

2021–2022

# Annual Report



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT

## Acknowledgment of Country

### Ngunnawal Translation

Dhawura nguna ngurumbangu  
gunangu 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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Cover image: Alica Tschierschke

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## List of Acronyms

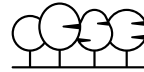
<b>AAQ</b>	Ambient Air Quality
<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>ACTHD</b>	ACT Health Directorate
<b>ANU</b>	Australian National University
<b>ARR</b>	Australian Rainfall and Runoff
<b>BOP</b>	Bush Fire Operations Plan
<b>CEMP</b>	Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program
<b>CHIP</b>	Catchment Health Indicator Program
<b>CMTEDD</b>	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
<b>CSD</b>	Community Services Directorate
<b>CSIRO</b>	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
<b>EHW</b>	Environment, Heritage and Water
<b>EPA</b>	Environment Protection Authority
<b>EPBC</b>	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
<b>EPSDD</b>	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
<b>ESA</b>	Emergency Services Agency
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>GSA</b>	Gungahlin Strategic Assessment
<b>IJSC</b>	Inter-jurisdictional Steering Committee
<b>JACS</b>	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
<b>MNES</b>	Matters of National Environmental Significance
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCA</b>	National Capital Authority
<b>NEPM</b>	National Environment Protection Measures
<b>NLP2</b>	National Landcare Program Phase TWO
<b>NRM</b>	Natural Resource Management
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>OCSE</b>	Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
<b>PCS</b>	Parks and Conservation Service
<b>RFMP</b>	Regional Fire Management Plan
<b>SoE</b>	State of the Environment
<b>TCCS</b>	Transport Canberra and City Services
<b>UC</b>	University of Canberra
<b>UNSW</b>	University of New South Wales
<b>URECAA</b>	Urban Ecosystem Accounting in Australia
<b>WSUD</b>	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

**2021–22 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 2022*.

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 2021 to 30 June 2022.

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.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Sophie Lewis**

Commissioner for Sustainability  
and the Environment

9 September 2022



The background of the slide is a photograph of a modern building facade. The upper portion shows a series of vertical panels in orange and grey, some with a textured, woven appearance. Below this, a large, curved blue section of the building is visible. In the foreground on the right, a tree with thin branches and small yellow flowers stands against the blue part of the building. The sky is a clear, deep blue.

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**):

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

## 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
- undertake projects associated with Aboriginal environmental traditional knowledge
- follow up measures undertaken by directorates on Aboriginal heritage and land management in the State of the Environment Report
- commence events with a Welcome to Country, or where this is not possible an Acknowledgement of Country
- use social media to promote proactively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events and peoples
- commit to priority procurement from Aboriginal providers (e.g., State of the Lakes Report graphic design), and
- active participation in 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness' training and calendar events.



Eucalypts on a Canberra hilltop. Credit: Mark Jekabsons

## 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 2021–22.

Dr Margaret Kitchen was appointed Acting Commissioner in June 2021 for a period of two months, until Dr Sophie Lewis returned in August 2022.

The current Commissioner, Dr Sophie Lewis, holds the following additional roles as of 30 June 2022:

- 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 2022, this team comprised of two directors (SOG B), one assistant director (SOG C), an office manager (ASO 6), a communications manager (ASO 6) (on leave since November 2021) and a project officer (ASO 6). As of 31 of May 2022, 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

Property and Shared Services, located within Commercial Services and Infrastructure of the Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), provides a range of centralised corporate support services including but not limited to:

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

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

## B1.6 Stakeholders

The Commissioner engages with a suite of stakeholders, including:

Stakeholders	
<b>Federal Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Capital Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Territory Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ACT Government Directorates as required</li> </ul>
<b>Other Government Agencies, Statutory Authorities, Office Holders and Corporations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT Auditor-General</li> <li>• ACT Human Rights Commission (Public Advocate, Children and Young People Commissioner)</li> <li>• ACT Chief Engineer</li> <li>• ACT Government Architect</li> <li>• Icon Water</li> </ul>
<b>Universities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian National University</li> <li>• University of Canberra</li> <li>• University of New South Wales</li> </ul>
<b>Education Groups and Skill Trainers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ainslie School</li> <li>• Campbell High School</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Government Organisations with Environment and Sustainability Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEE-Change</li> <li>• Conservation Council ACT Region</li> <li>• Canberra Ornithologists Group</li> <li>• Friends of Grasslands</li> <li>• Landcare ACT</li> <li>• ACT Wildlife</li> <li>• Ginninderra Catchment Group</li> <li>• Molonglo Conservation Group</li> <li>• Southern ACT Catchment Group</li> <li>• Greening Australia Capital Region</li> <li>• Trash Gather</li> <li>• National Parks Association ACT</li> <li>• Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch</li> <li>• Canberra Indian Myna Action Group</li> <li>• Canberra Nature Map</li> <li>• Housing Institute Australia</li> <li>• Australian Institute of Architects</li> <li>• Master Builders Association</li> </ul>



## B1.7 The Commissioner's Achievements

A summary of the Commissioner's achievements in 2021–22 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 ([envcomm.act.gov.au](https://envcomm.act.gov.au)).

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

### B1.7.2 Special Reports

Special Reports are discussed in detail in section B.2.1.2.

#### Minister Directed Investigations

There were no new reports commissioned under Ministerial direction pursuant to ss12(1) and 21(1)(a) of the Act in 2021–22.

#### Commissioner Initiated Investigations

There were no Investigations initiated by the Commissioner during the 2021–22 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 activities 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 represents 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

As Canberra grows, our city continues to exert pressure on the size of its urban footprint.

It is well known that expanding the footprint of the city beyond its current boundary imposes significant environmental pressures. These pressures come from several places. First, larger, sprawled cities are associated with less sustainable living, requiring additional infrastructure, resources and typically corresponds to greater dependence on private transport. Second, expanded urban development frequently impacts areas that hold significant environmental value.

While the ACT has a policy of 70 per cent infill within our existing footprint, the remaining development occurs as 'greenfield'. In 2022, the Office delivered an Investigation into the State of the Lakes and Waterways in the ACT which details the impact of development – particularly greenfield development – on water quality and waterway health. Between 2010 and 2021, Canberra's urban area expanded by 922 hectares. The landscape changes created by this conversion of rural and natural landscapes into urban zones increases pressure and pollutant loads on waterways.

However, the impacts of continued urban encroachment extend far beyond waterway health. The 2019 State of the Environment Report outlined that greenfield development places pressures on the environment through:

- Vegetation clearance
- Degraded land condition
- Expansion of invasive species
- Increased resource demand
- Threats to biodiversity

In addition to the suburbs currently under construction (Macnamara, Strathnairn, Molonglo, Denman Prospect and Whitlam), the ACT Planning Strategy identified large areas for potential future development. Of particular concern is the Western Edge of Canberra's existing development area. Bordered by the Murrumbidgee River, Weston Creek, the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen, this swathe of undeveloped land is primarily rural leasehold. Within this area are locations of high-quality habitat and environmental value. Despite this value and the known environmental impacts of expanded urban footprint, the Western Edge is clearly identified by Government as a development frontier.

It is of critical priority that we pause ever-expanding our city and instead embrace the challenge of creating liveable, efficient and sustainable future housing that sits within our current footprint.

## 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 2019–20 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, 32 were assessed in **Section B2.3.2**, providing an update on their implementation status for the 2021–22 reporting year. Recommendation 9 was closed by OCSE in 2021; recommendation 22 was not agreed to; and recommendation 27 was addressed in the State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report, 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 finished in the 2021–22 reporting period:

1. **Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT Investigation Report:** This Investigation explored 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 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly in November 2021.
2. The main aims of this Report are to:
  - estimate the ACT's scope 3 emissions
  - 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.

The key findings were:

- scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT make up 94% of the total emissions generated by the ACT
- household consumption is the main source of ACT scope 3 emissions (59%), followed by government (33%) and business (8%); and
- approximately 30% of the ACT's scope 3 emissions originate outside of Australia, 19% from Queensland, 18% from New South Wales, 13% from Victoria, and 20% from the rest of Australia.

OCSE provided 12 recommendations for the ACT Government to address the issues outlined in the Report. The Response of the ACT Government to the Recommendations of Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT Investigation Report was tabled in June 2022.

This document can be found on the Commissioner's website ([envcomm.act.gov.au](https://envcomm.act.gov.au)).





Packaged goods in a delivery van. Credit: Claudio Schwarz

3. **State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report:** This investigation explored the health and quality of Canberra's main three lakes; waterways that flow through the urban area and into the Murrumbidgee River, including urban ponds and wetlands; and the Molonglo River and tributaries. It excluded 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 was delivered to the Minister in May 2022 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly in August 2022.

The main aims of this Report are to:

- understand the quality and ecological health of the ACT's aquatic ecosystems and the impacts that 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.

The key findings were:

- Lake Burley Griffin receives already degraded water via the Molonglo River, with the quality of water dependent on management and aquatic health in NSW and the ACT.
- Lake Tuggeranong often has poor water quality and regularly suffers from cyanobacterial blooms and high levels of faecal contamination.
- Lake Ginninderra has not had a history of significant water quality issues that have led to extensive lake closures; however, it does not appear to be effectively mitigating the effects of urbanisation for the downstream receiving waters.
- Current policies and strategies are not well integrated and do not adequately address catchment management at an urban scale in the ACT.
- There is no clear governance structure to guide strategic decision-making for protecting and improving the health of urban lakes and waterways in the ACT.

OCSE provided 12 recommendations for the ACT Government to address the issues outlined in the Report.

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



Blue-green algae on Lake Tuggeranong. Credit: Alica Tschierschke

### 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 1993,<sup>2</sup> 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 environmental volunteering, wildlife care and citizen science. This report was finalised and published in February 2022 as a web-based report ([actenvirovolunteers.com.au](http://actenvirovolunteers.com.au)).

The main aims of the Report are 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.

The Report found that:

- environment volunteers in the ACT contribute over 307,000 hours per year. This would cost more than \$21.5 million in wages if they were paid for this work.
- environmental volunteering may save the ACT over \$13 million per year in avoided healthcare costs.
- other values of volunteering are more difficult to quantify, but no less important. These include volunteers' incredible knowledge, scientific observations and data collection, improvement in the quality of threatened ecosystems, and education of the broader public about local environmental matters.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.envcomm.act.gov.au/about](http://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/about)



- environmental volunteering in the ACT depends on a network of relationship and partnerships that span government and non-government organisations, and individuals from all walks of life.

The Report also showcased the experiences, passion and knowledge of a number of volunteer groups and individuals through its Volunteer Stories section.

The Report identifies 15 opportunities across six different areas for the ACT Government to consider in its approach to supporting community volunteers. These relate to use of volunteer knowledge and data, communication, recognition and transparency, and resourcing.



