website at <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/reserve-management-plans>.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Closed.

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

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the five recommendations from this report that remained open for the 2020–21 reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 1

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

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence of funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

Responsible Directorates

EPSDD, TCCS, HEALTH, CMTEDD, JACS, CSD, EDUCATION



EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- CMTEDD Climate Action has provided a response to this measure.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- CMTEDD Treasury lead agency

RESPONSE TO COMMISSIONERS COMMENT:

TCCS has included climate change mitigation in budget business cases including:

- better trees at Jamison car park (stormwater harvesting project)
- adoption of the Urban Forest Strategy. Extensive tree planting to increase tree canopy cover including renewal and replanting as well as taking proactive measures to prolong life of established trees
- bus stop solar lighting trial and the use of recycled content in roadworks
- recycled products preferred for park furniture
- stormwater modelling; and
- the NoWaste material recovery

HEALTH

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

- Nil response

CMTEDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X		X	

Comments on status

The 2020–21 budget included new funding of \$307 million over five years to support the transition to net zero emissions through the following initiatives:

- Establish a \$150 million fund for the Sustainable Household Scheme to offer zero-interest loans of up to \$15,000 to help households with the upfront costs of investing in rooftop solar panels, household battery storage, zero emission vehicles and efficient electric appliances.
- Funding of \$100 million over five years, including the 2020–21 financial year, to deliver a Big Canberra Battery of at least 250MW of new 'large-scale' battery storage distributed across the ACT.
- Waive registration fees on new zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) for the first two years of registration from May 2021 to encourage more Canberrans to purchase electric vehicles.
- Establish a \$5 million Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade Fund to support community clubs to undertake energy efficiency upgrades.

- Establish a \$50 million Vulnerable Household Energy Support Initiative to improve building efficiency and sustainability for social and public housing, low-income owner occupiers and low performing rental properties.
- Initial funding of \$855,000 to support phasing out fossil fuel gas through continuing work on the ACT's sustainable energy policy actions and developing legislation to prevent new gas mains network connections to future stages of greenfield residential development in the ACT.
- Invest \$915,000 over two years to establish an Office of the Coordinator General for Climate Action to coordinate government efforts and oversee major projects to keep the Climate Action commitments on track.

EDUCATION

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X		

Comments on status

- Design considerations and performance outcomes are integrated into new schools (all electric), existing school upgrades and maintenance contracts. Appropriations include:
 - \$15.9 million to upgrade gas heating systems to low or zero emission heating systems and thermal envelope upgrades (2019-20 to 2022-23).
 - \$17.96 million to upgrade roof systems including minimum R4 insulation and higher stormwater capabilities (2018-19 to 2021-22).
 - \$0.85 million building tuning and trial projects (annually).
 - \$0.4 million solar expansion (annually).

INNOVATION

- Two schools established as Living Laboratories under the Innovation Hub for Affordable Heating and Cooling, an initiative of ARENA and AIRAH.
- Double glazing performance specification applied to all glazing upgrades.

JACS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- In 2020-21, JACS was funded \$851,208 from the Zero Emissions Government (ZEG) Fund. The funding supported works at Tuggeranong Police Station and progressed procurement of the nation's first plug-in hybrid electric vehicle fire truck.
- In 2021-22 the JACS Better Infrastructure Fund contains \$673,000 for expenditure on energy efficiency measures and electric vehicle chargers.
- The Emergency Services Agency (ESA) received \$179,000 in 2020-21 through the National Partnership Agreement to support the development of whole of government bushfire planning and doctrine which includes the delivery of a number of actions under the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 2019 related to climate risk and readiness planning across the ESA and the broader ACT Government.

CSD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
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Comments on status

- CSD utilises Better Infrastructure Fund (BIF) each year to support projects that reduce emissions from CSD owned sites. In 2020/21 CSD completed the final stages of lighting upgrades to Gungahlin and Tuggeranong Child and Family Centres that will significantly reduce electricity usage. In 2019/20, CSD completed reduced natural gas-related carbon emissions through the completion of a three-year program to upgrade natural gas boilers at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. CSD will have continued reduction in gas use, during 2020–21 CSD completed the planning stage to have electric powered heating as a primary source of heating to further reduce emissions. In addition, during 2020–21, CSD reduced the transportation fleet from 90 vehicles to 87 and increased the number of electric vehicles (including PHEV's) from 13 vehicles to 28. This reduced CSD's transport fuel-related carbon emissions.

Commissioner's response 2021

EPSDD, TCCS, CMTEDD, JACS, CSD, EDUCATION - Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

Health - Insufficient evidence – Open: No evidence towards progress or consideration of recommendation. Provide evidence of funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Report progress on the Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan and emissions reduction initiatives undertaken as part of the ACT Transport Strategy.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, TCCS

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- On 22 April 2021, the ACT Auditor General's performance report on the ACT Government's vehicle emissions reduction activities was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. It found that ACT Government agencies have, for the most part, effectively implemented the zero emissions vehicle commitments considered as part of the audit. Of the 16 zero emissions vehicles commitments the Government made in 2018/19, 12 have been completed as at December 2020.
- Australia's first public hydrogen refuelling station opened in Fyshwick on 26 March 2021. This station has allowed the ACT to establish Australia's first government fleet of 20 hydrogen vehicles.

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency

Response to Commissioner's comment:

Two years free registration for battery electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles commenced on 24 May 2021 and will continue until 30 June 2024 for vehicles newly registered or converted.

Work has continued on implementing the zero emission transition plan for Transport Canberra including: workforce engagement; market sounding for the first tranche of 90 battery electric buses; energy and power modelling; technical specifications; and business case development.

Design amendments and electrical investigations for Woden bus depot commenced.

Market sounding for first 90 battery electric buses commenced. Replacement of 34 diesel buses commenced in 2021. Procurement is underway for provision of off-site charging facility and electric buses.

Work will progress in 2021 in relation to developing a pathway for zero emissions on garbage trucks, taxis and rideshare vehicles.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 6

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

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Report progress of the low income energy support programs including the solar and public housing initiatives, and other related actions in the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019. There is very little evidence of reduction in social inequality.

