

A SUSTAINABLE TERRITORY

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.

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).

AP2 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. Targets have also been introduced to achieve 90 per cent renewable energy in the next six years.

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

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 adapt to a changing climate.
- Leading 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) 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 Scheme is modelled to deliver around a 6.2 per cent reduction on emissions in 2015 and savings of 742,000 tonnes. The first compliance period of the EEIS ended on 31 December 2013. Retailers reported their energy sales in this period and the activities undertaken to meet their associated Energy Savings Obligation by 31 March 2014. Preliminary assessment indicates that the energy savings target and the 25 per cent priority household target have been met.

During the 2013 compliance period light globes, standby power controllers and door seals were installed in 18,064 households, including over 5,000 priority households. To 31 March 2014 an additional 6,313 households benefited.

A review of the EEIS is underway to determine its operation beyond 2015 and if any changes are required to improve its function.

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 program has assisted over 4,000 households with energy efficiency savings of approximately 450 tonnes CO₂-e (carbon-dioxide-equivalent) annually.

The ACT Large-scale Solar Auction process has set a national benchmark for large-scale solar generation policy design. The first auction delivered 40MW of competitively priced solar energy generation in the ACT. Two of these successful bidders are currently in the process of obtaining development approval. The construction of a solar farm south of Canberra is nearing completion.

A review of the auction published in October 2013 has confirmed the results of the auction will be successful in helping to reduce the ACT's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and help achieve targets to reduce the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions.

The Government announced in March 2014 a 200MW Wind Auction to be conducted by a competitive process. Under the ACT's 90 per cent renewable energy target, additional wind power investments will meet around 45 per cent of Canberra's electricity needs by 2020.

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. This includes facilitating a range of housing options of varying density in centres and along transport routes to achieve a more compact city form.

Master plans have or are being prepared for all major centres in Canberra. The City Plan, with the associated City to the Lake project, will help deliver a more vibrant and sustainable city heart.

Sustainability in Transport

Since releasing the *Transport for Canberra* policy in 2012, the Government has worked on implementation actions, aiming 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 2014-15 Budget commits \$4.833 million towards walking and cycling initiatives, including:

- \$2.5 million over two years for Transport for Canberra – Walking and cycling infrastructure – Stage 4; and
- \$2.333 million of capital upgrades funding for footpath and cycling improvements in various suburbs.

This funding builds on the \$17 million the Government has invested since 2010-11 in walking and cycling infrastructure, which is in addition to infrastructure provided as part of new estate developments or bike lanes on new roads.

The Government is committed to progressing Capital Metro – Canberra’s light rail project. This initiative is an important part of the Government’s vision to deliver a truly sustainable and creative city. The Government has established the Capital Metro Agency to deliver the first stage of the network from Gungahlin to City. The Capital Metro Agency has progressed work on the design and planning elements for the project as well as the analysis required to identify options for an appropriate delivery strategy for the project.

The Canberra Light Rail Master Plan project is exploring options for a potential future citywide light rail network that will seek to maximise the significant social, economic and environmental opportunities that light rail transport can provide to cities.

The Government is continuing to replace the ageing ACTION bus fleet to ensure it meets the targets in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the Government's objectives for improving the fuel efficiency and emissions profile of the fleet.

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 2014-15 Budget.

The *ACTSmart Business and Office* waste management and recycling programs have resulted in waste diversion to landfill savings of over 1,000 tonnes CO₂-e annually.

The Government is committed to long term resource recovery programs. These include a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for commercial and industrial waste. The Government will increase resource recovery from the public and from small businesses through its Recycling Drop Off Centres (RDOC's) and continue its construction and demolition resource recovery program.

The Government will continue to provide waste education to schools and the community and produce engaging promotional materials designed to encourage greater rates of recycling. The 20th anniversary of household recycling in the ACT in 2014-15 will provide a central theme for looking at where we have come from and envisioning where we aim to be in 2025.

The Government has allocated in excess of \$19 million on the construction of the first four cells of the Mugga Lane landfill extension and associated works. These works will meet the ACT's anticipated landfill needs for approximately 10 to 15 years.

Sustainability in Water Management

The Government will continue to maintain programs to reduce demand for potable drinking water and increase the use of cost effective fit-for-purpose non-potable water where effective.

The review of *Think water, act water* is nearing completion after the draft water strategy, *Striking the Balance*, was released in July 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 and streams through better catchment management.

In February 2014 the ACT Government secured funding to address the issue of water quality in our lakes under the Murray-Darling Basin Priority project. The project has a two staged approach to improve water quality by firstly investing in understanding the problem and then evaluating effective long-term solutions. The project will focus on six priority catchments that account for 74 per cent of total run-off and 54 per cent of total pollutant load in ACT waterways.

ACTEW Corporation has improved the ACT's water security by completing the Enlarged Cotter Dam.

Sustainability in Public Housing

All new public housing dwellings are built to the Gold level of the Livable Housing Australia 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.

Housing ACT sponsors and provides funds to the Water and Energy Savings in the Territory (WEST) Program which assists low income families to reduce their expenditure on electricity, gas and water through education to change behaviours and minor works at the home. Families are referred to the Program through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Energy and Water section as a result of families presenting with large debts to the utility companies.

The Government has provided \$30 million over ten years to improve the energy efficiency of public housing, with approximately 6,400 dwellings (approximately 54 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*. The Fund has been supplemented through the redirection of funding previously used for Greenpower purchases into the Fund to assist the Government in funding more projects.

Projects supported under the Fund include upgrades to lighting technology across various Government schools and other buildings, energy efficient heating at two hydrotherapy pools and the installation of a solar hot water system at Erindale College and Leisure Centre.