Community wetland tour of the Healthy Waterways ponds in Melba. Credit: Kat McGilp

## B2.1.4 Complaints

**Table 1: Summary of complaints for 2021–22**

Issues status	Number	Topic and Status
Complaints continuing from 2020–21	2021-003	<b>EPA response to excessive smoke from woodfire heater – Closed</b>  This complaint was received in December 2020. A full investigation was conducted and the final complaint report distributed to stakeholders in October 2021.
Formal Complaints received in 2021–22	2022-001	<b>Culling of kangaroos on ACT Government land – Closed</b>  The Commissioner reviewed extensive information held by OCSE and available online in relation to this matter. The complaint was closed following this preliminary review with a full investigation deemed unwarranted.



Sunrise over Canberra. Credit: Matt Sherren

## 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**

<b>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.</b>					
	<b>2021-22 Targets</b>	<b>2021-22 Result</b>	<b>% Variance</b>	<b>Explanation of Material Variances (+/- 5%)</b>	
<b>Total Cost (\$'000)<sup>1</sup></b>	\$1,774	\$1,235	(30%)	During the year there was an underspend in projects such as the State of the Lakes Report and State of the Environment Report primarily due to the external impacts of Covid-19 and the ability to conduct field work.	
<b>Payments for Expenses on Behalf of the Territory (\$'000)<sup>1</sup></b>	\$1,765	\$1,198	(32%)	Payments on behalf of the territory are recognised when cash is required. This variance includes the underspends in areas mentioned above.	
<b>Accountability Indicator</b>					<b>Minister</b>
<b>a.</b> Report on the uptake of recommendations on the ACT State of the Environment and special reports as part of the annual report	Oct-21	Dec-21	-100%	Due to the impacts of the public health emergency related to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Chief Minister approved the extension of the due date for Annual Reports from October 2021 to December 2021.	Vassarotti
<b>b.</b> Undertake Ministerial initiated investigations in accordance with the Minister's direction	100%	50%	-50%	Due to the extended lockdown, remote learning obligations and COVID disruptions, an extension was required to deliver the State of the Lakes Report.	Vassarotti
<b>c.</b> Undertake Commissioner initiated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%	0%	There have been no Commissioner-initiated investigations between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022.	Vassarotti
<b>d.</b> Undertake complaints generated investigations in accordance with the Terms of Reference	100%	100%	0%	N/A	Vassarotti
<b>e.</b> Report on complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory agency as part of the annual report	Oct-21	Dec-21	-100 %	Due to the impacts of the public health emergency related to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Chief Minister approved the extension of the due date for Annual Reports from October 2021 to December 2021.	Vassarotti

See notes on following page.

Notes:

The above Statement of Performance should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

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 2022 actual against the June 2022 Target.

1 Total cost (\$1,774 million) and payments for expenses on behalf of the Territory (\$1,765 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.



Australian National Botanic Gardens. Credit: Laurie Wasson

## **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 2021–22:

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a sustained impact in Canberra, Australia and more broadly
- Climate change remains a critical environmental challenge faced by the ACT on multiple timescales, underpinning many of the other environmental and sustainability issues.
- The effects of the bushfires in 2019–20 have wrought long-term environmental impacts in the ACT and the full extent of these remain unclear.

### **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 2021 and 30 June 2022 against 32 recommendations from the 2019 State of the Environment Report (s19 of the Act)
2. an update on directorate actions taken between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022 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.





Marbled gecko (*Christinus marmoratus*). Credit: Damien Esquerré

**Table 3: Summary of all Recommendations**

Minister Directed Investigation or State of the Environment Report	Year	Recommendations Open in OCSE Annual Report 2021–22
State of the Environment 2019	2019	32
Heroic and the Dammed: Lower Cotter Catchment Restoration Evaluation	2018	8
Independent Audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment (2018)	2018	10
Independent Audit of the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment	2017	6
Implementation Status Report: review of the ACT's climate change policy (2017)	2017	4

### Evaluation of directorate responses

The Commissioner provided comments on the directorate's response to each recommendation, and 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'. 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 2022–23 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 2021–22 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 Directorates:

EPSDD

#### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- No changes or updates, recommendation ongoing.

#### Commissioner's response

**Unsatisfactory – Open:** Provide evidence of additional progress.

## 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
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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- EPSDD has developed the Data Strategy, Data Strategy Implementation Plan and the Data Governance Working Group was initiated in early 2022. The ACT WoG Data Governance Framework 2021 have been developed.
- An EPSDD Data Audit was completed, collecting statistics on types of data, gaps and issues and it uncovered more than 800 datasets.

- In support of the ACT Open Data Policy, we are releasing more datasets on Actmapi, ACT Geospatial Catalogue and Data.act.gov.au.
- The ACT Geospatial Ecosystem is nearing readiness. It will enable centralised storage, data cataloguing and streamlined information and knowledge sharing of spatial data, including to the public.

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- EPSDD Lead agency
- TCCS conducted a series of Executive sustainability meetings in February and March 2022 to discuss opportunities to expand, capture and communicate sustainability in TCCS.

## Health response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Nil response

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The ACT Data Analytics Centre (Digital, Data and Technology Solutions), through the Data Reform Group, is supporting all directorates to implement the ACT Data Governance and Management Framework (Framework). The Framework supports improved data management practices, which includes the management of data assets underpinned by fit-for-purpose data management architecture. The ACT Data Analytics Centre is also working directly with EPSDD to support the development of its Data Strategy and data management capability, and provides guidance through participation on EPSDD's Geospatial Ecosystem Steering Committee.

- The public facing ACT Wellbeing Framework data dashboard continues to provide an opportunity for cross directorate and community analysis of progress towards having a climate resilient environment and community, access to and connection with nature and a healthy and resilient ACT natural environment.

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

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

**TCCS: Insufficient evidence – Open:** More information required to determine progress on this recommendation.

## 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.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD	TCCS	HEALTH	CMTEDD
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## EPSDD response

### 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	<b>Fully implemented or completed</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>

#### Comments on status

- No changes or updates, recommendation ongoing.

## TCCS response

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

<b>Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase</b>	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- TCCS conducted a series of Executive sustainability meetings in February to March 2022 to discuss opportunities to expand, capture and communicate sustainability in TCCS.

## Health response

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

<b>Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase</b>	Commenced programs and activities required	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- The implementation of the *Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025* continues to utilize a cross government approach to health and wellbeing, including the consideration of the impact of environmental factors.

## CMTEDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Wellbeing Impact Assessments (WIAs), which support early consideration in policy and program development of linkages and impacts across the Wellbeing Framework domains, are now required for all Cabinet submissions (from 1 January 2022) following legislative changes to the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*. WIAs are also required for proposals submitted in the annual Budget process.
- This change aligns with the 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'.

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

**EPSDD, Health: Satisfactory – Closed.**

**TCCS: Insufficient evidence – Open:** More information required to determine progress on this recommendation.

## 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 Directorates:

EPSDD

#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- EPSDD continues to partner with NSW Government stakeholders including ACT Parks and Conservation service who are part of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee who assist with management of alpine areas.
- ACT NRM is also a member of NRM region Australia which provides a coordinated approach to natural resource management issues related to the NLP2 commonwealth program.
- Water trading with NSW is still in the negotiation phase. Cross border issues are currently focusing on regional water supply and security (focus on Yass Valley) and major transport corridors.

#### Commissioner's response 2022

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



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## 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.**

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### 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

## EPSDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

#### Comments on status

- Endorsed strategic assessment requirements for monitoring and auditing are published together with other information on the EPSDD website.
- The EPSDD Offsets Register and Environmental Offsets Website host annual compliance reports, approvals decision links, offset management plans, annual ecological monitoring reports and other additional information on MNES.
- The layout and content of the register and website were updated in 2021 including a monitoring and research page. As research and monitoring reports become available this page will host additional information to what is published on the register. Updates are ongoing to ensure all outstanding reports are published online. Content related to offsets is posted on ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) social media platforms.
- EPSDD undertakes extensive internal and external consultation on offsets plans and programs (e.g. Budjan Galindji Nature Reserve Landscape Plan).

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Continue reporting progress in the following reporting year. Further information on community engagement and the completeness of the public register is required.

## 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 Directorates:

EPSDD

#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

#### 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 the new biosecurity bill which is currently with Cabinet.
- Biosecurity and Rural Services staff are 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 is an associate member of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, 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.
- EHW is currently working with the NSW Department of Primary Industry to update the MOU for cross-border assistance on biosecurity issues.

#### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Closed.**

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## 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.

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### 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*.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

## EPSDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- A Ngunnawal position has been created in the Water Policy and Planning team to develop a number of initiatives for water programs. Ongoing discussions are occurring between the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) and PCS Fire Forest and Roads on the development of a Ngunnawal cool/cultural burning program. EPSDD continues to engage with the committee to explore the potential for a unified framework for cultural indicators based on agreed outcomes from the water programs and cool/cultural burning programs.
- The ACT Heritage grant has a specific Aboriginal heritage category, this category is open to both Ngunnawal and other ACT First Nations people.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** In the following reporting year please provide further evidence needed about Heritage grants, with only two out of the 60 heritage grants awarded since 2019 relating to Indigenous culture. The current approach does not meet the intent of the recommendation, which is to facilitate Indigenous peoples' access to funding for cultural heritage projects.

## 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.

#### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD	TCCS	HEALTH	CMTEDD (EPA)
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#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable

#### Comments on status

- In 2021–22, the ACT Government has developed online content and tools that encourage community participation in climate action. A key initiative is the launch of the Everyday Climate Choices website. This consolidates and streamlines information previously provided across several ACT Government platforms. It presents information that is user-centred to support and empower the ACT community to take steps towards achieving our goal of net zero emissions by 2045.
- 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 response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- CMTEDD lead agency
- Comms Branch confirmed that the Neighbourhood Democracy Pilot is not a TCCS project – it sits with CMTEDD. Funding has been approved through the CMTEDD business case process to engage a consultant, they expect to go to market soon.

## Health response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- ACT Health's Preventive and Population Health branch continues to use deliberative democracy and co-design in the planning and implementation of many of its community-based initiatives to facilitate consideration of climate change impacts and adaptations on health and wellbeing.

## CMTEDD (EPA) response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- During 2021-2022, CMTEDD's digital research and insights team conducted a survey of 1,892 Canberrans to understand current behaviours, perspectives and community views in relation to household energy use. Specifically, the research will be used to help the ACT Government develop a pathway to transition from gas to electricity usage across the ACT as part of the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025.
- ESPDD and/or the Climate team have run the following YourSay Conversations in the past year and will report directly on these:
  - Single Use Plastics – Phase 2
  - Urban Tree Reform (multi projects/conversations)
  - Trees in the ACT
  - Urban Forrest Bill
  - Where should we plant trees (ongoing project)
  - Action Plan to prevent the loss of mature native trees
  - Variation 369: Living Infrastructure

## Commissioner's response 2022

**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
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## EPSDD response

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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- No changes or updates, recommendation ongoing.

