

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Adaptation Action

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT will face significant and increasing impacts from climate change over coming years and will need to adapt to this changing climate.
- This includes increasing temperatures; more hot days and heatwaves; reduced annual rainfall; more intense rain events and extreme storms.
- The Government is undertaking action to strengthen our resilience and prepare Canberra and community for the climate challenges we will face.
- By adapting, our community will be able to thrive in a changing and often unpredictable climate, keeping cool during our long dry summers and warming our homes efficiently during those cold winter mornings.
- The work we are doing is informed by the latest climate projections and the ACT Climate Risk Assessment that was undertaken in 2022.
- Actions to ensure our urban environment is climate ready include:
  - Planting over 23,000 trees in 2023-24 to increase tree canopy cover and reduce the urban heat island effect.
  - Embedding climate and urban heat provisions in the planning system.
  - Providing grants to community-led projects to address urban heat in difficult-to-cool locations through the *Nature in the City: Cooling Our Suburbs* program.
- The ACT Government is also working to increase community resilience, particularly for those in vulnerable situations. For example:
  - The Government introduced a minimum energy efficiency standard for ceiling insulation in rental properties, making renters' homes more comfortable and resilient to climate extremes.
  - Working with Community Sector Organisations to co-design a climate risk management and adaptation 'toolkit' to better assess and mitigate climate risks to their operations, services, staff, volunteers and assets.
  - A broad range of climate programs supports Canberrans most in need while also building community resilience, such as through the installation of curtains and insulation.
- The Government recognises future climate impacts need to be considered across many sectors. For example, the Disaster Resilience Strategy provides the framework for building resilience to disasters in the ACT.
- Preparing Canberra to be climate ready needs cooperative action by government, organisations, businesses and the community.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Perry Wiles  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

### Key Information

- The ACT Government monitors and assesses progress on its adaptation actions through a number of activities, including:
  - The 5-yearly 'Living well with a changing climate' longitudinal survey which assists with monitoring and evaluating community resilience to the impacts of climate change. The survey was first run in 2018 and, along with the most recent survey from 2023, is publicly available on the ACT Government Climate Choices website.
  - The ACT monitors our progress towards the Living Infrastructure Plan targets using periodic urban heat mapping and Light Detection and Radar (LiDAR) data collection and analysis. Canberra's city-wide canopy cover was last measured in 2020, estimating that Canberra has a canopy cover of 22.5 per cent. The next LiDAR survey has taken place in early 2025. Analysis to determine tree canopy cover is being conducted following the LiDAR data collection with publication of Canberra's urban tree canopy cover expected in late 2025, supporting identification of priority locations for tree planting and heat mitigation.

### Background Information

- The impacts of climate change for the ACT, if unprepared, are predicted to include increased pressure on healthcare, emergency response and recovery services, damage and disruption to key infrastructure, financial instability, lost productivity, and reduced thermal comfort across the built environment, impacting the health and wellbeing of residents and workers.
- In addition to efforts to mitigate carbon emissions, ongoing work is required to adapt to the future climate. For example:
  - ensuring critical systems, such as the electricity network, are resilient;
  - ensuring the resilience of Government assets, operations and services;
  - ensuring Canberra's urban environment is as climate ready as possible;
  - seeking to enhance community resilience, particularly providing support to the most vulnerable, and supporting small and medium businesses' resilience; and
  - all the while avoiding maladaptation.
- The ACT's adaptation work is informed by the NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARcliM) project, which provides detailed ACT level climate projections developed under the ACT Government's partnership in the NSW Government-led project.
- The most recent projections from NARcliM, released in August 2024, show the climate challenges ACT faces out to 2100. These include more extreme hot days and heat waves, increase in fire weather, and more intense rainfall and storm events with likely reduced rainfall overall.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Perry Wiles  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (Home Energy Support Scheme)

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government is ensuring a ‘just transition’ as part of its climate change response, noting that inadequately insulated, and energy inefficient homes contribute to higher energy bills and poor thermal comfort.
- Ensuring that supports are available to help our community members become early beneficiaries from the transition from gas to electric has a renewed and more targeted focus in this term of Government.
- Through the Home Energy Support Scheme, the ACT Government committed \$50 million to deliver a range of measures to reduce energy hardship for low-income homeowners as well as public, private, and community housing renters.
- The program offers a range of financial and other support for Canberra’s most vulnerable households to replace inefficient appliances and improve thermal efficiency. Participating households will benefit from reduced energy costs and improved wellbeing.
- Eligible homeowners can access rebates for energy efficient products under the *Home Energy Support: Rebates for Homeowners Program*.
- Homeowners with an eligible concession card can access
  - one rebate of up to \$2,500 to install rooftop solar (Category A), and
  - an additional rebate of up to \$2,500 for reverse cycle heating and cooling, eligible hot water systems, ceiling insulation or electric stove tops/ovens (Category B).
- Since program inception to 28 May 2025, 645 Category A and 827 Category B products have been installed at a total value of \$3.6 million.
- The *Public and Community Housing Upgrades Programs* deliver ceiling insulation and gas to efficient electric appliance upgrades in social housing properties. The program will ensure all social housing meets the minimum ceiling insulation standard by November 2026 and facilitates tenants to transition off the gas network to efficient electric appliance upgrades including cooktops, hot water and heating and cooling systems.
- As of 28 May 2025, 3,335 social (public and community) housing properties have received a ceiling insulation and/or electrification upgrade:
  - Ceiling insulation only = 1,845 properties (1,817 public + 28 community)
  - Electrification only = 830 properties (609 public + 221 community)

Cleared as complete and accurate:

03/06/2025

Cleared for public release by:

Executive Group Manager

Contact Officer name:

Fiona Wright

Lead Directorate:

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Ceiling insulation and electrification = 660 properties (624 public + 36 community)
- Rebates of up to \$2,500 are available for rental providers registered under the *Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme* to upgrade ceiling insulation in their rental properties in line with the minimum ceiling insulation standard. The program launched in April 2022, and as of 28 May 2025, 59 rebates have been paid.
- The *Chronic Health Conditions: Home Energy Efficiency Upgrades pilot*, which ran from February 2023 to August 2024, provided ceiling insulation and gas to electric appliance upgrades for low-income homeowners with chronic health conditions. A total of 50 households received upgrades.
- Insights from this pilot were used to inform the design of the ACT Government's *Community Partnership Electrification Program* (known publicly as the *Access to Electric Program*). This program is a commitment under the *Integrated Energy Plan* for the ACT Government to fully fund electrification and insulation upgrades for 350 low-income private homeowners over two years.

### Key Information

- Monitoring and evaluation reports on the Home Energy Support Scheme, released publicly in September 2024, showed program participants reporting improvements to their wellbeing, comfort, climate resilience and energy costs as a result of the Scheme.
  - 86% of public housing and 71% of community housing respondents reported the comfort of their homes had improved since receiving the upgrades.
  - 64% of public housing respondents reported their wellbeing has improved, including 20% who said they had improved mental wellbeing due to lower energy costs.
  - 64% of community housing respondents reported that they can more easily cope with heatwaves when they happen.

### Background Information

- The Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme is known publicly as the Home Energy Support Scheme. This decision was made through consultation with community stakeholders, including ACTCOSS and Council on the Ageing.
- The Scheme supports the following ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 goals:
  - 2.A - Support low-income residents
  - 4.C - Climate-wise, zero emissions rental homes
  - 4.D - Climate-wise, zero emissions public housing
  - 4.E - Climate-wise, zero emissions low-income homes.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Fiona Wright  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy Implementation

#### Talking Points:

- As of 1 June 2025:
  - there are 11,556 Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs) registered in the ACT
  - the ACT has 190 individual public EV chargers servicing **260 charging bays across 86 sites**, noting some chargers are capable of charging two EVs at once
- There is one Direct Current (fast) (DC) charging bay for every 112 registered electric vehicles in the ACT, which is within the Australian Government's suggested 2024-25 target of 139 EVs/DC plug for the ACT.
- The ratio of registered EVs to the number of fast DC charging bays is known as the plug ratio. The urban zones with the lowest plug ratios (i.e. most chargers) are
  - CBD (22)
  - East Canberra (33) and
  - Inner South (75)
- The urban zones with the highest plug ratios (i.e. least chargers) are
  - Belconnen (531)
  - Weston/Molonglo (282) and
  - Woden Valley (232)

#### Government funded supported public charging

- As of 1 June 2025, there are 60 public chargers (with **104 charging bays**) that have been installed with the assistance of government funding. This has been undertaken through a series of competitive grant rounds.
- Grant funding for EV charge point operators to support the establishment of a sustainable EV charging industry, are issued under the *Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Funding Program* (launched in 2022) and ongoing *Public EV Charging Infrastructure Fund* (launched in 2023).
- **The ACT has reached its ZEV Strategy target of 180 public chargers by 2025.** However, the Government recognises there are still gaps in the network, especially in locations with many apartments residents who often can't charge at home.
- The projects under the grant rounds will fund EV chargers at new locations across the Territory, targeting gaps in the network, tourist destinations, shopping centres, and areas with high-density residential buildings.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Rebates for local clubs to install EV chargers and other sustainability upgrades on their premises have been provided through the Community Clubs Program.

### DC Charging Hubs

- The ACT's Integrated Energy Plan 2024-30 identified the need for DC fast charging hubs to support the transition to electric vehicles for both private passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles. These are 'petrol station' style hubs with a concentrated number of fast DC Chargers.
- Hubs will be located in the most viable locations where traffic flow, amenities, electrical infrastructure and suitable land are all present.
- In December 2024, workshops were held with industry and potential users of DC fast charging hubs discussed how these hubs could be developed in the ACT.

### Support for EV charging in multi-unit developments

- To provide support for unit owners to transition to EVs, \$2.2 million was allocated in the 2024-25 Budget for an EV Ready Apartments loans program.
- This program will offer interest-free loan support to owners' corporations to install the backbone charging infrastructure. Residents will then be able to purchase their own charger at an equitable cost when they are ready to transition.

### ACT Government Passenger Fleet Transition:

- As of 1 June 2025, the ACT Government has over 590 EV chargers installed across Government sites, with its Passenger Fleet comprising:

Vehicle Category	Vehicle Type	Number	Percentage
Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV)	Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV)	252	44.0%
	Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles (FCEV)	7	1.2%
Low Emissions Vehicles	Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEV)	188	32.8%
Vehicles	Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Vehicles	126	22.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>100%</b>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
 Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Background Information

- The Strategy released in July 2022 sets a sales target of 80-90% of all light vehicle sales being zero-emission by 2030 and is supported by a suite of actions including:
  - expanding the ACT public charging network with 180 EV chargers by the end of 2025.
  - commitments to explore the phase-out of new internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035.
  - prohibition of new internal combustion engine vehicles onboarding into taxi and ride-share fleets by 2030.
  - \$2,000 incentives for installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure for apartment buildings (replaced by EV Ready Apartments program).
  - continued financial incentives for ZEV purchase such as stamp duty waivers, 2 years free registration for new and used ZEVs (now lower cost registration), as well as zero interest loans of up to \$15,000.
  - changes to the Territory Plan to make new builds electric vehicle ready.
  - continued action to ensure that 100% of all newly leased Government vehicles are ZEVs where fit for purpose and explore opportunities to replace ACT Government heavy fleet vehicles with ZEVs.
- The ACT Government non-passenger fleet includes an electric van, electric ride-on mowers, an electric forklift and a hybrid-electric fire truck.

## NSW Region

- Fast chargers in regional areas surrounding the ACT will also be critical to reducing driving range anxiety for ACT residents who need to travel outside the Territory.
- The NRMA, Tesla and other charge point operators have invested in public EV charging infrastructure in regions surrounding the ACT such as Yass, Goulburn, Gundagai, Batemans Bay, Braidwood and Bega.
- Australia's largest EV charging hub is under construction in Goulburn. The Tesla charging location will provide 20 DC charging bays offering speeds of up to 250kW per plug and will be open to all EV models.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 03/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### **Portfolio:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### **Biosecurity Threats (Avian influenza, Varroa mite, Red imported fire ant)**

#### **Talking points:**

#### **High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1**

- Australia is the only continent where high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 has not been detected.
- Outbreaks overseas have led to mass mortalities of wild birds and poultry and the deaths of some mammals (including livestock and humans). There is a high risk that this could happen in Australia and the ACT.
- The risk of an incursion of H5N1 in Australia has increased and national preparedness is a priority.
- The ACT is actively engaged with the Australian Government and other states and territories in H5N1 preparedness activities being conducted by the agriculture, environment, health and emergency management portfolios.
  - In February 2025, the ACT Government agreed to enter into a Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) with the Commonwealth which will provide the ACT with \$700,000 to support surveillance, detection, diagnosis and response to H5N1.
  - Separately, the ACT will receive an additional \$100,000 from the Commonwealth in direct departmental payments to progress HPAI preparedness and response planning for susceptible wildlife.
- The ACT is strengthening its existing biosecurity response plans to prepare for the increased risk of H5N1.
- The Government, working as part of a national program, is continuing to conduct wildlife risk assessments for Avian Influenza encompassing all species of native birds and mammals in the ACT.
- Surveillance in wild birds continues monthly at Jerrabomberra Wetlands with all samples taken to date testing negative to Avian influenza.
- ACT Biosecurity and ACT Health have been meeting regularly to ensure a “one health” approach to preparedness and response actions.
- ACT Biosecurity investigates reports of sick or dead wild birds. The ACT community is asked to report any unusual bird deaths to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Tegan Liston Ext: 57325  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### **Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*)**

- Varroa mite has been detected in a beekeeper's hives on a property in the Kowen district of the ACT.
- This is the first time Varroa mite has been detected in the ACT. The ACT Government is working with the affected beekeeper to provide advice on management techniques.
- The ACT Government will continue to update beekeepers directly and publish any updates about Varroa mite in the ACT region on the [ACT Environment website](#)
- Varroa mite is a parasite of honeybees and is considered a major threat to honey production and horticultural industries dependent on pollination. It does not pose a threat to food safety or human health.
- Varroa mite was first detected in Australia in 2022 triggering a national response to manage the biosecurity risk and spread.
- Varroa mite is no longer eradicable from Australia.
- The ACT Government has been working with local beekeepers to help build resilience and prepare them for the arrival of Varroa mite in the territory and minimise the ongoing impacts as it becomes endemic in the ACT.
- Varroa mite is thought to be one of the greatest threats to Australia's honey and honeybee pollination plant industries.
- Varroa mite do not pose a risk to human health or food safety.
- There are no movement restrictions between the ACT and NSW for bees, hives and beekeeping equipment.
- If ACT beekeepers suspect their bees have Varroa mite, they must call 6207 3587 or email [ACTBiosecurity@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTBiosecurity@act.gov.au).
- More information about Varroa mite, hive care and how to inspect bees for varroa mite is available on the [ACT Environment Website](#).

### **Red imported fire ant (*Solenopsis invicta*)**

- Red imported fire ants (RIFA/fire ants) are one of the worst invasive species to reach Australia, and are currently under eradication in Queensland and northern NSW.
- Fire ants can impact our environment and many industries and can cause extensive damage to ecological and agricultural systems.
- Fire ants can restrict everyday activities such as barbeques, picnics, and sporting events and have the potential to kill humans, pets, and animals including our iconic Australian species.
- Recent weather conditions in Queensland and northern NSW, including ex-tropical cyclone Alfred, have raised concerns around the potential for further spread of fire ants.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Tegan Liston Ext: 57325  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- The National Fire Ant Eradication Program is focusing monitoring and surveillance efforts in areas that received significant rainfall.
- Restrictions currently apply under the *Plant Diseases Act 2002* for the importation of materials that have the potential to carry fire ants into the ACT.
- These materials include organic mulch, soil and anything with soil on it, baled material like hay, potted plants, turf, agricultural or earthmoving machinery, and mining and quarrying materials.
- These restrictions apply to areas within 5km of identified fire ant nests in northern NSW, and areas in southeast Queensland declared as a fire ant biosecurity zone.
- These measures will help reduce the risk of fire ants inadvertently entering the ACT.
- The ACT remains engaged with the Australian Government and other states and territories in the fight against fire ants. The ACT contributed \$1.23 million to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program as its cost share for FY2024-25 to FY2026-27.
- Anyone suspecting fire ants in the ACT can also contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

### **Background**

- The ACT has a dedicated biosecurity planning and response team that constantly monitors the biosecurity threat environment. This team works closely with the Australian, state and territory governments and industry to identify and manage biosecurity risks and outbreaks.
- The ACT Government continues to strengthen its biosecurity legislation and undertake increased levels of planning in response to the current threats.

### **Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV)**

- The ACT continues to participate in national biosecurity response activities in relation to Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV).
- ToBRFV was detected in South Australia in August 2024 and was confirmed in Victoria in January 2025. ToBRFV is a highly contagious plant virus that affects tomatoes, capsicums and chillies. It is a considerable threat to Australia's \$5.8 billion vegetable industry (ABS 2023) due to reduced yield and quality of produce.
- The ACT does not have a tomato industry.
- There is no risk to food safety or human health from eating tomatoes with this virus.
- National Management Group agreed on 29 May 2025 that eradicating ToBRFV from Australia is no longer technically feasible. Current containment strategies are remaining in place while a new strategy is being developed with affected industries.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Tegan Liston Ext: 57325  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolios: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Urban Development Proposals and the Environment

#### Drake Brockman Drive Upgrades

- I am aware that an environmental organisation has raised concerns about the impacts of the Drake Brockman road duplication on the environment.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna has briefed me on the development and the engagement with the proponent to protect mature native trees and minimise environmental harm.
- I note that the development has progressed through rigorous planning and development approval process of the ACT and the Commonwealth.
- The proposal was granted approval in November 2024, subject to conditions. As a condition of this approval, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) must be prepared and endorsed by the Conservator prior to any works commencing. The CEMP needs to clearly articulate clearing procedures and boundaries, how significant trees are to be protected, and to confirm that clearing will occur outside of threatened bird breeding seasons.
- The CEMP will be referred to the Conservator for assessment and endorsement, and will be closely scrutinized to ensure all conditions have been met.

#### Wombat Management in Development Areas

- The protection of wombats from harm in areas proposed for development has been a considerable focus for the Government over the past year.
- With valued input from stakeholder groups, the Conservator for Flora and Fauna has finalised guidelines for reducing impacts from development and related activities on wombats and other burrowing native animals.
- The [Management of Burrowing Animals During Development Guidelines](#) have already been used to guide government assessments and to provide advice to developers on what is required to assess and manage burrowing animals.

#### Development at the Federal Golf Course

- The Government notes that the Federal Golf Club and Mbark are proposing to develop a retirement village, access road and water infrastructure in the southern area of the Federal Golf Club (Block 1, Section 56 Red Hill).
- The Conservator has issued an Environmental Significance Opinion for the proposed development.
- The proposed works will result in a small reduction in foraging and roosting habitat for both Gang-gangs and Superb Parrots. This is unlikely to have significant impact, as the Red Hill Nature Reserve is nearby, the project will avoid areas where animals search for food, and these species also use nearby urban areas.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Karen Taylor Ext: 54668  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- All areas of the threatened Box Gum Woodland ecological community within the Federal Golf Club have been avoided, and no impacts to these areas is anticipated.
- In April 2024, four DA's were submitted to the Territory Planning Authority to replace the three DA's submitted in October 2023. These DA's will now be subject to independent assessment pursuant to the *Planning Act 2023*. This will include a referral to the Conservator and will be subject to the new Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide requirements.

### Lawson North

- Lawson North is known to have important conservation values including Natural Temperate Grassland and Box Gum Woodland threatened ecological communities.
- The site contains habitat for threatened fauna such as the Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard, Perunga Grasshopper and Key's Matchstick Grasshopper.
- Scarlet Robins, White-winged Trillers and Gang-gang Cockatoos nest and forage in the mature trees in the area. There is also a known population of the endangered Ginninderra Peppercress adjacent to the proposed development area.
- Defence Housing Australia (DHA) lodged a referral under the EPBC Act on 4 July 2022, which closed for public consultation on 7 September 2022. The ACT Government provided expert advice on the scale of impact on several threatened matters at the site.
- On 7 October 2022, the Australian Government determined that the proposal is a controlled action, which means it will require assessment and approval under the EPBC Act before it can proceed.
- In December 2022, the Australian Government published a Statement of Reasons for the decision, which outlines the matters considered when making the determination that the proposal is a controlled action. The Statement of Reasons summarises the high ecological value of the site, and that the proposal may significantly impact numerous threatened values.
- DHA has since submitted a project variation to reduce the size of the development footprint and therefore reduce impacts to biodiversity and heritage values located on the site. The project will be assessed by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will be referred to the Conservator to review and provide comment on in due course.

### *Background*

Cleared as complete and accurate:	09/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
Contact Officer name:	Karen Taylor	Ext: 54668
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The DHA proposal is for an estate of approximately 443 dwellings, north of the existing Lawson estate. The referral area totals approximately 47.16 hectares with more than 100 hectares of the site being retained as an offset.
- The site is expected to remain declared National Land, the National Capital Authority (NCA) is the decision maker on all aspects of the proposed development. The ACT Government has no specific approval role which means a bilateral agreement would not be available.
- The Development Control Plan for the site requires that a concept plan be prepared and approved. A range of matters are required to be addressed in the concept plan including traffic, vehicle access, road network, access to Lawson south and active travel. The concept plan will be subject to public notification and consultation. This will include consultation with the ACT Government.
- Should the NCA approve the concept plan, a works approval (development) application will be lodged with the NCA for assessment and determination. Further public notification will occur at this stage.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Karen Taylor Ext: 54668  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## **Portfolios:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### **Callum Brae Crematorium**

#### Talking Points

- The Government acknowledges the concern from community groups about the potential impacts from the construction of a crematorium on a block adjacent to the Callum Brae Nature Reserve.
- I am aware that the federal Department for Climate, Environment, Energy and Water has reaffirmed their original decision that the development is not a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).
- As this matter is currently with the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT), it is inappropriate to discuss this proposed development further.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Karen Taylor Ext: 54668  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolios: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water City and Government Services

### Regulatory and Compliance Action

#### Talking Points

##### Dogs Off Leash Campaign (Minister C&GS)

- It is an offence to walk dogs off-leash in most of the ACT's parks and reserves where dogs are permitted.
- Dogs are entirely prohibited from about half of all ACT reserves and about a third of Canberra Nature Park reserves.
- Dogs may try and chase and attack native animals, including slow moving animals such as the Rosenbergs Goanna.
- Sadly, we continue to see Canberrans enter reserves with dogs where dogs are prohibited, or where dogs are walked off lead.
- The ACT Government will continue to regulate through education and enforcement where dogs are detected off lead.
- More information about walking dogs in the ACT's parks and reserves is available on the [ACT Parks website](#).

##### Fisheries Compliance and Patrols (Minister CCEEW)

- Recreational fishing is a pastime enjoyed by many Canberrans. A licence is not required.
- The public waters of the ACT are divided into prohibited waters, open waters, and trout waters, each of which has special requirements regarding recreational fishing. Information about recreational fishing, including a fact sheet, is available on the [ACT Environment website](#).
- In areas where fishing is permitted, fishers are limited to two fishing rods or handlines combined in open waters, and one fishing rod in trout waters.
- The ACT is home to several species of fish that are totally protected.
- In the 2023-24 ACT Budget, funding was provided for a Fisheries Compliance Officer (FCO) in the Office of Nature Conservation to protect the ACT's native fish and help educate Canberrans about legal and ethical fishing practices. Since the FCO has been conducting compliance activities the encountered non-compliance rate has fallen from 18% to 12%.
- This officer patrols Canberra's lakes and waterways with a second conservation officer from either the ACT Parks and Conservation Service or the Office of Nature Conservation.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Whilst education is the priority, this officer does have the capability to issue infringement notices under the *Fisheries Act 2000*. Written warnings have also been issued.
- Brochures about fishing in the ACT are available in English, Chinese and Vietnamese on the [ACT Environment website](#).
- Updated fisheries signage is currently being installed.
- Anyone with information about illegal fishing is encouraged to contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.
- In the current budget process, requested funding for the continuation of the FCO position has not been supported, and fisheries compliance and engagement activities are planned to cease at end June 2025.

### Key Information

- Regulating the ACT's environmental legislation including the *Nature Conservation Act* (NC Act) and the *Fisheries Act* is necessary to ensure the environment remains protected from actions that may cause harm or otherwise be in breach of legislation.
- Regulation is undertaken by Conservation Officers appointed under the NC Act and may involve audits of licence holders and patrols of the ACT's natural areas.
- The Government is strengthening its environment regulation capabilities to ensure the environment is protected and breaches of the Act are subject to enforcement action.
- The approach to encouraging compliance by the public is to educate, warn, then enforce. Education may be in-person or via published materials or signage. Verbal or written warnings may be given where assessed as being a sufficient deterrent. Enforcement action may include issuing infringement notices or prosecution in court.
- Infringement notice penalties under the NC Act range from \$30 to \$1,500. A person who receives an infringement notice remains innocent of any alleged offence until proven guilty in court, and has the option of paying the infringement penalty. If the person takes this option then, under section 122 of the *Magistrates Court Act*:
  - any liability of the person for the offence is discharged; and
  - the person will not be prosecuted in court for the offence; and
  - the person will not be taken to have been convicted of the offence.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

### Current compliance matters

Issue	Date of alleged offence	Status	Comments
Sch 1 1.14			
Excess rods deployed, Molonglo River (Molonglo River Reserve).	January 2025	Completed	Two alleged offenders, also not entirely honest in their responses to officers. 2 infringement notices issued. Fines have been paid.

Sch 1 1.14

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
 Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Angler with excess rods deployed at Casuarina Sands.	April 2025	Completed	Infringement notice issued.
2 male persons encountered by police in Gigerline Nature Reserve, with hunting equipment in vehicle.	April 2025	Completed	Formal warning issued by PCS.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
 Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Waragul (Dingoes) in the ACT

#### Talking Points:

#### Attacks on Stock

- The ACT continues to work local landholders and the NSW Government to undertake Waragul (Dingo) control, with the aim to reduce stock losses on neighbouring rural properties.
- Property owners are encouraged to report Waragul (Dingo) sightings or attacks to the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

#### Proposed Policy Change to Recognise the Waragul (Dingo) as a native animal

- The Dingo is known as 'Waragul' in Ngunnawal language (Winanggaay Ngunnawal language group), and this term should be used when referring to animals on Ngunnawal Country.
- The name Waragul will be adopted in all communication and policies except where the term wild dog is required by pest control permitting laws.
- On 5 July 2024, the ACT Government announced plans to formally recognise Waragul as a native animal.
- A policy approach is under development to ensure that:
  - Waragul are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
  - Appropriate mitigation measures are maintained that limit, as far as possible, the impacts of Waragul-related livestock losses on rural properties.
- To progress these changes over the coming months, EPSDD proposes to:
  - Draft a Controlled Native Species Plan for the Waragul (Dingo) under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*, commencing in 2025;
  - Remove the listing of dingo as a pest under the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021*;
  - Review the science, stakeholder values, control methods, and policy on this issue to ensure best practice for Waragul management.
- The ACT Government will soon establish a consultative committee to inform this policy reform. The consultative committee will include representatives of the Ngunnawal community, ACT and NSW conservation community, and rural lessees.
- Throughout these policy changes existing management programs for Waragul will continue in their current form.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:78628  
Contact Officer name: Rosie Cooney Ext:50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Key Information

- Genetic analysis undertaken by Dr Kylie Cairns, University of NSW has now tested 50 ear samples taken from the Waragul population in and around Namadgi National Park. The population is overwhelmingly genetically pure Dingo.
- Of the sampled animals, 47 (94%) showed no indication of any domestic dog ancestry, and two had very small amounts (4% and 7%) of domestic dog ancestry. This remains within the cutoff generally labelled as “pure” Dingo in published literature. One domestic dog was detected, with genetic data indicating a mix of kelpie, koolie and cattle dog, with small amounts of dingo ancestry not related to the local population, indicating a roaming or escaped domestic dog.
- This finding is consistent with 2 Australia-wide genomic studies, which have found Dingoes have minimal domestic dog genetic make-up and a much higher level of Dingo ancestry than previously thought.
- The ACT Scientific Committee has advised that a distinction should be made between the Dingo and feral domestic dogs in any legislation and/or regulations and recommended that the Waragul should be managed as a controlled native species.

## Background Information

### Terminology

- Domestic dogs and Dingoes are often currently considered the same species (*Canis familiaris*), but this taxonomy is disputed, with multiple species names used in scientific literature. Dingoes represent a separate evolutionary lineage and are different to domestic dogs in shape, physiology and behaviour.
- The term “domestic dog” encompasses free-ranging (feral) and pet dogs.
- The term “wild dog” is used in the National Wild Dog Action Plan to describe “all wild-living dogs, including Dingoes, feral dogs, and their hybrids”.

