

## 10.1 A SUSTAINABLE TERRITORY

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### The ACT Government Sustainability Framework

The Government adopts a triple bottom line approach to sustainability, and recognises the interdependence of social, economic and environmental wellbeing. It also recognises the need for a long-term perspective on sustainability and engaging the community in major government decision making. *People, Place, Prosperity* is the Government's sustainability policy. The policy was updated in 2009 reflecting ongoing work, aligning with the *Canberra Plan: Towards our Second Century* and its subsidiary plans.

The policy sets out a broad work program across the bottom line areas.

As part of ongoing work the Government has released a range of policy documents supporting sustainability principles, including:

- ACT Waste Management Strategy;
- ACT Sustainable Energy Policy;
- The Canberra Spatial Plan;
- Weathering the Change;
- Transport for Canberra; and
- The ACT Sustainable Schools Initiative.

### Sustainability Measures

The 2012-13 Budget builds on earlier work across Government including protecting our natural and built environments, conserving our natural resources, responding to challenges of climate change and promoting development and the uptake of renewable energy.

The Government is committed to a 40 per cent reduction on 1990 greenhouse gas emission (GHG) levels by 2020 and a goal of zero net GHG for the ACT by the year 2060. This commitment is underpinned by the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly in October 2010.

The Government has committed to carbon neutrality for schools by 2017.

The Government has also committed to be carbon neutral in its own operations and services by 2020. An ACT Government Carbon Neutral Framework will be released in 2012 that will provide the necessary guidance to achieve this goal.

The 2012-13 Budget includes a new \$5 million Carbon Neutral Government fund that will provide agencies with a loan facility to undertake projects designed to reduce emissions and help offset the cost of the impacts of the carbon tax. The projects completed under the fund will assist in the Government's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2020.

The Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Scheme introduced in 2012 will commence on 1 January 2013 and establishes energy savings targets and mandatory energy savings obligations for individual energy retailers. The scheme will provide targeted assistance to low income households.

Continuing with its promotion of renewable energy use in the community, in 2012-13 the Government will lead by example with 37.5 per cent of total Government electricity use coming from renewable sources.

In demonstrating a continuing commitment to reducing the ACT's carbon footprint, the Government will introduce electric vehicles as part of its passenger vehicle fleet.

The Government has also commenced a staged program for the replacement of inefficient, high-wattage streetlights with energy efficient alternatives. This is an ongoing program with the replacement of 9,600 high-wattage streetlights completed and the remainder due for replacement in the first half of 2012.

### *Sustainability in the Built Environment*

The ACT continues to lead in addressing sustainability issues with the early adoption of new building standards for energy efficiency, a well established energy rating scheme and the introduction of licensing for residential building energy efficiency assessors.

Improving the sustainability of buildings requires regular updating of the regulations applying to appliances, buildings and other equipment (including construction and installation). To achieve this, the ACT is a member of a number of national working groups.

The ACT has increased the number of building inspectors to improve the quality and sustainability of the building stock in the ACT.

The Government itself occupies almost 90,000m<sup>2</sup> of owned and leased office space and is implementing programs to reduce its carbon footprint as an example to other landlords and tenants.

In 2011-12, the Government replaced fluorescent lighting with energy efficient LED lighting at Dame Pattie Menzies House resulting in electricity savings in excess of 32 per cent. In 2012-13, the Government will continue to explore opportunities to implement similar initiatives in other Government owned and leased buildings.

The recent introduction of the Energy Efficiency Assessors Licensing Scheme will improve compliance with energy efficiency requirements in homes built in the ACT. Given the contribution of housing to overall energy use in the ACT, this will play a crucial role in the Government's 40 per cent reduction target by 2020.

### *Planning for a Sustainable Future*

The Government recognises the role of urban planning in ensuring a sustainable future.

The Government ensures that sustainability and innovation issues are incorporated in the planning and design of developments delivered through the Land Development Agency (LDA). The LDA Sustainability and Innovation Framework has been developed to address a range of elements including:

- energy and emissions;
- water;
- landscape and biodiversity;
- waste and materials;
- transport;
- affordability;
- influencing design; and
- community.