Responsible Directorates EPSDD, CSD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X	X	X	

Comments on status

- Support for vulnerable and disadvantaged households remains a priority.
- Solar for Low Income: over 670 households and 100 public housing units supported since December 2017.
- Home Energy Efficiency Program: over 4000 households since October 2015 received free energy assessments, education and upgrades (including draught- proofing).
- Housing ACT Program: over 2600 energy efficient heater and hot water systems installed since December 2018, with 1200 scheduled for 2021-22.
- Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme: Priority Household Target will increase from 30% to 40% from January 2022.
- \$50 million has been committed over five years through the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Initiative.

CSD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed

Comments on status

Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme

In its third year, the primary objective of the program continues to be assisting low-income households reduce their energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions through the provision of energy efficient products and upgrades.

The program aimed to replace predominantly inefficient gas heating, and gas hot water systems in 2,200 eligible public housing properties by December 2020. The program exceeded this target, with 2,685 installations completed.

The total abatement since the commencement of the program to 30 June 2021, was over 50,000 t/CO₂-e (tons of CO₂ gas emissions). This abatement is realised over the lifetime of the installed products and is equivalent to planting 252,200 trees or is equivalent to 18,478 cars off the road for 1 year. Source: <https://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au/Calculators/FuelCalculator>

Housing ACT is also undertaking the All-Electric Program. \$200,000 is available to replace gas cooking appliances with electric alternatives. This program compliments the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme and in addition to the emissions savings, households will save \$300 per year in gas connection charges. As at the end of June 2021, 66 properties have been disconnected from the gas network.

Solar Stimulus Project

Housing ACT has worked in collaboration with EPSDD for the Solar Stimulus Project installing solar roof top systems to 10 Housing ACT properties managed by community housing providers and two large multi-unit properties (MUPs). The 10 properties and one of the multi-unit properties installations were completed and delivered by 30 June 2021. The second multi-unit property solar system is expected to be fully functional early 2021-2022.

Commissioner's response 2021

EPSDD and CSD - Insufficient evidence -Open: provide evidence for outcomes from policies in terms of reducing social inequality.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Provide evidence of discussions with the community on carbon offsets and outcomes of these discussions.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The 'social cost of carbon' (SCC) is an estimate of the actual economic, social and environmental cost of emitting greenhouse gases, measured in dollars per tonne of carbon pollution.
- The social cost of carbon is not a commonly known or understood term and there is an opportunity to increase understanding of this important concept and promote climate action with the community.
- The ACT Government will consider approaches for community consultation in the development of a Social Cost of Carbon mechanism, noting that its development is undertaken by an independent body and does not come into place until 2025.

Commissioner's response 2021

Unsatisfactory - Open: Provide evidence of progress on recommendation, including of engagement with community.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Please advise when an audit has been or will be undertaken and/or reasons for timing/delays.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- The process for measuring and monitoring ACT emissions is reviewed annually. The independent consultant that produces the ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventory each year is required under their contract to provide the responsible Minister with a review of the method against best practice.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Closed.

Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the seven recommendations from this investigation that remained open for the 2020-21 reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the ACT Government adheres to prescribed timeframes for delivery of all commitments and/or formalized with the Commonwealth the approval process to be adopted in the event of changes to due dates on commitments.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide details on delivery of commitments within specified timeframes and any changes to the due dates that have occurred.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The Gungahlin Strategic Assessment (GSA) [annual report](#) for the 1 July 2019-30 June 2020 period was completed in August 2020. This report includes content of the timing of when the commitments were met or will be met.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that the ACT Government improves the process for collection of evidence on implementation of the commitments in the Plan.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide an update on how the process for collection of evidence on implementation of commitments in the Plan has improved.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- Compliance with implementation of GSA commitments is reported annually to the Commonwealth Government, with relevant evidence provided. This includes data and input from annual flora and fauna monitoring which is collected and recorded by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS). PCS is currently in the process of making this data publicly accessible through a series of annual reports, due to be published in August 2021.
- Relevant documentation for each commitment in the GSA is recorded in a central folder in EPSDD's record keeping program – Objective. This allows the compliance of each commitment to be easily tracked.

Commissioner's response 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: please provide evidence of improvements in collection of evidence.

RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensures that all the research undertaken as a function of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment and the Plan is made publicly available on the web, is accessible and easy to find, and includes historical research as well as the most recent scholarship and reports.

Government response AGREED

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence that the EPSDD website is up to date including the relevant research and reports.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The EPSDD Offsets [Register](#) and Environmental Offsets [Website](#) host annual compliance reports, approvals decision links, management plans and other additional reports on MNES.
- The layout and content of the [Register](#) and [Website](#) were updated in 2021. This included creation of a designated [monitoring and research page](#) on the Offsets Website. As research and monitoring reports are written, and once resourcing allows, this page will host information on monitoring and research additional to what is published on the register. The 2018-19 and 2019-20 annual Offsets monitoring reports will be published in August 2021.
- Updates are ongoing to ensure all outstanding reports are published online, once they meet accessibility guidelines.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: continue to ensure latest monitoring reports are accessible on noted website.

RECOMMENDATION 5

It is recommended that the ACT Government notes the Key Risks section and incorporates the recommendations in this section into future management.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how the recommendations in the key risks section have been included in future management.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

KEY RISKS

- **Commitment 4:** Land management agreements (LMA) are constantly reviewed and updated. For example, in 2019–20, two LMA's were updated.
- **Commitments 5 and 30:** Cat containment policy is in place for all suburbs in the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment area, except Kenny where urban development is yet to commence ([DI2019-33](#)). Interpretative signs have been installed along the extended predator-proof fence with educational information on the natural and cultural history, and ecological values of the area.
- **Commitment 15:** In 2018, a breach procedure was implemented for reporting, communicating and investigating all potential breaches of the GSA commitments.
- **Commitments 26 and 27:** A [habitat improvement plan](#) for Box Gum woodland (BGW) is complete. Ongoing vegetation mapping is undertaken annually to inform improvement activities.

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient Evidence – Open for Commitment 4: provide further evidence on the specific updates to the Land Management Agreements for the following reporting year to demonstrate they incorporate and facilitate management activities consistent with meeting objectives of the relevant offset management plan.

Satisfactory – Closed: for Commitments 5 and 30, 15, 26 and 27.

RECOMMENDATION 6

It is recommended that the ACT Government further investigate the commitments that have been termed *Undetermined*.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how the commitments which were termed *Undetermined* have been further investigated.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

The two commitments in the audit that were 'undetermined' were:

Commitment 3: EPSDD and the Plan Implementation Team (PIT) provides guidance on the development of concept plans that are provided during the preparation of estate development plans. The PIT's comments focus on any potential areas of non-compliance with the GSA.