### Ecological and Cultural significance

- Dingoes play an important functional role of top order predator in Australian ecosystems and are therefore of conservation importance.
- The Waragul holds a special place within the Ngunnawal society and dreaming since the first sunrise, representing resilience and protection.
- Within Ngunnawal family groups, Waragul were raised in the company of women and children to provide an effective hunting aid, a living blanket, and protection. Dingoes hold a special place within the Aboriginal communities more broadly as their footprints were tracked to find waterholes and pathways (song lines) across Country.

### Legislation and management

- In the ACT, wild dogs/Dingoes are currently listed as a single-entity pest animal in the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021*. Consequently, Waragul are

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:78628  
Contact Officer name: Rosie Cooney Ext:50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

not currently afforded protection as a native species under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

- Current management of Waragul in Namadgi National Park strives to limit the impact on populations by maintaining a “conservation area” where management actions do not occur.
- Baiting programs are limited to two scheduled 5 weekly periods with additional infrequent reactive baiting in times of above average grazing impacts. A Pest Animal Controller (trapper) is employed fulltime.
- The ACT is a signatory to three cooperative wild dog management plans with NSW.
- There are no plans to limit or stop the mitigation measures currently in place to manage Waragul in the ACT, including Namadgi National Park.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:78628  
Contact Officer name: Rosie Cooney Ext:50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## **Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### **First Nations Engagement and Programs**

#### **Talking Points:**

#### Ngunnawal Engagement

- The Environment Portfolio previously engaged the Ngunnawal community directly through monthly meetings with the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC). The term of the current DNCCC members ended in 2024 and the committee is currently under review.
- Other entities include the Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) regularly engaged through ACT Heritage on matters that affect cultural heritage in the ACT.
- Four Ngunnawal Cultural Advisors have been appointed to work closely with Office of Nature Conservation (ONC) ecologist and Parks and Conservation Service land managers on habitat restoration, embedding cultural values and practices in ACT Government's restoration practice.
- The Environment Portfolio also regularly engages 15 Ngunnawal community members to undertake Aboriginal Waterway Assessments (AWAs). This group is convened through the Office for Water and led by the Ngunnawal Water Policy officer.
- The Office of Water scheduled an engagement session with the Ngunnawal Community on Saturday, 8 February 2025 about the ACT and Region Catchment Strategy.
- The Office of Water engaged First Nations Consultant, Paul Knight to consult with First Nations communities in the ACT and region to understand their aspirations for participating in ACT water and waterway management and to deliver on water related Closing the Gap inter-governmental commitments.
- When appropriate and at the advice of the above entities, the Environment Portfolio also engages with community directly through established communication networks managed by the Traditional Custodian Engagement Team. This type of engagement is intended to reach the whole Ngunnawal community.
- The Office of Nature Conservation held a targeted consultation session alongside the Traditional Custodian Engagement Team for the Ngunnawal Community on Saturday, 5 April to continue discussions and seek input on the Nature Conservation Strategy that is currently in development.

#### Review of DNCCC

- The Government is currently working to undertake a review of the DNCCC.
- Over the past few years the DNCCC has been an effective mechanism for engagement between the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and representatives of the Ngunnawal Community.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Mary Mudford Ext: 75179  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- With the DNCCC members terms expired, it is timely and appropriate to undertake a review to examine how the DNCCC has operated and options to further strengthen engagement practices.
- The ACT Government continues to respect and value its relationship with the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and actively works together on a wide range of land management, cultural, environmental, and heritage matters through the active engagement of a number of governance entities and advisors that exist within the First Nations Community.

### Gula (Koala) Gathering

- Gula is the Ngunnawal word for Koala.
- On Saturday, 19 October 2024 the Ngunnawal community was engaged on Gula (Koala) restoration in the ACT. The event hosted 35 Ngunnawal community members to learn about the current impact and distribution of Gula and discuss their restoration in the ACT.
- The Gula gathering was a significant step to bring the Ngunnawal community voices to the threatened species space. Notably this event occurred after a sighting of a Gula in the ACT two days prior to this event.
- Following the Gula Gathering, the Ngunnawal community participated in a planting activity on Saturday, 10th May, at Urambi Hills Nature Reserve. Thirty participants planted 250 trees and shrubs during the event, contributing to the development of knowledge and capacity for the community to undertake conservation activities for threatened species.

### Youth programs

- The purpose of these youth programs are to address the disparity experienced by First Nations young people in education, justice, and health, with the data showing ‘Connection to Country, built through First Nations mentors enhance both individual and collective resilience for First Nations Youth’.
- The 2024-25 program is underway with 42 First Nations young people engaged through four EPSDD led and supported programs.
- The programs include engagement with four First Nations service providers and businesses.

### Background Information

#### Gula (Koala) Gathering

- Grant funding was received as part of the Koala Community Grants: Round 1 grant opportunity for the Gula (koala) gathering.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Mary Mudford Ext: 75179  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The objective of this program is to support community-led conservation and recovery efforts to improve the trajectory of the listed Gula/Koala (combined populations of QLD, NSW and the ACT).
- The intended outcomes of the program are to:
  - improve the extent, quality and connectivity of the nationally listed Gula (Koala) habitat and reduce local threats;
  - increase understanding and management of disease and injury affecting Gula (Koala) health and lift capability in on-ground care, treatment and triage of Gula (Koalas); and
  - improve data and knowledge of Gula (Koala) populations and health across their range, to support effective decision making and conservation action.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Mary Mudford Ext: 75179  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Kangaroo Management

#### Talking Points:

#### 2025 Kangaroo Management Program

- The culling component of the 2025 Kangaroo Management Program will commence on 10 June and finish by 31 July. The fertility control program has been underway for some months and is likely to be completed by the end of August.
- Sixteen (16) reserves will be closed for the culling program, including:

Aranda Bushland Nature Reserve	Jerrabomberra West Grasslands Nature Reserve
Callum Brae Nature Reserve	Molonglo River Reserve - Kama
Crace Grasslands Nature Reserve	Mount Ainslie Nature Reserve
Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve	Mount Majura Nature Reserve
Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve	Mount Mugga Mugga Nature Reserve
Gungaderra Grasslands Nature Reserve	Mulanggari Grasslands Nature Reserve
Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve	Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve
Jerrabomberra East Grasslands Nature Reserve	Red Hill Nature Reserve

- The number of kangaroos to be culled this year is higher than recent years, with a total target of 2981.
- The ACT environment in 2025 is drier than in recent years, which has resulted in reduced vegetation growth. As such, the number of kangaroos that can be sustainably maintained is substantially reduced across most sites compared to the last few years.
- Monitoring of ground layer vegetation and kangaroo populations was completed across priority nature reserves to inform kangaroo management recommendations for 2025.
- GonaCon, the fertility control vaccine, has been administered this year to 4 female kangaroos at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, 6 females at Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve, and 8 females at Mulanggari Nature Reserve. Subject to resourcing considerations, a new Reserve may be prioritised for use of fertility control in 2025.

### Refresh of Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan

- As part of their statutory role, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna is working to update the Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan to incorporate the recommendations from the 2024 independent review.
- The independent review of the 2017 Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan was completed in March 2024.
- The review is very complimentary of the ACT Government's approach to kangaroo management, noting and I quote:  
*"the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting for kangaroo management in the ACT is extremely impressive and an outstanding exemplar for adaptive management"*.
- The review makes 34 recommendations that contribute to continuous improvement of kangaroo management in the ACT.
- A new Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan is currently being prepared based on the recommendations of the review. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the new draft in 2025.

### Welfare considerations

- All kangaroo culling in the ACT is undertaken in accordance with the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes.
- The ACT also enforces additional measures to ensure high animal welfare outcomes, including rigorous testing of all kangaroo shooters and restricting culling of female kangaroos to between March and July each year to avoid orphaning young at a vulnerable age (8-12 months old).
- Independent veterinary audits of the ACT Government culling program are undertaken periodically to assess compliance with the National Code. The most recent audit in 2023 concluded that the culling operation was compliant with all aspects of the Code, and that current shooting protocols should be maintained.

### Kangaroo Fertility Control

- GonaCon Immunocontraceptive Vaccine was incorporated into the Kangaroo Management Program for the first time in 2022.
- It is expected that the use of GonaCon in ACT's reserves will reduce, but not eliminate, the need for conservation culls in the future.
- GonaCon has been used at three sites so far. From 2022 to 2025, a total of 83 female kangaroos at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, 66 female kangaroos at Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve, and 61 female kangaroos at Mulanggari Nature Reserve have been treated with GonaCon.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 75179  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Additional GonaCon treatments will likely be required at these sites in future years to maintain a high proportion of treated females in the population. Additional sites will be added to the program when feasible.

### Wallaby management at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

- Fenced sanctuaries like Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary (Mulligans) often require a range of additional management actions to protect environmental values that are not usually necessary in unfenced conservation areas.
- The fence at Mulligans means kangaroos and wallabies cannot get in or out and they are protected from mortality factors such as predation and motor vehicle collisions. As a result, wallaby populations have increased considerably since the fence was completed.
- The ACT Government monitors and actively manages kangaroo and wallaby populations in the Mulligans Sanctuary through conservation culling and fertility control trials to balance the health and survival of all species in the Sanctuary.
- Culling of wallabies at Mulligans has been undertaken periodically since 2019 and is licenced under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
- In 2024, 252 Red-necked Wallabies and 68 Swamp Wallabies were culled.
- The first ever GonaCon Immunocontraceptive Vaccine trial in Red-necked Wallabies and Swamp Wallabies commenced at Mulligans Flat in 2018. To date, 66 female Red-necked Wallabies and 21 female Swamp Wallabies have been treated with GonaCon. This trial is being expanded to the adjoining Goorooyarroo Sanctuary in 2025.
- Initial results indicate that GonaCon is highly effective in Swamp Wallabies, but less effective in Red-necked Wallabies. Booster doses have been administered to some Red-necked Wallabies to determine if this increases the effectiveness of GonaCon in this species. So far, administering a second dose does appear to be effective.

### Pouch Young

- In accordance with the [National Code of Practice for the humane shooting of kangaroos and wallabies for non-commercial purposes](#), if a female kangaroo is culled, the pouch young and small young-at-foot must be humanely killed.
- If this is not done, the young kangaroos risk inhumane death from starvation or predation.
- The Government aims to avoid the time of year when most females have large pouch young or small young at foot (aged between 8 and 12 months) by restricting management of female kangaroos to the period between 1 March and 31 July each year.
- 438 pouch young were humanely killed in 2024 during the kangaroo management operations.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 75179  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The teams carrying out the cull are highly trained in the most appropriate methods to humanely kill kangaroos in accordance with the code of practice.

### Key Information:

- Kangaroos are managed in the ACT in accordance with the Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan (an instrument under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*) to mitigate their environmental, economic, and social impacts across public and private land.
- Native grassy ecosystems in the ACT have been impacted by various threats. Natural Temperate Grasslands and Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland, are now critically endangered as a result. The Parks and Conservation Service has a legislative responsibility under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* to ensure threats to protected ecological communities are mitigated.
- Kangaroos are recognised as an important part of healthy, functioning grassy ecosystems in the ACT. However, their numbers can increase above sustainable densities in our highly fragmented urban reserves and in the absence of natural predators such as dingoes. This can result in over-grazing and significant negative impacts on the grassy habitat required by kangaroos and other native plant and animal species, including threatened species.

### Background Information:

#### Humane Society International Australia report, *Licence to Kill: The shocking scale of licenced wildlife killing in Australia*

- In November 2024, the Humane Society International Australia released a report about the licenced killing of native animals on private property across Australia.
- The report includes statistics and information provided by the ACT Government about kangaroo culling on ACT rural properties. The report also discusses the killing of dingoes in the ACT.
- Eastern Grey Kangaroos can be managed on rural lands in the ACT to minimise their impact on the economic viability of rural properties in accordance with the Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan.
- The authors of the report oppose the killing of wildlife. They are critical of the current licencing frameworks in all states and territories and are calling for substantial reform.
- However, in their assessment of licencing frameworks the ACT performs strongly compared to other states and territories, and the report specifically mentions that the ACT is the only jurisdiction that requires non-commercial kangaroo shooters to pass shooter accuracy and species identification tests.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 75179  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Election Commitments

#### Landscape Architect and Landscape Plan

- An election commitment of this Government is to appoint an ACT Government Landscape Architect and establish an office of the Landscape Architect to lead and develop a landscape plan for the ACT.
- The Landscape Plan will build on the work of Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to ensure that our natural and urban environments thrive. This work will continue under the new City and Environment Directorate from 1 July.
- Preliminary work is progressing on the roles and functions of the Landscape Architect and the Landscape Plan.
- As Canberra continues to grow we must develop a long-term plan that ensures harmony of the built and natural environment. The Landscape Architect will help us deliver that plan.
- I look forward to keeping the Assembly updated on the progress of this important initiative.

#### Licensing Arrangements for Snakes

- The Government will look to review current licencing arrangements and identify a framework those those snake handlers suitably qualified to register ownership of venomous snakes for education and training purposes.
- At present, keeping venomous snakes in the ACT is a regulated activity under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. It is an offence to interfere with or keep snakes in captivity without proper authorisation. These regulations exist for the welfare of the animal and public safety.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna is responsible for issuing licences for businesses or individual people wanting to keep venomous snakes. This process works is independent of Government.
- The Nature Conservation (Licensing Related to Non-Exempt Animals) Conservator Guidelines 2024 are currently in place to help the Conservator making licensing decisions.
- Venomous snakes, and species that present risks to themselves, the environment and/or the public are listed as animals not permitted to be kept.
- Dangerous animals including venomous snakes, are only issued to premises that are recognised as a zoological facility or for educational institutes such as universities where the activity is authorised by an animal ethics committee.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Dr Rosie Cooney Ext:50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Licences are not issued to individuals to keep venomous snakes at their private residence.
- Further consultation with snake handling organisation is expected to occur in the 2025-26 financial year.

### Review of the Environmental Legislation and Regulatory Settings.

- The Government is currently progressing a statutory review of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*, and concurrently designing a new Nature Conservation Strategy to help achieve the objects of the Act.
- The review commenced under the former Government and involved a Your Say community consultation.
- This review will improve the legislation that will be supported by a new Nature Conservation Strategy, also under development by the Government.
- These pieces of work acknowledge the importance and value of the ACT's natural environment and position alongside a growing city.
- I acknowledge and thank the Canberra community, particularly those from the environment sector, for their contribution to the review to date.
- The Government will give consideration to the reform proposals during 2025, and it is expected that further community consultation about the Nature Conservation Strategy will occur in late 2025.

### Review of the Conservator and the EPA

- An election commitment of this Government is to undertake a review of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (Conservator) and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to ensure they have the necessary support to perform their statutory roles effectively.
- Aspects of the Conservator's role has already been examined as part of the planning system governance review.
- The statutory review of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* that is progressing will allow other aspects of the Conservator's role to be examined including how best to support it.
- Similarly, the *Environment Protection Act 1997* is scheduled for review and will provide the opportunity for Government to consider ways to strengthen the role and support given to the EPA.
- The upcoming Machinery of Government which will merge TCCS, EPSDD and Access Canberra will also present an opportunity to review the governance arrangement for the Conservator and EPA.
- I look forward to speaking more about these reviews over the course of this term of government.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Dr Rosie Cooney Ext:50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water**Air Quality and Wood Heaters**Air Quality

- The [2023 ACT Annual Air Quality Report](#) prepared by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) shows Canberra's air quality is very good.
- There was only one minor exceedance of the national health-based air quality standards for PM2.5 in winter at Monash. There were no exceedances for PM10, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone at any of the ACT's three monitoring stations.
- Annual average levels for particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) associated with wood smoke remain at some of the lowest levels experienced in the past 10 years.

Burn Better Public Education Campaign

- The Government's annual Burn Better public education campaign aims to educate Canberrans about how to use their wood fire heaters responsibly to reduce smoke pollution in the ACT throughout the winter months.
- In 2024, the campaign ran from 27 May to 30 August with a budget of \$20,000.
- The campaigns received 3,953,164 impressions, and 3,164 clicks through to the website.
- The 2025 campaign will commence in June with a similar approach to last year's campaign with a focus on the correct operation of a wood heater to minimise smoke and illegal collection of firewood from parks and reserves.

Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy

- On the 28 November 2023, the Assembly was updated on the achievements under the First Action Plan of the [Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy 2021-25](#).
- Some key achievements include:
  - The government has strengthened its smoke plume modelling capabilities to better plan to mitigate the effects of bushfire smoke on the ACT community, particularly from prescribed burns.
  - The ACT's air quality website has been updated with a clearer and more interactive dashboard relating to air quality allowing the public to interrogate air quality data more easily, including on smartphones.
  - The Outdoor Smoke Health Impacts fact sheet has been updated to incorporate information on ways to reducing smoke entering buildings.
  - WorkSafe ACT has developed a smoke, pollen and dust webpage that sets out the duties of persons conducting a business to ensuring the air quality in the

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

workplace is safe. The webpage provides practical information on how employers can manage the risks of poor air quality caused by dust storms, pollen and smoke and provides links to useful resources to assist businesses in assessing air quality such as the air quality index for the ACT.

- The Government is reviewing whether additional work is required.

#### Wood Heater Removal Program

- The [Wood Heater Removal Program](#) (WHRP) aims to improve the ACT's air quality by offering financial incentives for the removal and disposal of older high emission wood heaters.
- As of **23 May 2025, 1,350 wood heaters** have been removed since the program commenced in 2004 with a projected health benefit of over \$6 million.
- EPSDD conducted a trial to replace wood heaters with an energy-efficient electric heating system in public housing properties from March to September 2024. Nineteen tenants participated in the trial.

#### **Key Information**

- ACT Health monitor's the ACT's air quality at 3 locations at Monash, Civic and Florey.
- This is done in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) under the *National Environment Protection Council Act 1994* (Act). EPSDD is responsible for the legislation.
- ACT Health provides hourly advice to the public on the levels of pollutants above the NEPM standards through the online Air Quality Index and AirRater App.
- The ACT Government has a range of programs to address emissions from domestic wood heaters, including:
  - regulating commercial firewood to ensure it's sold in a seasoned condition
  - prohibiting the installation of wood heaters in new development areas where planning studies show there would be an adverse impact on air quality. This includes Dunlop, East O'Malley and the entire Molonglo Valley (except Wright)
  - rebates available through the Wood Heater Removal Program to remove old inefficient heaters; and
  - the Burn Better public education campaign to educate Canberrans about how to correctly operate a wood heater.
  - regulating the sale and installation of wood heaters to ensure they meets the current Australian Standards for emissions (AS4013) and efficiency (AS4012).
  - regulating emissions from domestic wood heaters.
- These initiatives have put the ACT at the forefront nationally in addressing wood smoke pollution and have resulted in a significant improvement in our air quality.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Information about these initiatives and copies of the ACT Annual Air Quality Reports, are available on the [Access Canberra website](#).

### Background

- The ACT monitors 4 of the 6 NEPM pollutants including Carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), photochemical oxidants as ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter PM<sub>10</sub> and particulate matter PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- The ACT has never monitored sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) as it is primarily an industrial pollutant, and the ACT does not have heavy industry. In 2002, lead monitoring ceased with the phase out of leaded petrol.
- The ACT Government's [web page on Air Quality and Pollen](#), provides real time information on air quality, pollen counts, upcoming prescribed burning and health advice.
- The Government has commenced work to consider phasing out domestic wood heaters in all urban areas to improve air quality and the health and wellbeing of Canberraans.
- The consideration to phase out wood heaters was prompted, in part, by the [2023 Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's Special Investigation Report into Wood Heater Policy in the ACT](#) and a 2022 YourSay Panel survey exploring behaviours, motivators and barriers to remove and replace wood heaters which found:
  - 52% of the 1,955 respondents supported the gradual phase out of wood heaters
  - 59% of wood heater owners opposed the phase out of wood heaters
  - 89% of all respondents found air quality to be fair or poor
  - 73% of respondents indicated they were impacted by neighbours wood smoke
  - 72% respondents feel that wood heaters provide a unique source of warmth
  - 59% indicated they are enjoyable to use
  - 10% of the respondents own a wood heater and of those 5% use as their main heating source
- The Government has released its [formal response to the Commissioner's investigation into wood heaters](#) which supports the phase out subject to outcomes of air quality and a regulatory impact assessments.
- The Government engaged environmental consultant's AECOM to undertake an air quality assessment for the ACT to inform its approach. The Government will also undertake a regulatory impact assessment to guide its decision.
- The Government has passed legislation which took effect in February 2025 that bans the installation of wood heaters that don't meet the current emission standards. This compliments the existing laws prohibiting the sale of these wood heaters in the ACT.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The ACT Government has successfully lobbied the wood heater industry to reduce the emissions standards for wood heaters (AS4013) from 1.5g/kg to 1.0g/kg. The revised standard is scheduled to be published in the third quarter of 2025. This effectively completes the Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy action to reduce wood heater emissions to 1.0g/kg but at the national level.

### Burn Better Public Information Campaign

- The Burn Better campaign was previously called 'Burn Right Tonight', it was renamed to Burn Better in 2023 following a review of the campaign.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Daniel Walters Ext: 76334  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Environmental Volunteers and Groups – Funding Arrangements

#### Talking Points:

#### Review of Environmental Groups and Funding Arrangements

- The ACT Government recognises the contribution from community environmental groups to both government and the Canberra community in supporting the environment and undertaking climate action.
- In the 2024 election, the government committed to reviewing the best way to assist local environmental groups with their ongoing needs and activities and to identify how their initiatives could be supported.
- The government has commenced a review of the environmental services required by the government and the ACT community. This review is now commencing and will conclude in early 2026. It will ensure that funding in forward years is being directed to the highest priorities.
- The government is confident that, following this review, government funded programs will continue to have a positive impact on our environment and community into the future, and represent high value for money.
- Catchment Groups (Molonglo Conservation Group, Ginninderra Catchment Group, Southern ACT Catchment Group), ACT Wildlife, SEE Change, the Conservation Council ACT Region and the Canberra Environment Centre will receive an extension in current funding for one year to 30 June 2026 whilst the review is underway.
- The government has met with and advised these community environmental groups of the review and that funding agreements expiring in 2025 will be extended by a further 12 months to 30 June 2026.

#### Importance of volunteers

- The ACT Government has a long and proud history of supporting ACT's environmental volunteers and community groups. Volunteers are essential to helping protect, conserve, and enhance the ACT's environment.
- Environmental and animal protection volunteering is one of the top 3 ways people contribute to their community as a volunteer.
- The [2024 State of Volunteering in the ACT Report](#) tells us that for every \$1 invested in volunteering, \$5.40 is returned in benefits for the community. This is why it is important we have the right programs and settings in place to support these generous contributions.
- The ACT Government is proud to invest in a range of initiatives and programs that support environmental volunteers and facilitate the community organisations that assist them.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Frank Garofalow Ext: 70497  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### New initiative: Supporting Canberra's Environmental Groups and Volunteers

- In the 2024-25 ACT Budget, the government invested \$1.314 million over 4 years under the Supporting Canberra's Environmental Groups and Volunteers initiative to address recommendations from the ACT Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism.
- This funding includes:
  - \$830,000 over 4 years from 2024-25, including \$215,000 indexed and ongoing from 2027-28, to continue the Adopt-a-Park grants program in TCCS.
  - \$235,000 in 2024-25 for volunteer-led weed control.
  - \$74,000 over 2 years from 2024-25 to support ACT wildlife with veterinary services.
  - \$50,000 in 2024-25 to provide additional support to Landcare ACT.
  - \$125,000 in 2024-25 to continue and enhance the Canberra Nature Map.
- We have also committed to employing additional dedicated volunteer co-ordinators within TCCS to support the Urban Parks and Places Program and other urban community on-ground programs that work to keep our urban environment healthy.
- We will be reviewing how to best assist local environmental groups with their ongoing needs and activities. We will work with the Environmental Peak Groups to identify how government can best support their initiatives.

### Existing initiatives and ongoing programs

- These new initiatives and commitments compliment existing programs supporting environmental volunteers.
- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service funds 5 FTE staff to coordinate the **ParkCare program**. In 2024-25, it also funded \$136,700 in non-employee expenses to support on-ground volunteer activities, including volunteer training, personal protective equipment, uniforms, tools and equipment.
- ACT Government funds 2 FTE staff to support the ongoing \$215,000 a year **Urban Parks and Places Volunteer program**. Funding to provide volunteers with uniform, tools and personal protective equipment is allocated from TCCS operational budgets. Input from volunteers also informs allocation to weed and pest control programs.
- The ACT Government funds 2 FTE staff to support **Citizen Science programs including the Waterwatch and Frogwatch programs** and invests over \$426,000 per year for program coordinators who are embedded in the catchment groups. These programs are supplemented by \$92,100 from contractors per year who support the program.
- Since 2021-22 the **Volunteer Activation Initiative** has invested \$3.5m in ACT's environmental volunteers and the community groups that support them. This investment will continue from 2025-26 year as on-going funding.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Frank Garofalow Ext: 70497  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- This funding includes significant investment in volunteer-led environmental and community wellbeing outcomes, currently delivered by the three ACT **catchment groups, FrogWatch and ACT Wildlife.**
  - The investment includes ongoing funding for the long-running **Environment Grants program**, which in 2024 invested over \$350,000 in community-led projects to enhance ACT's environment and connect people with nature.
- The ACT Government's **2025-26 Environmental Grants round** opened on 5 June 2025 and will close 17 July 2025. \$360,000 is available for community groups for local projects that:
  - improve the environment
  - connect more people to nature
  - support Caring for Country initiatives, and
  - for environmental volunteer groups to enhance their skills and to help groups care for our local environment.
- The ACT Government occasionally enters into **supplementary grants** with local, environment-focused community groups to support key environmental work that falls outside of other grants programs.
- In 2023-24 over \$1.3 million in additional funding was invested in community and volunteer groups to deliver important environmental work.
- ACT Government is also proud to be collaborating with Landcare ACT to host another **Environmental Volunteers Conference** in August 2025. Building on the success of the event in 2023, the conference will bring together volunteers and experts from across the ACT to share ideas, network, and celebrate the accomplishments of environmental volunteers.

### Key Information

- The ACT's flagship volunteering programs – ParkCare, Urban Parks and Places, and Waterwatch – support more than 120 volunteer groups and 4,500 individuals to give back to their community by helping to maintain and enhance the ACT's natural environment.

### Background Information

- The ACT Government has a range of well-established and highly effective environmental volunteer programs. Through these, volunteers provide more than 50,000 volunteer hours per year to support environmental and wellbeing objectives.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Frank Garofalow Ext: 70497  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Threatened Species Management

#### Talking Points:

- A large number of ACT species are threatened with extinction. Key threats are habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation (driven primarily by urban and infrastructure growth; invasive plants and animals; and increased bushfire severity and frequency driven by climate change).
- EPSDD undertakes a variety of work on threatened species in collaboration with universities, zoos, botanic gardens, state and federal government agencies, and citizen science organisations.
- While this work contributes significantly to averting decline, the number of listed species continues to increase in the ACT.
- There are currently 63 ACT native species and three ecological communities threatened with extinction, as well as two key threatening processes, listed under the *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act).
- The Murray River Crayfish (*Eustacus armatus*) is listed as Vulnerable in the ACT and is now a Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES) due to its listing under the EPBC Act on 5 March 2025.
- A further nine species are listed as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and therefore, have Special Protection Status under the NC Act. This includes four listed Migratory Species (Latham's Snipe, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank) and the Alpine Water Skink. These five species are being recommended to you for listing under the NC Act.
- Under the EPBC Act, the (re)assessments of three ACT species and the assessment of one new ecological community (Alpine Ash forests), are currently in progress.
- The ACT Scientific Committee is currently assessing nominations for three invertebrates endemic to the ACT region (Perunga Grasshopper, Canberra Raspy Cricket and Cold Crayfish – Murunung Naruwi) for potential listing as Endangered under the NC Act.