All LDA estates are assessed against this Framework. A Design Review Panel also assesses development proposals at various stages in the planning process to ensure high quality design and outcomes.

The new suburbs of Coombs and Wright in Molonglo have achieved certification under the Urban Development Institute of Australia EnviroDevelopment program for energy, waste, community and ecosystems:

- energy initiatives include the Home Sustainability Advisory Service, solar envelope guidelines (ensuring solar access for standard homes) and on average seven star energy rated multi unit developments;
- waste initiatives include processing and reuse of vegetative debris either on site or at the nearby Arboretum and development of a request-for-proposal for a builders' waste recycling facility in Molonglo;
- community initiatives include early engagement with local community groups such as the Molonglo Bush on the Boundary group and in planning for a community garden in Coombs; and
- ecosystem initiatives include the protection of habitat in association with planning for the Molonglo River Park.

Other Government initiatives include:

- working with the Commonwealth to address matters of national environmental significance in relation to the land release programs across residential, commercial, industrial and community facility land releases;

- minimising the environmental impacts of works during construction in the control of dust, noise, sediment and building waste by enforcing compliance with waste management, littering and other requirements on new developments;
- developing water sensitive urban design, retaining more stormwater on-site and using non-potable water (from the various stormwater retention ponds) to irrigate public open space areas in new suburbs like Bonner;
- encouraging energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy by maximising solar orientation of blocks and mandating solar hot water systems in Harrison 4 (the last stage to be developed for the suburb of Harrison) and Coombs;
- in conjunction with ActewAGL and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS), the LDA is demonstrating installation of energy efficient compact fluorescent streetlights in Bonner and Harrison 4 which have the potential to reduce energy use and emissions by more than 50 per cent over standard street lighting;
- developing pedestrian friendly designs with plantings for shady verges and open space links throughout suburbs; and
- implementing a cat containment policy in Bonner, Forde, Coombs and Wright to help protect local wildlife.

*The ACT Spatial Plan* has a clear goal of creating a more compact city form with development being more intensive within 7.5 kilometres of Civic.

The Government is also investigating the suitability of sites for new urban development within the current urban boundaries but which might be outside 7.5 kilometres of Civic, particularly along transport corridors or adjacent to other town centres.

Bringing forward investigations on these sites provides the opportunity to explore the potential for improving sustainable transport and building options while considering how these might contribute to social equity, more affordable housing, and improved services for individuals and the community.

Transit-oriented development and walkable neighbourhoods are key planning principles being applied at Molonglo, assisting in the reduction of car dependence and GHG, and supporting a shift to public transport, cycling and walking. The first suburbs, Coombs and Wright, will have an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle paths to link community facilities such as shops, schools and parks with surrounding residential and recreation areas. The path networks generally follow natural drainage paths and bush corridors.

Alternative water supplies may be used to irrigate open spaces in Molonglo and playing fields to reduce potable water use. Protection of water quality within the Molonglo River is a high priority and is being achieved in Coombs and Wright through the use of wetland ponds on tributary streams.

Sustainable development principles are also being applied in new developments in Belconnen and Gungahlin through increasing densities around activity centres and along transport corridors and creating walkable neighbourhoods. These areas can also contain ecological communities and threatened species that are important to the Territory's biodiversity. Surveying and investigating areas proposed for future development enables identification and protection of communities and the implementation of measures that mitigate the impact of development, in line with Territory and Commonwealth legislation and policies.

### *Adaptive Re-use of Office Stock*

The Government has provided incentives for adaptive re-use of C and D grade office stock in Civic and town centres. Remission of Lease Variation Charge (LVC) will be available for developments which achieve improvement in environmental performance above the current standards and practice. The performance will be measured in whole of life carbon abatement above the standard, and the remission will be based on the prevailing carbon price under the national framework. The remission will also include an Embodied Carbon Premium (ECP) set at 20 per cent, to recognise the carbon savings from the re-use of an existing building.

A remission is also available for co-investment in public art. Eligible developers are able to reduce the amount of LVC paid by investing in public art. The remission will be calculated at 50 per cent of the amount contributed to a public art project developed in consultation with the relevant government agencies. The remission will be considered as part of the existing approval processes.