In the first three rounds, from July 2012 to December 2013, the Fund supported six projects with \$4.6 million provided for LED lighting and solar heating upgrades. The large scale LED lighting projects, installing internal lighting to more than 40 government buildings and schools, have an estimated cost saving of \$1 million per year and reduce electricity use by 30 per cent at most sites.

Sustainability in Health

The ACT Health *Sustainability Strategy 2010-2015* and the *ACT Health Resource Management Plan 2014-2016* provide a roadmap for a collaborative sustainable future and contain 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 elements of the strategy is the delivery of the *ACT Health Sustainability – Environmental Principles and Guidelines – Building and Infrastructure Projects*, which is developed to ensure that all capital projects and major refurbishment works can incorporate design and functionality whilst aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

Some initiatives incorporated into the ACT Health infrastructure aimed at reducing carbon emissions and energy costs include:

- installation and/or upgrade of water pressure pumps, heat recovery boilers and upgrade of Medical Air Compressors in Building 1 at the Canberra Hospital;
- installation of light sensors and energy efficient lights in various buildings;
- fresh air ventilation to provide ambient conditions optimisation;
- low flow tapware and fixtures;
- reverse osmosis water recycling to be used in Tuggeranong Community Health Centre Renal Dialysis;
- electric car recharge points;
- energy efficient lifts; and
- a computer based building management control system.

Sustainability in Schools

The Government is assisting schools to reduce water, energy consumption and waste going to landfill as well as improve biodiversity on school grounds through programs and best practice guides implemented through *ACTSmart Schools* (formerly *ACT Sustainable Schools Initiative*). The Government will build on the continued success of this initiative in 2014-15 by:

- encouraging all ACT public schools to register with ACTSmart Schools;
- supporting the existing non-government schools in the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative program;
- developing curriculum materials to complement the Australian Curriculum sustainability cross-curriculum priority;
- providing professional development for teachers in the area of energy efficiency and waste management; and
- engaging and assisting schools to facilitate the efficient use of environment centres.

The *Carbon Neutral Schools – Stage 1* project continues in 2014-15. Works planned include LED lighting upgrades and cavity wall insulation at two schools and ceiling insulation upgrades at up to four schools. To complement these infrastructure changes the Education and Training Directorate will work with these schools to foster a sustainable school community. To support this aim, the new Green Star Performance Tool, developed by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA), will be trialled at Canberra High School.

As part of the Investing in Healthy Kids Canberra initiative, water refill stations were installed at 17 ACT public schools in the 2013-14 year. This initiative is linked to the ACT Government's Towards Zero Growth: Healthy Weight Action Plan which incorporated the removal of vending machines from ACT public schools by the end of Term 1 2014. A minimum of two water refill stations will be installed at all remaining ACT public schools in 2014-15 promoting water as the drink of choice following the phasing out of the sale of sugary drinks from all ACT public schools by the end of the 2014 school year. Each student will be provided with a re-usable water bottle to encourage tap water as the drink of choice and reduce plastic waste. ACT public schools will adopt the new whole of ACT Government unified water branding.

Projects funded under the *Carbon Neutral Government* Fund (the Fund) to be completed in 2014-15 include the installation of:

- LED lamps at 19 ACT public schools; and
- solar pool heating at Cranleigh and Black Mountain Schools.

Additional energy conservation measures for ACT Public Schools, eligible to be supported by the Fund, will be investigated in 2014-15.

The implementation of environmental and sustainable design principles in landscape will continue to be expanded in 2014-15. A Xeriscape landscape, which minimises reliance on irrigation, will be constructed at one ACT public school. The ACT public school frontage upgrade program also includes the implementation of rain gardens, planting of drought tolerant species and irrigation from stormwater harvesting. These design principles increase infiltration into subsoil, improve water quality as well as the microclimate and encourage the development of biodiversity.

ACT public schools will continue to re-invest their Feed-in-Tariff income to support sustainability upgrades at their individual school site, including energy and water conservation measures, recycling and waste diversion programs, landscaping, and curriculum development.

Further initiatives to reduce energy use and carbon emissions to be pursued in 2014-15 include:

- installation of power factor correction at priority ACT public schools; and
- completion of the installation of gas data loggers in ACT public schools.

Sustainability – Capital Upgrades

The 2014-15 Budget Capital Upgrades Program includes a number of activities aimed at reducing the Government's footprint. These include:

- installation of energy efficient lights, air handling motors and power factor equipment at Canberra Institute of Technology campuses;
- installation of energy efficient street and traffic lights;
- improving pollution control measures at gross pollutant traps;
- cat containment measures;
- recycling drop off centre upgrades for Tuggeranong, Belconnen Town Centre, Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre and West Belconnen; and
- energy efficiency upgrades in Youth and Community Facilities.

Protecting the Environment

Environmental protection will continue to be a high priority for the Government during 2014-15. 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 and support for management of national parks and reserves, and maintenance of urban parks, trees and community spaces.

Agreed recommendations detailed in the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's various inquiries will be implemented as funding allows. Work has progressed on implementing these recommendations and the development and review of Plans of Management associated with nature reserves is on-going.

There are currently 2,045 hectares of land supporting matters of national environmental significance that the Government is managing or establishing as environmental offsets. This includes 994 hectares associated with the development at Molonglo.

The 2014-15 Budget also provides for further activities under the ACT Government's environmental offsets program including works to improve the infrastructure and ecological condition of:

- new reserves extending the Gungaharra Grasslands and Mulanggari Nature Reserves and monitoring the habitat and condition of the striped legless lizard; and
- the West Macgregor (Jarramlee) offset site and monitoring and improving the habitat and condition of the golden sun moth and natural temperate grassland community.

The Government has also allocated \$3.5 million to deliver commitments in the Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance (NES Plan).

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.