

## 8.1 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 (2009)*, the Government's sustainability policy, aligns with the *Canberra Plan: Towards our Second Century*.

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

- *ACT Planning Strategy – Planning for a sustainable city (2012)*;
- *AP2: A New Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the ACT (2012)*; and
- *Transport for Canberra – Transport for a Sustainable City 2012–2031 (2012)*.

#### *Action Plan 2: A New Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the ACT (AP2)*

In October 2012, the Government released AP2, which aims to set the Territory on the path to meet its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target and establish a strong foundation to achieve the overall target of being carbon neutral by 2060.

The ACT has the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets of any jurisdiction in Australia. By 2020, the ACT has a target of 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels.

*Weathering the Change: Action Plan 1 (AP1)*, released in 2007, established actions to reduce emissions and increase awareness of climate change across the Government and the community. AP2 builds on AP1, as it sets out a strategic pathway for the ACT to become carbon neutral by 2060. AP2 sets out to achieve the following four primary outcomes:

- Minimising the ACT's impact on global warming by achieving the ACT's legislated greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Ensuring a fair society in a low-carbon economy.
- Strengthening the ACT's capacity to a changing climate.
- Creating a more sustainable future.

### How is the Government Supporting the Community to reduce the ACT's footprint?

The *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012 (EEIS)* was passed and commenced operations on 1 January 2013. The objectives of the scheme are to:

- encourage the efficient use of energy;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with stationary energy use in the Territory;
- reduce household and business energy use and costs; and
- increase opportunities for priority households to reduce energy use and costs.

The scheme establishes energy savings targets and mandatory energy savings obligations for energy retailers. The scheme will provide targeted assistance to low income households.

The ACT Large-scale Solar Auction process has set a national benchmark for large-scale solar generation policy design and, subject to a review of the auction later this year, will be the model used to pursue the 690 megawatts of renewable capacity required to achieve our 2020 greenhouse gas emission targets.

The Government's *ACTSmart* range of programs has been supporting households and small businesses by providing education and expert energy efficiency advice. The Outreach program assists low income householders in improving energy efficiency in their homes and reducing energy bills by providing advice and energy efficient appliances and fittings.

The *ACTSmart Office and Business Program* has been successful in providing advice, training, signage and planning that helps businesses achieve waste reductions. Significant progress was made during the year with the Tuggeranong Hyperdome being the first large shopping centre in the Territory to participate in the program.

#### *Sustainability in the Built Environment*

For over a decade the ACT has led the way on disclosure requirements for building energy efficiency. The Territory has been recognised internationally in the development of these standards. The Government recognises the role of urban planning and ensures a sustainable future by incorporating innovative planning and design in developments, delivered through the Land Development Agency.

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.

The *ACT Planning Strategy – Planning for a sustainable city*, released in July 2012, establishes how the Territory will develop to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges.

#### *Sustainability in Transport*

In 2012, the Government released the *Transport for Canberra* policy which aims to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions while increasing the number of people using active travel and public transport.

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

- is safe for moving people however they get around;
- provides sustainable travel options and reduces transport emissions;
- makes active travel, like walking and cycling, the easy way to get around;
- is integrated with land use planning ;
- is accessible for everybody whatever their level of mobility; and
- is efficient and cost effective, providing value for money for Government, business and the community.

The Government is committed to sustainable transport, including progressing light rail in the Territory. The 2013-14 Budget provides for the:

- creation of the Capital Metro Agency to progress light rail;
- preliminary design of the network; and
- detailed system master planning.

The Government is continuing to replace the ageing ACTION bus fleet to ensure it meets the targets in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and clean energy legislation.

#### *Sustainability in Waste Management*

The Government released the *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025: Towards a Sustainable Canberra* in December 2011. The current waste strategy outlines a comprehensive framework to increase resource recovery to over 90 per cent by 2025.

In 2011, the Government trialled a bulky waste household collection service, which annually provides one free collection per dwelling to eligible Concession Card holders. Due to the success of the program, the Government has provided further funding for this service in the 2013-14 Budget.

The Government is committed to exploring other waste management programs including methods to reduce the level of organic waste going to landfill, through strategies such as comprehensive waste education programs and subsidising home composting equipment. The Government is also increasing resource recovery by progressing the development of the new recycling drop off centre in Gungahlin.

#### *Sustainability in Water Management*

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 review of *Think water, act water* has been completed and the release of a draft new water strategy, *Water for the Future: Striking the Balance*, is expected in Spring 2013. The strategy will provide for a new coordinated framework for managing the Territory's water resources, in particular, the improvement of the water quality of our lakes, streams and catchment management.

The issue of water quality in our lakes, which has arisen in a number of reports, will be addressed through the Government's proposed Murray-Darling Basin Priority project which is to be submitted to the Commonwealth Government for approval.

In 2013-14, ACTEW Corporation will improve the ACT's water security by completing the Enlarged Cotter Dam, finalising a pump station and pipeline from the Murrumbidgee River to Googong Dam and through the acquisition of water rights to supplement future supply needs.

#### *Sustainability in Public Housing*

All new public housing dwellings are built to the Gold level of the Liveable Design Standard. The dwellings are also constructed to achieve 6-star energy ratings. Water saving measures are also included such as water tanks and grey water systems.