#### Key Information

- The new ACT Action Plan for the **Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon** (CGED) 2025-2035 was officially released in May 2025. The ACT Government recently announced a funding injection of \$4.5 million dollars over 4 years to deliver critical recovery actions captured in the plan. This includes the building of a bespoke captive breeding facility at Melbourne Zoo to maintain genetic diversity and generate animals for wild release.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	09/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
Contact Officer name:	Dr Rosie Cooney	Ext: 50023
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- The ACT Government has been successfully breeding CGED at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve since 2022 and has provided animals for reintroductions into suitable habitat. Early results show good survival rates and evidence of breeding.
- In June 2024, the Jedbinbilla Safe Haven at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve was officially opened. A founding population of **southern Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies** (BTRWs) were released. These animals are part of a genetic rescue breeding program, providing insurance against extinction and a source of animals for translocations both in the ACT and Victoria.
- At least two BTRW joeys have been bred within the Safe Haven. Additional animals have been added, with more individuals to be released over the next few months.
- In February 2024, Critically Endangered **Northern Corroboree Frogs** (NCFs) were detected in the Ramsar listed Ginini Flats complex for the first time since 2019. The species has declined dramatically in the wild over the last 30 years, primarily due to Amphibian Chytrid Fungus.
- A captive population of NCFs was established in 2003 at Tidbinbilla, and releases of eggs and frogs into Ginini Flats occurred between 2011 and 2020 to bolster wild historic populations.
- The 2025 surveys of NCFs introduced into a new low elevation site in Namadgi National Park have been encouraging with more animals detected than in previous surveys.
- 200 Endangered Small Purple Pea were planted in September 2024, initiating a three-year translocation project. This project is run in partnership between ACT Government and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.
- By Autumn 2026, a total of 1,000 plants will be translocated across four protected areas, enhancing the genetics of remnant populations, and establishing new populations. Initial 2023 plantings continue to thrive and have produced lots of seed.
- In late 2024, habitat for threatened **Two-spined Blackfish** was constructed in sediment-affected areas of the Cotter River. This species was seriously impacted by the 2020 bushfires. Recent monitoring has found the constructed habitat to be successful, with 50% of fish captured at the structures, which cover only 4% of the sampling area.
- The Commonwealth Saving Native Species Program is funding a partnership between ACT Government, the Australian National Botanic Gardens, University of Canberra and the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney to conserve the Endangered **Tuggeranong Lignum** (*Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong*). The project is establishing a genetically diverse ex-situ population, supporting longer term management through improving the viability of future translocations and population augmentation efforts.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Dr Rosie Cooney Ext: 50023  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

#### Ainslie Phone Tower Site

##### Talking Points:

- The Government notes that in October 2024 the then Planning and Land Authority, now the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) in accordance with independent statutory planning processes, approved the construction of a telecommunications facility on a (9m X 10m) portion of Block 3 Section 60 Ainslie.
- The Government has no legal mechanism to intervene in this development in response to concerns raised by a community group in the media.
- The development application (DA) was subject to community consultation from 30 January to 19 February 2024. The Authority received and considered 49 submissions.
- Throughout the decision-making process, the Authority sought advice from other entities including Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), the ACT Heritage Council and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (the Conservator).
- The advice of the Conservator, which was based on a site inspection by a senior ecologist, confirmed that the development site on the block is dominated by exotic vegetation and not Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG), and subsequently offered no objection to the DA but suggested a range of conditions to protect some ecological values on the remainder of the block.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna is working with the Friends of Ainslie Volcanics Grasslands to discuss a project to undertake a deep-dive ecological assessment of the block. This process will help to identify the critical and important ecological values on the block, and the most appropriate ways to protect, conserve and enhance them.

##### Key Information

- In 2023-24, a grant was awarded to Molonglo Conservation Group on behalf of the Friends of Ainslie Volcanics Grasslands for conservation activities across the entirety of Blocks 2 and 3, Section 60 Ainslie.
- On 26 November 2024, the ACT Heritage Council made a formal decision under the *Heritage Act 2004* not to provisionally register the area in question, which was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register in 2020 as the 'Ainslie Volcanics.' The decision not to provisionally register meant the assessment was concluded. The ACT Heritage Council was not satisfied the place had heritage significance to meet the criteria set out in the Heritage Act.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Bren Burkevics Ext: 78628  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### **Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

#### **Canberra City Farm Licence**

##### **Talking Points:**

- The ACT Government is providing Canberra City Farm, located at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Block, with a one-year extension on their funding agreement for farming. This will take effect from the expiry date of the current licence, in October 2025.
- This one-year extension will allow the government to conduct a review of site use and current licence arrangements to ensure that funding is being directed to the right priorities.
- This work aligns with the government's election commitment to review how best to assist local environmental groups with their ongoing needs and activities.
- Officials met with Canberra City Farm on 16 April 2025 to discuss the arrangements for a new licence, and a listening exercise which is now being undertaken. A followup meeting is being planned.
- The ACT Government has engaged an external consultant, Communication Link, to conduct the listening exercise which will gather views and information on the best long-term use of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands block, which is currently being used for sustainable agricultural and educational activities.
- The listening exercise will include meetings with key stakeholders who have an ongoing interest in the use of the site.
- Stakeholder meetings commenced in the first week of June, with the final listening report to be delivered by 30 June 2025.
- Community environmental groups play an important role in community education and engagement to help Canberrans take action to help build a climate ready city and support the delivery of key environmental programs.
- Separately, the government is providing a one-year extension of funding agreements for 8 community environmental groups that work with government to assist with environment, wildlife rescue, farming, climate change and energy program delivery and community education, while a review is being undertaken.
- The government is confident that, following this review, government funded programs will continue to have a positive impact on our environment and community into the future and represent high value for money.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	09/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 6207 8629
Contact Officer name:	Paula Sutton	Ext: 6205 1839
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Inner North Power Outage

#### Talking points:

- In the ACT, the operation, management and maintenance of the electricity network is the responsibility of the local Distribution Network System Provider (DNSP), Evoenergy.
- Evoenergy has advised that the outage on 4 June 2025 was caused by a fallen electricity line and subsequent fire. Difficulty in accessing the location impacted the timeframes to carry out the repairs.
- Evoenergy is still investigating the root cause for the incident. Evoenergy is responsible for monitoring outages and determining whether there is non-compliance with guaranteed service levels within the Consumer Protection Code (an ICRC Industry Code and regulatory matter). There are additional technical standards administered by the Technical Regulator and UTR in Access Canberra.
- The ACT has a reliable electricity network. For 2024, Evoenergy met its requirements for providing a safe and reliable electricity supply, which is measured by the frequency and duration of supply interruptions to energy consumers. Despite this, outages do occur from time to time.

#### Key Information

- On the evening of 4 June 2025, Canberra experienced a significant electricity outage that affected more than 2,500 customers, primarily in the suburbs of Ainslie, Gungahlin, and other areas on the city's north side.
- The outage lasted for a couple of hours.
- The outage was caused by a fallen electricity line and subsequent fire. The fallen electricity line was on Duffy Street, Ainslie.
- ACT Fire and Rescue attended the fire, and Evoenergy repaired the electricity network.

#### Background Information

##### Performance Measures

- The *Electricity Distribution Supply Standards Code 2013* (the Supply Code) sets out the requirements for safe and reliable electricity supply from the electricity distributor's network. Network reliability performance is measured by the frequency and duration of supply interruptions to energy consumers. This performance is reported on an annual basis for the entire network, rather than for individual parts of the network.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:79780  
Contact Officer name: Simon French Ext: 53729  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- The Supply Code sets overall supply reliability targets for Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI); System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), and System Average Interruption Duration per customer (SAIDI). Evoenergy reports against these targets in their Annual Planning Report and submissions to the Technical Regulator.
- You are the responsible Minister for the standards established in the supply Code. These standards would be informed through advice from the Technical Regulator and Utilities Technical Regulation (UTR) within Access Canberra. Evoenergy's compliance with these targets is also a matter for UTR.
- In the 2024 period, the most recent reporting period, Evoenergy was able to meet both of these targets, achieving an average interruption duration of 89.28 minutes per customer against a target of 91 minutes and an interruption frequency of 0.80 against a target of 1.2.

### Guaranteed Service Levels (GSLs)

- Evoenergy is subject to Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) obligations under a jurisdictional scheme regulated by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC) . There requirements are outlined under the the *Consumer Protection Code 2020*.
- Evoenergy outlines its approach to these, and other national requirements in its published [Electricity Customer Charter](#).
- There are a number of GSL thresholds and Payments relating to Electricity. Ranging from notification of planned interruptions through to new connections and missed appointments. In relation to unplanned interruptions:
  - Restoration of Supply After Unplanned Interruptions - If power is not restored within a specified time (usually 12 hours for urban areas), customers may be eligible for compensation. Payment: \$80 for the first qualifying event, increasing for subsequent events.
  - Frequency of Unplanned Interruptions - If a customer experiences more than a set number of unplanned outages in a financial year (e.g., more than 9), they may be eligible for a payment. Payment: Typically starts at \$80 and may increase depending on the number of events.
  - Cumulative Duration of Interruptions - If the total duration of unplanned outages exceeds a threshold (e.g., 20 hours per year), a payment may apply. Payment: Similar to the frequency-based payment, starting at \$80.
- GSLs do not apply in cases of extreme weather, emergencies, or third-party damage.
- The ICRC reports on numbers of incidents and payments made under the Utility Licence Annual Report. This is published annually.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:79780  
Contact Officer name: Simon French Ext: 53729  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Electricity and Gas Prices

#### Talking Points:

##### ICRC regulated Standing Offer

- **Electricity consumers in the ACT can save hundreds of dollars a year by switching from the regulated standing offer to the lowest market offer. Consumers should shop around to find the offer that is best for them.**
- Each year the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC), in its annual price determination, sets the maximum % increase in the Standing Offer that may be applied. The ICRC made its determination for 2025-26 prices in May this year.
- The regulated Standing Offer price in the ACT for 2025-26 increased by 10.11% in nominal terms, or 7.05% excluding the impact of inflation.
- This translates to **an annual bill increase of \$214 for an average residential customer** consuming 6,500kWh of electricity per year.
  - For an average non-residential customer consuming 25,000kWh, the increase in the annual bill will be \$825.
- The Australian Government has also announced that further energy bill relief of \$150 will be made available to households and small businesses from 1 July this year until December 2025.
  - This rebate will bring further relief to families and small business owners who have been paying more of their weekly budget to cover increasing energy prices in recent years.
- Compared with other jurisdictions, based on equivalent electricity consumption by a household, the ACT's regulated standing offer price for 2025-26 is amongst the lowest in the national electricity market.
- A typical ACT household will be \$503 per year better off than their counterparts in NSW who use the same amount of electricity and remain on the standing offer.
- Further, a typical ACT small business will be \$1357 per year better off than their counterparts in NSW who use the same amount of electricity and remain on the standing offer.
- We recognise that it is important that essential services like energy remain affordable, and that people have equitable access.
- We still know that compared to a dual-fuel household with gas, an all-electric household will save Canberrans hundreds of dollars in their energy bills every year.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: James Priestley  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The AER's Default Market Offer (DMO) does not apply to customers in the ACT. The DMO is the equivalent of the ICRC's regulated standing offer. It is the maximum price that retailers can charge electricity customers on default contracts known as standing offer contracts in other jurisdictions. (NSW, SA and SE Qld).

### Large-scale Feed-in Tariff scheme

- Wholesale electricity prices affect the costs of the Territory's large-scale feed-in tariff (LFIT) scheme, due to our 'contract for difference' arrangements.
- When wholesale prices increase, the costs of the scheme reduce and when wholesale prices decrease, the cost of the scheme rises.
- The Reasonable Costs Determination sets the maximum amount that the ACT electricity distributor, Evoenergy, can recover from ACT electricity consumers to administer the LFIT scheme.
- In February 2025, Evoenergy submitted its final application for a Reasonable Costs Determination for the 2025-26 period. In its application, Evoenergy applied for an RCD of \$48 million to be recovered from ACT electricity consumers for the operation and administration of the LFIT scheme. I have agreed to the RCD amount for 2025-26.
- This equates to a cost to ACT electricity consumers of \$16.11/MWh, or \$104.72 a year for an average household consuming 6.5MWh a year.
- The increase in costs compared to the 2024-25 RCD reflects the relatively low closing balance for 2024-25 together with forecast electricity spot prices for 2025-26 that are projected to be lower than scheme contract prices.
- The ACT Government will continue to monitor electricity price movements and their impact on ACT consumers and businesses.

### Cost of Living Relief

- The effect of the Large-scale Renewable Energy contracts, in combination with the Commonwealth Energy Bill Relief and the increased Government Utilities Concession, means that most Canberrans have been insulated from wholesale electricity price rises in 2024-25.

### Gas prices

- ActewAGL Retail's published fossil fuel gas prices which came into effect on 1 July 2024.
- From 1 July 2024 a typical ACT residential household will see an increase of approximately \$3.50 per week. This is an increase of around 9%.
  - A typical ACT small business will see an increase of approximately \$61 per week.
- Fossil gas prices in the ACT are not regulated by the ACT Government and retailers are able to set their own prices.
- As with electricity retailers, the ACT Government recommends that gas consumers shop-around among retailers to find the best priced plan that suits their needs.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: James Priestley  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### Utilities Concession

- The **Utilities Concession** is expected to support around 43,800 eligible low-income households with a \$800 contribution toward their energy and water bills in 2023-24.
  - The 2023-24 ACT Budget included expanding the Utilities Concession eligibility criteria to include anyone with a Commonwealth Health Care Card, meaning 12,000 more households will benefit from this support.
  - The Utilities Concession includes an additional payment of \$50 for 2024-25, raising the amount of the concession from \$750 to \$800, to help further relieve cost of living pressures.

### **Background Information**

- ACT energy consumers can receive free advice on energy efficiency through the Sustainable Home Advice Program. Call 1300 141 777 or email [SustainableHomeAdviceProgram@act.gov.au](mailto:SustainableHomeAdviceProgram@act.gov.au).
- A range of rebates and energy efficiency programs are also available for households and businesses to save on energy bills. Information is available at <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au>.
- Analysis by the Australian Energy Market Commission indicates households can save hundreds of dollars through switching to different pricing plans. So, shopping around for retailers and asking retailers for better deals is important.

## **Portfolio:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### **Embedded Energy Networks**

#### **Talking Points:**

- The ACT Government is aware of community concern over embedded electricity networks and what is perceived as anti-competitive behaviour by embedded network operators.
- An embedded network is where the estate, village or building is in effect, a single energy user, with individual residents unable to choose their own retailer.
- In recent years, the residential apartment market has been the primary driver of a significant increase in the number and scale of embedded networks.

#### **ACT Government's Review of Embedded Networks**

- In 2023, the ACT Government engaged a consultant to undertake a review of embedded networks in the ACT. The Review was presented to the Legislative Assembly in June 2023.
- The ACT Government has released a response to the issues raised in the Review. It will be important that the recommendations are fully investigated to ensure any changes to existing legislation benefit customers in embedded networks.
- As an immediate first step, we have developed a dedicated web page on the Everyday Climate Choices site to help community members understand how embedded networks work, the implications for consumers, and how to make sure they are getting a fair price.
- The Justice and Community Safety Directorate has also made legislative changes to the *Unit Titles (Management) Act 2011* that require an owner's corporation to disclose more prescribed information about their unit plan, including information about whether the unit plan is part of an embedded network.
- Other recommended reforms are complex and will take time to achieve.
- We acknowledge there is a case for better regulation and consumer protections and will investigate and implement options for making improvements through the existing framework.
- Any required legislative amendments will only be made following extensive consultation with the ACT community and stakeholders.

#### **Australian Energy Regulator review of the exemption framework for embedded networks**

- In response to several jurisdictions undertaking reviews of embedded networks in their respective jurisdictions, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) also announced that they will undertake a review of its exemption framework for embedded networks.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: James Priestley  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- This review commenced in December 2023 and the Draft Decision was released March 2025.
- The AER's draft decision compliments the recommendations of the ACT's review, with a focus on issues that fall within national rules, such as consumer protections and billing. The AER's draft decision notes many of the findings of the ACT's review but finds that addressing those issues falls within the remit of the jurisdictions.

## ACCC Inquiry into the National Electricity Market

- In June 2024, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) released the report on its Inquiry into the National Electricity Market. It is important to note the ACT is not included in the analysis.
- The report presents the key billing outcomes and effective prices faced by residential and small business electricity customers across NSW, South Australia, South-East Queensland, and Victoria up to the third quarter of 2023.
- The report indicates that customers in embedded networks are paying less than customers on default market offers when compared on the same usage assumptions.
- The report also shows that customers in embedded networks had lower bills than customers on market offers in NSW (7% lower), Victoria (5% lower) and South-east Queensland (21% lower).
- The report also indicates that residential embedded network customers typically have lower usage than regular customers with residential median usage around 48% lower than regular customers in NSW.

## Key Information

- In October 2022, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a motion which called on the ACT Government to conduct a review of embedded networks in the ACT.
- Recommendations from the review include:
  - amending current legislation to remove the exemption status of embedded network providers. Currently, embedded networks are an exempt class of utility service under the *Utilities Act 2000* which means they are not subject to the codes or practices set by the Act;
  - introducing pricing reform for embedded networks;
  - strengthening the visibility and understanding of embedded networks for residents; and
  - engaging with national bodies on national review and reform processes.
- The review investigated electricity and gas networks only, and by extension gas hot water networks.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: James Priestley  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Background Information

- Embedded networks are private utility networks that are owned, controlled or operated by exempt network service providers or an Authorised Retailer (an Authorised Retailer is an electricity retailer that has been licensed by the Australian Energy Regulator). They are connected to a distribution or transmission network through a parent connection point and serve multiple customers at child connection points.
- The ACT's regulated standing offer is already effectively applied in most embedded networks. Section 152 (4) of the *National Energy Retail Rules* stipulates that embedded network customers cannot be charged more than the standing offer price of the local area retailer. This requirement is also reflected in the Australian Energy Regulator's *Retail Exempt Selling Guideline*.
- The standing offer does not apply to embedded network customers supplied by an Authorised Retailer, as Section 152 (4), only applies to retailers who are exempt from being Authorised Retailers. This creates a situation where if an embedded network customer in the ACT is supplied by an Authorised Retailer other than ActewAGL Retail, the standing offer may not apply. Despite this, the review found no evidence of anti-competitive pricing as a consequence.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: James Priestley  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

#### Emergency Solar Backstop

##### Talking Points:

- Over 41% of ACT households are estimated to have rooftop solar systems<sup>1</sup>. Rooftop solar systems save households money on their energy bills, as the electricity generated can be used within the home to run appliances. Renewables also lower daytime wholesale energy prices as solar energy is cheap to produce and abundant during the day.
- When electricity generation from rooftop solar is high, and electricity demand from the grid is low, it can be challenging to operate the electricity grid in a secure manner.
- The electricity grid is stable when electricity supply matches demand. Occasionally, rooftop solar systems can generate more electricity than is needed, for example, when we have high levels of solar generation but low levels of electricity demand. This can lead to power system security challenges that could result in blackouts if not addressed.
- In recent years, the number of rooftop solar systems in grid has grown substantially; and this is changing patterns of electricity supply and demand.
- While the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) can operate the grid with high levels of rooftop solar most of the time, it is important to ensure last resort tools are in place to operate the power system in a secure, stable, and reliable manner.
- Emergency backstop capability for the ACT will allow rooftop solar to be temporarily dialled down or disconnected in emergency situations to maintain grid security. It already exists in other jurisdictions.
- The ACT Government has consulted with the public to inform the design of a local regulatory framework for emergency backstop capability in the ACT. The consultation commenced on 17 March and closed on 28 April 2025.
- The community and technical stakeholder feedback received through this process is helping to inform the ACT's strategy for managing high levels of rooftop solar, so that we can continue to benefit from this clean, affordable, and abundant power source.
- Feedback is being used to shape the final regulatory design, and support the development of communication materials for energy consumers and local solar installers. A Listening Report, which will outline what we heard from our consultation and next steps, is in development and intended for release mid-2025.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://pv-map.apvi.org.au/historical>



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The ACT Government is also working with the New South Wales (NSW) Government to ensure that emergency backstop processes across our two jurisdictions are aligned and consistent to the appropriate extent.
- In July 2024, the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council endorsed the National Consumer Energy Resources (CER) Roadmap (Roadmap).
- The Roadmap recognises the need to implement technical capabilities to support the continued security of the power system, including implementation of emergency backstop by end of 2025.
- In December 2024, AEMO emphasised the immediate need for emergency backstop capabilities to mitigate system collapse risks in their 'Supporting Secure Operation with High Levels of Distributed Resources' report.
- Emergency backstop capability will be used only when required, and only for as long as needed. The Roadmap also includes several priority reforms to better integrate CER into the power system to ensure the need for emergency backstop is minimised.
- CER can play an important role in helping to balance energy supply and demand. The Sustainable Household Scheme supports households to install batteries, which can help homes maximise the use of the solar energy they generate, cut the cost of electricity bills, make the grid more reliable and stable.
- Keeping the system secure by having emergency backstop capability means more rooftop solar can be installed in the future, allowing more households and businesses to enjoy the benefits of rooftop solar.

### Key Information

- Australia's world-leading uptake of rooftop solar has changed the way the National Electricity Market (NEM) power system operates.
- The NEM power system was originally designed to handle one-way power flow from large-scale generators to consumers. Electricity flow is reversing as homes with rooftop solar are sending excess electricity back to the grid for use by other consumers.
- As more CER are installed, power system operation is becoming more complex, but is providing greater opportunities and lowering the electricity costs for consumers. There is a urgent need to adapt the way the power system currently operates to maintain secure and reliable power supply.
- Emergency backstop capability to curtail or disconnect rooftop solar is already in place in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia. Emergency backstop is currently being planned in other jurisdictions, including NSW and the ACT.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Lucinda Berrie  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Background Information

- AEMO manages the NEM grid in the eastern and south-eastern states. It operates the power system that allows electricity to be generated, transmitted and distributed, and the financial markets that allow electricity to be sold and bought.
- AEMO have advised that all NEM mainland regions are beyond or close to thresholds where action may be required to maintain power system security during high rooftop solar generation and minimum system load conditions.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Lucinda Berrie  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Integrated Energy Plan - Implementation

#### Talking Points:

- On 19 June 2024, the ACT Government released its first Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) outlining our approach to phasing out fossil fuel energy by 2045.
- The IEP outlines several new actions that build on efforts to date. Some of these new actions include:
  - A commitment to electrify all feasible public and community housing by 2030,
  - \$5.2 million for a pilot to electrify the appliances of households that most need support,
  - Interest-free loans for multi-unit buildings to become Electric Vehicle (EV) ready,
  - A new program to help multi-unit buildings develop a plan to electrify,
  - Rebates for fleet operators to install EV chargers,
  - Support for new, fast EV charging hubs,
  - Support for skills development, including a scoping study for a Future Energy Skills Hub at CIT, and targeted training subsidies for priority trades,
  - Exploring potential regulatory interventions to support electrification, and
  - Developing policy and regulatory frameworks to support safe, efficient and equitable decommissioning of the gas network.
- Five priorities will guide government decision making and government action as the IEP is implemented:
  - Ensuring a **clear and implementable pathway** with long-term clarity and a stable policy environment,
  - **Enabling Canberrans to act** through information, education and resources, made available for all parts of the community,
  - **Prioritising support for those who need it most** and cannot transition themselves,
  - Ensuring **secure and reliable energy systems** as the population grows, consumer energy resources increase, fossil fuel gas is phased out and zero emissions vehicles become the norm, and
  - **Removing barriers to the energy transition** through collaboration to remove technical, regulatory and workforce barriers to transition.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Bethel Sendaba  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Programs include:

### Access to Electric Program

- The Access to Electric program delivers on the IEP action of a \$5.2 million pilot to electrify the appliances of households that most need support.
- The two-year pilot commenced in August 2024. It will fully fund gas to electric appliance upgrades, ceiling insulation and gas disconnection for up to 350 homeowners who are experiencing sustained and extreme financial hardship.
- The ACT Government has significantly expanded its referral base and introduced targeted promotional activities to boost referrals to the program. This is in addition to existing referral partners, such as community support organisations and energy retailer hardship programs.
- Care Financial Counselling, as a trusted community partner with financial hardship counselling experience, has been engaged to conduct eligibility assessments.
- As of 28 May 2025, 42 households have been assessed as eligible. A further 34 households are undergoing eligibility assessments.
- Contractor ActewAGL has commenced upgrade works in eligible households, with 21 households receiving completed upgrades to date.

### Electrification of feasible public and community housing by 2030

- The electrification of public and community housing is underway through the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme. The ACT Government has committed a further \$28.098 million over three years from 2028-29 to ensure all feasible public and community housing in the ACT is electrified by 2030.

### Exploring potential regulatory interventions to support electrification

- The IEP committed to investigating whether current regulatory frameworks supporting the ACT's gas network remain fit-for-purpose when considering the ACT's transition to electrification.
- A gas meter disconnection policy is being developed in collaboration with Evoenergy and the Utilities Technical Regulator. In February 2025, a Gas Connection Decommissioning (Abolishment) Technical Review was completed. Ongoing work is focused on a comprehensive review of the regulatory framework and policy settings.
- Another commitment in the IEP also focussed on undertaking an 'initial assessment of measures to maximise replacement of gas appliances with electric appliances at end-of-life'. EPSDD is working closely with Access Canberra to improve data collection and reporting capabilities on appliance installation rates, to better understand transition activities and trends related to gas appliance installation.
- Community consultation on the IEP demonstrated that providing information on the transition to consumers who are considering purchasing gas appliances was strongly supported by the community and considered an effective way of disincentivising the installation of new gas appliances.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Bethel Sendaba  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- EPSDD is engaging with a range of stakeholders, including appliance retailers, plumbers, gas fitters, and electricians to better understand views, preferences, and potential barriers for businesses in providing information that the ACT is transitioning off gas when they sell or install gas appliances.
- This work will be used to assist with policy analysis and the development of potential options to maximise future gas appliance replacement with electric alternatives at end of life.

## Key Information

- Canberra is electrifying. In 2020, we were the first Australian jurisdiction to shift to 100% renewable electricity and we have legislated this in perpetuity. Transport and gas emissions are now the largest contributors to the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions.
- We need our community to play their part in transitioning our city's future energy use. The ACT Government offers advice and assistance to help households and businesses in the transition from gas to electric, including support for those in the community who need it most.
- The Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) 2024–2030 focusses on establishing conditions that allow ACT households and businesses to capture the benefits of electrification.
- Household electrification, coupled with energy efficiency, is the best choice for lower energy bills and emissions while improving the thermal comfort of a house to help adapt to a changing climate.
- An average household could save about \$735 a year in energy bills if they electrify all their gas water, heating and cooking appliances. The savings are even greater if coupled with a solar PV system and an electric vehicle.

## Background Information

- In 2023-24 more than 87% of the ACT's emissions came from ground transport (65.5%) and fossil fuel gas combustion [including LPG] (21.7%). The best approach to achieve our emissions reduction targets is for the ACT to electrify most fossil fuel uses with renewable electricity, including heating and cooling systems, hot water, cooking, vehicles and much of our transport network.
- The ACT Government developed the IEP in consultation with industry, community and other stakeholders:
  - In August 2022, the ACT Government released a Position Paper announcing the transition away from fossil fuel gas will be through electrification, with renewable gases for specific purposes only where electric solutions are not feasible.
  - Consultation on a second Position Paper to inform the IEP ran from 1 August to 12 September 2023. A listening report was published on 17 October 2023 on the YourSay Conversations website, with detailed consultation reports released in March 2024.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Bethel Sendaba  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The majority of organisations were generally supportive of the IEP and prioritising a fair and equitable transition. The community also showed majority support with almost 60% participants very or somewhat supportive of the ACT's intention to transition to a 100% renewable energy supply; however, there remains a significant proportion with concerns, with 28% very unsupportive.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Bethel Sendaba  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

[RETURN TO INDEX](#)

## Portfolio/s: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Default Market Offer

#### Talking points:

- **The Australian Energy Regulator's Default Market Offer (DMO) prices do not apply to customers in the ACT.**
- In the ACT, the **Standing Offer** provides a cap on electricity prices.
- Each year the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC), in its annual price determination, sets the maximum % increase in the Standing Offer that may be applied. The ICRC made its determination for 2025-26 prices in May this year.
- The regulated Standing Offer price in the ACT for 2025-26 increased by 10.11% in nominal terms, or 7.05% excluding the impact of inflation. ACT consumers continue to have amongst the lowest electricity prices in Australia.
- The ICRC's price determination only applies to Standing Offer tariffs. Canberrans are encouraged to regularly compare these tariffs to other offers in the market to see if they can get a better deal.
- ACT households can usually save hundreds of dollars per year by switching from a regulated standing offer to the lowest market offer.
- ACT Government offers support to help low income and vulnerable customers meet the costs of their electricity bills. Customers struggling to pay their bills should also contact their retailer. Under the national energy laws, retailers must provide assistance.
- Consumers can find ACT Government supports they may be eligible for by visiting [act.gov.au/costoflivingsupport](http://act.gov.au/costoflivingsupport).

#### Key Information

- The AER's Default Market Offer (DMO) is a maximum price that retailers can charge electricity customers on default contracts known as standing offer contracts in New South Wales, South Australia and south-east Queensland.

- In the ACT, the Standing Offer price (the equivalent of the AER's Default Market Offer) is set each year by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC) in its annual price determination. This sets the maximum % increase in the Standing Offer that may be applied. Only ActewAGL Retail is required to offer the Standing Offer, but its availability effectively sets a cap for electricity prices in the ACT.
- The ICRC released its 2025-26 Retail Electricity price determination in May 2025.
- A typical ACT household will be \$503 better off over a year than their counterparts in NSW who use the same amount of electricity and remain on the standing offer.
- Further, a typical ACT small business will be \$1357 better off over a year than their counterparts in NSW who use the same amount of electricity and remain on the standing offer.