## TCCS response

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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### 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 2022

**Insufficient evidence – Open:** More information required to determine progress on this recommendation.

## 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 response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- During 2021–22, EPSDD has further enhanced its collaborative arrangements with CSIRO, ANU and the University of Canberra to progress research activities and policy development focused on managing the ACT and surrounding environment for further changes due to climate change (e.g. ACT Climate Adaptation for the Environment symposium). Additional funding will be provided from 2022–23 FY via the Connecting People, Connecting Nature initiative which will focus on enhancing nature within the urban areas.

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency.
- TCCS will continue to collaborate with EPSDD to inform urban forest planting.
- TCCS has contributed to the initiatives practically, in particular providing data/information that contributes to the environmental recommendations.

### Commissioner's response 2022

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

**TCCS: Insufficient evidence – Open:** TCCS should acknowledge their contributions to this recommendation relating to urban parks and green areas. Please provide further information to determine progress on this recommendation.

## 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
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#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- As part of the 2021–22 budget process, the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to put a dollar value on climate inaction by implementing a ‘social cost of carbon’.
- A Social Cost of Carbon Fund has been established in 2021–22. The Fund will support Government agencies to undertake emissions reduction projects, such as the replacement of gas heating systems and a transition of Government fleet to zero emissions vehicles. Funding for 2021–22 was calculated at \$20 per tonne of emissions from Government sources in 2020–21, providing \$1.34m in funding, which has been allocated to three projects.

#### TCCS response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- EPSDD lead agency.
- TCCS will continue to 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.

## Health response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- As the key branch responsible for encouraging healthy food environments within the community, the Preventive and Population Health Branch continues to incorporate climate change messaging such as the impacts of food miles, food waste and reducing carbon emissions into health promotion initiatives.

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Nil input – please refer to EPSDD response.

## Education response

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

<b>Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase</b>	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
<b>Applicable</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- The Education Directorate continues to engage with internal directorate staff and the school community on actions to reduce emissions. The Education Directorate has established a five-year emission reduction target of 33 percent.
- Education has secured funding in 2021–22 through a Social Cost of Carbon grant program administered through EPSDD to support a transition from a gas heating system to zero emissions heating system at Fadden Primary School.
- It is expected that Principals and school staff will consult with the school community to promote the ongoing implementation of social cost of carbon initiatives.

## JACS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- EPSDD is the custodian of policy under the ACT Climate Change Strategy, including the development of social cost of carbon policy. JACS supports the development of a social cost of carbon and stands ready to participate in providing feedback as a proposal is developed by EPSDD.

## CSD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Nil response

## Commissioner's response 2022

**CMTEDD, CSD, EDUCATION, HEALTH and JACS: Satisfactory – Closed.**

**EPSDD and TCCS: Insufficient evidence – Open:** Need to provide evidence on the community consultation undertaken to address this recommendation.

## 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
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**EPSDD response**

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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- Across the ACT 54,000 trees will be planted by 2024 to enhance our urban forest. In line with targets set out in Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan, by 2045 we aim to have 30% of our urban environment covered by a tree canopy, or tree canopy equivalents such as green roofs, shrub beds, wetlands or rain gardens.

**TCCS response**

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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- The *Urban Forest Strategy 2021–2045* has been released and TCCS is contributing the implementation of the Strategy.
- 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 is continuing with the review of the *Tree Protection Act 2005*. The Urban Forest Bill 2022 will repeal and replace the *Tree Protection Act 2005*, which only applied to leased land, to improve tree protection on both public and private land and encourage the shared care of Canberra's trees. Key changes in the Bill are aimed at securing the Government's commitment of a 30 percent tree canopy cover or equivalent by 2045.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Continue reporting progress in 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
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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

### Comments on status

- The Big Canberra Battery project is soon to undertake two procurements to install batteries at a range of Government sites including schools and depots.
- The Sustainable Household Scheme offers zero-interest loans to help households with the upfront costs of multiple products including household battery storage. Over 900 systems have been installed as part of the program.
- The Next Generation Energy Storage Program has provided rebates for over 3000 batteries, mostly installed at households, and the panel of approved retailers has increased from 14 to 25.

## TCCS response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

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

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Initiatives include the Sustainable Household Scheme, the Big Canberra Battery project and the Next Generation Energy Storage Program which all support the uptake of distributed energy resources. The Sustainable Household Scheme and NextGen programs have supported the installation of more than 1000 household batteries over the last 12 months. The Big Canberra Battery will release an RFP for batteries at 14 government sites in July 2022, as well as proceeding to the second stage of a large scale (250MW) storage procurement. Planning for neighbourhood scale batteries is progressing.
- A new Distributed Energy Resources Laboratory opened at the Australian National University in July 2021, cementing Canberra's position as the national leader in renewable energy innovation and collaboration.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Closed.**



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## Recommendation 15: Waste

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

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### 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

TCCS

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- TCCS is developing a circular economy strategy. Work is continuing on creating 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.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**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.

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#### **Responsible Directorates:**

TCCS

## TCCS response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Minimum passing distance signage continues to be rolled out by Roads ACT at specific sites where there is high cycling traffic, and in areas of lower compliance rates with passing distance laws.
- Roads ACT is working with Infrastructure Delivery to progress a raft of intelligent transport system projects with the objective of minimising travel delays and providing better information to the travelling public to encourage the use of public transport.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** In following reporting year, please report on measures to improve cycling participation amongst women and girls.

## 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.

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

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#### **Responsible Directorates:**

**TCCS**

## TCCS response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

The ACT Government is currently exploring opportunities to run a car-free day event in the city centre later in 2022. The event would provide a platform to encourage people to consider non-car-based transport, noting that World Car Free Day is celebrated on 22 September.

A number of ACT Government grants are available to the community to design and deliver initiatives that showcase active travel and encourage uptake. Outcomes include:

- Health Promotion – Mount Rogers Primary School Bike Skills Initiative
- Healthy Canberra – The Bike Library at Margaret Hendry School (as part of the Community Health Activation Network program)
- Sport and Recreation – Girls on bikes
- Community Zero Emissions – Make the Move workplace travel planning
- Road Safety Fund – Crash trends and patterns, Evaluating and monitoring bicycle passing distances and Comparing e-scooter safety in the ACT and other jurisdictions
- Events and Tourism – Rotary Aussie Peace Walk, Big Canberra Bike Ride, Rocky Trail Mountain Bike ACT Event Series
- City and placemaking grants – Kinetic pedal-powered sculptures, Pedal-powered cinema, Pop-up parklets

## Commissioner's response 2022

**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 Directorates:

TCCS

### TCCS response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Work continues on implementing the zero emission transition plan for Transport Canberra including: workforce engagement and training in conjunction with CIT; the leasing of 12 battery electric buses and the second stage of procurement of a further 90 battery electric buses to commence in July 2022; energy, power and infrastructure requirements to house and charge the battery electric buses; and funding options with a business case being considered by Government.
- Detailed architectural and electrical designs for Woden bus depot are being finalised. Replacement of 34 Renault buses with lower emission leased buses is underway with contract arrangements finalised – the first of these are expected to be delivered in July 2022.

### Commissioner's response 2022

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



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## Recommendation 19: Transport

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

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### 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

TCCS

### TCCS response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Transport Canberra is furthering investigations to improve customer information and passenger services with the active procurement of a new next generation ticketing solution. It is expected that the new solution will provide improved analytics and electronic payment options, in addition to increased electronic accessibility to information for customers. This is in addition to continuing to develop a Public Transport customer strategy, as well as data analytics and surveys to better understand the TC Customer.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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
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#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- The Wood Heater Replacement Program provides financial incentives to encourage the removal of wood heaters from Canberra homes. Approximately 1255 wood heaters have been replaced as part of this program.
- EPSDD will investigate and present a paper to Government in November 2022 outlining options for a small trial, including costs and timing. Options will include a way to reduce the upfront costs for low-income households, including those in rental accommodation (including public and community housing) through adjustments to current and/or incoming programs.

#### CMTEDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- No additional input from last year, noting that AC is not the lead for this recommendation. This is for EPSDD to respond to as they are the lead agency.

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## Commissioner's response 2022

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**EPSDD: Unatisfactory – Open:** Please provide in the following reporting year:

- evidence of building on existing incentives, including details of the 'small trial' proposed in reference to the November paper will be trialling.
- evidence of the overall effectiveness of this approach in reducing wood fire heater use in the ACT (for example, how does the number of removed woodfire heaters compare with the number of new woodfire heaters installed over the same period?).
- information about how access to the scheme can be improved for the target audience, for example considering factors such as reducing the administrative and time burden of completing the application process, assisting potential applicants for whom language or education may be a barrier to participation, assisting with ongoing power bill subsidies for those who are not able to afford the ongoing electricity costs of heating their homes once their wood heater is removed, and other potential barriers to access.

**CMTEDD: Satisfactory – Closed.**

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## Recommendation 21: Air

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

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### 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 (NO<sub>2</sub>);
  - photochemical oxidants as ozone (O<sub>3</sub>); and
  - particulate matter (particles less than 10 microns in diameter – PM<sub>10</sub> and particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter – PM<sub>2.5</sub>).
- Due to a lack of heavy industry, the ACT has never monitored sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) 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 PM2.5). 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.

#### Responsible Directorates:

HEALTH	CMTEDD
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### Health response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is investigating the feasibility, utility, reliability and potential ongoing costs of a low-cost air quality sensors network (see action 3.2 under the First Action Plan of the *Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy 2021–2025*). The trial of several models of low-cost air quality sensors which commenced in 2021 is scheduled to end in mid-2022. ACTHD has undertaken preliminary analysis of the data in consultation with suppliers. A full report of the trial, assessing equipment performance and data quality, is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- No additional input from last year, noting that AC is not the lead for this recommendation. This is for Health to respond.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**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 response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- ACTHD continues to engage with the Centre for Air Pollution (CAR) in collaboration with the Environment Protection Authority and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Recent activities have concerned provision of air quality data and collaboration with CAR to determine population exposure to fine particulate matter pollution.

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- No additional input from last year, noting that AC is not the lead for this recommendation. The response to this recommendation should be by Health with input from EPSDD.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Please provide evidence on progress toward 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
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## EPSDD response

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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

## Comments on status

- The Interjurisdictional Environmental-Economic Accounting Steering Committee continues to work on 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 in EPSDD continue to engage with these forums.
- EPSDD continues to work with the Commonwealth to develop 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 response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### 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 2022

**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 Directorates:**

EPSDD
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**EPSDD response**

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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- The draft Action Plan to Prevent the Loss of Mature Native Trees in the Act was released for public comment on 15 March 2022 and closed on 27 May. A report is being prepared that details the responses received. It's anticipated that the final version of the Action Plan will be released in late 2022.

**Commissioner's response 2022**

**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 Directorates:

EPSDD

### EPSDD response

#### 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	<b>Fully implemented or completed</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>

### Comments on status

- EPSDD publicises milestones, documents, events, consultations and other activity around biodiversity and the environment, including on [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://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.
- The Conversation Effectiveness Management Program (CEMP) is transforming its communication approach from large PDF documents to an interactive online hub. This is launching in late July/August 2022 with the release of the first ecosystem in this way the ACT aquatic and riparian ecosystem assessment.

### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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# Recommendation 27

This was addressed in the *State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report*, which was completed by OCSE in May 2022.

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# 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.**

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## 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.

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**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD	HEALTH	TCCS	CMTEDD
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## EPSDD response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### 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 work is on-going.
- The Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch program produces an annual Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP) Report. This is based on their ~2000 annual records of water quality, stream and riparian vegetation health. Data on recreational water quality (faecal indicator bacteria, FIB) is published by ACT Health on a weekly basis to the ACT Government open data portal, [www.data.act.gov.au](http://www.data.act.gov.au). The proposal to establish the Office for Water identified several new initiatives to strengthen water management arrangements within the ACT, including the development of a Water Information Hub.
- Responsibility for water quality monitoring data is held across multiple government agencies. The Office for Water will work with the relevant agencies to scope a contemporary platform for providing access to water quality information. Implementation of the Water Information Hub will be subject to data sharing agreements and a future business case.

## Health response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Nil response

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- ACT Health and EPSDD lead this item.
- TCCS has been liaising with EPSDD water policy on processes to enable easier sharing of weekly water quality monitoring data.
- TCCS recurrent funding for Healthy waterway sites is contributing toward monitoring for asset water quality improvement performance (four sites).

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- No additional input from last year, noting that AC is not the lead for this recommendation. The response to this recommendation should be led by EPSDD with input from Health and TCCS.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Provide further evidence on the progress toward the production of an annual recreational water quality report that includes the considerations outlined in the recommendation.

## 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.**

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**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'.

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**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP) is an overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework for the ACT. The program reports on the condition of our natural ecosystems to support adaptive management. The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Assessment forms one component of the CEMP framework and includes reporting on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health. An overview of the condition monitoring framework is provided at [www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/conservation-research/conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/conservation-research/conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program). The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Assessment report is in preparation and should be completed in the next three months.

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**Commissioner's response 2022**

**Unatisfactory – Open:** More evidence required on the development of a government reporting framework and a public reporting program, for both urban and conservation areas.

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## 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.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The Implementation Plan for the *Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018* was completed in 2019.
- Implementation plans for the *Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan 2019* and *Googong Foreshores Land and Conservation Management Plan 2020* are being developed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.
- Commitments for the management of matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) under the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan have their own operational/implementation plans that are currently being updated in line with recommendations from the Commonwealth. These operational plans for each patch have been in place since 2019. They are currently being reviewed and this will likely be finished by the end of Q4 2022.

### Commissioner's response 2022

**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 response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The review on Non-potable water was finalised by ACT Treasury in December 2021.
- EPSDD is now investigating changes to non-potable water pricing and is considering opportunities to incentivise to increased adoption of alternative, non-potable water supply options.
- EPSDD is working with the Australian Government to finalise business planning for the water efficiency project. The project aims to support water conservation within the Territory. This project is the culmination of extensive investigations that have been conducted by the Territory, under the Australian Governments Murray-Darling Basin water reforms.

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- 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 2022

**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
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## EPSDD response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- During 2021–22, EPSDD conducted a review of water governance arrangements within the ACT. In response to the review, EPSDD will be establishing the Office for Water that will facilitate reforms to improve water policy implementation and deliver new initiatives including to develop an integrated water plan and refresh of the ACT Water Strategy.
- EPSDD is working with the Australian Government to finalise business planning for the water efficiency project. The project aims to support water conservation within the Territory. This project is the culmination of extensive investigations that have been conducted by the Territory, under the Australian Governments Murray–Darling Basin water reforms.

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- TCCS has worked with EPSDD to successfully hand over current healthy waterway assets.
- TCCS is collaborating with EPSDD on the ongoing maintenance and operations of existing Healthy waterway assets. A monthly healthy waterways working group has been established.
- TCCS continues to work 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 continues to sit on the cross-directorate Stormwater and WSUD asset steering committee to help improve the design, construction and handover processes for these type of assets.

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## Recommendation 33: Water

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

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### 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 ACTFlood 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Flood mapping for the ACT is available via ACTMAPi and will be updated as new studies associated with development are undertaken, for example, a major flood study is about to be undertaken for the Sullivans Creek.
- Work is underway to embed good floodplain management practices into the pending update to the Territory Plan, which is the most strategically important document for ensuring flood risks are properly considered in estate and other developments. Principles for flood management and being considered in the context of broader benefits of riparian corridors.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## Recommendation 34: Fire

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

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### 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable

### Comments on status

- The 2019–2023 RFMP was revised following the Orroral Valley Fire and considered tolerable fire intervals in relation to placement and timing of proposed fuel mitigation treatments. This work was informed by ecological and scientific advice. Preparation work is underway for the next review which will also consider tolerable fire intervals.
- The Regional Fire Management Plan has been published and is currently on the EPSDD website. The team is working with ACTMapi to understand how it can be integrated onto their platform.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## Recommendation 35: Fire

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

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### 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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable

### Comments on status

- Annual reporting on the 2021–22 *Bushfire Operations Plan* (BOP) has been finalised in July 2022. This report describes and gives detail 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 2021–22.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Insufficient evidence – Open:** More evidence required on the development of an evaluation and a public reporting program for ecological and cultural burning. Annual reporting on the area burnt does not address the outcomes of the burns as specified in the recommendation.

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# 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 six recommendations from this investigation that remained open for the 2021–22 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 Directorates:

EPSDD

#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- For the last four annual reporting years, the prescribed timeframes for the annual reports were met, except the year the annual report was prepared in conjunction with the *Plan Review Report*. The *Plan Review Report* (2013–18) was prepared in conjunction with the *Annual Report 2017–18* to allow for the findings to be incorporated into the Plan review. The next plan review and annual report are currently being prepared.

#### Commissioner's response 2022

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



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## Recommendation 3

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

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**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.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### 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 collected and recorded by PCS. PCS is currently in the process of making this data publicly accessible through a series of annual reports. PCS 2021 reports were published in August 2021, and PCS 2022 reporting is due to be published in August 2022.
- Relevant documentation for each commitment in the GSA is recorded in EPSDD's record keeping program, enabling compliance tracking of each commitment.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** please provide evidence of improvements, rather than the standard approach, to collection of evidence.

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

**Commissioner's comment**

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

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**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- Refer to Comments on Recommendation 5 regarding the EPSDD Offsets **Register** and Environmental Offsets **Website**
- The 2018–19 and 2019–20 annual Offsets monitoring reports were published in the last calendar quarter of 2021. An ecological baselines report, incorporating data from 2018–22, will be published by PCS at the end of 2022. This report is in lieu of annual reports for the 2020–21 and 2021–22 monitoring periods.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Continue to ensure latest monitoring reports are accessible on the noted website and fill gaps in information presented on the Offsets Register.

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## Recommendation 5

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

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

Commitment 4: provide further evidence on the specific updates to the Land Management Agreements to demonstrate they incorporate and facilitate management activities consistent with meeting objectives of the relevant offset management plan.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- In recognition of the weakness identified with Land Management Agreements, EPSDD have made the policy decision not to continue with this mechanism for managing offset land. The lease over the land identified as an offset at Kenny was withdrawn prior to offset establishment and formal processes for land management agreement withdrawal are being developed for the entire offsets estate

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open for Commitment 4:** provide further evidence on the alternative mechanism being used for management of the offset sites that was previously covered by Land Management Agreements.

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## Recommendation 6

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

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Asset protection or buffer zones in the Estate Development Plans are the responsibility of proponents. Proponents are required to consult and work with Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) as PCS is the ACT Government agency that manage these areas. In many cases the proponent is the ACT Government (Suburban Land Agency). The Impact Assessment Team from the Environment, Planning and Sustainability Development Directorate has been working closely with the agencies to establish these asset protection or buffer zones and ensure the commitments of the Plan are met.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- PCS adaptively manages the *Gungahlin Strategic Assessment (GSA)*, through the *ACT Environmental Offsets Adaptive Management Strategy 2020–30 (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 and business case planning. This data supports planning for ongoing reserve management, allows the evaluation of effectiveness of management actions and reserve condition and highlights key risks to program implementation. PCS utilizes spatial tools to plan restoration actions as part of the adaptive management cycle, with the ability to track progress towards commitments under the GSA.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Provide evidence that the *ACT Environmental Offsets Adaptive Management Strategy 2020–30* is available on the website.

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# 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 ten recommendations from this investigation that remained open for the 2021–22 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 specific evidence of funding for MNES within the assessment area.

**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD
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**EPSDD response**

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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- Parks and Conservator Service (PCS) has been given ongoing resourcing and funding for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of MNES within the strategic assessment area. For example, in the 2018–19 ACT Budget \$3.182m was allocated over four years for the capital works project establishing the Molonglo River Reserve to be delivered by PCS. In the 2019–20 ACT Budget \$7.165m was allocated over four years for the capital works project Remediating the former Molonglo sewerage

treatment facility to be delivered by PCS. In 2020–21, a total recurrent budget of 0.862m was allocated for implementing the commitments and actions in the NES Plan through three initiatives, Molonglo Riverside Park, Molonglo Valley–Implementation of NES Plan–Stage 2, Caring for our Environment–Establishing the Molonglo River Reserve–Stage 3.

### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Continue to provide specific evidence of ongoing 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 Directorates:

EPSDD

### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The majority of the reporting timelines outlined in the Plan have been met. On the occasion, due to staff resource change, an extension on various reporting commitments have been sought from and agreed by the Commonwealth.

### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Refer to Comments on Recommendation 5 regarding the EPSDD Offsets **Register** and Environmental Offsets **Website**
- The 2018–19 and 2019–20 annual Offsets monitoring reports were published in the last calendar quarter of 2021. An ecological baselines report, incorporating data from 2018–22, will be published at the end of 2022. This report is in lieu of annual reports for the 2020–21 and 2021–22 monitoring periods.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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# 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

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

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

## EPSDD response

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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Parks and Conservation Service has been continually implementing adaptive management methods which is considered to best anticipate and respond to the changing climate. These include taking appropriate steps with evidence-based decision making and planning for climate change resilience for on-ground activities so to protect threatened species and endangered ecological communities in and near conservation areas.

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

Please provide evidence to demonstrate the actions taken to reduce the urban edge effect on the Molonglo River Corridor.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable

### Comments on status

- Urban Edge Effect has been and is a consideration during the design and planning of new Estate Development Plans. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has been actively working with proponents and PCS to ensure that the physical development of any new buffer zones are delivered prior to any urban development activities being undertaken.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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.

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### 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, in particular on Action 7 regarding the Kama Nature Reserve Buffer.

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#### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable

#### Comments on status

- Key Risks and Observations from the 2018 Audit have been made known to line areas within PCS and ACT Government agency (Suburban Land Agency) that have development responsibilities within the Molonglo Valley.
- Observations:
  - Action 2 and 7: 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 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.

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#### Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Provide information as to why the buffer to Kama Nature Reserve has not yet been finalised, while development in the adjacent suburb of Whitlam has commenced.