Commitment 12: Coordination with TCCS and proponents occurs prior to the practical completion of each development contract. This often occurs as a condition of development approval. TCCS engages with contractors/staff to ensure conditions are met.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open. Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 7

It is recommended that the ACT Government notes the Observations detailed in the Audit Table and uses this to inform future management.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how the Observations detailed in the Audit Table have been incorporated into on-ground management.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

All observations in the audit table, other than those outlined below, have been covered by other recommendations:

- Review of the Taylor Stage 1 Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (commitment 11a)
- Complete Fire Hazard Management Strategies (commitment 28)

The [2018-19 annual report](#) of the GSA outlined that these observations/corrective actions were addressed on 29 January 2018 and 20 February 2018, respectively.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Closed.

RECOMMENDATION 8

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensures adaptive management principles are carefully scrutinised and considered for incorporation into implementation of the commitments for this Plan.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how adaptive management principles have been incorporated into implementation of the commitments.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- PCS adaptively manages the GSA, through the ACT Environmental Offsets Draft Adaptive Management Strategy 2020-2030 (EOAMS), which provides strategic guidance for implementation of the adaptive management cycle. Under the EOAMS, data collected under PCS Offsets' Monitoring and Research program informs annual operational planning. These data support planning for ongoing reserve management and allow the evaluation of effectiveness of management actions and reserve condition. PCS utilises spatial tools to plan restoration actions as part of the adaptive management cycle, with the ability to track progress towards commitments under the GSA.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue to provide evidence as to how adaptive management principles have been incorporated into implementation of the commitments for the Plan.



Environmental offset in Gungahlin. Photo Kirilly Dickson

Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment 2018

Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the eleven recommendations from this investigation that remained open for the 2020–21 reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensures ongoing resourcing and funding for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of MNES within the strategic assessment area.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence that ongoing funding is provided for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of MNES within the strategic assessment area.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The offset areas established under the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment are managed within the annual budget of PCS within EPSD
- PCS received \$988K in capital works funding and \$844K in recurrent funding in the 2019–20 budget and \$7595K in capital works funding and \$862K in recurrent funding in the 2020–21 budget to manage the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area.

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient Evidence – Open: Provide specific evidence of funding for MNES within the assessment area.

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that the ACT Government adheres to timing requirements for all the commitments.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide details on delivery of commitments within specified timeframes and any changes to the due dates that have occurred.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- The [annual report](#) for the Molonglo NES Plan was completed in November 2020 for the 2019-2020 period. This reports on the relevant timeframes in which commitments are delivered.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue to provide details on delivery of commitments within specified timeframes and any changes to the due dates that have occurred.

RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that the next Audit be carried out by May 2022 and that the ACT Government seeks agreement from the Commonwealth for this due date by 30 June 2018.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to whether agreement was sought from the Commonwealth for this due date.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- On 1 August 2017, written agreement was obtained from the Commonwealth for an extension to provide the independent audit on the Molonglo Strategic Assessment. This also confirmed the next independent audit will cover the period from 7 May 2018 to 7 October 2021. Procurement is currently underway to secure a service provider to undertake the next independent audit. Audit findings are due by the 29 April 2022.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open. Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 5

It is recommended that the ACT Government develops and implements an ISO9001 or similar framework for document control. This will also assist in retaining all the evidence and information required to demonstrate compliance with each and every commitment.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to the document control system that is being used to track compliance for every commitment.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- Compliance with the commitments of the Molonglo NES Plan is reported annually to the Commonwealth Government. Documentation for each commitment is recorded in a central folder in EPSDD's record keeping program – Objective. This allows the compliance of each commitment to be easily tracked.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Closed.

RECOMMENDATION 6

It is recommended that the ACT Government incorporates climate change resilience considerations in the management of MNES in the strategic assessment area.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence that climate change resilience considerations are being incorporated into the management of MNES.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- Climate change is being considered via the implementation of the [Molonglo Adaptive Management Strategy](#). Extensive threat abatement programs have been delivered across the Molonglo strategic assessment area. Various research projects have been undertaken to improve threatened species and ecological community resilience to climate change, including three threatened species translocations trials. Extensive work has been undertaken on 'climate ready' provenance and species selection for restoration plantings, which has been used to guide over 14,000 tree and shrub plantings across the Molonglo from 2019-21.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Provide further information on the benefits of these specific on-ground management actions to increase climate change resilience of the MNES.

RECOMMENDATION 7

It is recommended that the ACT Government gives urgent consideration to the urban edge effect that is apparent around the Molonglo River Corridor, which is likely to be exacerbated as each of the new suburbs in the later stages of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area are developed.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to actions being taken to reduce the urban edge effect in the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- As demonstrated in the [Molonglo Valley Stage 3 Planning and Design Framework](#), the urban areas in Molonglo Stage 3 are to be designed in a way to minimise impacts to retained values. The Planning and Design Framework proposed an extensive network of open space along the urban edge with the Molonglo River Reserve to provide a greater buffer.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Please continue to provide evidence to demonstrate the actions taken to reduce the urban edge effect on the Molonglo River Corridor.

RECOMMENDATION 8

It is recommended that the ACT Government notes the Key Risks section and Observations details in the Audit Table and incorporates all the recommendations in this section into future management.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how the recommendations in the key risks section and the observations have been included in future management.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

KEY RISKS – RECOMMENDATIONS – captured in responses to other recommendations. See above and below.

OBSERVATIONS

- **Action 2 and 7:** The [Planning Design Framework for Stage 3](#) has been finalised and approved (27 February 2019). The Planning Design Framework displays that urban development is not proposed to disrupt the ongoing connectivity within the Molonglo River Reserve Corridor, and the location and extent of the Kama Buffer. Stage 4 of Whitlam is currently in the planning stage and will incorporate a buffer to Kama in line with the [Kama Interface Management Strategy](#).
- **Action 3 and 12:** Noted.
- **Action 5 and 9:** The [Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan](#) has since been finalized (24 July 2019) and is in-place.
- **Action 6 and 10:** Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo River Nature Reserve are managed by the PCS and funding/resourcing is currently met within their annual budget.
- **Action 14 and 15:** An operational plan for offset patches C and H was completed in December 2018. An Operational Plan for Patch N was developed in 2014, as part of the Arboretum Woodland Conservation Area.
- **Action 16:** An Operational Plan for patch P was completed in December 2018. Patches I, L and M are managed under a rural lease with a Land Management Agreement (LMA). This LMA was updated to include protection measures for MNES (as advised in a letter to the Commissioner from EPSDD dated 6 May 2019).