### Background Information

- On 14 March 2025 the AER released its Default Market Offer (DMO) Draft Determination. The DMO sets maximum price that retailers can charge electricity customers on default contracts known as standing offer contracts in New South Wales, South Australia and south-east Queensland. **It does not apply to the ACT.**
- The DMO for 2025-26 will result in prices for residential customers increasing between 2.5% and 8.9%, depending on the region. Small business customers could see rises between 4.2% and 8.2%.
- Wholesale market and network costs, the two largest components of DMO prices, are major drivers of the cost increase. These have seen increases of 2% to 12%, respectively, for the majority of customers.
- The below table summarises the impact of the DMO on the regions where it applies.

### *DMO 2025–26 draft determination prices, including changes from last year (DMO6)*

Cleared as complete and accurate:	04/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext:79780
Contact Officer name:	Simon French	Ext: 53729
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Distribution region	Description	Residential (without CL)		Residential (with CL)		Small business (without CL)	
Ausgrid (NSW)	DMO price	\$ 1,969.00		\$ 2,714.00		\$ 4,988.00	
	for annual usage of	3,900kWh		4,800kWh Flat rate		10,000kWh	
				+ CL 2,000kWh			
	Change y-o-y	\$ 159	8.8%	\$ 205	8.2%	\$ 376	8.2%
Change y-o-y (real)	\$ 116	6.4%	\$ 145	5.8%	\$ 265	5.8%	
Endeavour Energy (NSW)	DMO price	\$ 2,397.00		\$ 3,050.00		\$ 4,762.00	
	for annual usage of	4,900kWh		5,200kWh Flat rate		10,000kWh	
				+ CL 2,200kWh			
	Change y-o-y	\$ 174	7.8%	\$ 249	8.9%	\$ 340	7.7%
Change y-o-y (real)	\$ 121	5.4%	\$ 182	6.5%	\$ 234	5.3%	
Essential Energy (NSW)	DMO price	\$ 2,713.00		\$ 3,174.00		\$ 6,183.00	
	for annual usage of	4,600kWh		4,600kWh Flat rate		10,000kWh	
				+ CL 2,000kWh			
	Change y-o-y	\$ 200	8.0%	\$ 243	8.3%	\$ 450	7.8%
Change y-o-y (real)	\$ 140	5.6%	\$ 173	5.9%	\$ 312	5.4%	
Energex (QLD)	DMO price	\$ 2,185.00		\$ 2,475.00		\$ 4,439.00	
	for annual usage of	4,600kWh		4,400kWh Flat rate		10,000kWh	
				+ CL 1,900kWh			
	Change y-o-y	\$ 119	5.8%	\$ 61	2.5%	\$ 178	4.2%
Change y-o-y (real)	\$ 69	3.4%	\$ 3	0.1%	\$ 76	1.8%	
SA Power Networks	DMO price	\$ 2,344.00		\$ 2,881.00		\$ 5,707.00	
	for annual usage of	4,000kWh		4,200kWh Flat rate		10,000kWh	
				+ CL 1,800kWh			
	Change y-o-y	\$ 114	5.1%	\$ 121	4.4%	\$ 355	6.6%
Change y-o-y (real)	\$ 60	2.7%	\$ 55	2.0%	\$ 227	4.2%	

Note – CL in the table above refers to Controlled Loads - a specific type of electricity usage that is separately metered and typically used for high-energy appliances like electric hot water systems or pool pumps. These controlled loads can only operate during a 'timing window' that is set by the electricity distributor.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 04/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:79780  
Contact Officer name: Simon French Ext: 53729  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### National Water Agreement

#### Talking Points:

- It is critical that threats to water security are prepared for and managed effectively to support prosperous communities, productivity, economic growth and environmental sustainability in the context of future conditions.
- The ACT, and all other state and territory governments, have committed to work on revising the current National Water Initiative (NWI) to form a new National Water Agreement (NWA).
- At the National Water Committee meeting #27 on 23 May this year, it was agreed that the Federal Water Minister, Murray Watt, could provide the final version of the agreement to state and territory Water Ministers for endorsement.
- The Office of Water will need to conduct thorough due diligence to evaluate the advantages of endorsing the new agreement. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that adequate resources are available for the efficient and effective implementation of the agreement prior to the Minister's endorsement.

#### Key Information

- The National Water Initiative (NWI) is the shared intergovernmental agreement that underpins the sustainable management of Australia's water resources. It was created in 2004 and agreed by all state and territory governments.
- Through the National Water Initiative (NWI) all jurisdictions have been able to provide a clear, public narrative to give certainty on water policy for stakeholders, industry, and communities.

#### Proposed Changes in the New Agreement

- The changes from the National Water Initiative are:
  - Water management to encompass all water sources including stormwater, recycled water and groundwater. This would support Australia's commitment to implement its international obligations including the Sustainable Development Goals and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
  - Actively prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' involvement and influence in water planning and management decisions.
  - Support the delivery of Closing the Gap targets and support increased access to water for cultural, spiritual, social, environmental, and economic uses, in line with principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and Closing the Gap targets.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Chris Hepplewhite  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- An increased focus on providing regional and remote communities, with reliable access to clean, safe, accessible and affordable water for drinking and sanitation, including drinking water, stormwater, sewage treatment, reuse, recycling, and demand management.

### The case for change

- Since 2004, Australia's water management landscape has changed considerably. Current water planning, management and service delivery arrangements have critical gaps, and do not adequately accommodate a more demanding and drier future, or effectively account for the aspirations and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- We are experiencing the effects of climate change and more water variability across Australia. System stressors, including:
  - longer, hotter droughts and more intense floods and bushfires are damaging the health and cultural heritage of our waterways, and the wellbeing and livelihoods of communities.
  - increased demand, with growing urban and regional populations, expanding agricultural and the need to consider water's role as part of Australia's transition to net zero and climate adaptation strategies.

### Productivity Commission Inquiries into National Water Reform

- The Productivity Commission's 2017 and 2020 reports on national water reform found most jurisdictions have largely achieved their commitments under the 2004 agreement and reform has brought sizeable benefits to regional communities and irrigators, the environment, water sector and customers.
- The reports recommended renewing the 2004 agreement to ensure Australia's primary water management framework is fit for purpose and addresses current and emerging challenges.
- The Commission recommended the following areas as priorities for water reform:
  - planning and service provision in urban water;
  - recognition of the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in water resource management, including economic interests;
  - planning principles based on best practice that account for a changing climate;
  - water accounting principles that provide confidence in water management; and
  - principles to address integrated catchment management and adaptive management.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Chris Hepplewhite  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT community have long advocated for better protections in the upper Murrumbidgee River.
- The upper Murrumbidgee River is the 320km stretch of the Murrumbidgee River (a major tributary of the Murray-Darling system) that lies between its headwaters in the Kosciuszko National Park and the Burrinjuck Dam.
- Funding provided under agreement with the Australian Government is supporting an expansion of current river health science and monitoring programs, involvement in a review of the water management arrangements for Snowy Hydro, on ground river restoration activities and First Nations engagement in program delivery.
- This is a great opportunity to deliver tangible on-ground outcomes that will better protect the environmental, cultural, social and critical human water needs that our region relies on.
- The work also has potential to benefit the river well beyond the 5-year timeframe of the program.
- Knowledge gained through research and monitoring of immediate works can help build a more effective, longer-term plan for the whole upper Murrumbidgee catchment. Empowering the community and First Nations people to continue their advocacy for the river will be key to the long-term success of the program.

#### Key Information

##### The upper Murrumbidgee River

- The upper Murrumbidgee River supports a wide range of values including water supply (domestic, urban and agricultural), critical ecosystem functions (e.g. fish population connectivity, biodiversity, threatened species), and social and cultural (Aboriginal culture, swimming and recreation).
- Water quality is fundamental to maintaining these values, and this is dependent on maintaining clean river flows from high in the catchment.
- The river is home to several threatened native fish (including natural, self-sustaining populations of Macquarie Perch and Murray Cod). However, only 6 of the 9 native fish that were historically known to occur within the reach continue to be found in the river.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Woo O'Reilly  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### A note on Snowy Hydro

- The ACT understands that Tantangara Dam, and in turn Snowy Hydro operations, play a critical role in Australia meeting its 82 percent renewable energy target.
- While supportive of a renewable energy target, we are conscious that the achievement of this target should not come at a broader ecological cost. This is particularly important when the impacts of climate change are already being felt.

### Funding the Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River Program

- The ACT entered into a Federation Funding Agreement schedule 'Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River 2024-25 – 2028-29' with the Australian Government on 12 September 2024.
- Contingent on meeting each milestone outlined within the schedule, the agreement provides the ACT with \$7.58 million over 5 years to improve the health of the Upper Murrumbidgee River.
- The ACT Project Work Plan for implementing the \$7.58 million was submitted to the Australian Government at the end of March 2025. Once approved, this will be published on the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website at the end of June 2025.

### **Background Information**

- In November 2023, the Australian Government committed more than \$50m to improve the health of the Upper Murrumbidgee River.
- This included:
  - \$15m over 3 years to address river health, water quality and habitat
  - \$5m over 5 years for new science and monitoring
  - \$5.3m over 5 years to support the review of the Snowy Water Deed
  - \$30m for additional river flows during extreme drought conditions
  - improved annual reporting to improve transparency in Snowy Hydro water management.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Woo O'Reilly  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Sport and Recreation

#### Phillip Pool site (Block 2 Section 22 Phillip)

##### Talking points:

##### Development application (DA-202443325)

- On 13 November 2024, a significant development application (DA-202443325) was lodged for the existing Phillip Pool site, Block 2 Section 22 Phillip. The development application (DA) is for stage 1 of the development which includes:
  - demolition and the construction of a mixed-use development comprising of a new pool facility on the ground floor with shower facilities and a cafe, two 13-storey residential towers with a total of 286 residential units, rooftop garden, basement parking and associated works.
- It is expected that a separate DA will be submitted for each stage. In total there will be 696 dwellings proposed for this site, across all three stages.
- An extended period of Stage One public notification was held from 21 December 2024 until 13 January 2025 with 118 representations received.
- Following the close of the public notification and receipt of entity comments, the Stage 1 Information Package was prepared for the applicant to respond to matters raised in the representations received within the notification period, all entity comments received and other matters arising from an initial review of the application.
- The applicant responded providing a written statement to address entity comments, public representations, and other requested further information. A number of changes have been made to the proposal in response to the matters raised in the Information Package.
- The second round of public notification commenced on 24 April 2025 and ended at the close of business on 22 May 2025. An additional ten working days was provided for further representations to be submitted. A total of 40 representations were received.
- The Authority has made a further information request in response to entity comments received from the referral of the applicant's response to the Stage 1 Information Package (s179B amended submission).
- Once the applicant has responded to the further information request the Authority will then consider all representations and entity advice and assess the DA against the requirements of the *Planning Act 2023* and Territory Plan 2023.
- The statutory due date for the Authority's decision is currently 7 July 2025. However, the due date for a decision is subject to change in response to the second further

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 76804
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext: 51834
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

information request currently being prepared and will be dependent on the time the applicant takes to respond.

### Planning policy

- Changes were proposed to the requirements for a replacement public swimming pool in Phillip in the Territory Plan as part of the Planning System Review and Reform Project. These changes were made in consultation with Sports and Recreation.
- The changes in the Territory Plan reduced the requirement for a replacement public swimming pool from 50m to 25m and added requirements regarding minimum width and depth of the pool, as well as providing a warm water program pool, additional toddler/leisure pool facilities and other amenities.
- The proposed changes were available for public comment as part of the draft interim Territory Plan during the Planning System Review and Reform Project. Public comments were considered and responded to as a part of associated listening and consultation reports.
- Planning for community, sport and recreational facilities will continue as part of delivering on the 2023 District Strategies. To date, quantitative assessments shows that the Woden District meets the requirements for a district level pool with a 25-metre pool. When planning and delivering aquatic facilities, access to other facilities such as the Stromlo Leisure Centre with operation costs and visitation rates are also considered.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 76804
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext: 51834
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Gungahlin - cinema proposal

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government is committed to working with the private sector to deliver a Cinema in the Gungahlin District.

#### Key Updates:

- The development approval for a cinema on Block 2 (formerly part Block 1), Section 12, Gungahlin has now lapsed.
- However, the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) is aware of a proposal for a significant proposed mixed-use development on Block 2 Section 11 Gungahlin that intends to incorporate a cinema as part of the development.
- The Authority has met with the developer of Block 2 Section 11 to discuss the proposed design and lodgement of a development application (DA). The Authority understands the importance of a cinema for the Gungahlin community and continues to work with the developer to facilitate this proposal.
- The developer for Block 2 Section 11 is currently actively engaging with the Authority with the intent to lodge a DA around August/September 2025.
- The developer for Block 2 Section 11 also engaged with the Gungahlin community previously regarding its proposal.

#### Block 2 Section 12 Gungahlin DA

- On 7 April 2020, the Authority conditionally approved DA 201936502 for the construction of a two-storey building containing a cinema.
- While the Authority issued several extensions of time to aid the construction of the cinema to commence, the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (which the DA was approved under) prevents an extension of time more than 5 years after the day the approval takes effect, being 8 April 2025.

#### Lease – Block 2 Section 12 Gungahlin

- On 28 February 2022, a Crown lease was granted for Block 2 Section 12 with a purpose clause of an indoor entertainment facility that must include a cinema with a minimum gross floor area of 3000m<sup>2</sup>.
- The lease also includes a building covenant clause to complete the development within 24 months from the date of the lease.
- If the building covenant timeframe in the Crown lease expires, then the lessee would be in breach of their lease and the ACT Government may take action.
- The lessee of the site (i.e. Block 2 Section 12 Gungahlin) has an option to apply for a lease variation to remove the requirement for a cinema under the DA process. The

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 76804
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext: 51834
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Authority would then be required to assess such a DA against the *Planning Act 2023* and *Territory Plan 2023*.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 76804
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext: 51834
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Development at the Federal Golf Club

#### Talking points:

- Proponents for the Federal Golf Club site, Mbark, have submitted development applications (DA) for the redevelopment of the area under both the now repealed *Planning and Development Act 2007*, and the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act).
- Both suites of DAs have undergone public notification processes during 2024.
- During the public notification process, the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) included a notification on their website to alert interested parties to the two separate DA processes.

#### Initial DAs (lodged under *Planning and Development Act 2007*)

- Three DAs for the Federal Golf Club site were lodged with the Authority on 9 February 2024 relating to a retirement village. The three applications were lodged under the (now repealed) *Planning and Development Act 2007*.
  - DA-202342252 proposed a subdivision of Block 1 into two parcels and was conditionally approved on 7 November 2024.
  - DA-202342260 proposed a redesign of the golf course to accommodate a retirement village development and was conditionally approved on 19 April 2024.
  - DA-202342264 proposed a retirement village and access road and was conditionally approved on 18 November 2024.
    - The retirement village includes 77 single storey dwellings, 48 apartments and an amenities building.
    - The maximum building height proposed is three storeys.
- The development aligns with recommendations from the Red Hill Integrated Plan, which was presented to the previous Legislative Assessment.
- The relevant recommendations from the Plan were adopted into the Territory Plan. This included the transfer of 10Ha of land considered to have high ecological value, from the golf course to the reserve.
- The application for the retirement village was supported by an Environmental Significance Opinion from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

#### New DAs (lodged under *Planning Act 2023*)

- The proponent for the development also lodged four DAs under the Act, including:
  - DA-202442898 – Lease variation to add retirement village (maximum 125 units) and ancillary uses to the Crown Lease Purpose Clause;
  - DA-202442899 – Construction of a water storage dam;
  - DA-202442900 – Construction of a public road; and

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:76804  
Contact Officer name: Dominic Riches Ext: 51834  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- DA-202442901 – Design and siting of a retirement village.
- The DAs were publicly notified for 25 working days, concluding on 4 June 2024.
- On 1 November 2024, the Authority conditionally approved DA-202442898.
- On 20 December 2024 the Authority conditionally approved DA202442899.
- An application for review of the DA202442899 decision was lodged with ACAT by a third party on 22 January 2025. A directions hearing for this appeal was held on 4 March 2025 and the application was dismissed as the ACAT decided the application was not reviewable.
- The other two DAs (DA202442900 & DA202442901) remain under assessment by the Authority.

### The Lease

- The lease over Block 1 Section 56 Red Hill is a concessional lease. There is currently no development application to remove the concessional status from the lease. The Federal Golf Club is proposing the development to contribute to the future financial security of the club.

### **ACAT Review: DA202342260 (Proposed retirement village)**

- An application for review of the DA202342264 decision was lodged with the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) by a third party on 13 December 2024.
- The ACAT provided a decision on 17 April 2025 that the approval was set aside due to the application not being properly made, as the requisite signatures were not provided as required. It is understood this requirement stems from the Federal Golf Club's Constitution which requires the Board to consider and sign the form, not the President of the club.
- The ACAT also indicated concerns with the potential removal of hollow bearing trees and the associated impact on native fauna such as Gang Gang Cockatoo's and Swift Parrots.
- The ACAT are yet to provide written reasons for its decision.
- The Territory Planning Authority will consider the ACAT's decision, including implications for any other development applications for the site.

### **ACT Supreme Court Review: DA202342260 (Proposed retirement village)**

- The Proponents for the Federal Golf Club have appealed the above noted ACAT decision in ACT Supreme Court.
- The court has listed the matter for a one-day hearing on a date to be determined in the week commencing 4 September 2025. The matter is listed for further directions at 2pm on 18 June 2025.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext:76804
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext: 51834
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Woolworths Redevelopment at Hawker shops

#### Talking Points:

- With the Territory's population expected to grow to 700,000 by 2050, Housing is a priority for myself as the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development.
- The ACT Government is aware of the community interest in the proposal by Woolworths to expand the existing supermarket to a large format/full line supermarket with additional retail space, and redevelopment of part of the Hawker Group Centre.
- The Government has committed to an ambitious but achievable goal of 30,000 new homes by 2030, including 'shop top' housing. To achieve this, the renewal of local shops and group centres is a priority, with mixed-use development strongly encouraged.
- As I noted in my Ministerial Statement to the Legislative Assembly on 4 March 2025, after careful consideration of the current direct sale application, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has advised Woolworths that the proposal in its current form does not meet the Government's strategic objectives, policy setting or community benefit for key mixed-use commercial group centres.
- EPSDD has written to Woolworths to clarify the position and expectations outlined above and has offered to meet with the proponent in good faith, to provide reasonable opportunity for a revised proposal, which more closely aligns with the Government's and community's expectations for the site. This correspondence has been acknowledged by Woolworths. EPSDD has also asked Woolworths to engage meaningfully with the community on any revised proposal. Should a revised application be provided, EPSDD will assess this carefully, including a consideration on if a direct sale is the most appropriate way to sell the land, and provide advice to government.
- The Government committed to supporting more housing and better shops across Canberra with the right policy settings.

#### Key Information

##### The Direct Sale Process

- The *Planning Act 2023* sets out the circumstances in which the Government could approve a direct sale of land. To be eligible for a direct sale, Woolworths would need to meet at least one grant objective in the Act (Section 266 (4)) and demonstrate that selling the land by other means (through an open market process) is unlikely to meet the objective to the same extent as the direct sale of the land (Section 266(2)(b)).

##### Planning and land release

- A range of information, including broader strategic planning considerations at the Hawker Group Centre and surrounds, is required to inform the assessment of the application. Some of these studies have been completed and assessment of these continues.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: x50351  
Contact Officer name: Katherine Hicks Ext: x54868  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

#### Ainslie Phone Tower Site

##### Talking Points:

- The Government notes that in October 2024 the then Planning and Land Authority, now the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) in accordance with independent statutory planning processes, approved the construction of a telecommunications facility on a (9m X 10m) portion of Block 3 Section 60 Ainslie.
- The Government has no legal mechanism to intervene in this development in response to concerns raised by a community group in the media.
- The development application (DA) was subject to community consultation from 30 January to 19 February 2024. The Authority received and considered 49 submissions.
- Throughout the decision-making process, the Authority sought advice from other entities including Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), the ACT Heritage Council and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (the Conservator).
- The advice of the Conservator, which was based on a site inspection by a senior ecologist, confirmed that the development site on the block is dominated by exotic vegetation and not Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG), and subsequently offered no objection to the DA but suggested a range of conditions to protect some ecological values on the remainder of the block.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna is working with the Friends of Ainslie Volcanics Grasslands to discuss a project to undertake a deep-dive ecological assessment of the block. This process will help to identify the critical and important ecological values on the block, and the most appropriate ways to protect, conserve and enhance them.

##### Key Information

- In 2023-24, a grant was awarded to Molonglo Conservation Group on behalf of the Friends of Ainslie Volcanics Grasslands for conservation activities across the entirety of Blocks 2 and 3, Section 60 Ainslie.
- On 26 November 2024, the ACT Heritage Council made a formal decision under the *Heritage Act 2004* not to provisionally register the area in question, which was nominated to the ACT Heritage Register in 2020 as the 'Ainslie Volcanics.' The decision not to provisionally register meant the assessment was concluded. The ACT Heritage Council was not satisfied the place had heritage significance to meet the criteria set out in the Heritage Act.

## **Portfolio:** Planning and Sustainable Development

### **Bluetts Block (Minor Plan Amendment MA2024-m)**

#### **Talking Points:**

- As articulated in my statement of planning priorities, I am committed to continue to protect and enhance our natural environment. This included understanding the next steps in protecting blocks adjacent to development in Denman Prospect, specifically Blocks 402 and 403 Stromlo, as well as the remainder of Block 12 Section 1 Denman Prospect from future development.
- Following a request by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (the Conservator), the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) proposed minor amendment 2024-m to identify Stromlo rural block 403 and the undeveloped part of Denman Prospect block 12 as nature reserve by placing a 'Pc' overlay on the Territory Plan Map.
- Bluetts block contains dry sclerophyll forest, Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland and native grassland remnants. The Conservator identified it as an area of high conservation value that required protection as a nature reserve.
- The community were invited to provide their comments on the proposed minor amendment during the consultation period which ran from 12 September 2024 to 11 October 2024. 27 submissions were received during this period.
- Minor Amendment 2024-m was considered and finalised by the Authority, and now protects Bluetts block. The minor amendment commenced on 14 February 2025.
- The Authority is currently preparing a major plan amendment to remove the future urban area overlay from Block 403 Stromlo and part Block 12 Section 1 Denman Prospect (Bluetts block). It is anticipated this will be placed on public consultation by the end of the month.
- This will provide further certainty to the community that the site will be protected in perpetuity.

#### **Key Information**

- The Conservator wrote to the Authority on 23 May 2024 and requested that Bluetts block, comprising Stromlo rural block 403 and the undeveloped part of Denman Prospect block 12, be identified as a nature reserve via an overlay in the Territory Plan.

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Phillip Services Area

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT has a limited supply of Commercial CZ3 services zone land which provides for minor industrial and service trades. Service Trades Areas are a key component of our employment lands and are important service destinations for Canberrans.
- The Woden District Strategy identifies the Phillip Service Trades Area as a critical component of a diverse economy, providing a wide range of light industrial, service and related activities to cater to the needs of the Woden district and broader Canberra.
- The Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework is intended to guide future development and urban renewal in the Southern Gateway Corridor, including the Phillip Trades area.
- Recognising the important role that Service Trades Areas play in our city, the potential impact of further zoning changes that allow for other uses, like residential development or hotel accommodation, in areas like Phillip must be considered.
- I held a Ministerial roundtable on 29 May 2025 to better understand the diversity of views held by a range of stakeholders including business owners, building owners and community groups.
- It was clear from attendees that there is keen interest in the future of Phillip Service Trades Area and appetite for carefully considered changes to encourage it to evolve and become a high amenity diverse environment that support business and potential future residential.
- I have asked that EPSDD look to progress work over the course of this year which considers planning options to support this outcome. Further, as the Phillip Service Trades Area is an integral part of the Woden Town Centre I have made sure that the cross-directorate Woden Town Centre Working Group will include consideration of this area.

#### EPSDD meetings with representatives

- Representatives of EPSDD spoke with Mr Tom Adam, President of the Phillip Traders Association, on 22 November 2024 and on 7 February 2025, to arrange a pre-ministerial round table.
- On 3 April 2025 EPSDD met with representatives from the Phillip traders, businesses, building owners and community representatives to discuss the Phillip trades area and listen to inform the agenda for the Ministerial roundtable.



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

### Background:

- The new Territory Plan prohibits residential development in the Phillip Service Trades Area (provisions commenced 27 September 2024) to limit potential conflicts between the existing trade uses and any proposed residential uses.
- On 1 November 2024, the Planning and Land Authority refused a commercial accommodation proposal within Phillip and the Services Area. This refusal decision was recently confirmed in the ACAT although is now subject of further appeal to the Supreme Court.
- The Authority also refused a Lease Variation seeking residential use within the Phillip and Services Area. This too was appealed before ACAT but was subsequently withdrawn by the proponent.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	17/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext:79703
Contact Officer name:	Anthony Burton	Ext:54699
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Hot Topic: Planning Priorities – Community Facility Land Release

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government is currently undertaking a sales process for five blocks of community facility zoned land:
  - Gungahlin (Block 5 Section 235) - 4,075 m<sup>2</sup> for a Community Activity Centre or Religious Associated Use.
  - Chisholm (Block 9 Section 567) - 12,284 m<sup>2</sup> for a Place of Worship, Community Activity Centre, Indoor Recreation Centre or Outdoor Recreation Centre.
  - Evatt (Block 14 Section 52) - 1,872 m<sup>2</sup> for a Place of Worship or Community Activity Centre.
  - Kambah (Block 24 Section 286) - 1,523 m<sup>2</sup> for Community Activity Centre.
  - Gowrie (Block 4 Section 291) - 1,692m<sup>2</sup> for a Place of Worship, Community Activity Centre or Residential Aged Care.
- The EOI closed on 21 November 2024 and responses have now been assessed.
- All respondents were notified in early April 2025 with four community organisations being invited to participate in a second stage request for tender (RFT) process.
- It is anticipated that the second stage RFT will commence in mid-2025 for the Evatt, Chisholm and Gungahlin blocks. No respondents have been shortlisted for the Kambah and Gowrie blocks.

#### Molonglo Town Centre Site

- EOI's were also called for future community land or space in the Molonglo Town Centre for a Place of Workshop.
- The site in Molonglo Town Centre will either be a site between 2,000 - 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>, or space collocated with other community facilities (i.e. a building collocated with other buildings, or floor space within an existing building).
- The exact nature of what will be provided is subject to the Suburban Land Agency and a forthcoming Subdivision Design Application.

#### Background

- The two-stage sales process commenced with an expression of interest (EOI) that was open to community organisations interested in purchasing a non-concessional crown lease (market value lease) to establish a community facility.

Applicants must demonstrate community demand for the facility and consider potential impacts to the surrounding area including traffic, noise and lights, parking and tree

Cleared as complete and accurate:	06/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Branch Manager	Ext: x50351
Contact Officer name:	Daniel Santosusso	Ext: x77212
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

cover. Importantly, the ACT Government is interested to see how the community will benefit from the proposed facilities at each site.

Relevant Community Councils and residents adjoining the blocks of land were informed of the sales process and broader community consultation will occur as part of any future development application process. More information is available at the ACT Planning Website for interested community members.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	06/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Branch Manager	Ext: x50351
Contact Officer name:	Daniel Santosusso	Ext: x77212
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Heritage

### Heritage Matters

#### Funding for the National Trust (ACT)

- Since early 2021 the ACT Government has provided \$75,000 in funding to the National Trust to promote the conservation of, and foster public knowledge about places, objects and issues that are significant to the heritage of the ACT.
- In 2024-25 Financial Year, the ACT Government provided boosted funding \$157,000 (ex GST), administered through a one-year grant.
- To guide and inform long term funding decisions, a funding review of the National Trust (ACT) is underway. This review will determine how the funded activities align with and support the strategic heritage priorities of the ACT Government and the Heritage Council.
- In consideration of the competing financial demands on the Government, the difficult decision has been taken to return funding levels of the National Trust to the previous \$75,000.
- The final report from the funding review is due 30 June and will guide and inform the future decisions of Government in relation to National Trust funding.

#### Court Matter – Registered Aboriginal Organisations

- I am aware that in November 2024, a third-party submission was made to the Supreme Court which in parts relates to the recognition of Ngambri (Kamberri) Cultural Group Incorporated as a Representative Aboriginal Organisation (RAO) under *the Heritage Act 2004*.
- As this is now a matter for the Supreme Court, it would be inappropriate for me to make any comment until case has been heard and the court has made a decision.