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## Recommendation 9

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

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

Action 17: Please 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: Provide evidence of annual monitoring according to the Monitoring Procedures Manual.

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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	<b>Fully implemented or completed</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>

### Comments on status

- The four Actions identified as undetermined in the 2018 Audit were in relation to patches I, L, M and P. Since then, operational management plans have been developed for these areas against Action 16 and a Monitoring Procedures Manual for Molonglo was prepared by EPSDD in 2013. Annual monitoring the condition of these areas have been undertaken and reported in the annual reports. Annual monitoring outcomes/recommendations are incorporated into the land management as part of the adaptive management strategy for the Molonglo.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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**Government response: AGREED**

**Commissioner's comment**

Please provide specific examples of how adaptive management is occurring in the implementation of the commitments of the NES Plan.

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**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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	<b>Fully implemented or completed</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>

**Comments on status**

- Review on the adaptive management principles are currently under way and will be used to inform future management of these areas. PCS undertakes annual ecological monitoring of MNES values to evaluate and improve on management actions. The monitoring results are scrutinised and incorporated into the implementation of management actions in accordance with the adaptive management principles. Updating and developing annual ops plans provides further feedback on management effectiveness.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The Remediation of the former Coppins Crossing sewerage treatment facility and the establishment of the first major Special Purpose Reserve precinct in the reserve (Namarag), showcased the commitment to engage with community early and throughout the design and construction process. This included extensive use of Ngunnawal language, art, storytelling and native planting across Namarag. Designated cultural precincts such as the Bugang Events Terrace, Nature Play Space and Bushtucker Terraces were developed with the Ngunnawal community and local artists. This collaboration with the Ngunnawal community has strengthened their connection to Country and facilitated the ongoing land management of the site including protection of MNES values within the Molonglo Valley.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Please continue to provide specific examples of how indigenous approaches to land management for MNES protection in the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area are being implemented.

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## Recommendation 12

It is recommended that the ACT Government ensures that all the research undertaken as a function of the Molonglo 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

**Commissioner's comment**

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

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**Responsible Directorates:**

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

**Comments on status**

- All research or reports that are related to the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment and the NES Plan have been made publicly available. These include dedicated webpages for the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment on both EPSDD's official website and Parks and Conservation website.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

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

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

## Government's Response and Directorate updates

This Section provides a final update on the implementation status of the eight recommendations from this investigation that remained open for the 2021–22 reporting year.

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### Recommendation 1.1

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

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**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.

Provide evidence that data collected is presented and analysed in accordance with the Lower Cotter Catchment Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

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#### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD



## EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Data relevant to the condition of the Lower Cotter Catchment is monitored and reported through the Government's overarching Conservation Effectiveness and Monitoring Program.
- The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Assessment and Monitoring Plan report contains information about key environmental indicators. The report is currently in draft and is scheduled to be released later this year.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – 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.



Holder Wetlands. Credit: Miranda Gardner

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## Recommendation 1.2

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

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**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.

Provide information about which water quality data are captured, and about the progress and functionality of the live dashboard.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- ACT Government manages a wide range of data and is continuously improving in data management practices. Within the Data Lake and open data portal, streamflow, rainfall and water quality data acquired by ACT Government is made public via the Open Data portal. Spatial information is managed within AGOL.
- The proposal to establish the Office for Water identified several new initiatives to strengthen water management arrangements within the ACT, including the development of a Water Information Hub.
- Responsibility for water quality monitoring data is held across multiple government agencies. The Office for Water will work with the relevant agencies to scope a contemporary platform for providing access to water quality information.

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### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Existing platforms do not appear to facilitate public access to clear information specifically about the Lower Cotter Catchment. Continue to provide information about progress made against this recommendation by the Office for Water.

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## Recommendation 1.3

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

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**Government response: AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

### Commissioner's comment

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

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- In the lead-up to the *ACT Budget 2022–23* the ACT Government announced the establishment of the Office for Water. This identified several new initiatives to strengthen water management arrangements, including the development of a Water Information Hub.
- Implementation of the Water Information Hub will be subject to data sharing agreements and a future business case. Please refer to our Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program, and responses to Recommendation 2.

---

### Commissioner's response 2022

**Satisfactory – Open:** Continue to provide information about what progress has been made to improve consistency and coordination of monitoring, mapping and modelling through the Office for Water. Note that progress against this action appears to have been re-set compared with previous agency responses.

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

Provide details of how funding and resources have been allocated to meet both operational and strategic management of the LCC.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Internal allocation of resources to PCS business units is underway as part of the 2022–23 budget process for the Environment, Heritage and Water Division.

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### Commissioner response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** no evidence of resources allocated to date.

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## 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

Provide details of how funding and resources have been allocated for monitoring and evaluation implementation for the LCC.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP) incorporates data collection and monitoring of some ecological values that overlap with the LCC. The program reports on the condition of our natural ecosystems to support adaptive management. The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Assessment forms one component of the CEMP framework and includes reporting on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health. An overview of the condition monitoring framework is provided at [www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/conservation-research/conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/conservation-research/conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program). The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Assessment report is in preparation and should be completed in the next three months. The program is ongoing and is funded through the conservation research budget and has 2.5 FTE and involves extensive collaboration within the environment divisions and external stakeholders such as Icon Water.

### Commissioner's Comments 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Further evidence towards progress of recommendation required from PCS, Water Policy and the Environment Protection Authority.

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED**

### Commissioner's comment

Provide details of progress on the development of the Code of Potable Water Catchment Management and the Code of Sustainable Land Management Practices.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

#### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Implementation of these recommendations has been delayed. A project scope and delivery timeframes are under active consideration.

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### Commissioner's comment 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Latest evidence demonstrates that progress against this recommendation appears to have gone backwards compared with previous reporting year. Please provide evidence of progress.

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## 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.

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**Government response: AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

### Commissioner's comment

Dependent on Recommendation 3.1 above.

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### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

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### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- As per the update for Recommendation 3.1, progression of a number of outstanding recommendations are being considered.

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### Commissioner's comment 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** No progress compared with last year's agency response.

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## Recommendation 5.1

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

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**Government response: AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

### Commissioner's comment

Provide commentary on whether the amendments to the Litter Act have improved the ability of officers to remove abandoned vehicles in practice.

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### Responsible Directorates:

TCCS

### TCCS response

#### 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	<b>Fully implemented or completed</b>
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>

### Comments on status

Response to Commissioners comment:

- In the ACT, abandoned motor vehicles (ABV) are regulated and managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), Licensing and Compliance, City Rangers. Significant regulatory work has also been undertaken in the past two years in preventing vehicles being abandoned. In the 2020–21 financial year, Licensing and Compliance received 2384 reports of suspected abandoned vehicles. Subsequent investigations resulted in 221 of these vehicles being declared abandoned, with the remainder resolved through identification and engagement with the owner of the vehicle. This equates to a 53% reduction in declared and impounded abandoned motor vehicles within two years.
- The *ACT Litter Act 2004* was amended to give authorised people and police officers better power to respond to and manage ABV. Included in the legislative amendments was the power for authorised people to remove vehicles at public places where a person fails to comply with a Removal Direction, or where an authorised person reasonably believes that the vehicle is abandoned. Reasonable grounds include burnt out wrecks, deteriorating body, broken windows, or missing number plates.



- Further work is currently underway to privatise the towing, management and disposal of abandoned vehicles in the territory. Once implemented this process will expedite the removal of abandoned vehicles from public land, reducing their amenity impact and the risk they pose.
- All activities associated with these reforms are being sourced from existing Government and Policing resources, as part of BAU activity.
- Efficiencies are expected with officers not needing to duplicate response and through the privatization of the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles.

## Commissioner's comments 2022

**Satisfactory – Closed.**



Tulum, Mexico. Credit: Mark Jekabsons

# 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 four recommendations from this report that remained open for the 2021–22 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
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#### EPSDD response

##### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

#### Comments on status

The 2021–22 budget provided funding for:

- The Sustainable Household Scheme which offers zero-interest loans to help households with the upfront costs for rooftop solar panels, household battery storage, electric vehicles and efficient electric appliances.
- The Big Canberra Battery Project which will support the development of 250MW new 'large-scale' battery storage distributed.

- Work commenced on identifying the most appropriate pathway for the ACT to transition off gas, including detailed technical and economic modelling work undertaken by consultants.
- Waiving registration fees on new zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) for the first two years.
- The 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.
- Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme to deliver cost-effective energy and emission savings for households, especially for low-income households
- The 2021–22 budget also provided additional funding for the following mitigation and adaptation activities:
- Climate action – Adaptation and resilience (\$699,000 for 2021–22, further 3 years funding of \$1,798,000).
- Climate action – Community Clubs Building Energy Efficiency Fund – continuation (\$2,710,000 for 2021–22, further 3 years funding of \$2,291,000).
- Climate action – Community Zero Emissions Grants (\$150,000 for 2021–22, further 3 years funding of \$450,000).
- Climate action – Solar for Low Income scheme – continuation (\$771,000 for 2021–22, further 3 years funding of \$2,313,000).

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

TCCS has sought funding for climate change mitigation, for example:

- Jamison carpark water reuse trial constructed
- 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
- Use of recycled content in roadworks
- Recycled products preferred for park furniture, stormwater modelling and further investment into active travel infrastructure
- NoWaste material recovery and food organics and garden organics (FOGO) diverted from landfill

## Health response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is in the planning stages for three major projects on climate change mitigation:

- Canberra Hospital masterplan. The masterplan for the hospital campus, which was endorsed by the Government in November 2021, includes a pathway for the campus becoming zero emission in the coming 20 years.
- Planning for the new northside hospital. This hospital, which will open about the end of this decade, will be an all-electric facility.

Asset renewal program. Work has begun on a long-term program to refurbish and rebuild community health assets to remove gas power and make buildings more sustainable.

## CMTEDD response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

The 2021–22 Budget includes over \$49 million in funding over four years for climate change mitigation and adaptation measures across government, including:

- Continued implementation of the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme to support households with the upfront costs of energy-efficient upgrades.
- Continued investment in the solar for low-income program to address equity and fairness issues for low-income households in the clean energy transition.
- Releasing provisioned funds to commence the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme that supports energy efficiency improvements for low-income households as part of the ACT's transition to a net-zero emissions future.
- Continuing the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme to support Canberra businesses to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the reduction of household and business energy use and costs, and opportunities for priority households to reduce energy usage and costs.
- Providing \$600,000 over four years for the continuation of grant funding for the Community Zero Emissions Grant program.

- Investing \$2.5 million over four years in measures to build adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change across the ACT, including modelling for living infrastructure, undertaking climate data and risk-based assessments and funding to support delivery of the ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change.
- \$2.5 million to support the four-year Community Club Building Energy Efficiency Fund (the Fund) to provide rebates to clubs for equipment energy upgrades, building envelope improvements and installation of rooftop solar and batteries to reduce electricity and gas bills.
- \$12.1 million over three years to grow Canberra's urban forests
- \$4.7 million over four years to commence work on developing a social cost of carbon for emissions from government operations such as the replacement of gas heating systems and a transition of the Government fleet to zero emission vehicles.
- Over \$15 million in capital funding to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Callam Offices.
- Providing additional \$8.56 million funding to expand the two years' free registration waiver for new and used zero emissions vehicles registered in the ACT until 2024.
- Investing \$856,000 over four years into strategic communication and behavioural change activities to encourage Canberrans to consider climate conscious decisions in their lives, including the launch of the Everyday Climate Choices website.