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

RECOMMENDATION 9

It is recommended that the ACT Government further investigates the commitments that have been termed Undetermined.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how the commitments which were termed Undetermined have been further investigated.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

UNDETERMINED COMMITMENTS

- **Action 17:** [The Bushfire Risk Strategy](#) sets out the management requirements both within and immediately outside the future urban development boundary in Denman Prospect taking into account Box Gum Woodland (BGW). This Strategy is supported by ESA and the Fire Management Unit of TCCS. Fuel management is being undertaken in line with the strategy and with protection of BGW as a critical consideration. An ecological burn was undertaken in Patch P in 2019 to reduce blackberry thatch and promote BGW regeneration, while also reducing fire fuel levels.
- **Action 18:** A [Monitoring Procedures Manual for Molonglo](#) was prepared by EPSDD in 2013. EPSDD has undertaken annual vegetation monitoring since 2013, in accordance with the monitoring procedures manual.
- **Action 19:** 2019–20 annual vegetation monitoring showed that the ecological condition of patches I, L, M, P1 and P3 has been maintained. Patch P2 showed decline in 2018, however this result was driven by a decrease in native grass cover, however, in 2019 P2 grass cover increased to levels consistent with native grass cover in 2013. The floristic value score for Patch P2 remains unchanged.
- **Action 20:** With the above, an additional offset is not required.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open:

Action 17: please continue to provide updates on the fuel hazard management strategies that are being undertaken in patches I, L, M and P while protecting Box-Gum Woodland.

Action 18: continue to monitor annually according to the Monitoring Procedures Manual.

Action 19: continue to provide evidence that the ecological condition of patches I, L, M, P1 and P3 have been maintained.

RECOMMENDATION 10

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensure adaptive management principles are carefully scrutinised and considered for incorporation into implementation of the commitments for the NES Plan.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how adaptive management principles have been incorporated into implementation of the commitments.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
			X

Comments on status

- MNES across the [Molonglo Strategic Assessment Area](#) are adaptively managed via the implementation of the Molonglo Adaptive Management Strategy. Reserve Operational Plans have been developed for all Reserve and Offset areas and are used to guide the development of annual reserve works plans, which are then implemented. Annual vegetation condition monitoring is used to inform operational planning and assess management effectiveness. Key knowledge gaps are addressed by undertaking targeted research projects.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: continue to provide specific examples of how adaptive management is occurring in the implementation of the commitments of the NES Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 11

It is recommended that the ACT Government considers Indigenous approaches to land management for MNES protection in the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence as to how Indigenous approaches to land management for MNES protection are being incorporated.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- Much of the land containing MNES in the NES Plan areas is managed by PCS. PCS works collaboratively with Nggunawal and Aboriginal organisations in order to incorporate Aboriginal (specifically Nggunawal where appropriate) approaches to land management for MNES protection. These include:
 - the [Dhawura Nggunawal Caring for Country Committee](#)
 - [Representative Aboriginal Organisations](#) (RAOs), who have been declared by the Minister under Section 14 of the Heritage Act 2004 and have a formal, statutory, role in Aboriginal heritage assessment and management.
 - the [ACT Government Healthy Country](#) team
 - [Murumbung Rangers](#)

Commissioner's response 2021

Insufficient evidence – Open: Please provide specific examples of how indigenous approaches to land management for MNES protection in the Molong Valley Strategic Assessment area are being implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 12

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensures that all the research undertaken as a function of the Molong Valley Strategic Assessment and the NES Plan is made publicly available on the web, is accessible and easy to find, and includes historical research as well as the most recent scholarship and reports.

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence that the EPSDD website is up to date including the relevant research and reports.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- The EPSDD Offsets [Register](#) and Environmental Offsets [website](#) host annual compliance reports, approvals decision links, management plans and other additional reports on MNES.
- The [Molonglo valley vegetation Condition Monitoring Report 2018](#) (5 year report) can be found on the EPSDD [Planning Publications](#) webpage.
- The layout and content of the [register](#) and [website](#) were updated in 2021. This included creation of a designated [monitoring and research](#) page on the Offsets website. As research and monitoring reports are written, and once resourcing allows, this page will host information on monitoring and research additional to what is published on the register. The 2018-19 and 2019-20 annual Offsets monitoring reports will be published in August 2021.
- Updates are ongoing to ensure all outstanding reports are published online, once they meet accessibility guidelines.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: continue to ensure all reports relevant to the Molong Valley Strategic Assessment are publicly accessible on the EPSDD website.

The Heroic and the Dammed – Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation 2018

Government's Response and Directorate updates

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

The Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework be implemented urgently.

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on implementation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to demonstrate effective restoration has occurred.

Refer to Recommendation 2.1 and 2.3 below regarding funding.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- Catchment health and water quality monitoring in the Lower Cotter Catchment will primarily be captured under the CEMP framework, EPSDD's ecosystem condition monitoring framework. The Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy contains several monitoring metrics designed specifically for the Lower Cotter Catchment to better inform management effectiveness and improve water quality outcomes.
- Citizen science programs including Waterwatch and Frogwatch continue to undertake monitoring, including sites within the Lower Cotter catchment. Data is available via the Atlas of Living Australia (Waterwatch) and Canberra Nature Map (Frogwatch).

Commissioner's response 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: Provide evidence the data collected through the various avenues outlined above is presented and analysed in accordance with the Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

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

Government response **AGREED**

Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on access to the ACT Government Data Lake and the Whole of Government live dashboard for displaying data.

Relates to SOE 2019 Recommendation 2.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- Streamflow, rainfall and some water quality data are now captured within the ACT Data Lake. EPSDD is exploring the possibility of generating a whole-of-Government live dashboard for displaying the data. Within government, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability to do this is currently being developed.
- Further changes in Lower Cotter Catchment data management are contingent on additional funding being made available as per recommendations 2.1 and 2.3.

Commissioner's response 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: Provide further information about which water quality data are captured, and about the progress and functionality of the live dashboard.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

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

Government response **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

Commissioner's comment

Provide an update on monitoring, mapping and modelling coordination within EPSDD.