#### Early Kingston Shops

- In May 2024, the Council provisionally registered identified blocks that relate to the Early Kingston Shops, and part of the road verge.
- The Council undertook public consultation during June that was subsequently extended to 19 August 2024.
- Approximately 50 public submissions were received about the nomination. It is pleasing that so many Canberrans took the opportunity to have their say.
- Following a statutory extension of the consultation process, the Council provided me with a written report on the outcomes of public consultation.
- In response, I have asked the Heritage Council for information on whether mixed-use development - including shop-top housing to the extent permitted in the Territory Plan – would be possible if the Early Kingston Shops were registered.

- It is not unusual for the Minister for Heritage to ask the Council for more information in response to their Public Consultation report.
- Under the provisions of the Heritage Act 2004, my direction to Council has triggered a 3-month extension to the provisional registration period.
- Council is now working with the ACT Government planning directorate to clarify how protection of the Early Kingston Shops' heritage significance can be achieved alongside a mix of uses. EPSDD Planning staff will attend the ACT Heritage Council meeting on 24 June to brief members on intersection of the place's heritage protection with Territory Plan.
- The final decision will be made by the Heritage Council – which is independent statutory body – against the heritage significance criteria set out in the Heritage Act.
- The end of provisional registration is now 27 August 2025 and, as there are no further provisions for extension, the Heritage Council will make a decision before that date.

### Coggans Bakery – Braddon

- I am aware of public concern about the condition of the heritage registered Coggans Bakery in Braddon.
- The building is privately owned, and the owner is responsible for its maintenance and conservation. The Council as the statutory authority for heritage in the ACT can take action if the necessary repair works are not being done.
- The Council provided advice to the owner on heritage conservation requirements.
- Action has been taken to board up windows and doors within the building, which will assist in protecting significant fabric in the short term.
- The Council will also continue to work with the new owner on longer term actions to restore and appropriately manage the heritage building, as part of a broader redevelopment proposal for the block.
- For privacy reasons, I am unable to disclose further detailed information on the matter.

### Former Ginninderra Schoolhouse, Nicholls

- Concerns have also been raised about the condition of the heritage registered Former Ginninderra Schoolhouse in Nicholls.
- The building is privately owned, and the owner is responsible for its maintenance and conservation.
- The Council as the statutory authority for heritage in the ACT is engaging with the owner regarding essential maintenance works.
- The Council has authority to take action if necessary repair works are not being done, through Heritage Directions and Repair Damage Directions.

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

### Canberra Brickworks – Yarralumla

- Redevelopment of the Canberra Brickworks Precinct is a significant ACT Government renewal project, which aims to conserve, reuse and reopen the industrial heritage site to the public.
- With Heritage Council endorsement, a number of development applications (DAs) have been recently approved for the project – including the Estate Development Plan DA and the Heritage Core DA.
- These DAs authorise the adaptive reuse of kilns, and a range of early on-site works; and it is anticipated that works on site will commence soon.
- The Heritage Council is continuing to work with Doma Group regarding heritage conservation outcomes to be delivered as part of the project.

### Kingston Oval Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

- Kingston Oval is registered on the ACT Heritage Register as part of the Kingston/Griffith Housing Precinct, and is managed by Sport and Recreation within Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).
- To inform TCCS management of the Oval, a CMP was prepared by Philip Leeson Architects in 2022-23.
- This CMP was approved by an ACT Heritage Council (Council) delegate on 9 August 2024.
- This CMP sets out a scope of works for the maintenance of the Oval, and guiding principles for future infrastructure and development that are consistent with its heritage values as a community sporting facility.
- To date, no specific development proposals for the Oval have been submitted to the Council for further advice.

### Heritage Council Appointments

- The process to appoint new members of the community to the ACT Heritage Council has progressed according to statutory processes and is nearing completion.
- I expect to publicly announce the appointments on 1 July 2025.
- The appointments include 3 Expert members and 2 Aboriginal Community Representatives.
- These new members bring to the Council expertise in archaeology, heritage management, architecture cultural history and cultural consulting.
- The Aboriginal Community Representative members are critical in informing Council decisions related to Aboriginal place and objects, as well as other Council business.
- A new Chair and Deputy Chair will also be announced from within the membership.
- These appointments bring the Council to the full complement of 10 members allowed by the Heritage Act 2004 and enable it to undertake a busy program of decision-

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Mary Clare Swete Kelly Ext: 76902  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

making on the recognition and preservation of heritage place and objects in the ACT, among several other responsibilities.

### Community engagement

- The 2025 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival (Festival) ran from Friday 18 April to Sunday 11 May 2025.
- The 2025 theme 'Unearthed' encouraged event holders to uncover forgotten stories, explore hidden treasures and bring to light the lesser-known histories that shape our community.
- 142 events were held during the festival hosted by 75 different groups.
- 45 community groups and not-for-profits organisations hosted events, with 15 by government organisations, 5 professional organisations and 10 commercial groups.
- Regional partners included Yass, Goulburn, Cooma, and Queanbeyan.
- Evaluation of the festival is currently underway, the public and event organisers can provide feedback through the YourSay page, open to 6 June.

## Portfolio: Planning & Sustainable Development

### TOPIC: Brindabella Christian College Planning Issues

#### Talking Points:

- Brindabella Christian Education Limited, the lessee of the Brindabella Christian College (BCC) land, appealed the ACAT decision to close the car park in the Supreme Court and obtained a stay order permitting its use.
- Since then, an administrator was appointed to BCC and the school has now been sold to Christian Community Ministries (CCM).
- ACT Education Directorate (ACTEDU) has organised a network of relevant ACT Government agencies to provide CCM with updates and advice on any residual regulatory compliance actions that remain outstanding when BCC was in operation with the previous owner.
- Access Canberra, as delegates of the Chief Planner, and ACTEDU met with representatives of CCM in late May and outlined the history of the Controlled Activity Order (CAO) for the carpark and issues with the Development Approval conditions issued over the site.
- Access Canberra will continue to engage with CCM with assistance of ACTEDU and have provided information and documents to assist with their ongoing work to progress any outstanding compliance matters.
- CCM have been proactive in engaging in this matter and Access Canberra is satisfied with the current engagement and understanding of CCM in relation to the legal matters surrounding the carpark.
- While the matter is being resolved with the new ownership previous court proceeding decisions are still in force meaning that **the carpark can remain open while the matter is before the Courts** or until a resolution is achieved with new ownership.
- The ACT Government is aware of community concerns regarding a third demountable placed along Brigalow Street that was constructed without Building Approval. BCC has since obtained a **Building Approval** for this structure; but a **Certificate of Occupancy and Use** has not been issued.

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Optus tower proposal in Fadden - DA-202543794

#### Talking Points:

- On 11 March 2025, a development application (DA) was lodged with the independent Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) in relation to Block 14 Section 401 Fadden.
- The DA (DA-202543794) has proposed a 25m high telecommunications monopole and associated works within an area of unleased land.
- The DA was publicly notified until 9 April 2025. 133 representations were received within time, and 2 late representations received.
- The proposal has also been referred to entities for advice including Icon Water, Evoenergy, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).
- Given the application is being assessed independently, by the Authority, I am unable to intervene. Any concerns should be raised directly with the Authority through the statutory process.
- The Authority will now consider all representations and entity advice received, in accordance with the requirements of the Territory Plan and *Planning Act 2023* prior to making a decision.

#### Key Information

- DA-202543794 is currently being assessed by the independent Territory Planning Authority.
- Any concerns should be raised with the Authority through the statutory process.
- The proposal is located within the PRZ1 Urban Open Space Zone on unleased land.
- TCCS is currently the land custodian for Block 14 Section 401 Fadden.
- A site at North Fadden was proposed in a previous Network Plan, from 2005, which proposed telecommunications infrastructure on a light pole close to the subject site that is now proposed in DA-202543794.
- However, the North Fadden proposal did not progress to a DA as an alternate location was selected at the time.

#### Background

- Representations and correspondence have referred to a previous refusal of a proposed telecommunications tower at the subject site circa 2006-2007.
- There are no previous DAs on record for a telecommunications facility at Block 14 Section 401 Fadden, noting the electronic records system commenced in 2003.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext:
Contact Officer name:	Dominic Riches	Ext:
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Through a records search, the following information was located about telecommunications towers in the area:
  - Block 27 Section 375 Macarthur - Withdrawn
  - Block 2 Section 364 Fadden – Approved (DA-200603417)
- When the 3G network was rolled out, under previous requirements, a network plan was required to be approved by ACTPLA which was to ensure the network was needed, efficient, could be suitably located and integrated with NSW.
- Network Plans were considered separate to the DA process under the provisions of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Regulation 1992* and under the Authority's *Guideline for Telecommunications (Mobile Phone) Networks 28 November 2005*.
- Network plans were not required when improving an existing network.
- The Network Plan that was approved at the time (2006) outlined around 40 new sites across the ACT. Fifteen (15) of these sites did not require planning consent from the Authority, as they are regulated by other Authorities or under separate legislation.
- The plan was subject to a lot of public interest and one site at North Fadden was withdrawn from the network plan and an alternate site at Block 27 Section 375 Macarthur was selected.
- The site at North Fadden, that was withdrawn from the Network Plan, was proposed on a light pole on Bugden Avenue (near Nicklin Street) in Fadden.
- Although records do not show an exact location for the original proposal at North Fadden, it is likely that the original location was close to the subject site that is now proposed in DA-202543794.
- However, the North Fadden proposal was not subject to a DA and an alternate location was proposed by the service provider who prepared the Network Plan at the time.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Dominic Riches Ext:  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### Portfolio: Planning & Sustainable Development

#### TOPIC: Big Splash Water Park, Macquarie

#### Talking Points:

- Big Splash is a privately owned recreational facility. The Crown lease permits use including an aquatic and indoor sports and recreation centre and an unlicensed family restaurant.
- The lease requires the owner to maintain, repair and keep the premises in repair to the satisfaction of the Territory Planning Authority.
- Access Canberra is engaging with the owner about the safety of the site and the future of the recreational facility.
- Due to immediate safety concerns Access Canberra liaised with the Owner who has advised that quotes have been obtained for the fencing. The owner intends to fully fence the property with a Colourbond fence.
- Whilst the date of completion for the fence is **unknown** the matter is being monitored by Access Canberra inspectors.
- If members of the community observe concerning behaviour by individuals or groups accessing the site, they are encouraged to report incidents to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online via its website [www.crimestoppersact.com.au](http://www.crimestoppersact.com.au). For any planning related concerns, the public can contact Access Canberra via its website.

### Portfolio: Planning & Sustainable Development

#### TOPIC: 'Site Inspections' Canberra video

#### Talking Points:

- I am aware of the video purporting to show alleged building defects at a Canberra property.
- Access Canberra is considering the matters raised in the video.
- I understand that the certifier for the property has engaged with the builder about some of the issues raised. This shows that our system is working – that the private certifier is raising issues with the builder so that they can be fixed before construction is complete.
- The *Building Act 2004* sets out what is considered building work. Unfinished paintwork and other 'fit and finish' matters are not building work and are not regulated under this Act. I am advised that quite a number of alleged defects noted in the video are not considered building work.
- If Access Canberra receives a complaint about this matter it will assess the complaint in line with the [Access Canberra Regulatory Complaint and Investigation Policy](#).
- If a member of the community has a complaint about building or planning matters, I encourage them to contact Access Canberra via the website or by phoning 13 22 81.

# QUESTION TIME BRIEF

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Major Territory Plan Amendments

#### Talking points:

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)	Proposed Change	Current Status
<p><u>DPA-01 - Fraser Primary School Expansion (government initiated)</u></p>	<p>This amendment proposes rezoning approximately 1.36 hectares of Fraser section 64 block 6 from NUZ3 Hills, Ridges and Buffer to Community Facility, to allow the expansion of the Fraser Primary School located on the adjoining block.</p>	<p><b>Public consultation:</b> 9 Dec 2024 to 21 Feb 2025.</p> <p><b>Submissions Received:</b> 1</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> DPA-01 was notified on 3 June 2025: <a href="#">2025-286.PDF</a>.</p>
<p><u>Revised DPA-B - Forrest Section 19 Blocks 5,6, 9, 11 and 12 (proponent-initiated for blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and Authority-initiated for block 12)</u></p>	<p>This draft amendment proposes rezoning Forrest Section 19 Blocks 5 and 6 from Residential RZ1 to Commercial CZ5 Mixed Use Zone, and Blocks 9, 11 and 12 from Commercial CZ6 Leisure and Accommodation Zone to CZ5 Mixed Use Zone.</p>	<p><b>1st Round Public Consultation:</b> 6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024.</p> <p><b>1st Round Submissions Received:</b> 15</p> <p><b>2nd Round Public Consultation:</b> 7 March 2025 to 22 April 2025.</p> <p><b>2nd Round Submissions Received:</b> 15 Representations were made to extend the public consultation timeframe. The Authority did not extend the formal timeframe but agreed to accept late public submissions until 6 May 2025.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> The Authority is considering public consultation comments on revised DPA-B. Consultation comments will be summarised in a consultation report. Revised DPA-B (which may contain changes resulting from consultation) will be progressed</p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703  
 Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)	Proposed Change	Current Status
		<p>for referral to the Standing Committee.</p> <p><b>Revised DPA-B</b> The Authority revised DPA-B to include all blocks listed as a change area in the Inner South District Strategy. The decision to expand the site was also made in response to public comments which highlighted a desire for broader consideration of Section 19 when DPA-B was initially placed on consultation and only considered Block 9, Section 19 Forrest.</p> <p>Revised DPA-B includes two proponent-initiated applications for an MPA and one block which is an Authority-initiated MPA. All of the blocks (Blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12, Section 19 Forrest) were included in revised DPA-B prior to a second round of public consultation.</p>
<p><u>DPA-C - Watson Section 95 Block 3 (proponent-initiated)</u></p>	<p>This amendment rezones Watson Section 95 Block 3 from Commercial CZ6 (Leisure and Accommodation) to Residential RZ4 Medium Density Residential.</p>	<p><b>Public Consultation:</b> 6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024.</p> <p><b>Submissions Received:</b> 5</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> On 7 April 2025 I approved the MPA. The MPA was tabled on 9 April 2025. No disallowance motions were moved. The MPA commenced on 30 May 2025 and the changes have been incorporated into the Territory Plan.</p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703  
 Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)	Proposed Change	Current Status
<p><u>DPA-02 - Ainslie Football and Social Club (proponent-initiated)</u></p>	<p>This amendment proposes rezoning northern parts of Section 26 Ainslie from Restricted PRZ2 (Restricted Access Recreation) to both RZ5 High Density Residential and CZ5 Mixed Use.</p>	<p><b>Public consultation:</b> 2 Dec 2024 to 3 Feb 2025. Late submissions were accepted until 14 Feb 2025.</p> <p><b>Submissions Received:</b> 147</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> The Authority progressed DPA-02 to the Minister, along with a report on consultation and background papers for DPA-02 for referral to the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services.</p> <p>The above documentation was referred to the Committee on 10 June 2025. The Committee has 15 working days to make a decision on whether it wishes to undertake an inquiry and report about DPA-02.</p> <p>Two petitions (E-PET-018-25 and PET PET-023-25) were received requesting the Legislative Assembly to refer DPA-B to the Standing Committee to undertake a full public inquiry, including public hearings. The ACT Government will prepare a response to these petitions.</p>
<p><u>DPA-03 - Holt Aged Care, Section 74 (proponent-initiated)</u></p>	<p>This amendment proposes rezoning Blocks 2, 7 and 8 Section 74 Holt from RZ2 (Suburban Core) to CFZ Community Facility Zone.</p>	<p><b>Public consultation:</b> 11 April 2025 to 30 May 2025.</p> <p><b>Submissions Received:</b> 2</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> The Authority is considering public consultation comments on DPA-03.</p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703  
 Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)	Proposed Change	Current Status
		<p>Consultation comments will be summarised in a consultation report. DPA-03 (which may contain changes resulting from consultation) will be progressed for referral to the Standing Committee.</p> <p>The Standing Committee has 15 working days to decide if it will undertake an inquiry and report.</p>
DPA-04 – Missing Middle Housing Reform	<p>This amendment proposes changes to the Territory Plan that relate to subdivision, consolidation and development in the residential zones (generally in the RZ1 and RZ2) across the Australian Capital Territory.</p>	<p><b>Public consultation:</b> 20 May 2025 to 22 July 2025 and written submissions will be accepted until 5 August 2025.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Public comments will be considered in the context of the broader missing middle project that is undergoing public engagement during the same timeframe as consultation on DPA-04.</p>
DPA-05 – Future urban area overlay	<p>This amendment proposes to remove the future urban area (FUA) overlay from several areas in the Molonglo Valley. These include Block 403 Stromlo, part Block 12 Section 2 Denman Prospect (also known as Bluetts Block), and Coombs peninsula (with the final zoning set).</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> The Authority is preparing DPA-05. It is anticipated that the DPA will be placed on public consultation by the end of June 2025.</p>
Thoroughbred Park ( <u>proponent-initiated – under consideration</u> )	<p>Rezone the Thoroughbred Park site from NUZ1 (Broadacre) to a mixture a number of zones including high density</p>	<p>The Authority is considering the MPA request. It is identified as a category 2 change area in the</p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703  
 Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)	Proposed Change	Current Status
	residential, services zoning, mixed use, urban open space and broadacre.	Inner North and City District Strategy.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703  
 Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Ongoing Planning Studies

#### Talking Points:

##### Western Edge Investigations

- The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 identified a strategic direction to investigate land to the west of Canberra's metropolitan area (the Western Edge investigation area) for potential urban development and environmental conservation, such as new nature reserves.
- The Western Edge investigation area is approximately 9,800 hectares and includes land bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the existing urban areas of Belconnen, Molonglo Valley, Weston Creek and Kambah.
- This area is home to a substantial array of flora and fauna, with some requiring study and assessment over multiple years to understand habitat use over lifecycles and connection and movement through the habitat.
- Some preliminary background investigations have been completed and are available on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's website. A number of these investigations indicated further assessments were required, including environmental values. These are part of the next stage of investigations, currently in progress.
- This work is required before options and recommendations regarding potential land uses can be considered.
- There has been no government decision in relation to whether there will be urban development in the western edge.

##### Eastern Broadacre (including Majura Valley)

- The Eastern Broadacre area is identified in the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 and in the East Canberra District Strategy 2023.
- Investigations within the study area are looking at new industrial and employment opportunities, while also considering existing uses of the land and environmental values.
- The Eastern Broadacre area is subject to a strategic assessment under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The process will assess potential impacts on nationally significant environmental values of proposed development in parts of the area. The strategic assessment will inform the future planning and potential rezoning of the district.
- A draft EBSA was submitted to the Commonwealth for review and endorsement in April 2024. The Commonwealth provided substantive comments on the draft EBSA

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 77387  
Contact Officer name: Freya O'Brien Ext: 58434  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

report. The ACT Government is currently reviewing these comments and considering next steps.

### *Majura split blocks*

- The ACT Government has worked closely with the Department of Defence to revoke the National land portion of the blocks, with the split block land now being identified as Territory land.
- I am pleased to advise that new 25-year leases have now been granted and commenced for all the Majura Split Block Farmers.
- I would like to thank the Australian Government for their help in resolving this long-standing issue.

### Southern Gateway Planning and Urban Design Framework

- The government is investing in the planning work to deliver a Southern Gateway Planning and Urban Design Framework.
- Planning work will consider community and recreation facilities, open space, flooding and stormwater, walking and cycling connections, and traffic and utility infrastructure. This planning work, along with future community engagement, will inform the development of the Framework.
- The Framework will represent an integrated strategic approach to land use planning and transport infrastructure in the Corridor. It will support the implementation of the district strategies, providing potential housing supply and maximising the benefits of light rail for our city. Community input will be important to guide growth and change. Community engagement on the district strategies undertaken between 2019 and 2023 identified the unique character of the Inner South and Woden districts. The outcomes of this engagement has guided the project to date, including informing the identification of 'change areas' and 'key sites'. There will be further community engagement opportunities to guide future possibilities for the Southern Gateway.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	19/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 77387
Contact Officer name:	Freya O'Brien	Ext: 58434
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Land Release

#### Talking Points:

- The Indicative Land Release Program (the program) is a component of the broader Housing Supply and Land Release Program. For 2025-26 to 2029-30 targets the release of land to support **25,948** new homes.
- Additionally, analysis of March quarter 2025 data from Colliers shows that between now and 2030, the private sector is anticipated to contribute an estimated **9,200** new homes on land owned by the private developers.
- As available government owned land reduces, the government will play an important role in facilitating development through other mechanisms such as land facilitation and investment, and planning and providing supporting infrastructure to assist the private sector in delivering new homes.
- The program supports the provision of housing in the future. It is important to consider the lag between land release, construction and occupation for dwelling requirements, which can range between two to four years from release of land to dwelling completion.
- Recent data shows housing activity remain subdued in the ACT as high cost of living and high mortgage interest rates continue to affect consumer confidence. The 50 basis points interest rate cut by the RBA in February and May 2025 is expected to fuel consumer confidence and lift activity in the housing market.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that total value of new residential construction work undertaken decreased by 1.9 per cent in the March quarter 2025 and was 8.9 per cent lower than in the March quarter 2024.
- When compared to the September quarter, the number of dwelling commencements increased by 171.2 per cent to 724 commencements in the December quarter 2024. However, this was 24 per cent lower than its level in the December quarter 2023.
- There were 867 new dwellings approved but not yet commenced construction in the December quarter 2024, a decrease of 24.1 per cent from the September quarter 2024 and 50.9 per cent lower than its level a year ago. This indicates construction activity has moved to dwelling commencement phase.
- 1,644 new dwellings were completed in the quarter, an increase of 69.7 per cent from the September quarter 2024 and 58.4 per cent higher than the December quarter 2023.
- ABS data also shows the level of dwelling stock remain healthy in the ACT. ACT's dwelling stock increased by 4,700 dwellings over the 12-months to the March quarter 2025. The annual growth of 2.4 per cent in the March quarter 2025 is above the ACT's population growth of 1.4 per cent (as at 31 December 2024).

Cleared as complete and accurate:	19/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Branch Manager	Ext: x50351
Contact Officer name:	Natalia Guzman	Ext: x78422
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

*Table 1: 2025-26 to 2029-30 Program breakdown of use by year and dwelling type*

Release Year	Single dwellings	Multi-unit dwellings	<b>Total Residential dwellings</b>	Mixed-use land (m <sup>2</sup> )	Commercial land (m <sup>2</sup> )	Industrial land (m <sup>2</sup> )	Community land (m <sup>2</sup> )
2025-26	336	2,848	<b>3,184</b>	75,152	20,887	10,868	28,977
2026-27	308	4,675	<b>4,983</b>	55,209	61,285	0	103,000
2027-28	569	5,622	<b>6,191</b>	14,982	94,958	0	105,700
2028-29	726	5,042	<b>5,768</b>	71,678	58,946	0	45,000
2029-30	440	5,382	<b>5,822</b>	30,000	76,590	0	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,379</b>	<b>23,569</b>	<b>25,948</b>	<b>247,021</b>	<b>312,666</b>	<b>10,868</b>	<b>292,677</b>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: x50351  
 Contact Officer name: Natalia Guzman Ext: x78422  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Reinvigorating Commercial Centres

#### Talking Points:

- The Government's plan to enable the delivery of 30,000 new homes by 2030 will include fostering more 'shop top' housing. This priority aligns with the directions and implementation actions of the District Strategies that were introduced in late 2023, and my Statement of Planning Priorities.
- Our local and group centres are the heart of our suburbs and districts. As part of the consultation on the 2023 District Strategies, we heard from many Canberrans that they want to see renewal at their local shops, including upgrades to the existing privately owned buildings.
- The revitalisation of local and group centres does not rest solely with the ACT Government undertaking government funded upgrades on public land or to public spaces and streets in these centres. Private lease holders own land and buildings in these centres and private upgrades may play a more significant role in leading revitalisation of a local or group centre.
- The District Strategies focuses on 14 group centres and 18 local centres with specific initiatives to provide targeted planning and non-planning interventions to support the centres and their communities.
- The intention of the initiatives is to explore their on-going viability, their role as community meeting places; to provide for greater employment and jobs; and provide additional housing.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is also exploring revitalisation opportunities for our commercial centres.
- This will include how planning controls and the provision of housing in centres, such as "shop top" housing, may function as a catalyst for the revitalisation of centres including those which are currently vacant, underutilised or ageing.

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Missing Middle Housing Reform

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government is committed to enabling 30,000 homes by 2030. This will, in part, be achieved through reforms to deliver more missing middle housing in our existing RZ1 and RZ2 zoned land.
- As one of the nation's fastest growing cities, Canberra's population is expected to reach half a million people by 2027 and exceed 700,000 by 2050. The need to futureproof a diverse housing supply is more prevalent than ever.
- The ACT Government is responding to the demand for greater housing choice by reforms to our planning system, including a new Missing Middle Housing Design Guide (MMHDG), and draft changes to the Territory Plan through a Major Plan Amendment:
  - The MMHDG will provide best practice guidance for creating well-designed homes that respect local character and contribute positively to our streets and neighbourhoods, and
  - Changes to the Territory Plan will remove barriers in the planning system and allow more housing options (including more townhouses, terraces, and duplexes) in residential areas. These changes will make it easier to build well-designed, sustainable homes in our existing suburbs.
- The planning system reforms have been developed with local architects, designers and technical experts to balance the needs of new and existing residents, aiming to supply more well-designed, sustainable housing in existing residential areas while maintaining Canberra's unique amenity and suburban character.
- The ACT Government appointed consultants Urbis, partnering with local firm Stewart Architecture, to assist in developing a draft MMHDG.
- The proposed Missing Middle Reform is released for consultation with industry and the community until **22 July 2025**. Written submissions will be able to be made for a further two-week period, closing on **5 August 2025**.
- The proposed changes to the Territory Plan include updates to key policies and supporting documents including the Residential Zones and Subdivision Policy and associated technical specifications.
- Engagement materials including information about upcoming community engagement events can be found at the ACT Government's YourSay webpage.

# QUESTION TIME BRIEF

## YourSay Data – as at 23 June 2025

	Views	Visitors	Contributions			
			Survey	Quick Comment	Poll	Written Submissions
<b>Total Data</b>	<b>19,996</b>	<b>11,480</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>6</b>

## Engagement Events – as at 23 June 2025

Date	Event	Registrations	Attendance
22 May	Environment and Planning Forum	15	15
3 June	Community Workshop - Dickson		12
5 June	Industry Workshop - Dickson		22
10 June	Pop-up – CIT	-	32
11 June	Tuggeranong Community Workshop	20	11
12 June	Pop-up – Barton	-	68
12 June	Online Information Q&A Session	31	17
13 June	Pop-up – Dickson	-	46
14 June	Pop-up – Kippax	-	44
20 June	Government Architect – Woden	6	7
	Listening Space – Woden	-	7
22 June	Pop-up – Curtin	-	51
	Pop-up – Mawson	-	41
28 June	Government Architect – Belconnen	7	
	Listening Space – Belconnen	-	
	Pop-up – Woden		
	Pop – up – Tuggeranong	-	
1 July	Belconnen Community Workshop	11	
3 July	Online Listening Space – Missing Middle	3	
<b>Total attendance</b>			<b>373</b>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 54877  
 Contact Officer name: Adam Azzopardi Ext: 73541  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

**Portfolio:** Planning & Sustainable Development**TOPIC:** Unclean Leasehold and Vacant Blocks**Talking points:**

- Access Canberra inspects blocks in the ACT in accordance with the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act). Inspections consider the lease state in relation to rubbish visibility, building completion timeframe, and adherence to the Crown Lease provisions.
- Access Canberra assesses risks to the public, including securely fenced vacant blocks, review building approvals and compliance with Crown Lease provisions. Crown Lease requirements apply to rural, residential, and commercial leases.
- Leases contain development covenants, construction timeframes, and potential termination clauses for non-use for more than one year.
- Generally, a new block owner has 12 months to commence development and 24 months for completion, but this time can be extended under section 374 of the Act. Blocks may remain undeveloped for various reasons such as inclement weather, or delays with securing funding, materials or a builder.
- Crown lease requirements vary and are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The ACT Government introduced regulations in 2024 to better manage block cleanliness, improving the capacity of the Territory Planning Authority to investigate complaints about unclean blocks.
- Community concerns about an unclean or vacant block can be reported via Fix My Street, the feedback forms on the Access Canberra website or calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81.
- Access Canberra actively reviews undeveloped blocks and considers regulatory options for blocks undeveloped for a long period of time.
- The public can check lease conditions and responsibilities either on the Planning website or by contacting Access Canberra.
- I can take specific block details on notice but if a block is under compliance action or investigation, the information I can provide may be limited for privacy and protection of regulatory actions.