\$2.968 million over four years in expense funding (non-ongoing) to prevent, eradicate and undertake early containment of invasive plants, animals and diseases under La Nina weather patterns

## Education response

### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

Design considerations and performance outcomes are integrated into new schools (which are all electric), existing school upgrades and maintenance contracts.

Appropriations to address climate change mitigation and adaptation include:

- Ongoing funding to upgrade gas heating systems to low or zero emission heating systems and thermal envelope upgrades (\$15.9m)
- Continuation of existing program to upgrade roof systems including minimum R4 insulation and higher stormwater capabilities (\$17.96m)
- Annual building tuning and trial projects (\$0.85m p.a.)
- Annual solar expansion program (\$0.4m p.a.)
- Thermal comfort stimulus program (\$2.74m)
- Innovative program opportunities such as ARENA's Innovation Hub for Affordable Heating (i-Hub).
- Double glazing performance specification applied to all glazing upgrades.

## JACS response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	Commenced programs and activities required	<b>Programs and activities well advanced</b>	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- JACS is implementing Australia's first plug-in hybrid electric vehicle fire truck, low emissions specialist heavy vehicles and charging infrastructure through the \$12.78m Emergency Service Agency (ESA) Vehicle Replacement Program from 2021–22 to 2024–25.
- All-electric and sustainable design is integrated into all new building works and leases. \$1.30m is allocated for emissions reduction from gas through asset renewal at existing facilities over 2021–22 and 2022–23.
- ESA received \$0.18m in 2021–22 through the National Partnership Agreement to support the development of whole of government bushfire planning and doctrine, including delivery of actions under the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan 2019 related to climate risk and readiness planning across ESA and the ACT Government.

## CSD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

#### Comments on status

- Nil response

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

# 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
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## EPSDD response

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
Not applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- The ACT's Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PAGA) of the 10th Legislative Assembly, released in 2021 significantly extended the ACT's commitments to reduce emissions and increase zero emissions vehicle uptake. In November 2021, the ACT Government released the first status update on the actions from PAGA. This highlighted that progress has been made to deliver projects to support the transition to a net-zero emissions future such as the Sustainable Household Scheme and waiving of registration fees on new zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) for the first two years.
- The ACT Government has recently released the Zero Emission Vehicles strategy which highlights the path to increase the number of electric vehicles in the ACT. This includes rebates and other incentives which will be rolled out over the coming year.

## TCCS response

### 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
Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Work continues on implementing the zero emission transition plan for Transport Canberra including: workforce engagement and training in conjunction with CIT; the leasing of 12 battery electric buses and the second stage of procurement of a further 90 battery electric buses to commence in July 2022; energy, power and infrastructure requirements to house and charge the battery electric buses; and funding options with a business case being considered by Government.
- Detailed architectural and electrical designs for Woden bus depot are being finalised. Replacement of 34 Renault buses with lower emission leased buses is underway with contract arrangements finalised – the first of these are expected to be delivered in July 2022.
- Work will progress in 2022 in relation to developing a pathway for zero emissions on Garbage Trucks, Taxis and Rideshare Vehicles.

## Commissioner's response 2022

**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.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

CSD

### EPSDD response

#### 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
Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- Support for vulnerable and disadvantaged households remains a priority.
- 38 rebate applications were approved since the launch of Phase 2 of the solar for low-income program since March 2022. As part of Phase 1, 670 households and 100 public housing units have been supported from 2017 to 2021.
- Over 4,614 households have received free energy assessments, education and draught-proofing since 2015 via the Home Energy Efficiency Program, of which about 80% are public housing tenants.
- Almost 500 renters have been supported through free home energy assessments and the use of a home energy assessment web tool since 2020.
- The Priority Household Target for the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme remains at 40% from January 2023.
- \$50 million has been committed over 4 years through the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Initiative.
- The Government has progressed work to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties, with the standard expected to commence late in 2022 and phased-in over several years.
- These programs provide the community with financial incentives and support to be more energy efficient.

## CSD response

### 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
Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable	Applicable

### Comments on status

- Housing ACT ran the Energy Efficiency Program, the All-Electric Program and Solar.
- The Energy Efficiency Program has provided a total of 3,792 appliance upgrades to Housing ACT properties. This financial year, 1,107 installations have been completed, saving 80,728.55 MWh of electricity over the lifetime of the product. The contract for this Program is expired on 30 June 2022 and has not been varied to extend.
- With the All-Electric Program, at the end of June 2022, a total of 128 gas cooking appliances have been upgraded to electric and 86 of these properties have been disconnected from the gas network. This Program is expected to be complete by the second quarter of the 2022–23 financial year.
- A commitment was made to install solar panels on twelve public and community housing properties. This project was completed in April 2022.

## Commissioner's response 2022

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

**CSD: Satisfactory – Closed.**



View of South Canberra. Credit: Mark Jekabsons

## 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, including engagement with community.

### Responsible Directorates:

EPSDD

### EPSDD response

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

Discussion, planning, and resourcing phase	<b>Commenced programs and activities required</b>	Programs and activities well advanced	Fully implemented or completed
Not applicable	<b>Applicable</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable

### Comments on status

- As part of the 2021–22 budget process, the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to put a dollar value on climate inaction by implementing a 'social cost of carbon'.
- A Social Cost of Carbon Fund has been established beginning in 2021–22. The Fund will support Government agencies to undertake emissions reduction projects, such as the replacement of gas heating systems and a transition of Government fleet to zero emissions vehicles. Funding for 2021–22 was calculated at \$20 per tonne of emissions from Government sources in 2020–21, providing \$1.34m in funding, which has been allocated to three projects.

### Commissioner's response 2022

**Unatisfactory – Open:** Provide evidence of progress on recommendation, including of engagement with community.

# Complaint investigations and investigation recommendations

The Commissioner investigated one complaint in 2021–22 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 closed on 11 October 2021.

## 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 was addressed in the State of the Lakes and Waterways Investigation Report, completed by OCSE in May 2022.

Recommendation 4.2 from the Report on the Canberra Nature Park (nature reserves), Molonglo River Corridor (nature reserves) and Googong Foreshores Investigation (2011) was closed as the Canberra Nature Park Management Plan was finally delivered in 2021.

## 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 to approximately 1,900 followers over the reporting period.

The Office's Twitter account, **@EnvComm\_ACT** had over 2,100 followers on 30 June 2022.

The Office's Instagram account, **@envcomm** had over 1,100 followers on 30 June 2022.

## Online Engagement

### *State of the Environment for Kids and State of the Environment for Youth websites*

In 2021 the Office launched two websites for children and young people about the ACT's state of the environment. One website is dedicated to primary school kids ([environmentforkids.com.au](https://environmentforkids.com.au)) and another one to high school students ([environmentforyouth.com.au](https://environmentforyouth.com.au)).

These websites aim to provide children, young people, parents and educators with resources to learn about the Territory's environment and sustainability.

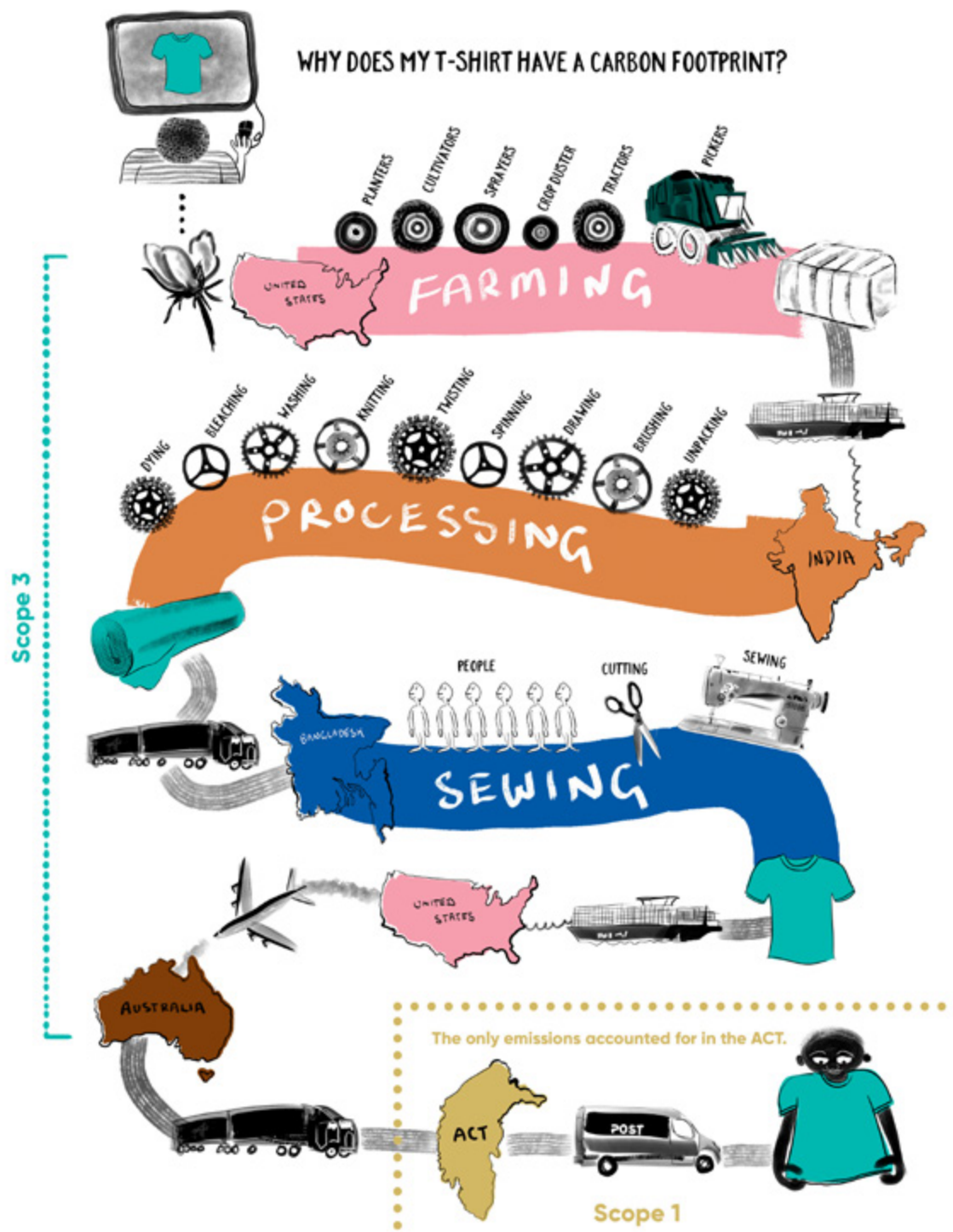


Credit: OCSE

### *Scope 3 emissions in Canberra*

In 2021 OCSE conducted an investigation on Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas emissions, which are those released outside the city as a result of activities occurring inside its boundaries. The investigation found that 94% of the ACT's emissions are scope 3, and therefore that this is mainly a consumer Territory.