As part of the continuous refurbishment and upgrade of properties water saving shower heads and dual flush cisterns are installed.

The Government has provided \$30 million over ten years to improve the energy efficiency of public housing, with approximately 4,400 dwellings (approximately 36 per cent of housing stock) already upgraded. Works undertaken include ceiling and wall insulation, draught sealing, pelmets and curtain rods, energy efficient hot water systems and heating appliances.

### **How is the Government reducing its own footprint?**

The 2012-13 Budget Papers announced a \$5 million *Carbon Neutral Government* fund (the Fund). The Fund replaces and expands the *Resource Management Fund*.

Projects supported under the Fund include upgrades to lighting technology at 28 Government sites, energy efficient lighting, controls and mechanical upgrades in 15 community facilities, installation of solar-tube lighting at Exhibition Park in Canberra and upgrade of lighting at two public libraries.

It is expected that the number of applications to the Fund will increase over time, in part through three initiatives supporting the identification of potential projects, including a trial of the *ACTSmart Government Energy and Water Program* which provides advice and assessment of energy savings opportunities; the recruitment of two officers to perform a whole of government energy efficiency service; and the establishment of a Sustainability Data Management System to provide comprehensive data on the Government's operations.

#### *Sustainability in Health*

The *Sustainability Strategy* developed by ACT Health provides a roadmap for a collaborative sustainable future and contains actions for seven focus areas – Models of Care, Buildings and Infrastructure, the Digital Health Environment, Transport, Regulatory Environment, Workforce, and Partnerships and External Service Delivery.

One of the key actions of the strategy is the delivery of the Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Building and Infrastructure Projects, which guides future sustainable development of ACT Health facilities with the aim of reducing carbon emissions. Initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs include:

- installation and/or upgrade of water pressure pumps, boiler heat recovery and upgrade of Medical Air Compressors in Building 1 at Canberra Hospital;
- boiler Replacement in Buildings 2,7,10 and 12 at the Canberra Hospital;
- new backflow prevention installed on potable water feed from Gilmore Crescent to the Canberra Hospital; and
- installation of light sensors and energy efficient lights in various buildings.

#### *Sustainability in Schools*

The Government is assisting schools to reduce water, energy consumption and waste going to landfill through programs and learning tools implemented through the *ACT Sustainable Schools Initiative*. The Government will build on the continued success of this initiative in 2013-14 by:

- supporting ACT public school, all of which have registered with the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) program;
- supporting the existing non government schools in the AuSSI program;

- developing curriculum materials to complement the Australian curriculum sustainability priority;
- providing professional development for teachers in components of sustainability; and
- engaging with the environmentally sustainable design (ESD) champion at each public school to facilitate the introduction and management of more ESD activities.

The installation of solar power generation systems at public schools will continue in 2013-14 which will assist in the reduction in the use of electrical power and increase student awareness of solar power generation. The Directorate will also expand the use of smart metering to include water and gas meters at all public schools.

Stage 1 of the *Carbon Neutral Schools* project involves the implementation of energy efficient lighting and insulation at ten schools. Additional works will be trialled at two of these schools including improving heating system efficiency, thermal resistance of existing windows, and providing covered and secure bike shelters.

Further sustainability measures to be pursued in 2013-14 include:

- finalising the connection of three schools – Dickson College, Lyneham High School and Lyneham Primary School –to the North Canberra Urban Waterway System;
- trialling solar reflective paint on two school roofs ;and
- installing water refill stations at ACT public schools to support the Government’s *Investing in Healthy Canberra Kids* initiative.

## **Protecting the Environment**

Environmental protection will continue to be a high priority for the Government during 2013-14. Conserving the Territory’s environment for future generations entails balancing development needs with the responsible and efficient use of available resources.

Key priorities include the provision of five additional park rangers by 2015-16, funding for continued improvements to Canberra’s urban treescape, and support for management of national parks and reserves, and maintenance of urban parks, trees and community spaces.

In addition, a review of the level of service, quality and quantity of land management and regulatory activities will be undertaken to inform future service provision.

Agreed recommendations detailed in the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment’s various inquiries will be implemented. Work has progressed on implementing these recommendations. The Googong Foreshores Plan of Management (POM) has been developed, work has commenced on a review of the Canberra Nature Park POM, and a POM for the Lower Cotter Catchment has been commenced.

The Government has also acted to reintroduce threatened species into native habitats, for example:

- Eastern Bettongs have been successfully translocated from Tasmania to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Mulligans Flat in 2011-12. From the 30 bettongs translocated to Tidbinbilla there are now 53 adults and 19 pouched young. In Mulligans Flat the population has increased from 32 to over 50 adult bettongs.
- The Corroborree Frog program has also seen success with the release of captive-bred frogs back to sphagnum moss bogs in Namadgi National Park.

## **Community Engagement**

The Government has been involving the community in all aspects of climate change and environment policies. The Government is committed to supporting the community in undertaking activities that complement the delivery of environmental priorities. In 2013-14, the Government will continue to provide support to community partners including the Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre, the Conservation Council and SEE-Change ACT.

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