## Planning and Sustainable Development

### TOPIC: Construction Occupations Licensing

#### Talking points:

- Assessment for builder licence applications is complex, involving analysis of work history, interviews, exams and review of qualifications. This is essential to ensure builders in the ACT are suitably qualified and experienced to undertake their jobs.
- The 'Construction Licences' section of the Planning website advises that a builder licence application assessment takes at least four weeks.
- Licence applications from apprentices who have recently completed their electrical or plumbing apprenticeships are processed within 21 days if they are submitted within 14 days of the apprentice receiving their certificate and transcript. This supports those applicants in cases where such a pay increase is not granted by their employer until they are issued with their tradesperson licence. This also assists the community by having more licensed skilled labour available.
- In 2023-24, there were a total of 4,642 active builder licences in the ACT, with 696 new licences issued within the financial year.
- As at **13 June 2025**, **292 builder licencing applications** were pending assessment, most assessments are completed within four weeks.
  - The oldest application of those pending for interstate applicants was received **27 May 2024**.
  - The oldest application of those pending for applicants in the ACT and surrounding region was received **2 June 2025**.
- The above timeframes reflect the complexity and rigour of the assessment process.
- In issuing a licence, it is critical that applicants provide full evidence that they have the qualifications and necessary experience to undertake the work permitted under their licence. Where delays occur, it usually relates to the applicant being able to provide evidence of the skills and experience for their particular licence application.
- If a builder has a concern about the status of their application, they can contact [CWPL@act.gov.au](mailto:CWPL@act.gov.au) for assistance or call 02 6207 8096.

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Licensing and Registration

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government is committed to making sure those working in the building and construction industry are held accountable for their actions resulting in greater protection to the community and to lift standards across the sector.
- I acknowledge that there are many individuals and businesses across the ACT operating in the building and construction sector who do good work and provide quality services to their customers.
- We have an important agenda to enable 30,000 new homes by 2030. The building and construction sector will have an important role to play in delivering quality and compliant new homes and enjoying the economic opportunities which will come.
- I am keen to continue working with the sector to boost the importance of tradespeople completing their skills qualifications. This recognises the importance of skilled trades in delivering quality work for Canberrans.
- As a principle, current policy and legislative approaches seek to support the identification and remediation of defects at the earliest possible point and at the lowest cost to industry and the consumer. We must work together to reduce and eliminate the unnecessary costs that arise as a result of poor quality work.
- In this term of government, we will continue to implement reforms that result in better outcomes for Canberrans.

#### Background Information

##### Professional Engineers Registration Scheme

- We will continue to monitor the ACT's Professional Engineers Registration Scheme (the Scheme). This scheme has been introduced to protect the public by making sure professional engineering services are provided by suitably qualified persons and maintain confidence in the standard of professional engineering services in the ACT through accountability measures and standards of practice.
- From 6 March 2025, all engineers providing professional engineering services in a prescribed area of engineering have been required to be registered.

##### Trade Licensing

- We have committed to extending licencing to select building trades, including waterproofing, painting and decorating, brick and block layering, carpentry, plastering, tiling, concreting and glazing.
- The ACT Government is progressing work on options for an ACT trade licensing scheme.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 06/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 77387  
Contact Officer name: James Bennett Ext: 54877  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) Scheme

- We want to make sure we have the skills and licensed trades and professionals available to deliver on our housing commitments. Automatic Mutual Recognition is not currently available for construction occupations due to a Significant Risk Exemption in place for the ACT. The exemption will expire on 30 June 2025.
- The ACT Government is committed to exploring measures to address the identified risks to support the future operation of AMR for construction occupations in the ACT which support labour mobility across the country.

### Regulation of medical gas systems

- To support accountability in medical gas system installation and maintenance, the *Building and Construction Legislation Amendment Act 2023* introduced a new licensing and regulation framework for the installation and maintenance of medical gas systems.
- These new requirements commenced on 11 December 2024, recognising the importance of making sure skilled and qualified individuals are undertaking this high-risk activity.

### Developer Licensing and Regulation

- We have already taken significant steps in the regulation of property developers. The *Property Developers Act 2024* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2024. Parts of the Act commenced on 11 July 2024, with the remainder proposed to commence in 2025.
- The ACT Government is currently working on developing the Act's subordinate legislation and will continue to engage closely with industry and other stakeholders as this work is progressed.
- The implementation phase includes developing a Code of Practice, as well as supporting information for the licence application process.
- As the implementation work progresses, a decision will be made about the commencement of the scheme, including transition times for applications and staging of the scheme.

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Loose Fill Asbestos

#### Talking Points:

- As of 1 June 2025, 1,013 of the known 1,029 residential properties identified as affected by loose fill asbestos insulation have been demolished (98 per cent):
  - 980 through ACT Government Demolition Program (including 1 acquired by Territory as a Deceased Estate);
  - 12 through assisted Private Demolition;
  - 20 through self-funded demolitions; and
  - One surrendered to the Territory following demolition.
- Of the remaining 16 properties in the ACT, 14 are privately owned and 2 are owned by the Territory.
- The remaining 14 affected properties in private ownership have legislative requirements that they need to comply with, such as Asbestos Management Plan requirements, development and building approval restrictions, and occupancy prohibition for any new owners and tenants.
- These are regulated independently by WorkSafe ACT.
- WorkSafe ACT has submitted a paper to its Case Management Panel seeking regulatory advice on three properties that have consistently been non-compliant with the Territory's regulatory requirements since their implementation.
- All remaining homeowners, regardless of whether they are participating in the Scheme, continue to have access to financial supports such as relocation assistance upon permanent vacation of their affected property.

#### Compulsory acquisition

- Notwithstanding, while not the preferred option, the ACT Government acknowledges it may need to undertake compulsory acquisition of any affected properties remaining privately owned.
- The ACT Government will consider the individual circumstances of each homeowner and resident, and work closely with them, prior to any compulsory acquisition action being taken.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: x50351  
Contact Officer name: Madeleine Orubuloye Ext: x72182  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

# QUESTION TIME BRIEF

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Cladding Remediation Key Stats and Figures – figures valid as at 27 May 2025

#### *Private Buildings Cladding Testing and Assessment Scheme (the Testing and Assessment Scheme) – Operational between July 2021 and July 2022*

Applications approved	53
Findings and actions taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 buildings had combustible cladding posing a moderate or higher fire safety risk           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (37 buildings are being remediated, 3 Owners Corporations (OCs) are still considering whether to take action); and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 13 buildings had combustible cladding posing a low risk.</li> </ul>

#### *Phase 1a – Private Buildings Cladding (Supplementary) Scheme – Operational between 20 May 2024 - 20 March 2025*

Scheme is now closed. 19 OCs were contacted:

- 8 have applied to the Supplementary Scheme.
- 8 have confirmed that their building does not have combustible cladding.
- 2 have self-funded testing and assessment and are considering remediation.
- 1 not willing to engage with the Supplementary Scheme.

Extension of testing and assessment report deadline:

- Original deadline is 21 July, 2025.
- However some OCs have indicated they may be unable to meet this deadline.
- Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) is extending this deadline to Friday, 12 December, 2025 which will allow additional time for the OC's to apply for a concessional loan if they are eligible.

#### *Phase 2 – the Concessional Loan Scheme –extended to 27 February 2026*

- As at 27 May 2025, \$70.22 million has been committed in Concessional Loans.

Number of active loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 OCs have active loans:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 buildings have been remediated under the Concessional Loan.</li> <li>○ 2 loans were to refinance commercial loans used to remediate where the building was remediated.</li> <li>○ 14 buildings are being remediated.</li> <li>○ 2 buildings exploring the installation of early warning fire monitoring systems and are unlikely to apply for the loan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
------------------------	---

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

How many residents have had their housing made safer by utilising a Concessional Loan?	Approximately 922 residents (3 buildings that have been remediated).
Average amount of concessional loan	\$3.60 million
Data* on recycled cladding  * All figures are estimates	8,328 kilograms of cladding has been recycled, equating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 5,720 new trees would have required planting to achieve an equivalent carbon offset.</li> <li>• 16.8 petrol cars being permanently removed from roads.</li> <li>• energy savings equivalent of an average of 43.14 households per year.</li> </ul>

## Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development

### Cladding Remediation

#### The Private Buildings Cladding Scheme

##### Private Buildings Cladding Scheme

- The Private Buildings Cladding Scheme consists of three sub-schemes or phases:
  - Phase 1 – a Testing and Assessment Scheme - now closed;
  - Phase 1a – a Supplementary Scheme to provide assistance to Owners Corporations (OCs) of buildings that did not participate in Phase 1 assistance for testing and assessment - now closed, and;
  - Phase 2 – a Concessional Loan Scheme.
- **Phase 1 – Testing and Assessment Scheme – now closed** The Testing and Assessment Scheme provided a rebate of up to 50 per cent of the costs (to a maximum of \$20,000 excluding GST) for testing and assessing of eligible buildings' cladding.

##### ***Phase 1a – Private Buildings Cladding (Supplementary) Scheme – open for applications between May 2024 and March 2025***

- The Supplementary Scheme provides OCs with up to 50 per cent of the costs of testing and assessment of their cladding, up to a maximum of \$12,500 (GST inclusive).

##### ***Phase 2 - the Concessional Loan Scheme – open until 27 February 2026***

- The Concessional Loan Scheme offers a concessional loan of up to \$15 million to eligible OCs to remediate higher risk combustible cladding.

##### ACT Government Cladding Scheme

- 23 Government owned buildings were identified as needing cladding remediation were identified. All these buildings were remediated by December 2023.

##### ***Assurance review of ACT Government buildings***

- Since the initial review of ACT Government buildings was undertaken between 2017-2019, industry and government knowledge of combustible cladding, the types of material considered combustible cladding and how combustible cladding may be visually identified has grown significantly, which has prompted a need for a review to provide assurance that all government buildings will continue to be appropriately risk managed.
- A fire engineer procured by iCBR has visited a number of ACT Government properties to conduct visual site inspections, checking whether the buildings may have combustible cladding.
- There have been no high-risk buildings identified. Most of the buildings have been identified as having either no combustible cladding or combustible cladding that poses low risk. A small number of buildings have been identified as moderate risk. Further testing of buildings identified as moderate risk may be required to inform recommendations for remediation.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Director-General  
Contact Officer name: Gillian Geraghty  
Lead Directorate: Infrastructure Canberra

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- All directorates have site safety management plans in place for buildings which have been identified by the fire engineer as appearing to have combustible cladding.

### **Questions and Answers**

- *Should occupants of ACT Government buildings be concerned about the safety of these buildings?*
  - No. The presence of combustible cladding does not represent an immediate safety risk to occupants if managed appropriately.
- *Did the visual inspection by the fire engineer disrupt the occupants of ACT Government buildings?*
  - No, the fire engineer and a representative from each directorate inspected the outside of certain buildings. They did not go inside any of the buildings.
- *Does this new review mean that the earlier identification and remediation of ACT Buildings was inadequate?*
  - No, the earlier identification and remediation of buildings focused on the known substance of Aluminium Cladding Panels (ACP) and successfully identified many buildings with ACP. However, since then, a new type of cladding, composite timber has been identified, which ACP previously considered to be fire-retardant has now been reclassified as combustible. In addition, knowledge of cladding, including how it may be visually identified has increased. This review is a further assurance process to identify whether there are any other ACT Government buildings that may have combustible cladding and develop a plan to mitigate risks, if required.
- *Will the list of ACT Government buildings with cladding be published?*
  - No, in line with previous decisions we do not propose releasing a public list of the sites at this stage where there is any risk of it prompting untoward behaviors in respect of those buildings. Information on the identity of the buildings will be made to those who need to know as inspection and repair activities continue.
  - Full disclosure of the list of buildings remediated will be made once remediation works are complete.

## Portfolio: City and Government Services

### Wildlife Injuries

#### Talking Points:

- The ACT Government, through the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), delivers an Urban Wildlife Program which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- The Urban Wildlife Program supports Rangers to attend to wildlife welfare issues, predominately injured kangaroos.
- Reports of injured wildlife are generally received through Access Canberra 24 hours a day. ACT Wildlife, ACT Policing, members of the public and other agencies occasionally report incidents directly to PCS.
- Once a report has been received, Access Canberra contacts the Urban Wildlife Ranger and provides details of the report including location, situation and the contact details of the person who reported it.
- Rangers will proceed to the reported incident site as soon as possible once a report has been received.
- At times, animal and location details provided by members of the public are inaccurate and wildlife rangers can be delayed in locating the injured animal, or may not find the animal at all, particularly at night time.
- In these cases, rangers will attempt to verify further details, including contacting the person who made the report, but this may not be possible if contact details are inaccurate or have not been provided.
- Wildlife rangers are highly trained and experienced in dealing with distressed and unpredictable wildlife, particularly on roadsides. The work they do to relieve an animal in distress may be confronting to some members of the Canberra community.
- Further information about collisions with wildlife is available on the Transport Canberra and City Services website.

#### [Virtual fencing petition and Media Report](#)

- [The government remains interested in technology to reduce the impact of collisions between native animals and road traffic.](#)
- [Virtual fences are small roadside devices installed on posts along the roadside that emit sound and light when the headlights of approaching vehicles are detected. These devices are designed to deter animals from crossing the road when a vehicle is approaching.](#)
- [The government notes recent media reporting on the claims of effectiveness of these devices and the call to undertake a trial on Erindale Drive.](#)

Cleared as complete and accurate: [22/04/2025](#)[19/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Charles Stephenson  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- As there is a petition before the Assembly about the use of virtual fences, the Government will continue its research and due diligence about these devices and look to provide further advice in due course.



- The Government is also preparing a new Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan that is considering improved ways to reduce the risk of collisions between kangaroos and road traffic.



### Key Information:

- The Urban Wildlife team consists of four wildlife rangers who work ten (10) days on and then take four (4) days off every fortnight. There is usually at least one ranger on shift each day for both north and south Canberra working out of the Mitchell and Athllon depots, each with a specialist vehicle.
- They are supported by urban wildlife experienced PCS staff who work across multiple depots to ensure there is always someone on call during periods of staff illness or leave.
- Staff are licensed to discharge firearms and are required to do so on animal welfare grounds where euthanasia is required. The specific situations where this is required are complex and decisions are made dynamically to weigh up both risk and animal welfare needs.
- ACT Wildlife is a volunteer supported organisation that provides wildlife advice, caring and rehabilitation services.
- PCS officers and ACT Wildlife volunteers assess the welfare of wildlife at each individual incident and consider options including taking the animal to a veterinarian or carer, assessing the injury as minor and releasing the animal into the wild or if necessary, humanely euthanising the animal.

### Background:

- The Urban Wildlife Program is a 24/7 operation that provides an on-call wildlife ranger to respond to reports of trapped or injured native wildlife. The vast majority

Cleared as complete and accurate: [22/04/2025](#)[19/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Charles Stephenson  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

of reports relate to Eastern Grey Kangaroos unfortunately hit by cars within urban Canberra.

- The program has been running in some form for approximately 30 years and has been refined over this period to focus almost solely on kangaroos and magpies.
- PCS attends between 2,000 and 5,000 wildlife based call-outs each year.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [22/04/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: [19/06/2025](#)  
Contact Officer name: Executive Group Manager Charles Stephenson Ext: 78628  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

**Portfolio:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water  
City and Government Services

## State of the Environment Report 2023

Note: The Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water is the lead Minister for State of the Environment Report matters

### Talking Points:

#### General

- The former Government tabled its response to the State of the Environment Report 2023 in June 2024.
- This Government maintains that many recommendations in the report represent business as usual or work already underway.
- Areas of focus for this government that fall under aspects of the State of Environment Report 2023 include:
  - Progressing the review of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*, and refreshing the ACT's Nature Conservation Strategy.
  - Considering options for a review of the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*.
  - Advocating, where appropriate, for ongoing investment in national studies on the impacts of bushfire smoke.
  - Reviewing the *Urban Forest Act 2023*.
  - Responding to and investigating reports of alleged breaches of Construction Environment Management Plans.
  - Delivering prescribed burns in a manner that protects, and where possible enhances, sensitive ecological values.

#### Minister for City and Government Services

- As the Minister with responsibility for the Parks and Conservation Service I am aware of the impact that prescribed burns can have on the natural environment if not well managed.
- I note recommendation 29 seeks to ensure hazard reduction burns do not adversely impact on the environment.
- I am aware that hazard reduction burns, which represent a core part of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's Bushfire Operations Plan, are carefully planned and delivered in conjunction with input and approvals from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 620 78628
Contact Officer name:	Bren Burkevics	Ext: 620 78628
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Prescribed burns conducted by the ACT Parks and Conservation service are monitored by a specialist values officer who maintains a focus on protecting environmental values.
- With Autumn now here Canberrans will see smoke and flames from prescribed burns. These burns reduce fuel loads in the landscape and close to assets, reduce future wildfire severity and can help to reduce biomass and promote new growth.
- Canberrans can feel confident that prescribed burns are being delivered by experienced officers from the Parks and Conservation Service.
- Further information on prescribed burns is available online. Please do not call emergency triple-zero unless you see unattended fire or smoke.

### Key Information

- Long-term trends show that the ACT is getting warmer. 2019 is the hottest year on record for the Territory with 33 days over 35°C.
- The ACT achieved 100% renewable energy in 2020 and emissions are decreasing. However, scope 3 emissions account for the majority of the ACT's total emissions, accounting for 95 percent of the ACT's total carbon footprint in 2020.
- The ACT's ecological footprint is more than 9 times the size of the land area of the ACT showing that current resource use is unsustainable.
- The ACT continues to lose threatened ecological communities and many species are in decline.
- There is a continued high reliance on cars, while public and active transport use is much lower than previous decades despite population growth.
- PM2.5 is the ACT's most serious air quality issue. During the 2019-20 bushfire season the ACT experienced 56 days with air pollution levels that exceeded health standards, including 42 days above the hazardous to health rating.
- In non-bushfire years, wood heaters have the greatest impact on air quality in the ACT.
- The biggest threats to native vegetation are from weed spread, urban development, climate change, bushfires and the loss of mature trees.
- Native fish populations are under pressure with the Murrumbidgee River dominated by alien species and impacted by dams and bushfires.
- Urban development is degrading water quality and increasing impacts downstream of the ACT.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 620 78628
Contact Officer name:	Bren Burkevics	Ext: 620 78628
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Background Information

- Pursuant to the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993* (the Act), the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is required to provide the Minister for Environment, Parks and Land Management with a state of the environment report each reporting period, at maximum intervals of 4 years.
- The ACT State of the Environment 2023 Report fulfills this statutory requirement, using data and information provided by many directorates and covering the reporting period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023.
- The ACT State of the Environment 2023 Report makes 30 recommendations to assist the ACT Government in making strategic management decisions to improve environmental outcomes in the Territory. Recommendations are grouped under seven environmental themes: climate change, human settlements, air, land, biodiversity, water, and fire. The Report also provides recommendations in two administrative themes; overarching, and environmental governance.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	12/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 620 78628
Contact Officer name:	Bren Burkevics	Ext: 620 78628
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio: City and Government Services

### Autumn Prescribed Burn Season Program

#### Talking Points:

#### Bushfire Risk Update

- ~~The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) works closely with the Emergency Services Agency to monitor bushfire risks and prepare for bushfires in the ACT.~~
- ~~31 March 2025 marked the official end of the 2024-25 High Risk Weather season in the ACT.~~
- ~~Throughout the season Emergency Services Agency (ESA) and PCS staff responded to 42 grass fires across the territory, as well as working with NSW colleagues to successfully extinguishing the remote Bag Range fire bordering Brindabella National Park.~~
- ~~I am pleased that during short periods of benign fire conditions over the summer PCS were able to deploy a small number of firefighters to assist with major bushfires in Tasmania and Victoria~~

#### Prescribed Burns

- The arrival of Winter has seen the prescribed burning window close.
- However, PCS will continue to undertake smaller hazard reduction and ecological burns across Canberra over the coming months.
- Prescribed burns help to reduce biomass, promote new growth, reduce bushfire risks and heal country. Smoke is a consequence of this work but is managed to minimise impact to the public to the greatest extent possible.
- PCS is also continuing to deliver normal hazard reduction activities including mowing, slashing and grazing, to reduce the risk of wildfire during the 2025-26 season.
- ~~PCS is now focused on delivering the prescribed burn program across many of the ACT parks and reserves in addition to normal hazard reduction activities including mowing, slashing and grazing. It is too early to predict the severity of the bushfire season ahead, however I note that in Autumn the ACT experienced below-average rainfall and significantly warmer-than-average temperatures, and that the long-range outlook for Winter also predicts above-average temperatures—potentially in the top 20% of the historical range—for both daytime and nighttime.~~
- I am aware that the deteriorating fire conditions in Canada has meant some Australian firefighters are being deployed to assist. Small contingents of PCS firefighters may be deployed to assist during our Winter months on a cost-recovery basis. These deployments are a valuable opportunity for upskilling our firefighters in large and complex wildfires.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/04/2025 10/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Nicholas Daines  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext:

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- ~~PCS were able to successfully deliver several large prescribed burns in the lead up to Easter. More burns will occur in May and into Winter when the weather conditions allow; Canberrans are likely to see bushfire smoke in the air and may see flames during the prescribed burn program. This is normal and safe.~~
- ~~Please do not call emergency triple-zero unless you see unattended fire.~~
- ~~Please keep up to date with prescribed burn plans by visiting the Parks website.~~
- ~~Prescribed burns help to reduce biomass, promote new growth, reduce bushfire risks and heal country. Smoke is a consequence of this work but is managed to minimise impact to the public to the greatest extent possible.~~
- The ACT Government is engaging with the Ngunnawal Community to enable cultural burning on Ngunnawal land.

### Namadgi National Park Fire Trail Access

- Maintaining vehicle access to Namadgi National Park and other parks and reserves for emergency, maintenance and public visitation is a key responsibility of PCS.
- I am pleased to report that all areas of Namadgi National Park are accessible to fire fighting and maintenance vehicles.

---

• I encourage the public to visit the Parks website at [parks.act.gov.au](http://parks.act.gov.au) to check for local or temporary closures before setting out. Road conditions can quickly change due extremes of weather.

### Tenth Assembly inquiry into the ACT environment's bushfire preparedness

- The ACT Government supports the objectives of all recommendations made by the Standing Committee as demonstrated in its Response.
- It is particularly pleasing that the majority of the recommendations are either existing government policy, completed, agreed, or agreed in principle.
- Maintaining readiness for bushfires and other emergencies is a core responsibility and priority for the ACT Government. It is critical that the community has trust in the Government's bushfire preparedness for the ACT, including in our parks and reserves.
- The Namadgi National Park fire trails that were damaged by the Orroral Valley bushfire and subsequent high rainfall have been repaired with areas now fully accessible to fire vehicles.
- Please help keep the ACT's parks and reserves bushfire free by observing restrictions, and call triple-zero if you see an unattended fire.

### Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP) and resourcing

- The Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) is a requirement of the *Emergencies Act 2004*. The Plan details the specific annual bushfire mitigation activities undertaken by the

Cleared as complete and accurate: ~~22/04/2021~~ [105/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Nicholas Daines  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Fire Management Unit (FMU) to reduce the risk of bushfire impacting on life, property and our critical environmental assets.

- The BOP includes a wide range of fuel load management strategies including prescribed burning, slashing, spraying, physical removal and the use of cattle grazing, along with fire trail network maintenance. The application and effectiveness of these methods are regularly reviewed and improved.
  - Following the 2023-24 prescribed burn program, the residual risk to the community was reduced from 37% to 31% which is an even stronger result than the target band of 47% - 33% outlined in the Regional Fire Management Plan 2019-2028. The 2024-25 BOP program is underway to maintain a reduced level of risk; modelling on residual risk has not been finalised but early reports indicate we remain comfortably within or below the target band-
  - I urge the Canberra community to continue to keep up to date with park closures and other notifications available on the parks.act.gov.au website and adopt the bushfire and storm-ready advice of the Emergency Services Agency (ESA).
- 

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/04/2025 10/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Nicholas Daines  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

**Portfolio:** City and Government Services

**Thermal Assist Aerial Control Program**

**Talking Points:**

- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) ~~are undertaking an~~ have completed the annual Thermal Assisted Aerial Control (TAAC) program successfully removing remove vertebrate pest species from key conservation areas, water catchments and semi urban areas in the ACT.
- ~~The program will commence on 8 May and run until 30 May 2025~~ concluded on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May after 21 days of operations during which 79 hours of aerial operations were flown-
- The TAAC program covered approximately 110,000 hectares removing vertebrate pest species from areas that are inaccessible for ground programs due to terrain, vegetation and /or remoteness.
- ~~For the safety of visitors, some of our parks, reserves and recreational areas will be closed during the control program.~~
- For the safety of visitors, contractors and staff, Namadgi National Park, areas within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Molonglo River Reserve ~~and,~~ Tidbinbilla Nature reserve and Googong Foreshore will also be formally closed, were formally closed during operations.
- ~~The Murrumbidgee Discovery trail will be closed from Pine Island to Casuarina Sands, this includes a section of the Centenary trail between Kambah Pool and Pine Island. Alternate route details can be found on the Centenary Trail section of the ACT parks website.~~
- Extensive safety precautions will be were in place during the program, such as buffer zones, signage and sweeps prior to operations. Community members should not be alarmed by aircraft operating at the impacted areas.
- During the most recent program:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Feral Deer</u>	<u>Feral Pigs</u>	<u>Feral Horses</u>	<u>Feral Goats</u>	<u>Wild dogs</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>2025</u>	<u>528</u>	<u>247</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>849</u>
<u>2024</u>	<u>357</u>	<u>284</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>119</u>			<u>767</u>

Cleared as complete and accurate: ~~01/05/202~~ 105/06/2025

Cleared for public release by: ~~Executive Branch~~ Manager Executive Group  
Manager

Ext: 786281831

Contact Officer name:

Luke Halls

Ext: [REDACTED]

Lead Directorate:

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- ~~Closures of areas will be staggered over the course of the program. To stay up to date on park closures, visit the ACT Parks website. In 2024, a total of 284 feral pigs, 357 feral deer, 119 feral goats and 7 feral horses were controlled across Namadgi National Park, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Molonglo River Reserve and Googong.~~
- 2025 numbers are slightly higher than 2024 numbers, which can be attributed to an increased focus on higher density sights such as Bullen Range Nature Reserve and Gigerline Nature Reserve during the 2025 program.

### Key Information:

- Aerial shooting is the most effective and humane method available to control large herbivores pest. In the ACT thermal imaging cameras are used to detect and target animals and this increases the effectiveness and animal welfare outcomes.
- Feral hoofed animals cause environmental and agricultural impacts by damaging native vegetation and crops, damaging waterways, competing with native wildlife and stock and as potential carriers of exotic diseases.
- Feral pigs and feral deer are established in many areas of the ACT and ongoing control (both aerial and ground) is required to reduce pressure on natural values, protect water catchments, minimise potential spread into recreational and urban areas and to manage impacts on neighbouring properties. To achieve more effective control, some areas of private rural lease and forestry land are included in the control zones.

### Conservation

- The control program focusses on reducing the impact of vertebrate pest species on our natural environment.
- Across our parks and reserves, vertebrate pest species such as pigs and deer endanger threatened plant and animal species through grazing, antler rubbing, trampling, trail creation, ground disturbance and wallowing.

### Background:

- Since 2021, thermal assisted aerial control has been used to control the impacts of pest species across ACT parks, reserves and recreational areas. Ongoing control is required to manage the impacts of feral animals and to prevent semi-urban populations establishing.

Cleared as complete and accurate: ~~01/05/2021~~10/06/2025

Cleared for public release by:

~~Executive Branch  
Manager~~Executive Group  
Manager

Ext: ~~786281831~~

Contact Officer name:

Luke Halls

Ext: [REDACTED]

Lead Directorate:

Environment, Planning and  
Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Management of invasive pest animals is guided by the [ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012-2022](#), which details a strategic approach aimed at a reduction of impacts caused by pest animals.
- This program is funded through the ACT Government Better Biosecurity initiative
- A National Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for aerial shooting feral deer cover the conditions under which it could be considered appropriate, the appropriate calibre projectile weight and shot placement to ensure animal welfare standards are met - [National-SOP-aerial-shooting-feral-and-wild-deer-2023.pdf \(pestsmart.org.au\)](#)

### Hunting ~~(IF ASKED)~~

- Recreational hunting is a valid pastime, however previous programs in Australia have shown that it is not effective at controlling the impact of pest animals.
- Recreational hunting on public land needs to be carefully managed and requires significant resources to do so. In the ACT, these resources are best put towards aerial control for the most effective control of pest animal impacts.
- Professional ground shooting is less effective than thermal assisted aerial shooting, particularly across the challenging terrain found in Namadgi National Park, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Tidbinbilla and Googong.