Further incentives are provided through waivers of conveyance duty on a case by case basis. The waiver is limited to the first transaction to reduce the costs for the 'financial vehicle' used for the project, and will be provided upon application to ACT Revenue Office.

The Government considers the redevelopment of Northbourne Avenue Corridor as a a priority project. LVC remissions will be also available to support high quality developments that achieve improved environmental performance above the current standards. To be eligible, the developers would be required to achieve carbon savings which exceed the current minimum practice by at least 30 per cent.

## *Sustainability in Transport*

The Government released the *Transport for Canberra* policy in March 2012, which provides the foundation for transport planning for the next 20 years.

*Transport for Canberra* sets about creating a transport system that:

- is integrated with land use planning;
- makes active travel like walking and cycling the easy way to get around;
- provides sustainable travel options and reduces transport emissions;
- is safe for moving people however they get around;
- is accessible for everybody whatever their level of mobility at any time or place; and
- is efficient and cost effective, providing value for money for the government, business and the community by managing travel demand across the whole transport system.

The policy further builds upon the *2004 Sustainable Transport Plan* which was successful in designing, building and maintaining transport infrastructure. Highlights achieved in 2011-12 include:

- extension of the Blue Rapid bus services to Kippax;
- provision of additional Red Rapid services in the morning peak period;
- improvements to bus services for newly constructed suburbs in Gungahlin;
- improvements to bus services for the City West precinct and the Australian National University (ANU), Fyshwick, Canberra Hospital and Majura Park;
- improvements to the scheduling of bus services in Weston Creek;
- installation of additional bus shelters and street furniture;
- construction of new park and ride and bike and ride facilities;
- commencement of the project for bus priority measures along Canberra Avenue;
- design and construction of on-road cycling facilities;
- continuing the installation of bike racks on the ACTION bus fleet with 80 per cent of the in-service fleet projected to have bike racks installed by June 2012; and
- promotion and marketing of sustainable transport options.

Transport feasibility studies were also completed or commenced in 2011-12, including:

- release of concepts for the City to Gungahlin Transit corridor, with light rail and bus rapid transit options explored for Northbourne Avenue and Flemington Road;
- investigation of options to expand the City Bus Station and relocate the City Bus layover;
- release of draft options for freeway-style bus stops along Adelaide Avenue; and
- short listing of sites for future park and ride and bike and ride facilities.

The Government is also encouraging increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy in ACT vehicles, including exploring further opportunities for electric vehicles and developing a low emission vehicles strategy by 2013.

### *Progressing Actions on Climate Change*

The ACT Government has the most ambitious GHG emissions reduction targets of all Australian jurisdictions.

A second Action Plan under the *Weathering the Change* climate change strategy will be released in 2012. The Action Plan will provide strategies for achieving the first legislated interim target of reducing emissions by 40 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020 and set the Government on a pathway to meet the 2060 goal of zero net carbon emission.

### *Sustainability in Waste Management*

The Government released the *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025: Towards a Sustainable Canberra* in December 2011. The previous *No Waste* strategy increased resource recovery from 42 per cent in 1995-96, when it was released, to over 70 per cent in 2011. The current waste strategy outlines a comprehensive framework to increase resource recovery to over 90 per cent by 2025.

The Government also issued a request for proposals to build a Material Recovery Facility for dry mixed commercial wastes in December 2010. Proposals closed at the end of March 2011 and negotiations are continuing with the preferred proponent. Subject to successful negotiations, it is expected that a new facility will be established within the Hume Resource Recovery Estate in 2013-14 which will recover in excess of 40,000 tonnes of material each year.

The Government continues to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and States/Territories to improve resource recovery with the commencement of the much anticipated Television and Computer Product Stewardship Scheme on 15 May 2012. The ACT became the first jurisdiction to divert all computers and television units from landfill by introducing mandatory recycling for televisions in 2010, complementing the mandatory recycling for computers introduced in 2005.