When the report was released in November 2021, the Office conducted a social media campaign to share with the Canberra community the main results of the investigation. The report had a strong focus on emissions from food and construction, and we shared on social media relevant information about scope 3 emissions related to these sectors, as well as suggestions to the community on how to reduce them.

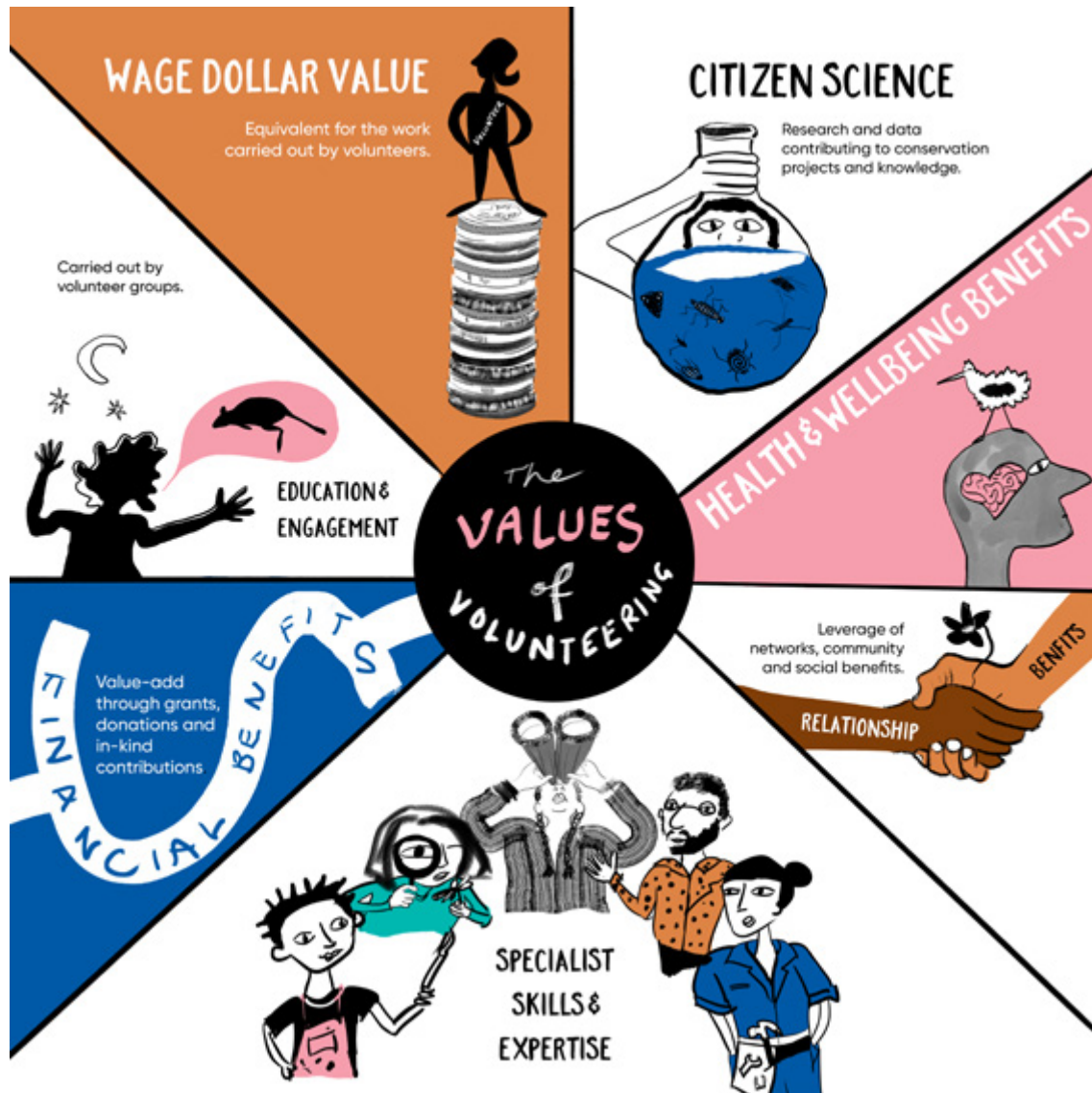


Credit: OCSE



### ACT Environmental Volunteers website

In February 2022, the Office launched a website dedicated to the environmental work conducted by volunteers within the ACT. The website contains information about the different types of volunteering opportunities and programs available in the Territory. The report was circulated on social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram), where we shared individual volunteers' stories, showcasing their motivations to offering their time and effort towards this important work. We also highlighted the different types of environmental volunteering work available in the ACT.



Credit: OCSE

## Women in Climate and Health Breakfast

In June 2022, the Office hosted the fourth 'Women in Climate and Health breakfast' event. This is a networking breakfast that brings together women and other community members to discuss Canberra's environmental challenges, including climate change. This event included a panel of expert guest speakers and community leaders that shared their professional and personal experiences. The discussion was centred on community focused solutions to reduce consumption and make sustainable choices across different industries, such as food and building.

The speakers included:

- Ms Serina Bird – The Joyful Frugalista
- Mr Chris Dennis – Founder and Managing Director of the Two Before Ten Group of companies
- Dr Melinda Dodson – Founder of the Canberra Low Carbon Housing Challenge
- Dr Arnagretta Hunter – Cardiologist and ANU Climate Change Institute
- Dr Sophie Lewis – Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment in the ACT
- Dr Marisa Paterson – MLA Member for Murrumbidgee



From left to right: Melinda Dodson, Serina Bird, Chris Dennis, Marisa Paterson and Sophie Lewis speaking at the Women in Climate and Health Breakfast. Credit: OCSE



## Messages of Appreciation

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

*"What a wonderful site! Such excellent information, so interesting and easy to navigate. It doesn't talk down to younger readers and will definitely appeal to older students – and many parents. Thank you."*

about Environment for Youth website.

*"Thank you once again Megan for your assistance with our event. The presentation by Sophie and the other panel members was extremely well received with more than one attendee commenting that it was 'the best' Senior Staff meeting they had ever attended."*

Government, Schools and Community, Invitation to speak to National Library of Australia Senior Staff.

*"Thank you so much for taking the time to support our ACT schools at the Actsmart Schools Sustainability Awards – today, in the planning and the judging. The schools, particularly the students, had a great time celebrating their hard work & achievements and also recognising each other's amazing work." "...The Actsmart Schools team thanks you all, and we hope we can continue to work together to empower our young people to be agents of change, so they can continue to pave the way to climate action, improving sustainability and building community adaptation and resilience."*

Government, Schools and Community, Actsmart Schools Sustainability Awards.

*"Congratulations on the web-based report on environmental volunteering in the ACT. It is a wonderful positive read, and really highlights the value that we can add to our outdoor spaces. Hopefully it will support the continued need for support from government bodies to assist us in our work. I have passed it on to all our members. Well done again, and thank you for consulting us – we have really enjoyed seeing our group featured."*

Griffith Woodland Volunteer Group about ACT Environmental Volunteers Report

*"On behalf of Women & Leadership Australia, I would like to say a huge thank you for your participation and involvement at The Australian Women's Leadership Symposium held in Canberra last week. The feedback from the delegates has been overwhelmingly positive, and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for the time that you dedicated to this event."*

*Your participation and insights were well received by all and had a huge impact on making the event as successful as it was. Many delegates commented that the day assisted them greatly in developing leadership capability, finding resolutions and strategies, building leadership resilience, renewing their energy, and feeling empowered."*

*Thank you for sharing your story with us, your presentation was so thoughtful and beautifully presented, we and the participants were all captivated!*

*We were thrilled that you were able to join us, and hope you enjoyed your time at the event! Thank you for devoting your time to this important national program."*

*It was such a privilege to work with you and I sincerely hope we get the chance to work together again in the future."*

Australian Women's Leadership Symposium

### 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 2021–22**

Submission	Recommendations	Submitted
<b>Amending the Residential Tenancies Act on The Right to Grow Food</b>	Broad recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removing barriers for renters to grow food, which will provide positive environmental sustainability and outcomes. This would allow transitioning to more ecologically sustainable lifestyles and reducing food insecurity.</li><li>• Support modifications in rental gardens that add environmental value to the property, and encourage future tenants to participate in more ecologically sustainable practices, such as vegetable gardens and composting infrastructure, provided they are maintained.</li></ul>	30 August 2021
<b>Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism</b>	Broad recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the way metrics about volunteer contributions are collected and held</li><li>• Improve recognition of volunteer contributions</li><li>• Ensure appropriate resourcing for volunteer programs and community organisations</li><li>• Promote transparency around government activities and decisions that affect volunteers</li><li>• Improve processes for using volunteer knowledge</li><li>• Improve processes for using citizen science data</li></ul>	7 February 2022



Yellow robin (*Eopsaltria australis*). Credit: Miranda Gardner

Submission	Recommendations	Submitted
<b>Capital Food and Fibre Strategy</b>	<p>Broad recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategy investigates the potential of traditional native foods and fibres that occur naturally in the region, led by Traditional Custodians. To include market development.</li> <li>• The Strategy encourages local groups to support community-led urban farming projects through targeted financial and practical support. To include market development.</li> <li>• The Strategy re-examines the viability of harvesting meat from culling.</li> <li>• The Strategy adopts a comprehensive multiple hazard approach to climate change resilience.</li> <li>• The Strategy considers the estimation of the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions associated with food items consumed within the ACT, both for those produced within the region and for those imported. If possible, consider estimating the emissions of food items at different stages of the supply chain to inform targeted emissions reduction at specific stages of the supply chain.</li> <li>• The Strategy considers the development of a local food purchasing policy for ACT Government that will support the preferential selection of catering suppliers that use local products and work to minimise the length of their supply chains.</li> </ul>	18 February 2022
<b>Urban Forest Bill</b>	<p>Broad recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That provision is made for exotic trees in designated nature reserves to be removed without penalty.</li> <li>• That additional protection is provided to local native trees beyond those afforded to exotic species.</li> <li>• That heritage protection afforded to exotic trees should end when the tree in question dies or is removed. Such trees should be replaced with climate-appropriate native species from approved ACT Government planting lists.</li> </ul>	23 May 2022
<b>Planning System Review and Reform Project</b>	<p>Broad recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that the application of planning principles does not unduly diminish conservation of the natural environment and that the Planning Bill 2022 Consultation Draft is revised to explicitly state that the principles listed do not constitute a hierarchy.</li> <li>• Revising Draft Planning Bill 2022 Consultation Draft, to achieve environmental outcomes through a more strategic approach that protects ecosystems and natural resources in the ACT.</li> <li>• That the ACT Government ensures sufficient resourcing is provided to the assessment of development applications to ensure good planning occurs that is faithful to the Bill's principles.</li> <li>• The Chief Planner should not be provided with the power to approve a development contrary to entity advice.</li> <li>• That the draft Bill is revised to reflect and address identified issues with current offsets policies and their implementation.</li> </ul>	1 June 2022

## 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 timeframe.



Fringe lily close-up. Credit: Miranda Gardner

## 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, including the new course added to the Learning Plan: Introduction to Risk in the ACT Government.