Relates to SOE 2019 Recommendation 2.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- Whole of EPSDD coordination and examination is ongoing to determine the most suitable, widely applicable and cost-effective remote sensing tools to inform protected area management strategies, including for the Lower Cotter Catchment. However, any substantial improvement in monitoring capability is dependent upon additional resources being identified.

Commissioner's response 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Provide further information about what progress has been made to improve consistency and coordination of monitoring, mapping and modelling within EPSDD.

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

Commissioner's comment

The Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018 Implementation Plan was developed by the specified due date of 30 June 2019 (refer to Recommendation 3.3 below). Please provide an update as to whether this reallocation of funding has occurred in order to achieve actions under the Implementation Plan.

Responsible Directorate EPSDD

EPSDD

Current status of the government response/actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- The completed Implementation Plan forms the basis for the preparation of an annual works plan for holistic management of the Lower Cotter Catchment.
- Additional allocation of resources within the ACT Parks and Conservation budget has not been identified for reserve management responsibilities outlined in the implementation plan.

Commissioner response 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: No evidence of resources allocated to date.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Please provide details as to the funding that has been allocated for the implementation and ongoing costs of Recommendation 1.1 above.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
X			

Comments on status

- See actions related to recommendation 1.1 – 1.3 and 2.2.
- EPSDD has been supporting CEMP development and implementation and will continue to do so. However, any substantial improvement in monitoring capability is contingent on government's budget considerations.

Commissioner's comment 2021

Unsatisfactory – Open: No evidence of funding allocation provided.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Recommendation 1 (Code of Potable Water Catchment Management) is not reported on, please provide an update on this.

Recommendation 4 (Code of Sustainable Land Management Practices) is still being finalized and is overdue. Please provide an update on the status of these documents.

(Recommendation 3 is covered by Recommendations 1 and 4).

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (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 drinking water catchment. In 2019–20, PCS re-assessed the Code of Sustainable Land Management Practice project with an external consultant, which assisted in re-focusing the scope and project timeframes. Changes and delays have been experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is anticipated that a draft of the code will be developed for stakeholder consultation by June 2022.

Commissioner's comment 2021

Satisfactory – open (delayed): Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Dependent on Recommendation 3.1 above.

Responsible Directorate **EPSDD**

EPSDD

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
	X		

Comments on status

- Once the Committee has assisted developing the Code of Sustainable Land Management 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.

Commissioner's comment 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.

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**

Commissioner's comment

Are cars now removed more easily than prior to the amendments being introduced?

Responsible Directorate TCCS

TCCS

Current status of the government response /actions required to address recommendation

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
		X	

Comments on status

- TCCS lead agency
- Response to Commissioners comment:
 - In 2019, amendments to the Litter Act were made to improve the ability of authorised officers to remove abandoned vehicles or vehicles causing a safety risk. Additional actions and collaboration with ACT Policing are underway to ensure operational policies and practices provide for effective and timely use of the available powers.

Commissioner's comment 2021

Satisfactory – Open: Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year.



Cotter river. Photo Mark Jekabsons

Complaint investigations and investigation recommendations

The Commissioner investigated one complaint in 2020–21 regarding management of the environment in the Territory. This was received in December 2020 and was in relation to *EPA response to excessive smoke from a wood fire heater*. This investigation was ongoing at 30 June 2020. B2.3.3 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'.

Recommendation 27 from State of the Environment Report 2019 will be addressed in the State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report, which will be completed by OCSE in 2022.

B2.4 Activities Under the Objects of the Act

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

B2.4.1 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.

B2.4.2 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Forms of direct engagement included meetings with the Commissioner, presentations, launches, networking events, 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 on social media 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 office's [Facebook profile](#) continues to grow, increasing by approximately 1,800 followers over the reporting period.

The office's Twitter account, [@EnvComm ACT](#) had over 2,100 followers at 30 June 2021.

The office's Instagram account, [@envcomm](#) had over 1,100 followers at 30 June 2021.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Protecting Canberra's Air quality

In 2020, we surveyed the ACT community on the ways that the Black Summer smoke affected their physical and mental health.

After receiving over 1500 responses, we synthesised this information into an online [story map](#) to share with the community, sharing infographics and key facts across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and used an interactive Instagram story to engage people in our findings.

To give community members the chance to ask questions about the health impacts of air pollution and smoke, we hosted an online webinar in February 2021 with physician and cardiologist, Dr Arnagretta Hunter, and Commissioner Dr Sophie Lewis.



Woman and dog sitting on their roof during the black summer smoke. Photo Lauren Sandeman

Environmental Offsets in the ACT

In February 2021 we released an online background report about environmental offsets in the ACT, featuring a list of opportunities for improvement. We shared this information on our [website](#) and across our social media channels; engaging key decision makers on Twitter and community members via stories on Instagram.



the HEALTH EFFECTS of SMOKE POLLUTION

PHYSICAL



Respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

asthma attacks



Eye, nose and throat irritation.

Low birth weight for babies.



MENTAL

Increased feelings of stress and anxiety.



Financial strain.



Feelings of isolation and loneliness.



Aggravation of existing mental health symptoms.



ACT Young Environment Leaders Forum

In Children's Week, in October 2020, we hosted an ACT Young Environment Leaders forum for a cluster of Canberra primary schools. This provided a space for students to voice their concerns about the environment, share their projects and ideas, and inspire one another. A testament to the impact of this forum was Ainslie School carrying out a 'State of the School Report'.



Commissioner Lewis hosting a Young Environment Leadership Forum for Primary School students. Source OCSE

Sustainable Textiles Campaign

From March to June 2021 we carried out an interactive Instagram campaign to engage the Canberra community in sustainable approaches to textiles and clothing consumption.

As well as providing facts and information on textile waste and ways to reduce impact, we asked our followers questions about the ways they think government could make changes in this space. We also shared a live story of a Fyshwick second-hand shopping trail that followers could replicate to buy their gifts sustainably.

This campaign succeeded in engaging followers, not just through likes and views, but through contributions in stories, polls and questions.



Visit to a Canberra Op-Shop. Source OCSE

Ride to Work Day and Backyard Bird Count

To encourage the ACT community to get involved in citizen science and engage in local biodiversity, Commissioner Sophie Lewis rode to Dickson Wetlands to help Canberra ecologist, Kate Grarock, carry out a Backyard Bird Count. We shared photos and findings across social media and showed our followers how to complete a bird count themselves.