While the Government continues to make significant progress in reducing waste generation and increasing resource recovery, it is recognised that for the foreseeable future, unrecoverable wastes will be created that will need to be sent to landfill. The Government has invested in maintaining a safe and environmentally responsible landfill to meet the ACT's future needs by extending the life of the current landfill to 2015 through improved design and more efficient use of landfill cells within the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre. Design details for the next stage of the Mugga Lane landfill that will provide capacity to 2030, are now being finalised.

In 2011-12, the Government introduced street-level recycling in the city centre with the installation of 42 recycling bins and bin shrouds in high visibility locations. This activity has been continued in the 2012-13 Budget with an additional \$0.150 million to maintain the service.

### *Sustainability in Water Management*

Notwithstanding the recent above average rainfall, the Government will continue to maintain programs to reduce demand for potable water and increase the use of cost effective fit-for-purpose non-potable water where effective. The ACT community has across all sectors continued to use its water resources conservatively as reflected in the reduction of water consumption. The demand management policy and programs have enabled the ACT to be on course to meet its water reduction targets as set out in the *Think Water, Act Water* strategy.

The review of the *Think Water, Act Water* strategy is expected to be released during 2012 which will then be followed by the launch of a revised water resources strategy for the Territory. The revised strategy will renew our objectives and provide for a new coordinated framework for managing the ACT's water resources. A particular component of the ACT water resource planning will be to improve the water quality of our lakes and streams and establish a coordinated approach to catchment management.

The latest information on climate change data and scientific analysis has been incorporated to inform water planning, including a focus on water security.

ACT water planning will be influenced by the release of the draft Basin Plan by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, which aims to ensure a more sustainable Basin. The ACT supports the Plan but seeks to ensure sustainable water resources for the ACT's future are available.

In 2012-13, the Government will continue to monitor the implementation of ACTEW's water security projects with the objective of implementing an efficient and effective planning and management approach, ensuring water security for the ACT and broader region.

A central platform to this approach is water supply diversification, in particular:

- completion of the construction of the enlarged Cotter Dam, which is expected to be completed in 2013.
- construction of a pump station and pipeline from the Murrumbidgee River, near Angle Crossing, to Googong Dam, which is expected to be completed by 2012-13; and
- acquisition of water rights to supplement supply.

### *Sustainable Energy*

In 2011, the ACT Government released the *Sustainable Energy Policy*, which establishes an integrated policy framework for managing the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the Government to 2020 as they relate to energy production and use. The framework consists of four key targeted outcomes:

- secure and affordable energy;
- smarter use of energy;
- cleaner energy; and
- growth in the clean economy.

Complementing the fully subscribed Feed-in-Tariff Scheme for micro and medium solar generators, the *Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011* provides for a further 210MW in renewable energy generation in the ACT and surrounding regions. In January 2012, the Government announced a first capacity release of 40MW of the 210MW for the establishment of solar renewable generators within the ACT. This release is in the form of a Solar Auction, the success of which will inform future releases.

Energy policy work will continue in 2012-13, with the Government:

- participating in the national energy reform agenda, including the local implementation of the National Energy Customer Framework;
- undertaking targeted projects to ensure the equitable provision of energy;
- continuing to facilitate the establishment of large scale solar power generation in the ACT; and
- decentralising energy supplies and progressing a second electricity supply line to the ACT and south-eastern NSW.

The Government will continue to implement new and revised national minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) for appliances and equipment. These standards cover a number of products from small household plug-in appliances to industrial installations. The first of the MEPS for gas powered products were introduced in late 2010 with the implementation of standards for gas water heaters.

As part of its review of the Territory Plan, the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESDD) has prepared a new estate development code to replace the Residential Subdivision Development Code. Among other things, this code introduced rules to ensure that at least 95 per cent of blocks in future greenfield subdivisions comply with new solar orientation requirements, whilst ensuring that subsequent residential buildings can achieve good solar orientation without casting shadows over neighbours.

The ACT continues to lead the way on the introduction of energy efficiency initiatives.