## 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 authority to choose whether auditing responsibilities will be delegated or not.

Staff in the Office are aware that the EPSDD’s Audit Committee is available for assistance if required.

## B6. Fraud Prevention

EPSDD manages the corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2021–22 Annual Report.

## 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 2021–22 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](mailto:EPSDFOI@act.gov.au).

For more information on making an access application, visit:

[www.environment.act.gov.au/about-us/access-government-information](http://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:

[www.environment.act.gov.au/about-us/access-government-information/disclosure-log](http://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 2021–22 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.

Eight stand-up desks are available in the office to aid staff health management. Workstation assessments are available through EPSDD and have been utilised by staff.

EPSDD manages the corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2021–22 Annual Report as relevant. Staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant initiatives run by EPSDD.



Hot air balloons over Lake Burley Griffin on Canberra Day. Credit: Vanessa Lavis

## B9. Human Resources Management

EPSDD manages the corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2021–22 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 22 June 2022.

**Table 5: FTE by gender and head count**

Headcount total	FTE		Female	Male	Total
7	6.3	FTE by gender	5.3	1.0	6.3
		Headcount by gender	6	1	7
		% of workforce	85.7%	14.3%	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	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

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

Employment category	Female	Male	Total
Casual	0	0	0
Permanent full-time	1	1	2
Permanent part-time	3	0	3
Temporary full-time	2	0	2
Temporary part-time	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
Average years of service	5.4	4.2	5.2

**Table 8: Headcount by diversity group**

Diversity Group	Headcount	% of total staff
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1	14.3%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	1	14.3%
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	0	0	0
55 and over	1	1	2

**Table 10: Permanent recruitment and separation rates**

Classification Group	Recruitment rate	Separation rate
TOTAL	0.0%	0.0%

## B9.2 Attraction and Retention Incentives (ARins)

The Office had no ARins arrangements during the 2021–22 reporting year.



Wombat at London Bridge. Credit: Damian Esquerré



## 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 accepted an intern from University of Canberra conducting undergraduate studies 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:

- Women in climate & health
- Urgent climate action
- Landcare conference
- ACT Government's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City
- Aboriginal cultural training
- National Council for Fire & Emergency Services conference
- Canberra Hospital Expansion Design
- Communicating with Influence
- Society and Environmental Change
- Australian Institute of Company Directors training
- HRIMS demonstration
- Growth Mindset
- Healthy Environments and Lives
- Protecting water quality in the urban environment
- How do public spaces support wellbeing?
- International Day for People with Disability
- Transitioning to a Prosperous, Resilient & Carbon-Free Economy
- Waste Initiatives to Transform the City
- Annual Pride Picnic
- ANU Climate Update 2022
- Innovate environmental solutions in our new world
- Can indigenous science help craft water quality solutions for stormwater?
- Urban Habitat and Connectivity Project – Improving outcomes for our urban wildlife
- Launch of the 2022-2023 ACT Environmental Grants Program
- How to take more great Australian science from 'bench to boardroom'
- State of Place 2021 Australian Liveability Census – Liveability in ACT Forum
- Team Management and Writing
- Women and Leadership Australia

## **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 2021–22.

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 2021–22 Annual Report.

# **B10. Ecologically Sustainable Development**

## **B10.1 Office Accommodation**

In March 2022 the office moved from a temporary space at Finlay Crisp Centre, Customs House building, 5 Constitution Avenue, Canberra ACT 2601, to a definitive office in Nara Centre, 3 Constitution Avenue, Canberra City 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 renewed its 'Actsmart Business accreditation' in May 2022.



Actsmart accreditation 2022. Credit: OCSE

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. The Office did not purchase any paper for printing this last financial year.
- using 100% recycled paper for printing.
- 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 staffs' own coffee cups and not disposable ones.
- using the compost bin located in the office's floor to dispose of organic waste, and recycling bin located in the office for recyclable waste.
- 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.
- 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 2022	Unit	Previous FY 2020–21	Current FY 2021–22	% change
<b>Agency staff and area</b>				See explanatory notes for this column
Agency staff	FTE	6	6.3 <sup>a</sup>	
Workplace floor area	Area (m <sub>2</sub> )	85	160.04 <sup>b</sup>	
<b>Stationary energy usage</b>				
Electricity use	Kilowatt hours	3957.58	5904.36 <sup>c</sup>	
Natural gas use	Gigajoules	27.11	9.368 <sup>c</sup>	
Diesel	Kilolitres	0	0 <sup>c</sup>	
<b>Transport fuel usage</b>				
Electric vehicles	Number	0	0	
Hybrid vehicles	Number	0	0	
Other vehicles (not electric or hybrid)	Number	0	0	
Total number of vehicles	Number	0	0	
Total kilometres travelled	Kilometres	0	0	
Fuel use – petrol	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – diesel	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Kilolitres	0	0	
Fuel use – Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)	Cubic Metres (Cm <sup>3</sup> )	0	0	
<b>Water usage</b>				
Water use	Kilolitres	81.07	56.69±	
<b>Resource efficiency and waste</b>				
Reams of paper purchased	Reams	5	0 <sup>d</sup>	
Recycled content of paper purchased	Percentage	100	0 <sup>d</sup>	
Waste to landfill	Litres in 2020–21, kilos in 2021–22	1050 <sup>e</sup>	92 <sup>e</sup>	
Co-mingled material recycled	Litres in 2020–21, kilos in 2021–22	900 <sup>e</sup>	33.8 <sup>e</sup>	
Paper and cardboard recycled (including secure paper)	Litres in 2020–21, kilos in 2021–22	494 <sup>e</sup>	87.6 <sup>e</sup>	
Organic material recycled	Litres in 2020–21, kilos in 2021–22	0 <sup>f</sup>	0.3 <sup>e</sup>	
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions</b>				
Emissions from transport	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	0	0	
Scope 1 emissions	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	2.42	0.48	
Scope 2 emissions	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	0	0	
Total emissions Tonnes	Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e	2.42	0.48	

See explanatory notes over page.

### ***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 is for Nara Centre. The total office space area is 160.04 m<sup>2</sup>, and occupancy area is 40.01 m<sup>2</sup>.
- c. Water use, electricity, gas and diesel estimates, were obtained from Climate Change and Energy Division in EPSDD.
- d. The Office did not purchase paper this financial year.
- e. Resource efficiency and waste figures were obtained from CMTEDD directorate. These were estimated accounting for the Office moving in March 2022 from Customs building to Nara. The figures represent an allocation of % area occupied by the Office in each building (note that for Customs it is an estimated figure due to a specific area not being allocated and rent was charged based on the previous location 3%, for Nara Centre the share was 1.87%). The figures were also adjusted for the periods working remotely between August 2021 to November 2021, and January 2022. Note that this financial year's units are kilos instead of litres of waste.
- f. The Office has access to a compost bin in Nara building but did not in the previous financial year.

Please note that some data reported for this financial year in the table above may differ from figures reported in the 2020–21 Annual Report. These are due to updates to agency occupancy and historical consumption data, annual adjustments to ACT specific electricity emissions factors, and the Office moving to a new space in March 2022. Therefore, calculating a percentage change between 2020–21 and 2021–22 does not provide a meaningful comparison.

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 third 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 2021–22 Annual Report.

## C2. Financial Statements

The ACT Government appropriation for the Office in 2021–22 was \$ 1,765,000.

Further information on the Office's financial management is covered in the EPSDD 2021–22 Annual Report.

The financial transactions for the Office are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the EPSDD 2021–22 Annual Report as part of 'Expenses on Behalf of the Territory'.

## C3. Capital Works

The Office has no capital works projects.

## C4. Asset Management

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 2021–22 the Office initiated one contract exceeding \$25,000:

Comprehensive policy review of all ACT Government environment and sustainability policies for 2023 State of the Environment Report (\$164 844.00 including GST).

## C6. Statement of Performance

EPSDD manages the corporate functions of OCSE and reporting under this section is covered in the EPSDD 2021–22 Annual Report as relevant.



National Arboretum Canberra. Credit: Mark Jekabsons





SECTION D.

# Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Staff presenting at conferences, seminars and forums

### Summary of presenting at Conferences, Seminars for 2021–22

Date	Type of Activity, e.g., conference, seminar	Name of Conference, seminar, etc.	Provider	Attendee
15 Sep 22	Briefing to Minister	Briefing of Scope 3 Investigation	OCSE/ Minister's Office	Sophie Lewis, Serena Farrelly and Connie Leon
03 Nov 21	Interview	Her Canberra – The Canberrans: Dr Sophie Lewis	HerCanberra	Sophie Lewis
19 Nov 21	Presentation	Invitation to speak to National Library of Australia Senior Staff	Invitation – National Library of Australia	Sophie Lewis
23 Nov 21	Interview	Interview by Clare Watson for COSMOS	COSMOS	Sophie Lewis
14 Dec 21	Presentation	Presentation to Icon Water on Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	OCSE/ICON	Sophie Lewis Serena Farrelly Connie Leon
17 Feb 22	Presentation	Presentation to HIA	OCSE/HIA	Sophie Lewis Serena Farrelly Connie Leon
28 Feb 22	Presentation	Presentation to Dharuwa Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee	OCSE/DNCCC	Sophie Lewis, Serena Farrelly, Connie Leon
09 Mar 22	Presentation	Presentation to Master Builders Association	OCSE/MBA	Sophie Lewis Serena Farrelly Connie Leon
10 Mar 22	Briefing	Briefing: Ms Nicole Lawder/ Sophie Lewis		Sophie Lewis, Miranda Gardner
22 Mar 22	Tour	Tour of Bragg Street Park	Bragg Street Park Volunteers Group	Sophie Lewis
21 Apr 22	Briefing	Briefing: Mr Jonathan Davis/ Sophie Lewis		Sophie Lewis, Miranda Gardner
03 Jun 22	Video Interview	Win Local News	Win Local News	Serena Farrelly

# Appendix 2

## Compliance Statement

The 2021–22 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](http://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 2021–22 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 2021–22 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 2021–22 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report as follows:

- Transmittal Certificate, see Section A, page 6
- Organisational Overview and Performance, inclusive of all subsections, see Section B, pages 8–128, and
- Financial Management Reporting, inclusive of all subsections, see Section C, pages 130–131.

### 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 2021–22 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 2021–22 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Annual Report:

Ministerial and Director-General Directions, see Section B2, pages 14–119.

## 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:  
[www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/report/annual\\_reports](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual_reports)