Cleared as complete and accurate: ~~01/05/202~~105/06/2025

Cleared for public release by: ~~Executive Branch~~  
~~Manager~~Executive Group  
Manager

Ext: ~~786281831~~

Contact Officer name:

Luke Halls

Ext: [REDACTED]

Lead Directorate:

Environment, Planning and  
Sustainable Development

## Portfolio: City and Government Services

### Tidbinbilla Visitors Centre

#### Talking Points:

##### Demolition

- On 12 November 2024, the tender was released for the demolition of the old Tidbinbilla Visitor's Information Centre (VIC) building and remediation of the site.
- The remediation work for the Tidbinbilla VIC will remove contaminants and unsafe materials and stabilise the site.
- The tender was open for four weeks, the successful contract was awarded to AGH Demolition and Asbestos Removal on 23 April 2025.
- Works are expected to be completed in the second half of 2025, pending approval of the development application.
- Site remediation is expected to be completed by mid-2026

##### Master plan

- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) is leading the development of a master plan to provide a long-term vision and plan for the upgrade and improvement of Tidbinbilla.
- PCS is leveraging its engagement to date to set the direction for the development of the master plan and to further consult more broadly with the Canberra Community on options for Tidbinbilla.
- Key considerations of the plan include visitor centre requirements, visitor amenities, cultural and education interpretation, walking trail upgrades, access and fee collection, and conservation initiatives.
- Community consultation will occur and community feedback incorporated into a finalised master plan. A communications plan is being developed to support this process.
- There has been early consultation and detailed Options Analysis with the public, staff and the Ngunnawal community about a potential new location for a new visitor's centre, however this location has yet to be formally endorsed.
- Funding was received from the Australian Government Disaster Ready Fund to incorporate design elements for safeguarding culturally significant artefacts at Tidbinbilla. The funding will help to protect and preserve cultural sites and in-situ artefacts and objects from the impacts of natural disasters.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

## Temporary Visitor's Centre

- A new demountable building was installed at the entrance to the reserve in April 2024, providing visitors an opportunity to interact with staff in-person about the many walks and activities on offer at Tidbinbilla. The temporary visitor centre also provides first aid to visitors and is a coordination point for search and rescue.
- The temporary visitor centre has Wi-Fi, accessible public toilets, drinks, snacks and icecreams and other amenities to facilitate critical visitor services for the foreseeable future while planning for a new permanent visitor centre is underway.

## Key Information:

- The preparation of mandatory planning and approval documentation will commence in the coming weeks. Demolition works are anticipated to be completed in the second half of 2025 pending statutory approvals and weather impacts.
- The temporary visitors centre will remain operational while the demolition works occur.

## Background:

- The Tidbinbilla VIC was closed in May 2023 due to health and safety concerns, and a temporary visitors centre was established in April 2024 to service the community.
- There will be no impact to the temporary visitor centre while the existing centre is being demolished. Visitors and volunteers will be able to access the reserve as normal.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

## Portfolio: City and Government Services

### Invasive Species Management - Weeds and Pest Animals

#### Talking Points:

#### Invasive plants

- The spread of invasive plants into the ACT's parks and reserves is a key threat, impacting their ability to provide quality habitat for the ACT's threatened plants and animals.
- There has been 7,700 ha of plant control work done so far this year. The main species controlled in 2024/25 has been St John's Wort, Serrated Tussock, African lovegrass and Blackberry.
- The government works closely with other organisations and the community to fight against weeds through the Invasive Plants Working Group.
- The NatureMapr and iNaturalist app citizen science platform is allowing early reporting of and response to new weed incursions.
- Sadly, ongoing monitoring demonstrates that African lovegrass is impacting further into Canberra Nature Park nature reserves, including the biodiversity hot spot, Black Mountain Nature Reserve. This is a significant environmental biosecurity issue and fire risk. The government in collaboration with ParkCare volunteers are actively fighting this highly invasive weed. Prioritising weed control efforts is now critical.
- A range of control methods are used to manage invasive weeds including biocontrol, prescribed burning, herbicides, manual removal, grazing, slashing, mulching and revegetation. Combining these methods reduces herbicide use. Recently the tritter mower has been particularly effective on blackberry thickets which are challenging to access. Follow up herbicide is used to control any remaining plants following tritter work.
- Extensive surveillance and control work has been undertaken on alligator weed in the Ginninderra creek waterways to prevent overflow and escape into other waterways.
- The 2024-25 Adopt a Park program guidelines prioritise funding of projects that control invasive weeds to benefit ecosystem and biodiversity functions and encourage projects adjacent to areas of high conservation value.

#### Invasive animals

- The Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) manages the impact of invasive pest animals through controlling rabbits, feral horses, feral pigs, foxes, feral deer and feral goats.
- These control actions are conducted in cooperation with neighbouring land managers to minimise their negative impacts on conservation reserves and agricultural land in the ACT.
- A mustering program [was recently completed to remove](#) all feral goats from Rob Roy Nature Reserve. Feral goats previously occurred in

Cleared as complete and accurate: [01/04/2025](#)[12/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

several ACT conservation areas and Rob Roy is currently the only known population within the ACT (feral goats do occur at Googong Foreshores).

- Feral animal control operations (ground shooting) were also conducted at Googong Foreshores from 14 to 16 April 2025.
- The Thermally Assisted Aerial Control Program (TAAC) is a nation leading program to remove invasive animals from conservation areas in the ACT, through the use of a helicopter and thermal camera equipment. This program assists in detecting and controlling pest animals, particularly feral pigs and deer, in the ACT's parks and reserves.
- ~~The 2025 TAAC program will commence on the 8 May 2025 and run until concluded on the 30 May 2025. It will occur in areas of NNP, Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Molonglo River Reserve, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Googong Foreshore and small sections of Canberra Nature Park, specifically Molonglo River Reserve and Rob Roy Nature Reserve. Areas of rural land under private lease and forestry land adjacent to conservation areas will also be included.~~
- ~~Closures of areas will be staggered over the course of the program. To stay up to date on park closures, visit the [ACT Parks website](#). Over 771 invasive animals were culled during the 2024 program to help protect, conserve and enhance the ACT's environment.~~
- 
- Warragul(Dingo)/Wild dog activity has increased in the ACT since the start of 2025 with stock attacks occurring in multiple locations, this follows reports of increased activity across the south-east area of the ACT. The team have responded by employing a second pest animal controller (trapper) on short term contract and engaging two contract trappers. Additional baiting is also being delivered to respond.

### Feral Horses

- Feral horses in the ACT are managed in accordance with the [Namadgi National Park Feral Horse Management Plan \(2020\)](#). This Plan establishes a zero-tolerance policy towards feral horses in Namadgi National Park.
- Seven horses were culled during the 2024 thermal assisted aerial control program. This culling prevented the growth of the feral horse population and damage to the environment through the trampling of sensitive ecosystems, waterways and plant communities.
- [No horses were culled during TAAC operations in 2025.](#)
- PCS continues to monitor feral horses remaining in the Clear Range area, with less than 15 observed near the park boundary, on private property in NSW.

### Rabbit Control

- In the 2023-24 ACT Budget, the government increased its investment in rabbit control. This has resulted in a significant increase in control action across the ACT.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [01/04/2025](#)[12/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Control programs aim to keep rabbit numbers at levels where impacts are minimal.
- Over the past 12 months, PCS has implemented control programs throughout Canberra Nature Park, Namadgi National Park and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.
- EPSDD and TCCS have been working together to expand this work into several urban sites. Work has progressed from City Hill, Grevillea Park, Amaroo/Moncrieff and Nicholls into Ngunnawal Hill, Bonner, Forde, Harrison, Dickson and Ainslie, with control continuing across all urban sites throughout 2025.
- EPSDD is currently trialling thermal shooting as a primary control method, complimented by rabbit warren fumigation and ripping (collapsing warrens). This method is proving highly effective across both urban and some rural sites.
- [Operations are listed on the TCCS Weekly Maintenance Activities web page.](#)

### European Wasps

- The ACT Government is proactively tackling European wasps with an eco-friendly Queen trapping program. This initiative traps newly emerged wasp queens looking to start a new nest & helps protect our parks and creeks by preventing new European wasp nests from ever starting. From October to December 2024, 2,224 queen European wasps have been captured, overtaking the 2023 total by 733. A further update on trapping outcomes is expected in April 2025.
- The ACT Government treats European wasp nests on government land. Wasp nests on private property are the owner's responsibility to have it removed by a qualified pest control operator. People should not attempt to treat the nest themselves as they risk being stung.
- The public can report a wasp nest or sighting on public land by submitting a request using the European Wasp, Ants or Bees Report form through the [City Services website](#).
- The ACT Government endeavours to investigate and control European wasp nests on ACT Government land within 5-10 business days. When a request is received, it is prioritised based on various factors such as public safety, resource availability and the need for further information or investigation.
- Priority is given to control identified European wasp nests before investigating sightings or nuisance wasp incursions where the nest location is unknown.

### Cattle in Namadgi

- ~~Cattle from a NSW property were detected in southern Namadgi National Park for several months despite the efforts of the farmer, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service, and ACT Park Rangers to relocate them.~~
- ~~The cattle were removed in March 2025 and have not re-entered the Park since.~~

## Portfolio: City and Government Services

### Reduce your risk around waterways (including Gibraltar Falls)

#### Talking Points:

#### Summer Season Drowning

- The drowning that occurred in 2024 over summer at Pine Island, is a tragic reminder of the danger that can exist when swimming in the natural environment. This is now a matter for the Coroner.
- The Government continues to work to make popular areas for swimming as safe as possible. The Government has installed safety signage, is trialling safety equipment, and has improved sight lines and access to waterways.
- However, the risks associate with swimming in the natural environment cannot be eliminated and those going to these locations must bear the responsibility to keep safe. The messages are simple:
  - The ACT's waterways are not patrolled and there are no flags. Visitors must risk assess and make their own decisions on whether to get into the water.
  - Some waterway areas do not have mobile phone coverage. This makes calling for help much more challenging.
  - If you cannot swim do not go into the water, even with floatation equipment.
  - Weather and water conditions can change quickly and prove hazardous.
  - Obstacles and hazards beneath the water can be difficult to see and pose a real risk to swimmers.
  - Alcohol and swimming do not mix.
  - Don't swim alone and always keep watch on other.
  - If you decide to get in the water, ensure you have assessed the risks and enter in a matter that matches your capabilities.

#### Waterway safety

- In July 2023, the ACT Coroner's Office released a report into the matter of four deaths by drowning in the ACT that occurred between October 2020 and January 2022.
- The report included two recommendations for the ACT Government including:
  - deliver a safety campaign to increase awareness of the risks of swimming in rivers and natural waterways,
  - determine if there was any type of rescue equipment that could be placed at popular riverside locations.
- The ACT Government ran the first Reduce Your Risk Around Waterways public awareness campaign from 1 December 2023 to 28 February 2024.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [/202518/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts Ext: 71831  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- In 2023-24, the campaign achieved more than 6 million impressions and 6,100 clicks through to the webpage on the ACT Parks and Conservation website. During this period the website also saw almost 7,200 views, indicating a high level of engagement on the topic of water safety.
- The 2024-25 Reduce Your Risk Around Waterways campaign commenced on 1 December 2024 and ran until 28 February 2025. The campaign achieved more than 8 million impressions and 7,319 clicks through our webpage on the ACT Parks and Conservation website, resulting in an increase of engagement from the previous year.
- The primary target audience for the 2024-25 campaign was males and people born overseas. The campaign included new translated advertisements and strategically placed communications located close to our university campuses and public transport.
- Radio advertisements, social media and online advertisements were translated into Mandarin, Vietnamese, Nepali and Punjabi. These performed well with our targeted ads achieving 1,674,945 impressions and 1,474 clicks.
- The Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) also installed large swim safety signs at 17 key locations to enhance the messaging on site.
- EPSDD Communications updated all our reserve and park web pages cross-referencing all installed swim safety signs with the appropriate warning, regulation information and safety icons.
- Additionally, PCS trialled the installation of 9 lifebuoys at popular riverside locations including Casuarina Sands, Casuarina Pool, Cotter Campground, Cotter Bend Uriarra East and West and Swamp Creek. These devices are placed next to swim safety signs to ensure they are clearly visible in the event of an emergency.
- These sites were chosen as locations with high visitation rates and those less likely to experience vandalism or theft of equipment. This trial will help to determine the level and types of use of the equipment. PCS continues to monitor safety measures and risk at all sites and this will help inform future management decisions. I ask the community to respect this equipment as it can save lives. It is there for safety.

The ACT Government will look to run the 2025-26 Reduce Your Risk Around Waterways public awareness campaign later this year.

### Gibraltar Falls

- Gibraltar Falls was closed in February 2023 following the tragic deaths of two people at the location.
- A safety review was completed in 2023. The ACT Government is implementing the recommendations of the review which includes:
  - improving infrastructure at the site by installing a 1.5m high, 210m long fence along the walking track near the falls; and
  - upgrading the visitor warning signs.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [/202518/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts Ext: 71831  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The Gibraltar Falls site remains closed while this work is being finalised. The government will provide a further update in the coming months.
- I appreciate the community's patience while these important safety measures are implemented.

### Key Information

- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna will make the final decision to reopen Gibraltar Falls under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* once satisfied with the infrastructure and agreement from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and other key stakeholders.
- The cost of upgrading infrastructure at Gibraltar Falls will be known when the project is finalised in the coming weeks, however the fence construction is expected to cost approximately \$740,000.
- The fence and associated infrastructure were installed in response to advice and a risk assessment completed by expert design and behavioural insight consultants.
- The ACT Government is also investing \$3.6 million to redevelop the Woods Reserve campground, walking tracks, and linkages to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. This redevelopment will provide visitors with enhanced facilities and new opportunities for engaging with our beautiful park's estate.
- The cost of designing, purchasing, and installing the new swim safety signs at the 17 riverside locations and 9 lifebuoys was approximately \$72,000. Installation was completed in November 2024, and PCS is considering rolling life buoys out at additional sites
- The ACT Government has also submitted proposals under the Australian Government's Mobile Black Spot Program to increase mobile phone coverage at three locations including the Cotter and Casuarina Sands. Whilst this is a matter for the Australian Government to resolve, the ACT Government acknowledges that gaps in mobile phone coverage may make it difficult for visitors to these locations to call triple-zero in the event of an emergency. However, landlines are available at the Cotter Campground and Casuarina Sands.

### Background Information

- The four deaths by drowning referred to in the ACT Coroner's 2023 report occurred at Cotter Bend on 25 October 2020, Tharwa Sandwash on 19 December 2020, and Kambah Pool on 22 January 2022. All deaths were deemed to be accidental.
- The two deaths at Gibraltar Falls occurred on 12 February 2023 and 18 February 2023. There is no timeline on the finalisation of the Coroner's report, noting work is underway to improve visitor safety infrastructure on site.
- An additional drowning death occurred at Uriarra West on the Murrumbidgee River on 8 February 2024.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [/202518/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts Ext: 71831  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The most recent drowning death occurred at Pine Island Reserve in Greenway on 29 December 2024.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [/202518/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts Ext: 71831  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: City and Government Services

### Crace Grasslands

#### Talking Points:

- I have been briefed by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna that Conservation Bollards have been installed in a section of public land between Drooka Crescent in Crace and the Gungaharra Nature Reserve.
- These bollards help to indicate that a buffer zone exists between the bike path and the reserve. This buffer provides additional protection and habitat for the Striped Legless Lizards that exist within the Reserve. The Striped Legless Lizard is a threatened species and has special protection status within the ACT.
- These bollards are used across Canberra where there are ecological values that need to be protected and exist outside of the ACT's nature reserve.
- In 2022, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided advice that this buffer zone should have a special mowing regime applied, to ensure that the grass remained at a level and state that is suitable for the Striped Legless Lizard.

#### Key Information

- On 25 July 2024, a Crace resident emailed the Conservator to request a discussion about the mowing regime to an area of public land between Drooka Crescent in Crace and the Gungaharra Nature Reserve (GNR).
- The constituent raised concerns around the loss of amenity and the potential for snakes due to the special mowing regime.
- The conservation advice provided by the Conservator to TCCS in 2022 is as follows:
  - Mowing/slashing of this habitat should be minimised but can be undertaken occasionally (once or twice a year at its most frequent) when the grass gets long. The following guidelines can be used to plan for mowing of the site.
    - The site should only be mown when the average grass height is above 20cm.
    - Ideally mowing should be undertaken in Autumn but it is acceptable to undertake occasional mows in Spring or Summer. Mowing in Winter should be avoided.
    - Mowing should be undertaken during the warm parts of the day when the lizards can actively avoid the machinery.
    - Ideally grass should not be mown below 10cm high, in years of very rapid grass growth 5cm is acceptable. .
    - If possible a catcher or vacuum collector should be used to gather the cut grass, leaving the cuttings in place will have long term negative impacts on the habitat.



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The Conservator and conservation officers undertook a site inspection of the area on 1 August 2024. The site inspection confirmed that the mowing regime is protecting environmental values and habitat that exists alongside the boundary of the GNR.
- The site inspection confirmed that there is over 30m of area from the bike path in the direction of the GNR boundary that is not subject to a special mowing regime and so is kept to a very short standard.

### Background Information

- Decisions about special mowing regimes are progressed in accordance with the *City Parks Mowing Management Guidelines for Urban Native Grassland and Woodland Sites 2020* (Mowing Guidelines). These mowing guidelines were developed in close consultation between TCCS, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and the Conservator. The Mowing Guidelines support co-ordinated and consistent management of urban vegetation.
- The Conservator's office provides ecological advice to inform mowing practices on a site-by-site basis, to both inform the Mowing Guidelines for ongoing management, as well as one off management actions. Any proposed amendments to current mowing regimes or activities is discussed with the relevant stakeholders within EPSDD and TCCS to ensure the outcomes are operationally achievable and provide good ecological outcomes.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [02/04/2025](#)[18/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Karen Taylor Ext: 54668  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: City and Government Services

### Parks and Reserves

#### Talking Points:

#### Woods Reserve Upgrades

- Woods Reserve is located on the banks of Gibraltar Creek south-west of Canberra and in walking distance from Gibraltar Falls. It is a popular place for camping (tents and campervans), picnics and functions.
- In early 2025, the Government released tenders for upgrades to Woods Reserve.
- Proposed works include new and upgraded carparking, campsites, day-use amenities, amenities blocks, visitor areas, walking tracks, a lookout and making the reserve accessible for people with a disability.
- Ageing toilet blocks will also be replaced with a new centralised toilet facility for day users, with disabled access and hot showers for campers. Tenders have now closed.
- The Government will provide a further update by mid-2025 following the conclusion of the tender process.

#### Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre

- The temporary Visitor Centre at Tidbinbilla is proving a popular, accessible, and convenient place for visitors to Tidbinbilla to receive information and talk to staff about their visit.
- A contractor has been engaged to demolish the original Visitor Centre commence in July 2025.
- In the 2024-25 ACT Budget, funding was provided for further planning for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve which will provide a long-term vision and plan. This will include a visitor centre and amenities, cultural and education interpretation, walking trail upgrades and conservation initiatives.

#### Maintenance of Parks and Reserves

- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) is the custodian and land manager for almost 70% of the ACT.
- PCS is also responsible for programs and initiatives that deliver conservation and land management outcomes and visitor recreation experiences. The estate comprises of a National Park, reserves, land that offsets development impacts and forestry lands.
- PCS manages approximately 2,500km of roads and related infrastructure, 400km of walking trails and over 15,000 fixed assets.
- Natural hazards in the ACT that pose a threat to conservation areas include bushfires, heatwaves and severe storms. The impact of climate change is projected to result in an increase in temperature and extreme heat events, more severe fire weather,

Cleared as complete and accurate: [01/04/2025](#) [18/06/2025](#)

Cleared for public release by:

Contact Officer name:

Lead Directorate:

Executive Group Manager

Charlie Stephenson

Environment, Planning and  
Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

reduced rainfall, and an increase in extreme rainfall events in the ACT over the coming decades.

- PCS is delivering infrastructure and resilience improvements within the reserve estate, with a focus on enhancing the environment, visitor experience and mitigating the impacts of a future climate where natural disasters have been predicted to be more severe with greater impacts.
- Weed control and management is a key focus of operations during the spring and summer season with officers on the ground across the estate to manage environmental threats. The team place an enhanced focus on popular visitor areas and known sites where invasive species have been detected.

### Parks Visitation

- The 2023-24 financial year visitor survey results indicated a high level of community satisfaction with the management of our nature reserves and national parks (86.8%) and the quality of the visitor experience (90.8%). The next survey is being held from March - May 2025.
- Visitors to ACT parks and reserves are encouraged to check the Parks website for local conditions, particularly when planning a visit to Namadgi National Park where weather or road conditions may result in road closures.
- Recreational trails at Mt Painter, The Pinnacle, Black Mountain, Bruce Ridge, Mt Taylor, Red Hill, Molonglo Gorge, Mt Majura and Pine Island have received safety, sustainability and visitor experience upgrades. Funding was provided by the ACT Government and Australian Government.

### Namadgi National Park

- The Commonwealth funded Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program (\$6.583m) has concluded and complemented ACT Government investment to deliver:
  - visitor experience improvements to walking trails in Namadgi National Park,
  - upgrades to the Namadgi Visitor Information Centre and Depot, including accessible toilet and upgrades to the BBQ area (nearing completion),
  - road repairs and stream crossings,
  - boundary fence repairs; and
  - nature-based visitor experience accommodation improvements (underway).
- Namadgi National Park is open and accessible to the public, including, the Orroral Valley campground and the Link Road from Honeysuckle to Orroral Ridge, with the following exceptions:
  - Gibraltar Falls remains closed with the intention to reopen in mid-2025.
  - The Yankee Hat rock art precinct remains closed until post-fire renewal works are completed. Consultations with Traditional Custodians have now concluded, and

Cleared as complete and accurate: [01/04/2025 18/06/2025](#)

Cleared for public release by:

Contact Officer name:

Lead Directorate:

Executive Group Manager

Charlie Stephenson

Environment, Planning and  
Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

ACT Heritage has approved the program of infrastructure renewal works. Works are expected to be completed by the first half of 2025.

### Cattle in Namadgi

- Cattle from a NSW property were detected in southern Namadgi National Park for several months despite the efforts of the farmer, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service, and ACT Park Rangers to relocate them. The cattle were removed in March 2025 and have not re-entered the Park since.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [01/04/2025](#)[18/06/2025](#)  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Charlie Stephenson  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Ext: 78628

Ext: [REDACTED]

**Portfolios:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water  
City and Government Services

## Gula (Koala) Sighting in Jacka

### Talking Points

#### General

- The Koala is known as 'Gula' in Ngunnawal language (Winanggaay Ngunnawal language group), and this term should be used when referring to animals on Ngunnawal Country.
- The Gula that was sighted in the Jacka area of Gungahlin in October 2024 has not been detected since.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna (the Conservator) has written to the Territory Planning Authority to advise on the outcomes of the environmental due diligence surveys and recommended next steps.
- The Territory Planning Authority has notified the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) of the outcomes of the environment due diligence surveys and recommended a self-assessment be undertaken to determine whether a referral is needed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- The Conservator will continue to support the SLA with their decision making about the development proposed on the Jacka block.

#### Key information

- The area the Gula was found in is scheduled for development. The area was previously subject to strategic environment assessments and approvals under the Commonwealth Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *ACT Planning and Development Act 2007*.
- The detection of a Gula in an area that has already been subject to environmental assessments and approvals is a strong example of the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the ACT's environment, including its flora and fauna.
- The Conservator has engaged with the responsible land custodian to ensure that development activities do not start until the environmental due diligence surveys are completed.
- Environmental due diligence surveys have confirmed that one or more Gula were present in the scheduled development area for at least four weeks, and that the scheduled development area contains high quality Gula habitat that is connected to neighbouring habitat patches.
- All stakeholders across the ACT Government are working closely together to ensure the Gula is protected and informed advice can be provided.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Chris Malam Ext: 58100  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The ACT Government has highly qualified and experienced Conservation Officers, researchers, and the statutory Conservator of Flora and Fauna position to respond to these situations and work with stakeholders to minimise negative impacts on the biodiversity of the ACT.

### **Background**

- Prior to this sighting, the most recent confirmed sightings of Gula in the ACT were in 2021, with one individual reported at Tennent and another at Oaks Estate.
- In 2017, there was a report of a Gula crossing the road near Pialligo Avenue (past the airport, on the way to Queanbeyan).
- Recent sightings of Gula (2023) have been recorded near Sutton, NSW.
- Acoustic monitoring undertaken by the Office of Nature Conservation since 2022 have recorded 'bellows' from male Gula in the vicinity of Googong and in southern ACT.
- Prior to these records, the last time a Gula was recorded within the ACT was in the Kowen Escarpment Nature Reserve in 1992.
- Historic records suggest that the area now known as Gungahlin was home to a large resident Gula population.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	09/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
Contact Officer name:	Chris Malam	Ext: 58100
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Environmental Volunteers and Groups – Funding Arrangements

#### Talking Points:

#### Review of Environmental Groups and Funding Arrangements

- The ACT Government recognises the contribution from community environmental groups to both government and the Canberra community in supporting the environment and undertaking climate action.
- In the 2024 election, the government committed to reviewing the best way to assist local environmental groups with their ongoing needs and activities and to identify how their initiatives could be supported.
- The government has commenced a review of the environmental services required by the government and the ACT community. This review is now commencing and will conclude in early 2026. It will ensure that funding in forward years is being directed to the highest priorities.
- The government is confident that, following this review, government funded programs will continue to have a positive impact on our environment and community into the future, and represent high value for money.
- Catchment Groups (Molonglo Conservation Group, Ginninderra Catchment Group, Southern ACT Catchment Group), ACT Wildlife, SEE Change, the Conservation Council ACT Region and the Canberra Environment Centre will receive an extension in current funding for one year to 30 June 2026 whilst the review is underway.
- The government has met with and advised these community environmental groups of the review and that funding agreements expiring in 2025 will be extended by a further 12 months to 30 June 2026.

#### Importance of volunteers

- The ACT Government has a long and proud history of supporting ACT's environmental volunteers and community groups. Volunteers are essential to helping protect, conserve, and enhance the ACT's environment.
- Environmental and animal protection volunteering is one of the top 3 ways people contribute to their community as a volunteer.
- The [2024 State of Volunteering in the ACT Report](#) tells us that for every \$1 invested in volunteering, \$5.40 is returned in benefits for the community. This is why it is important we have the right programs and settings in place to support these generous contributions.
- The ACT Government is proud to invest in a range of initiatives and programs that support environmental volunteers and facilitate the community organisations that assist them.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Frank Garofalow Ext: 70497  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### New initiative: Supporting Canberra's Environmental Groups and Volunteers

- In the 2024-25 ACT Budget, the government invested \$1.314 million over 4 years under the Supporting Canberra's Environmental Groups and Volunteers initiative to address recommendations from the ACT Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism.
- This funding includes:
  - \$830,000 over 4 years from 2024-25, including \$215,000 indexed and ongoing from 2027-28, to continue the Adopt-a-Park grants program in TCCS.
  - \$235,000 in 2024-25 for volunteer-led weed control.
  - \$74,000 over 2 years from 2024-25 to support ACT wildlife with veterinary services.
  - \$50,000 in 2024-25 to provide additional support to Landcare ACT.
  - \$125,000 in 2024-25 to continue and enhance the Canberra Nature Map.
- We have also committed to employing additional dedicated volunteer co-ordinators within TCCS to support the Urban Parks and Places Program and other urban community on-ground programs that work to keep our urban environment healthy.
- We will be reviewing how to best assist local environmental groups with their ongoing needs and activities. We will work with the Environmental Peak Groups to identify how government can best support their initiatives.

### Existing initiatives and ongoing programs

- These new initiatives and commitments compliment existing programs supporting environmental volunteers.
- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service funds 5 FTE staff to coordinate the **ParkCare program**. In 2024-25, it also funded \$136,700 in non-employee expenses to support on-ground volunteer activities, including volunteer training, personal protective equipment, uniforms, tools and equipment.
- ACT Government funds 2 FTE staff to support the ongoing \$215,000 a year **Urban Parks and Places Volunteer program**. Funding to provide volunteers with uniform, tools and personal protective equipment is allocated from TCCS operational budgets. Input from volunteers also informs allocation to weed and pest control programs.
- The ACT Government funds 2 FTE staff to support **Citizen Science programs including the Waterwatch and Frogwatch programs** and invests over \$426,000 per year for program coordinators who are embedded in the catchment groups. These programs are supplemented by \$92,100 from contractors per year who support the program.
- Since 2021-22 the **Volunteer Activation Initiative** has invested \$3.5m in ACT's environmental volunteers and the community groups that support them. This investment will continue from 2025-26 year as on-going funding.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 09/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Frank Garofalow Ext: 70497  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- This funding includes significant investment in volunteer-led environmental and community wellbeing outcomes, currently delivered by the three ACT **catchment groups, FrogWatch and ACT Wildlife.**
  - The investment includes ongoing funding for the long-running **Environment Grants program**, which in 2024 invested over \$350,000 in community-led projects to enhance ACT's environment and connect people with nature.
- The ACT Government's **2025-26 Environmental Grants round** opened on 5 June 2025 and will close 17 July 2025. \$360,000 is available for community groups for local projects that:
  - improve the environment
  - connect more people to nature
  - support Caring for Country initiatives, and
  - for environmental volunteer groups to enhance their skills and to help groups care for our local environment.
- The ACT Government occasionally enters into **supplementary grants** with local, environment-focused community groups to support key environmental work that falls outside of other grants programs.
- In 2023-24 over \$1.3 million in additional funding was invested in community and volunteer groups to deliver important environmental work.
- ACT Government is also proud to be collaborating with Landcare ACT to host another **Environmental Volunteers Conference** in August 2025. Building on the success of the event in 2023, the conference will bring together volunteers and experts from across the ACT to share ideas, network, and celebrate the accomplishments of environmental volunteers.