The *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Bill 2012* creates an energy efficiency retailer obligation scheme, commencing from 1 January 2013 and running initially until 31 December 2015. The Scheme establishes a Territory-wide energy savings target and mandatory energy savings obligations for individual retailers. Retailers will meet their targets by undertaking energy efficiency activities in ACT homes and businesses. Examples include replacing inefficient heaters, air conditioners and water heaters as well as home improvements such as double glazing, draught sealing and insulation. The Scheme will also target low income households so that these families benefit the greatest from energy savings.

The Government will also be actively involved in developing and implementing other national initiatives to improve the efficiency of buildings and effectiveness of energy efficiency schemes, including the development of a new national framework for setting energy use and assessment standards for buildings and aiming to be the first jurisdiction to license residential energy assessors.

## *Sustainability in the Education Sector*

The *ACT Sustainable Schools Initiative* is part of the ACTSmart suite of programs delivered by ESDD.

The Government will build on the continued success of the Initiative in 2012-13 by:

- supporting 84 ACT public schools, all of which have registered with the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) program;
- supporting the existing 44 non-government schools in the AuSSI program;
- continuing to provide professional development for teachers in components of sustainability through professional learning opportunities;
- continuing to assist schools to conduct water, waste and energy audits, and surveys of school grounds;
- continuing to assist schools to reduce water and energy consumption and waste going to landfill;
- supporting schools to create habitats and increase biodiversity in school grounds;
- continuing to accredit schools in the sustainable management of energy, water, waste and school grounds;
- supporting schools to establish and maintain environment centres/areas;
- continuing to develop curriculum support material for teachers;
- promoting the AuSSI toolkit and supporting resources; and
- supporting sustainability practises in the Education and Training Directorate's (ETDs) central office locations.

The roll-out and installation of photovoltaic (solar power generation) systems at all public schools will continue in 2012-13. In conjunction with the roll-out of solar power systems, ETD is installing smart (pulse) meters to record energy (electricity and gas) and water consumption and energy (solar power) generation with educational interface software. This will assist schools to reduce energy and water consumption, increase student awareness of solar power generation and support curriculum activities relating to sustainable practices. AuSSI ACT will continue to provide professional development to the schools about their power system, energy efficiency strategies and renewable energy.

ETD will complete the stage 1 installation of artificial grass play areas at public schools which will create and maintain safe and inclusive student learning environments as well as reducing the need for irrigation and maintenance required with grassed play areas. ETD will also complete pilot landscape improvement projects at public schools and commence school frontage improvement work in 2012-13 at priority high schools. These projects include water sensitive urban designs.

Stage 1 of the Carbon Neutral Schools project will commence in 2012-13 and will include the installation of high efficiency internal lighting and high rating roof insulation, upgrades to improve heating efficiency, replacement of windows in high use rooms with thermal resistant glass, provision of window furnishings and the construction of covered and secure bike shelters.

Similar to the recently completed schools (Gungahlin College, Namadgi School and Harrison Secondary School) the design of the new Bonner Primary School includes initiatives to achieve a green star rating from the Green Building Council of Australia. The designs include water sensitive urban design principles, building orientation and solar passive design, clerestory windows, solar hot water systems and underground rainwater storage tanks. Construction of this school will be completed in 2012-13, and also includes an environmental learning centre.

Through the annual schools Capital Upgrades Program, ETD will continue to undertake pilot projects and implement initiatives aimed at reducing energy and water consumption and reducing and better managing waste, including:

- installation of water refill stations at trial sites;
- installation of solar tubes at trial sites;
- installation of power management systems for all personal computers at all public schools;
- connection of Dickson College, Lyneham High School and Lyneham Primary School to the North Canberra urban waterways system; and
- construction of bin enclosures at pilot sites.

The new Sustainable Skills Training Hub at the Canberra Institute of Technology's Bruce Campus will meet current Government requirements for sustainable commercial development by conserving energy and water. A significant aim of this project will be to achieve 100 per cent green power generation within the new facility. The facility will incorporate the latest sustainable technologies.

The new electro-technology building, situated at the Fyshwick Trade Skills Centre, incorporates environmentally responsible materials and services, including the building fabric, insulation, shade, heating and cooling systems, ventilation, lighting and water consumption.