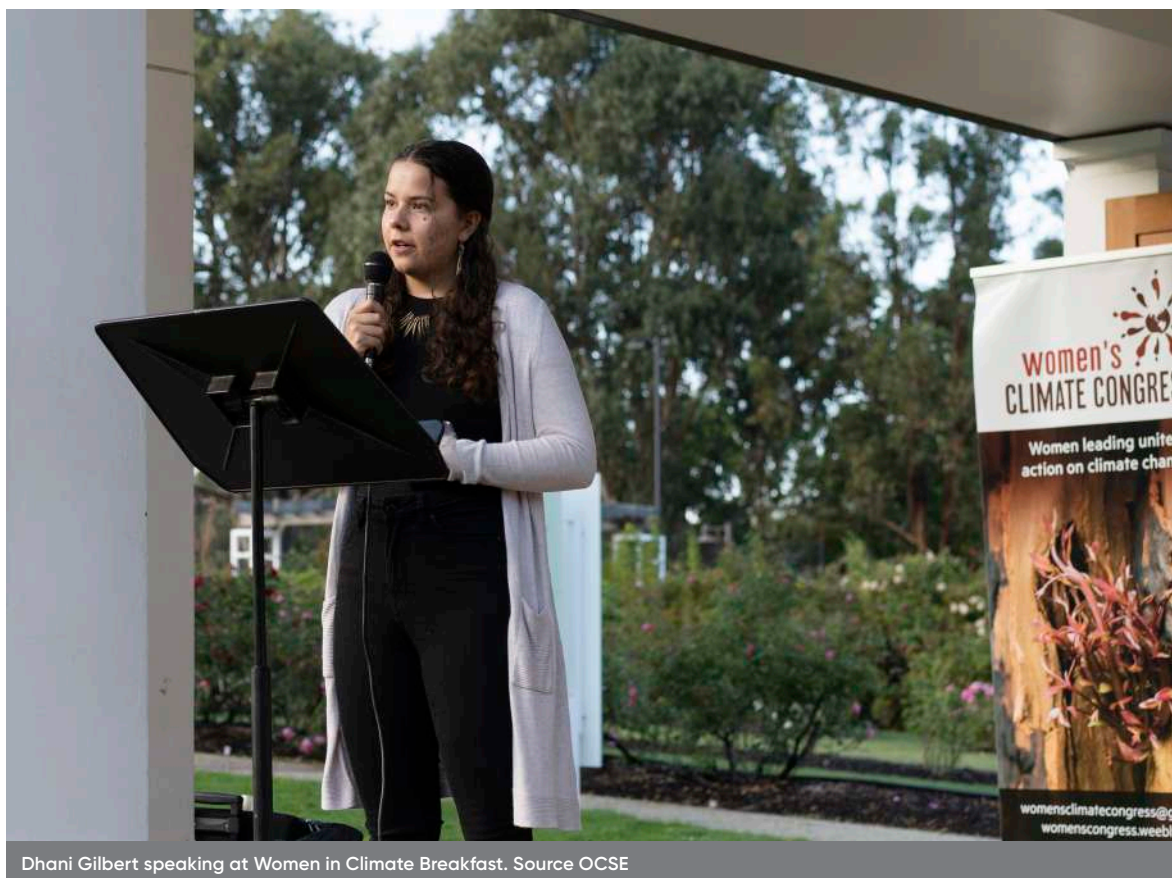
Backyard birdcount at Dickson Wetlands. Source OCSE

WOMEN IN CLIMATE AND HEALTH BREAKFAST

In March and June 2021, the office hosted the second and third 'Women in Climate and Health breakfast' events, respectively. These events are free of charge and consist of networking breakfasts that bring together women from the community to discuss Canberra's position in the global climate emergency and environmental challenges. Each event included discussion panels of speakers that exemplify the important role of women play in tackling these challenges.

The speakers included:

- › Dr Sophie Lewis, Commissioner for Sustainability in the Environment in the ACT
- › Dr Janet Salisbury, Founder of Women's Climate Congress
- › Dr Arnagretta Hunter, Cardiologist and ANU Climate Change Institute
- › Dhani Gilbert, Wiradjuri woman and 2021 ACT Young Woman of the Year
- › Felicity McCallum, Awabakal woman and PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University
- › Dr Liz Hanna, Honorary Senior Fellow, Fenner School of Environment & Society & Climate Change Institute
- › Edwina Robinson, Founder of the Climate Factory in Canberra
- › Dr Hedda Ranson-Cooper, Research Fellow at Engineering and Computing Science in the Australian National University, and
- › Beth Mitchell, Director Asset Strategies – Sustainability at ACT government Education Directorate.



Dhani Gilbert speaking at Women in Climate Breakfast. Source OCSE

B2.4.3 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 4: Summary of Submissions to Public Consultation Matters in 2020–21

Submission	Recommendations	Submitted
Draft Urban Forest Strategy 2020–45	<p>Broad recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of climate change within the Draft Urban Forest Strategy, including the focus on diversity of tree species and the suitability of traditional tree species under changing climate conditions. • Ongoing maintenance of urban trees. 	27 August 2020
Queanbeyan STP Upgrade EIS201900029	<p>Broad recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding effluent management, continue to urge that best practice management be implemented and monitored accordingly 	4 March 2021
Draft Territory Plan Variation 372 for Watson Section 76	<p>Broad recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the trees along the northern boundary of Section 76. • As a minimum, a buffer between the protected trees and the proposed development needs to be incorporated to reduce the effects of the adjacent planned dwellings on the wildlife who use the trees. • Plant favoured Superb Parrot food plants in future landscaping of the site however, careful consideration must be given as to the effect future climate change will have on the species selected and ensure these will be resilient to this change. 	11 March 2021
Education and Community Inclusion – Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure	<p>Broad recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water efficiency measures such as installation of rainwater tanks, and minimum 4-star water efficient appliances. • Develop a dedicated living infrastructure plan for ACT school environments • Energy, heating, cooling and thermal efficiency such as electric heating and cooling systems, rooftop solar panels, and ceiling and wall insulation, double glazing or window treatments. • Waste avoidance and management including support for soft plastic, food and organics, co-mingled recycling and e-waste streams; on-site recycling of food and organic waste; and discourage single use plastics. • Low embodied carbon emissions in school building works and material selection, including scope 3 caps, and sustainable procurement policies for IT infrastructure. • School system-wide climate adaptation plan for increasing temperatures and potential compound events (e.g. smoke) • Encourage Sustainable travel by supplying fit-for-purpose storage facilities for bikes, scooters and skateboards 	13 May 2021

B2.5 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.