### *Sustainability in Public Housing*

The Government has committed \$30 million over 10 years to improve the water and energy efficiency of public housing properties with the aim of decreasing emissions and increasing the comfort of tenants. The works focus on improvements such as ceiling and wall insulation and draught sealing, as physical building and shell improvements have greater longevity and are less prone to failure. This includes the additional \$2 million provided in the 2012-13 Budget to extend the expanded program to improve energy efficiency in public housing until 2015-16.

Housing ACT continues to participate in the *Water and Energy Savings in the Territory* Program, now incorporated into the Outreach Program delivered by ESDD, to assist tenants to reduce energy costs. This includes retrofitted improvements to properties coupled with targeted education programs. Housing ACT also works with ACTEW to assist tenants in managing water use more effectively through their participation in a number of water tune-up programs.

As part of the ongoing revitalisation of the public housing portfolio, properties with an energy rating of at least three stars are acquired. When properties are constructed, they include many energy efficiency measures, including energy efficient hot water systems and appliances, have an energy rating of six stars or more. They also include the installation of water saving measures, such as water saving shower heads, flow limiters and water tanks, and use of rainwater for flushing of toilets and for use in the laundry or garden. Also the landscaping and gardens use drought resistant plantings and shrubs that require less water.

### *Sustainability in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*

Sustainability principles are also incorporated in the Government's ICT programs. Shared Services continues to pursue initiatives to improve efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of ICT operations, including:

- continuing to introduce new 'Coolthread' based technology that delivers sound performance, maximises energy and space efficiency, and has a high level of performance per watt;
- ongoing pursuit of server 'virtualisation' that dramatically reduces the number of power consuming and heat generating physical servers;
- replacement of a large number of older desktop PC devices with new PCs that are not only faster but also more energy efficient;
- completing the implementation of "hot aisle/cold aisle" principles in all ACT Government data centres, which is approximately 97 per cent complete; and
- the development of a draft *ACT Government ICT Sustainability Plan 2012-2017*.

A number of new initiatives have been identified in 2012-13 including:

- implementing the ACT Government's Data Centre strategy by procuring a new leased facility which will be required to meet current Government standards for sustainable commercial development by conserving energy and water and incorporating the latest technologies;
- investigating data management strategies in order to reduce costs and the ACT Government's carbon footprint;
- implementing an e-tendering solution which will result in a more effective and efficient tendering process and reduce paper consumption significantly; and
- implementing an automated solution which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACT Government's accounts payable processes and investigate various forms of electronic invoicing which will reduce paper consumption significantly.

### *Sustainability Across the Health Sector*

ACT Health's capital upgrade program is geared towards implementing new environmentally efficient initiatives and upgrading fittings and fixtures including:

- use of night cooling;
- installation of energy efficient lighting;
- installation of occupancy sensors or timer controls for lighting and air conditioning in non-critical buildings;
- installation of flow restrictors and water efficient plumbing fixtures; and
- connection of plant and building spaces to building management systems to allow automated and/or remote monitoring.

### *Sustainability in the Justice and Community Safety Sector*

The Justice and Community Safety (JACS) sector is supported by the Directorate's capital upgrade program which includes:

- targeted energy audits of high energy consumption properties, including the Alexander Maconochie Centre;
- upgrading of building management systems, and heating ventilation and air conditioning systems at energy intensive sites;
- upgrading of lighting and lighting systems across owned and leased sites;
- installation of solar panels and solar hot water at selected ACT Emergency Services Agency sites; and
- implementation of a pilot plan to achieve carbon neutrality at the Ainslie Fire Station.

A Sustainability Committee oversees the implementation and monitoring of initiatives to ensure efficient and effective outcomes are achieved. In addition, training and information sessions will be provided in leadership in sustainability for JACS Business Unit Executives and Sustainability Committee members supporting continued leadership in sustainability. Staff sustainability surveys are also conducted to identify behavioural change outcomes with delivered measures.

## Sustainability Programs

Sustainability programs under the ACTSmart banner support the Government's sustainability policy initiatives in the areas of climate change, energy, water and waste. This provides help for residents including low income earners, businesses, schools and community groups to save energy and water, reduce waste and cut GHG emissions. The programs have been refined and adjusted to reflect policy developments and results of reviews and evaluations.