B3 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.

B4 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 staff meetings and a risk register has been developed for the office, as well as staff undertaking risk management training available in ACT Government's MyLearning.

B5 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.

B6 FRAUD PREVENTION

EPSDD manages corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2020-21 Annual Report as relevant.

B7 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Section 96 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI 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 2020–21 financial year as there were no applications received nor managed under the FOI Act.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

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-us/access-government-information>.

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

B8 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 are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

During 2020–21 the Commissioner did not receive any notices under the Act, and there were no notifiable incidents. The Commissioner does not pay a first-tier worker's compensation premium.

Four stand-up desks are available in the office to aid staff health management. The office acquired four new chairs to suit the needs of staff members. Workstation assessments are available through EPSDD and have been utilised by staff. The office has access to EPSDD e-bikes and staff walk to meetings if the distance is appropriate.

EPSDD manages corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2020–21 Annual Report as relevant. Staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant initiatives run by EPSDD.

B9 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

EPSDD manages corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2020–21 Annual Report as relevant.

B9.1 Workforce Profile

B9.1.1 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 23 June 2021.

*Please note as at 23 June 2021 one FTE senior officer was on parental leave.

Table 5: FTE by gender and head count

Headcount total	FTE		Female	Male	Total
8	6.8	FTE by gender	5.8	1.0	6.8
6	5.4	Headcount by gender	7	1	8
		% of workforce	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%

Table 6: FTE by classification

Classification group	Female	Male	Total
Administrative officers	3	0	3
Senior officers	2	1	3
Statutory office holders	2	0	2*
TOTAL	7	1	6

* Sophie Lewis was on leave between June and July 2021, and Margaret Kitchin acted as Commissioner during that period

Table 7: Headcount by employment category and average years of service

Employment category	Female	Male	Total
Casual	0	0	0
Permanent full-time	2	1	3
Permanent part-time	3	0	3
Temporary full-time	1	0	1
Temporary part-time	1	0	1
TOTAL	7	1	8
Average years of service	6.1	3.2	5.8

Table 8: Headcount by diversity group

	Headcount	% of total staff
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1	12.5%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	1	12.5%
People with a disability	0	0.0%

Table 9: Headcount by age group

Age group	Female	Male	Total
Under 25	0	0	0
25–34	1	0	1
35–44	4	0	4
45–54	1	1	2
55 and over	1	0	1

Table 10: Permanent recruitment and separation rates

Classification Group	Recruitment rate	Separation rate
TOTAL	21.0%	21.0%

B9.2 Attraction and Retention Incentives (ARins)

The office had no ARins arrangements during the 2020-21 reporting year.

B9.3 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 performance and development 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 interns from ANU and University of Canberra undergraduate students in environmental science related studies and provided local content to several course assessments.

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

- › transitioning to electric vehicles
- › urban water cycle management
- › women in climate & health
- › urgent climate action
- › the voice of children and young people in research
- › climate change projections for the ACT
- › citizen science seminar
- › climate change adaptation
- › sustainable and local food production
- › upper Murrumbidgee fish and flows
- › EPSDD Executive: cultural safety masterclass
- › effectively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees
- › Pre-COP26 Roundtable - adaptation and resilience workshop

B9.4 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.

B9.5 Whole of Government Learning and Development Initiatives

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

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

B9.6 Participation in Study Assistance Program and ACTPS Training Calendar

No staff members participated in the study assistance program during 2020–21.

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 2020–21 Annual Report.

B10 ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

B10.1 Office Accommodation

The office moved from CIT Bruce in September/October 2020 to a temporary space at Finlay Crisp Centre, Customs House building, 5 Constitution Avenue, Canberra ACT 2601.

Staff and the Commissioner have access to and frequently use bicycle parking.

B10.2 Resource Management Planning

The office is covered under the EPSDD Resource Management Plan.

The Office moved to a temporary space in October 2020 and will renew its 'Actsmart Business accreditation' as soon as it moves to its permanent space.

The office ensures that its facilities are appropriate to maintain independence from relevant ACT 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
- › striving for sustainable procurement through approved tendering assessment processes
- › using 100% recycled paper for printing
- › using staff's own coffee cups and not disposable ones,
- › keeping non-disposable dishes and cutlery in the office
- › encouraging staff to ride, carpool or use MyWay bus passes to attend off-site meetings and events where feasible, and
- › working remotely as appropriate to reduce transport emissions and in response to COVID-19.

Table 11: Sustainable development performance – current and previous financial year

Indicator as of 30 June 2021	Unit	Previous FY 2019–20	Current FY 2020–21	% change
Agency staff and area				See explanatory notes for this column
Agency staff	FTE	6	6 ^a	
Workplace floor area	Area (m2)	137.5	85 ^b	
Stationary energy usage				
Electricity use	Kilowatt hours	7753.80	3957.58	
Natural gas use	Gigajoules	33.35	27.11	
Diesel	Kilolitres	0	376.47	
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 (Cm3)	0	0	
Water usage				
Water use	Kilolitres	81.07	56.69 ^c	
Resource efficiency and waste				
Reams of paper purchased	Reams	25	5 ^d	
Recycled content of paper purchased	Percentage	100	100	
Waste to landfill	Litres	808 ^e	1050 ^e	
Co-mingled material recycled	Litres	692 ^f	900 ^f	
Paper and cardboard recycled (including secure paper)	Litres	380 ^g	494 ^g	
Organic material recycled	Litres	332	0 ^h	
Greenhouse gas emissions ^m				
Emissions from transport	Tonnes CO2-e	0	0	
Scope 1 emissions	Tonnes CO2-e	1.72	2.42	
Scope 2 emissions	Tonnes CO2-e	0	0	
Total emissions Tonnes	Tonnes CO2-e	1.72	2.42	