The ACTSmart suite of sustainability programs includes:

- an updated user-friendly ACTSmart website ([www.actsmart.act.gov.au](http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au)) providing the convenience of browsing all ACT Government rebates, assistance programs and advice;
- household programs that provide advice, assessments and rebates including Home Energy Advice Team energy efficiency program, ToiletSmart Plus, GardenSmart and the new IrrigationSmart;
- ACTSmart Office and business programs that provide advice, training, signage and planning to help businesses achieve waste reductions;
- a new small business energy and water efficiency program, to start on 1 July 2012, that has been developed in response to the outcomes of a review of existing energy and water efficiency programs and research on successful programs in other jurisdictions;
- the ACTSmart Public Event Recycling Program to assist event organisers implement recycling facilities within a public event and provide the public the opportunity to recycle within that event. This program has been extended to cover all the Centenary of Canberra events;
- the AuSSI ACT Schools program covering all ACT schools to guide school communities to work through energy, water, waste and biodiversity program elements and achieve planned improvements over time;
- Waterwatch that covers a range of volunteer programs including Frogwatch and Platypuswatch; and
- the Outreach program that is a major initiative assisting low income residents to improve their energy efficiency at home, reduce their expenditure on energy bills, and contribute to reducing the ACT's GHG emissions.

## Protecting the Environment

Environmental protection will continue to be a high priority for the Government during 2012-13. Conserving the Territory's environment for future generations entails balancing development needs with the responsible and efficient use of available resources.

Key priorities include implementing the agreed recommendations made by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's inquiries into the management of Canberra's urban forest, Canberra Nature Park, Googong foreshore and the Molonglo River corridor and maintaining a high level of regulatory oversight over water quality and abstraction, noise pollution and air quality.

This year the Government renewed its investment in programs aimed at conserving threatened species. Collaboration continued with the ANU and nationally significant research continues to be conducted at the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary on the restoration of critically endangered woodlands. Reintroduction of locally extinct fauna into the Mulligans Flat Woodlands Sanctuary is a key focus.

In 2011-12, Eastern Bettongs were translocated from Tasmania to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in preparation for a population to be established at Mulligans Flat. Works are also progressing on the reintroduction of the New Holland Mouse. The successful Corroboree Frog breeding program is continuing with the release of frogs into the wild during the year.

Research on threatened grassland fauna, in conjunction with the University of Canberra, is working towards the establishment of a Grassland Earless Dragon breeding program and research on the habitat and ecology of the dragon. The ACT Government collaborated with Greening Australia to maintain the plantings of *Allocasuarina* trees, which are food trees for the Glossy Black Cockatoo, with several trips for weed and site management. The survival rate is high at approximately 95 per cent.

The Government continues the staged replacement of the urban forest, which is a strategic initiative that aims to reduce the risk to government, people and property from the declining condition of the ageing and drought-affected urban tree estate.

The *ACT Vertebrate Pest Management Strategy 2002* is currently being reviewed to:

- assess the efficacy of its objectives, strategies and performance indicators; and
- ensure alignment with the *ACT Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005* and the recently released Commonwealth and NSW Government pest management strategies, codes of practice and management plans.

The 2012-13 Budget will implement strategies to address high priority vertebrate pest challenges facing the Territory's parks and reserves. Feral deer and pigs, wild dogs and rabbit will be targeted.

The final *ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy* will be released in 2012.

## **Strengthening Communities**

The Government is committed to supporting the community in undertaking activities that complement the delivery of environmental priorities. In 2012-13, the Government will continue to provide support to our community partners including the Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre, the Conservation Council and SEE Change ACT.

In partnership with the Commonwealth Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative, the ACT Government will continue to support the *Waterwatch* program and *Greening Australia* to engage the community in the delivery of environmental projects. The Government will continue to deliver a targeted Indigenous employment and training project, *Caring for our Cotter*, funded through the *Caring for our Country Initiative*.

ACT environment grants will continue to support worthwhile on-ground community projects addressing native habitat rehabilitation and control of weeds and pest animals.