Explanatory notes for Table 11

- a** The figure for FTE was calculated taking into account three staff members work part time.
- b** The figure for workplace floor area includes 14 m² of walk space and 71 m² of office space.
- c** The figure for water use was calculated based on the total consumption of water between July and September 2021 of 12.481 KL, and the annual average FTE of 5.83. Water use, electricity, gas and diesel estimates, were obtained from Climate Change and Energy Division in EPSDD.
- d** 5 reams of recycled A4 paper.
- e** Since the Office is in a temporary space, it shares its bins with other ACT government staff, with different bins in the kitchen and office space. Therefore, the figure for 2020–21 had to be estimated based on last financial year's figure. During the 2019–20 financial year, the ACT was in lockdown for 12 weeks, and therefore we added that period to the estimate. During both financial years there were 6 FTE. Some staff members worked from home a few days a week, and there were graduates and interns joining the team for a few days a week, therefore the estimates for points e., f. and h., are approximate.
- f** The figure for 2020–21 was based on last financial year because the Office shares recycling bins with other ACT government staff (see point e.).
- g** The figure for 2020–21 was based on the previous financial year, because the Office shares paper bins with other ACT government staff (see point e.).
- h** We do not have a compost bin in our temporary office space.

Calculating a percentage change between 2019–20 and 2020–21 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.

Please note that some data reported for this financial year in the table above may differ slightly from figures reported in the 2019–20 Annual Report. These are due to updates to agency occupancy and historical consumption data, and annual adjustments to ACT specific electricity emissions factors, as well as the office moving to a new temporary space.

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 transport fuel and natural gas use. Scope 2 are indirect emissions from mains electricity.

The ACT met its 100% renewable electricity target in 2019–20. This is the second year that the ACT Government will be reporting zero greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use.





SECTION C

Financial Management Reporting

C1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

Further information on the office's financial management is covered in the EPSDD 2020–21 Annual Report.

C2 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The ACT Government appropriation for the office in 2020–21 was \$ 1,550,000.

The financial transactions for the office are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the EPSDD 2020–21 Annual Report as part of 'Expenses on Behalf of the Territory'.

C3 CAPITAL WORKS

The office has no capital works projects.

C4 ASSETMANAGEMENT

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

C5 GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

C5.1 Procurement Principles and Processes

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

C5.2 External Sources of Labour and Services: Individual Contracts Exceeding \$25,000

During 2020-21 the office initiated two contracts exceeding \$25,000:

1. State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report (\$99,019.08), and
2. Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT Investigation Report (\$71,589).

C6 STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE

EPSDD manages corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2020-21 Annual Report as relevant.

SECTION D

Appendices



APPENDIX 1

Staff presenting at conferences, seminars and forums 2020–21

Date	Type of Activity, e.g., conference, seminar	Name of Conference, seminar, etc.	Provider	Attendee
14–15 July 20	Video	Environmental Sustainability in Schools	Dr K Turnbull, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning	Sophie Lewis
21 Jul 20	Presentation	Recycling	Pinocchio Curtin Preschool	Sophie Lewis
29 Jul 20		Gave evidence at a public hearing on 29 July – Senate Inquiry into lessons to be learned in relation to the Australian bushfire season 2019–20	Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee	Sophie Lewis
29 Jul 20	Interview	Lessons Learned from the 2019/20 Bushfires	Afternoons- ABC Canberra radio	Sophie Lewis
03 Aug 20	Presentation	Circular Economy Discussion	UC Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra	Sophie Lewis/ Caitlin Roy
11 Aug 20	Video Keynote Presentation	Zero CO2 – CIT hackathon 2020	CIT	Sophie Lewis
17 Aug 20	Presentation	O'Connor Cooperative School visit –	Lyneham Primary School	Sophie Lewis
25 Aug 20	Presentation	National Capital Authority Board Meeting	National Capital Authority	Sophie Lewis
01 Sep 20	Webinar Presentation	The Case for Urgent Action	MSSI	Sophie Lewis
02 Sep 20	Presentation	Scientific Committee – Meet & Greet	EPSDD	Sophie Lewis
08 Sep 20	Presentation	ACT Climate Change Council meeting	EPSDD	Sophie Lewis
09 Sep 20	Presentation	Year 3 Majura Primary School Presentation	Majura Primary School	Sophie Lewis
11 Sep 20	Presentation/ class visit	Year 12 Dickson College textiles class	Dickson College	Elsie Percival
08 Oct 20	Presentation/ Introduction	CRA Board Meeting – meet and greet	City Renewal Authority	Sophie Lewis

Date	Type of Activity, e.g., conference, seminar	Name of Conference, seminar, etc.	Provider	Attendee
29 Oct 20	Presentation/ class visit	Year 9 Geography students to talk about land use	Orana School	Sophie Lewis, Elsie Percival and Serena Farrelly
30 Oct 20	Forum	Student Leaders Forum	Canberra Inner North Public Primary School Cluster	Sophie Lewis
03 Nov 20	Workshop/ presentation	Parliament of Youth presentation	SEE-Change	Sophie Lewis
16 Nov 20	Forum	Panellist at a screening of Attenborough's: A life on our planet	Climate Change Institute	Sophie Lewis
18 Nov 20	Panellist	School Sustainability Festival 2020	Port Phillip Ecocentre	Sophie Lewis
25 Nov 20	Conference	Public Sector Women in Leadership Conference Canberra	Aventedge	Sophie Lewis
17 Dec 20	Presentation	Year 6 Graduation Ceremony	Charles Weston School	Sophie Lewis
09 Mar 21	Presentation	International Womens' Day presentation	Orana Steiner School	Sophie Lewis
16 Mar 21	Hosted	Women in Climate & Health Breakfast	OCSE/ Women's Climate Congress	Sophie Lewis
14 Apr 21	Interview	Climate Change	7.30 Report, ABC TV	Sophie Lewis
16 Apr 21	Presentation	Undergraduate Women in STEM Leadership Conference	ANU	Sophie Lewis
29 Apr 21	Podcast	Policy forum pod – What Biden's climate policy means for Australia	ANU	Sophie Lewis

APPENDIX 2

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The 2020–21 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 2020–21 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 2020–21 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 2020–21 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report as follows:

- › Transmittal Certificate, see Section A, page 1
- › Organisational Overview and Performance, inclusive of all subsections, see Section B, pages 4–115, and
- › Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of all subsections, see Section C, pages 118–119.

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 2020–21 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 2020–21 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report:

- › Ministerial and Director-General Directions, see Section B2, pages 12–107.

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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