### Key Information

- The ACT's flagship volunteering programs – ParkCare, Urban Parks and Places, and Waterwatch – support more than 120 volunteer groups and 4,500 individuals to give back to their community by helping to maintain and enhance the ACT's natural environment.

### Background Information

- The ACT Government has a range of well-established and highly effective environmental volunteer programs. Through these, volunteers provide more than 50,000 volunteer hours per year to support environmental and wellbeing objectives.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	09/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
Contact Officer name:	Frank Garofalow	Ext: 70497
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**CAB2024/539 Murray-Darling Basin FFA schedule -  
 Funding profiles**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	780	655	390	0	<b>1,825</b>
Revenue	-780	-655	-390	0	<b>-1,825</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The Government will support the continued implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by investing in water reform activities that will contribute to water recovery, environmental water accounting data and information, and water market improvements.

This initiative will be funded through the Federation Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth for 'Implementing Water Reform in the Murray-Darling Basin'.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT entered into a new Federation Funding Agreement 'Implementing Reforms in the Murray-Darling Basin 2024-25 – 2027-28' with the Australian Government on 12 September 2024.
- Contingent on meeting each milestone outlined within the schedule, the agreement provides the ACT with up to \$2,605,000 over four years to continue implementing Murray-Darling Basin reforms in the ACT.
- ACT officials have been informed that full payment will be provided for 2024-25. An assessment report confirming milestone and payment outcomes will be published on the Australian Government website in the 2025/26 financial year.

**Key Information**

- Under the schedule, priority actions for the ACT over the four year program are:
  - Contributing to activities that will inform reviews of the Basin Plan 2012 and the *Water Act 2007*;
  - Continuing to progress discussions on interstate water trade arrangements consistent with requirements under the Basin Plan;

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
 Contact Officer name: Hannah Evans  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Supporting implementation of Commonwealth initiatives to improve outcomes for First Nations people in relation to holding water entitlements; and
- Progressing long-term environmental watering plans for the ACT and improving the ACT's water accounting framework.

## **Background Information**

### Previous Federation Funding Agreement

- During 2021-2024, the Australian Government provided approximately \$2.6 million to support the implementation of MDB water reforms within the ACT. Funding provided to the ACT for MDB reforms supported:
  - Long-term environmental water planning;
  - Basin Plan implementation monitoring, evaluation, and reporting;
  - Climate vulnerability and water security planning to build resilience in the environment and community of the ACT and surrounding region, and
  - Investigating options to deliver water for the environment by returning at least 4.9 GL to the basin.
- In 2022-23 and 2023-24, a portion of funding against the *Implementing Water Reform in the Murray–Darling Basin schedule (30 June 2024)* was withheld by the Australian Government in relation to specific trade milestones that required coordination between the ACT and NSW governments.
  - Australian Government officials had previously agreed to revised deliverables during implementation of the FFA schedule, however, in the absence of a formal variation, the evidence provided to receive payment was not accepted by Australian Government Treasury.
- The ACT entered into a contract variation signed by the previous Commonwealth Water Minister, Minister Plibersek which would provide the ACT with an opportunity to receive the \$67,800 payment in 2024-25. Under the variation, the ACT and NSW Governments were required to establish two-way entitlement and allocation trade between the two jurisdictions, to ensure protection of future environmental water downstream from the ACT. This milestone was met as required.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**CAB2024/539 Upper Murrumbidgee FFA schedules -  
Funding profiles**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	2,580	2,200	500	500	<b>5,780</b>
Offset – Expenses	-2,580	-2,200	-500	-500	<b>-5,780</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The Government will support planning and delivery of on-ground works, communications, science and monitoring projects to improve the health of the upper Murrumbidgee River.

This initiative will be funded through the Federation Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth for 'Restoring the upper Murrumbidgee River Program'.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate.

**Talking points**

- The ACT entered into a Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) schedule 'Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River 2024-25 – 2028-29' with the Australian Government on 12 September 2024.
- Contingent on meeting each milestone outlined within the schedule, the agreement provides the ACT with \$7.58 million over five years for a range of measures to improve the health of the upper Murrumbidgee River.
- Fulfillment of milestone 1 (2024-2025) against the FFA was completed in March 2025 including the development of the ACT Project Work Plan as well as Joint Program Plans between NSW and ACT for First Nation Engagement and Participation, Science and Monitoring and Communications and Engagement.
- ACT officials have been informed that full payment will be provided for 2024-25. The Project Work Plan, outlining the projects, will published on the Australian Government website in the 2025/26 financial year.

**Key Information**

- The ACT *Restoring the upper Murrumbidgee River Program* will invest in:
  - On ground works to improve water quality, riparian condition, connectivity, instream habitat and fish passage, as well as reduce the impact of threats such as invasive woody weeds and erosion.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Ext:  
Lead Directorate: Choose directorate:

- Monitoring projects that measure the impacts of interventions and track riparian and river condition.
- Science projects that fill critical knowledge gaps to establish an evidence based toolkit to support future water and river management decision-making.
- Looking for opportunities to support ongoing community stewardship and participation and engagement of the Ngunnawal Community is a priority across all projects.

### **Background Information**

- The ACT community have long advocated for better protections in the upper Murrumbidgee River.
- The upper Murrumbidgee River supports a wide range of values including water supply (domestic, urban and agricultural), critical ecosystem functions (e.g. refuge and connectivity for aquatic biodiversity and threatened species), social (recreation, swimming) and Cultural values.
- Water quality and ecological condition is fundamental to maintaining the River's values, yet the health of the river is in decline. Safeguarding river health is dependent on maintaining clean and adequate river flows from high in the catchment.
- In November 2023, the Australian Government committed more than \$50m to improve the health of the Upper Murrumbidgee River. This includes:
  - \$20m over five years for on-ground and science and monitoring projects via the *Restoring the upper Murrumbidgee River Program* across ACT and NSW;
  - \$5.3m over 5 years to support the review of the Snowy Water Deed;
  - \$30m for additional river flows during extreme drought conditions; and
  - improved annual reporting to improve transparency in Snowy Hydro water management.

**Portfolio/s:** Planning and Sustainable Development

**EPSSD C01 – Loose-Fill Asbestos Coordination –  
 Continuing services**


	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital	2,100	200	0	0	2,300
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,300</b>
Expenses	790	799	0	0	1,589
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,589</b>

The Government will extend the operation of the Loose-Fill Asbestos Coordination team to complete remaining work related to the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme. This initiative is nominally offset from existing funding and resourcing within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget Review Initiative *Investing in public services – Extending the Loose-Fill Asbestos Coordination team*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Governance and institutions, Housing and home, and Health.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring the safety and health of Canberra residents by addressing the ongoing risks associated with loose fill asbestos insulation in affected properties.
- Extending the Loose Fill Asbestos Coordination (LFAC) team enables completion of the remaining work related to the Loose Fill Asbestos Eradication Scheme. This includes demolitions, rebuild and sale of the remaining government owned affected properties and continued engagement with the 14 affected properties in private ownership.
- The completion of this work is essential to meet the Government’s commitment to eradicate loose fill asbestos insulation from the Canberra community, ensuring community safety.

**Key Information**

- As of 1 June 2025, 1,013 of the known 1,029 residential properties identified as affected by loose fill asbestos insulation have been demolished (98 per cent):
  - 980 through ACT Government Demolition Program (including 1 acquired by Territory as a Deceased Estate);

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: via Teams  
 Contact Officer name: Madeleine Orubuloye Ext: x71282  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- 12 through assisted private demolition;
- 20 through self-funded demolitions; and
- One surrendered to the Territory following demolition.
- Of the remaining 17 properties in the ACT, 14 are privately owned and 3 are owned by the Territory.
- The remaining 14 affected properties in private ownership have legislative requirements that they need to comply with, such as Asbestos Management Plan requirements, development and building approval restrictions, and occupancy prohibition for any new owners and tenants.
  - These are regulated independently by WorkSafe ACT.
- All remaining homeowners, regardless of whether they are participating in the Scheme, continue to have access to financial supports such as relocation assistance upon permanent vacation of their affected property.
- Continuation of LFAC supports the ACT Government's commitment to eradicate loose fill asbestos insulation from the Territory. This has been progressed through the Scheme and has been subject to several independent reviews which endorse the delivery, including the goal of eliminating properties effected by Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation.

### **Background Information**

- Mr Fluffy Loose Fill Asbestos has posed a serious health and safety risk to the Canberra community for over 50 years.
- A \$1 billion-dollar concessional loan from the Commonwealth Government was provided to fund the Scheme's voluntary Buyback and Demolition programs.
- Since the implementation of the Scheme, a series of regular reports have been presented to the Legislative Assembly to provide progress updates on the removal of loose fill asbestos insulation from residential properties in the ACT. The original voluntary Buyback Program under the Scheme closed on 17 August 2021 and after eight years of operation, the Taskforce ended on 30 June 2022.
- In 2014 the ACT Government determined that demolition of each affected house was the only enduring solution to the health risks as well as the social, practical and financial consequences being faced by homeowners of loose fill asbestos insulation affected properties.
- On 18 June 2025, the ACT Government agreed that compulsory acquisition is to remain an option and to be utilised on a case-by-case basis, if required, with a further update and advice to be brought forward in 2027. Affected properties will continue to be managed within the existing Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme.

**Portfolio/s:** Heritage

**EPSDD C02 – Heritage in a Growing City**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Offset – Capital – Provision	-418	0	0	0	<b>-418</b>
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>-418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-418</b>
Expenses	1,096	0	0	0	<b>1,096</b>
Offset – Expenses	-78	0	0	0	<b>-78</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,018</b>

The Government will continue to support the improved delivery of heritage regulatory functions under the *Heritage Act 2004* in the ACT through staff resourcing. This resourcing will assist in reducing processing times for referrals including development applications and Conservation Management Plans.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Delivering Heritage reforms, database and website* which provided funding for the design and scoping of a new heritage database.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Housing and home.

**Talking points:**

- The provision of funding to provide for six full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in ACT Heritage will support the provision of timely heritage advice.
- Delays in heritage approvals directly impact development timelines and land release. Maintaining adequate staffing levels supports timely advice and approvals, and aligns with the Government's priority to increase housing availability across greenfield sites, urban infill areas, and key growth corridors.
- Heritage places and objects, along with their traditions and stories, connect us to the past. Managing heritage well - including providing timely advice – gives surety to owners and managers, helps protect these connections and strengthens the shared identity of the Canberra community.

**Key Information:**

- This budget will support 6FTE positions in ACT Heritage for 2025-26.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
 Contact Officer name: Mary Clare Swete Kelly Ext: 62076902  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- This investment will reduce delays and costs for applicants seeking heritage advice and approvals.
- Provision of heritage advice is enabled by an effective heritage management framework, including data management and policy. Some of the 6FTE will contribute to these areas, which will lead to lasting improvements in heritage management.

### **Background Information**

- Between 2020 and 2022, service responsiveness declined, leading to growing backlogs and costly delays across a spectrum of developments—from individual housing projects to major public and private investments. The introduction of temporary staffing in 2022-23 began to address these issues, and the current budget decision will extend this support for another 12 months.
- Progress is already evident. The backlog of Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) lodged before 2022 will be cleared by 30 June 2025. The additional resources provided in this budget will enable ACT Heritage to process new applications received since 2022 within substantially reduced timeframes.
- Service delivery has also improved. In 2024, 87% of heritage advice to private owners was provided within six months—up from 81% in 2023—with nearly half delivered within eight weeks.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSDD C03 - Integrated Energy Plan: Public Housing Electrification (VHESS)**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	13,423	5,688	514	0	<b>19,625</b>
Offset – Capital – Provision	0	0	0	-10,000	<b>-10,000</b>
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>13,423</b>	<b>5,688</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>-10,000</b>	<b>9,625</b>
Expenses	193	975	571	412	<b>2,151</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>2,151</b>

The Government will accelerate funding to upgrade gas appliances to appropriate electric alternatives in 1,600 public housing properties, including make-good requirements, associated ancillary electrical works and gas connection abolishment charges by 2028. This initiative is fully offset against existing provisioned funding over time, under the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Climate action - Improving the energy efficiency of Canberra's public housing*.

[To expedite the completion of this initiative, an additional allocation of \\$18.1 million, originally provisioned for fiscal years 2029-30 and 2030-31, has been drawn forward to facilitate completion by 2028. This initiative includes a further offset of \\$18.1 million in capital provision over two years from 2029-30.](#)

This initiative builds on recent Government actions including the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Climate action - Improving the energy efficiency of Canberra's public housing*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Housing and home, and Environment and climate.

**Talking points:**

- This initiative expedites \$21.776 million of previously provisioned funding to facilitate the early delivery of upgrades to public housing properties.
- Funding will be used to upgrade gas appliances to appropriate electric alternatives in 1,600 public housing properties, including make-good requirements, associated ancillary electrical works and gas connection abolishment by 2028. Funding also covers the continuation of a selection of staff positions, and auditing, compliance and evaluation work associated with the project.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- This initiative will ensure that ACT residents living in public housing properties are not left behind, and are as the ACT transitions to net zero emissions by gas free by 2045.
- It allows the ACT Government to continue to electrify its housing stock while benefiting tenants through improved thermal comfort and reduced energy bills. All upgrades are fully funded at no cost to the tenant.
- It is estimated tThe early allocation of funding will provide long-term savings to the ACT Government and its tenants.

### Key Information

- Up to 1,600 public housing households will receive upgrades through this initiative. These properties include free standing and other non-complex dwellings such as townhouses and duplexes.
- Approximately 1,200 hot water systems, 700 heating systems and 500 cooktops and/or stoves are expected to be replaced.
- An average household could save up to \$735 a year in energy bills if they electrify all of their gas water, heating and cooking appliances.

### Background Information

- The ACT Government's commitment to the electrification of all feasible public and community housing properties by 2030 is the centrepiece of the Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) released in 2024. It is expected that this commitment will be met ahead of schedule, by 2028.
- This Budget initiative will build on the ceiling insulation and electrification work underway in community and public housing through the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (VHESS). The VHESS is due to complete upgrades ahead of schedule in early 2026. As of 17 June 2025, over 3,100 properties have been upgraded under the VHESS, with a further 600 estimated to be upgraded this calendar year.
- This IEP initiative will use established delivery mechanisms and governance structures from the VHESS to ensure the program of works are delivered efficiently.

**Portfolio: Planning and Sustainable Development**
**EPSSD E01 CMB1 – Safe and Sustainable Homes and Buildings**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	357	0	0	0	357
Offset – Revenue	-357	0	0	0	-357
Offset – Expenses – Provision	-3,445	-3,445	-3,445	-3,445	-13,780
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>-3,445</b>	<b>-3,445</b>	<b>-3,445</b>	<b>-3,445</b>	<b>-13,780</b>

The Government will fund the development of reforms to regulate the building and construction sector in the ACT including bringing back public certifiers and extending occupational licencing to high-risk trades.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Delivering reforms for sustainable building construction* and the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Improving building quality and safety – building certification services* which provided funding to strengthen building certification services.

This initiative will be fully offset through increases to the building levy and existing provisioned funding.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Housing and home. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Living standards, Economy, Time, and Environment and climate.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government will be progressing priority reforms to deliver on government commitments to extend occupational licencing to selected building trades and to establish an expert team of public certifiers in the ACT public service.
- These are important reforms to boost building quality and safety, and to promote consumer confidence in the ACT construction industry.
- Reforms to the building regulatory system are intended to give greater choice and protection for the community and make those working in the industry accountable for their work.

Cleared as complete and accurate: XX/XX/2024  
 Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General Ext: N/A  
 Contact Officer name: James Bennett Ext: 54877  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

### Key Information

- There will be a small increase in the building levy of 1.54 per cent from 1 July 2025 for the 2025-26 Financial Year.
- This change will apply to the owner of land at the issuing of a building approval.
- For a new home costing \$700,000 to construct, this means an increase of \$149.02.

### Background Information

- The ACT Government committed at the October 2024 election to:
  - extend occupational licensing to selected building trades including (but not limited to) waterproofing, painting and decorating, brick and block laying, carpentry, plastering, tiling, concreting and glazing.
  - to establish an expert team of publicly funded building certifiers within the ACT Public Service, operating on a fee for service competitive model, to help break the perceived over-reliance between developers and private certifiers.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (and the new City and Environment Directorate) is progressing work to deliver these commitments in this term of Government. This will include consultation with key stakeholders.

**Portfolio:** Planning and Sustainable Development

**EPSDD E02 – More housing choices –Continuation of the National Capital Design Review Panel**



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	500	510	0	0	<b>1,010</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,010</b>

The Government will continue to resource the National Capital Design Review Panel to meet demand and provide timely advice on projects, through additional design sessions and staffing resources.

This initiative builds on recent Government investment in this area through the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Better supporting planning outcomes*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Governance and institutions. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributed to are Economy, Environment and climate, Housing and home and Access and connectivity.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT led National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP) provides a single city-wide process for peer review of major development proposals to support good planning outcomes.
- The ACT Government has agreed to provide funding for the continuation of the NCDRP, with \$1.010 million invested over two years from 2025-26.
- This investment supports improved efficiency of the NCDRP, enabling a greater number of sessions that reduce wait times, and to meet the demand for NCDRP that supports the new outcomes focussed planning system.
- The ACT Government continues to provide the NCDRP as a free service to the development industry, to boost the design quality of developments for the benefit of all Canberrans.

**Key Information**

- The additional investment into the NCDRP has shortened current wait times to one month, which is the minimum time needed to provide a robust design review process.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General Ext: N/A  
 Contact Officer name: James Bennett Ext: 54877  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Following high demand in previous years, the ACT Government has increased resourcing to meet demand and maintain a high level of service to facilitate major development through this phase of the planning system.
- Earlier in June 2025, the NCDRP engaged with its 200<sup>th</sup> project since commencing in September 2017.
- There has been a total of 280 sessions held, to 28 May 2025, noting projects regularly have more than one review session.

**Portfolio/s:** Planning and Sustainable Development

**EPSDD E05 – Delivering 30,000 homes by 2030 –  
Delivering the next stages of planning reform**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	2,239	0	0	0	2,239
Offset – Expenses	-2,239	0	0	0	-2,239
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The Government will provide funding to undertake planning and technical studies to support the supply of new housing and community facilities. This includes planning reforms to support more well-located housing around shopping centres and public transport corridors.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area through the 2024-25 Budget initiatives *Increasing housing access, choice and affordability – Delivering Planning priorities*.

This initiative will be funded through existing resources, including provisioned funding under the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Increasing housing access, choice and affordability – Western Edge Strategic Planning*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Housing and home, and Economy.

**Talking points:**

- The Government has an ambition to enable the construction of 30,000 homes by 2030.
- Funding in this year’s budget supports work underway to deliver my statement of planning priorities, a key component of achieving not only 30,000 homes by 2030 but also ensuring we have opportunities to work, play and live across our districts.
- Through this funding, we hope to unlock shop-top housing at group centres, release land for community facilities, support planning changes to enable development along transport corridors and implement district strategies to make our city an even better place to live.

**Key Information**

- Funding will enable strategic planning and land release within the Belconnen Town Centre and group centres identified as change areas in District Strategies.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: via Teams  
 Contact Officer name: Shobaz Kandola Ext: 50531  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Work will also be undertaken to identify sites suitable for release for the development of community facilities.
- The Budget funding is also supporting strategic planning along transport corridors and implementation of District Strategies.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSDD E06 - Maintaining the ACT's Biosecurity Capabilities**


	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	965	0	0	0	965
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>965</b>

The Government will continue to maintain a specialised biosecurity response capability to address biosecurity threats entering or establishing in the Territory and ensure the ACT meets its obligations under the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity* (IGAB).

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Strengthening our biosecurity and nature conservation programs* and the 2021-22 Budget initiative *Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Better managing invasive species*.

~~This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Health, Environment and climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributed to are the Economy and Governance and institutions.~~

**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government is investing \$965,000 over the coming year to maintain its biosecurity capabilities to prepare and respond in the event of a biosecurity threat entering the Territory.
- \$840,000 of this funding will maintain a complement of 6 staff dedicated to coordinating and delivering the government's response in the event of a biosecurity incursion.
- \$45,000 has been allocated to engage spraying contractors to eradicate weed species. This supplements existing on-going funding for weed control.
- \$79,000 has been included in this year's budget to fund one year of the ACT's agreed contribution to the National Electric Ant Eradication Program (NEAEP).

**Key Information**

- EPSDD works closely with a range of agencies to ensure biosecurity incidents can be responded to quickly and efficiently including the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, ACT Health Directorate, Emergency Services Agency within the Justice and Community Services Directorate, Environment Protection Authority,

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager

Ext: 78628

Contact Officer name:

Tegan Iliston / Daniel Walters

Ext: 57325 / 76334

Lead Directorate:

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Access Canberra, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. EPSDD also maintains strong relationships with relevant industry and organisations.

- Funding this initiative ensures the government delivers on the ACT's national obligations to minimise the risk of biosecurity incidents.

### **Background Information**

- This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Strengthening our biosecurity and nature conservation programs* and the 2021-22 Budget initiative *Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Better managing invasive species*.
- The ACT Government established the Biosecurity Team in 2022 to ensure the ACT has a specialised biosecurity response capability to address biosecurity threats entering or establishing in the ACT and ensure the ACT meets its obligations under the [Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity \(IGAB\)](#).
- Biosecurity threats to the ACT and Australia are increasing in frequency and complexity. In 2024, the Biosecurity Team responded to 33 suspect biosecurity incursions and have contributed to national biosecurity surveillance programs. In addition, the team was critical in the emergency response to the Avian Influenza H7N8 outbreak in the ACT in 2024.
- The Biosecurity Team in the ACT Government provides the only biosecurity prevention, preparedness, response and recovery capability within the ACT and its services are an obligation under the IGAB. Prevention and early intervention are proven to be the most effective and low-cost solutions for managing biosecurity threats.
- New outbreaks of biodiversity threats are anticipated to occur including Avian Influenza H5N1 which has caused mass wildlife deaths globally. Experts have indicated that it is a case of when, not if, H5N1 will reach Australia. As a result of training, planning and emergency response experience, the Biosecurity Team is best placed to respond to the threat of H5N1 and other new outbreaks. Should funding for the Biosecurity Team cease the ACT will be unable to respond to new biosecurity outbreaks and will fail to meet its obligations under the IGAB.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSDD E07 - Maintaining core climate change and energy functions**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	4,500	3,540	1,448	1,375	<b>10,863</b>
Offset – Expenses – Provision	-1,185	-1,200	-1,230	-1,230	<b>-4,845</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>3,315</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>6,018</b>

The Government will continue actions to meet policy and statutory requirements in the Climate Change and Energy Portfolio.

The ACT has a commitment to reach net zero by 2045. This initiative ensures the Government can continue to meet its statutory and policy obligations in the Climate Change and Energy Portfolio and reaffirms the Government's commitment to undertake action to reach net zero and meet interim emissions reduction targets.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributed to are Governance and institutions and Health.

**Talking points:**

- This initiative supports climate change statutory and reporting and ongoing policy work over the next 4 years:
  - to continue emission reductions and improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of the ACT.
  - to maintain secure, reliable and renewable energy through the net zero transition and support ACT interests in national reforms.
- This initiative will support policy development for the government's next ACT Climate Change Strategy and strengthen the Territory's adaptation response. This will be critical for preparing the path to an adaptive and resilient city and net-zero emissions future.

## Key Information

This broad initiative will support a range of activities in the climate change and energy portfolio. This includes:

Climate change mitigation statutory and reporting obligations and ongoing policy work.

- Greenhouse gas inventory, Minister's Annual Report on Climate Change and responding to the five-yearly external review of government climate change action.
- New ACT climate change strategy.
- Ongoing policy work to unlock further emissions abatement.

Adaptation and resilience reporting and policy.

- Communicating climate projections and future scenarios to inform risk management, adaptation planning and decision making, such as NARCLiM 2.0.
- Embedding climate considerations across government and preparing for a 2 to 4°C warmer world.
- Supporting the community to improve their own resilience.

Energy Policy

- Ensuring ongoing energy affordability and reliability, mitigating the potential costs associated with the transition away from gas while ensuring the energy needs of the Territory are met in a cost-effective manner.
- Maintaining ACT's 100% renewables target. Delivering a review of electricity network resilience measures.

ACT Climate Change Council and central strategic policy coordination

- Secretariat support for the Council, including sitting fees.
- Maintaining alliances and memberships, including reporting and management requirements for the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (ECMC) and leveraging work with jurisdictional counterparts.

Gas transition policy

- Regulatory framework to support fossil gas transition, including analysis, public education and awareness campaigns.

Community Zero Emissions grants

- Ongoing support for continuation of the grants program.

Consumer Energy Resources

- Supporting the timely and cost-effective installation and operation of Consumer Energy Resources, enhancing energy resilience and fostering electrification.

Unit titles reform to facilitate electrification

- Review of unit titles management legislation to help ensure this legislation facilitates electrification.
- Review and develop options to mitigate the barriers surrounding sustainable energy infrastructure.

### **Background Information**

- The ACT has a longstanding commitment to positive action on climate change. This initiative ensures Government continuity in meeting statutory and policy obligations in the Climate Change and Energy Portfolio. It reaffirms the Government's commitment to reach net zero and meet interim emissions reduction targets.
- This initiative helps to deliver and build on existing policies such as the Intergovernmental Energy Plan and the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSSD E08 – Preventing the Extinction of the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	1,834	1,043	1,062	1,080	<b>5,018</b>
Offset – Expenses	-545	-187	-125	-127	<b>-983</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>4,035</b>

The Government will continue to support the critically endangered Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon (CGED) by maintaining a local breeding colony and expanding a second breeding colony through a partnership with Melbourne Zoo.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including, the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Environmental Volunteers and Emergency action to preserve the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon*, the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Protecting Canberra's unique environment – Continuing the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon program*, the 2022-23 Budget initiative *Protecting Canberra's unique environment – Securing offset values along the Eastern Broadacre employment corridor*, and the 2019-20 Budget initiative *Protecting grasslands and conservation areas*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and Climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Education and lifelong learning and Health.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government has committed to preventing the extinction of Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon (CGED) and has committed \$5.018 million over the next 4 years.
- The ACT Government is investing \$1.998 million to expand the captive colony at Melbourne Zoo to hold up to 200 CGED breeding individuals. Funding will cover facility expansion, technical staff and running costs.
- \$2.780 million funding will also support a program coordinator and a project officer for monitoring populations and undertaking captive to wild releases, and two technical officers to run the captive colony at Tidbinbilla. This will be partially offset

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
 Contact Officer name: Dr Ben Croak Ext:  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

by existing initiative funding and Commonwealth funding with a total value of \$887,000.

- A total of \$96,000 will enable field research and support operational releases of captive bred CGED into the wild, fully offset by Commonwealth funding.
- \$144,000 will fund running costs for the maintenance of the current captive colony at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

### **Key Information**

- The CGED is only found in and around the ACT, in the Jerrabomberra and Majura Valleys of the ACT and nearby NSW.
- Monitoring of wild CGED populations has shown a dramatic decline in numbers since the millenium drought (1996-2010) and the subsequent drought of 2017-2019.
- In the event of the extinction of CGED, it would be the first documented extinction of a reptile on the mainland of Australia since European settlement.
- Population viability analyses show that 500 breeding individuals are required in a captive population to maintain genetic diversity and evolutionary potential.
- To maintain genetic diversity and ensure persistence in the wild, captive to wild releases are needed. A total of 500 breeding individuals in captivity will allow up to 100 individuals to be produced for release annually.
- Two captive colonies of CGED currently exist for conservation purposes and translocations. These are located at Melbourne Zoo and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.
- Pending the outcomes of the program over the next two years, the ACT government will assess the appropriateness of a third colony at Taronga Zoo to bring the total number of captive breeding individuals up to 500.

### **Background Information**

- CGED is the only vertebrate endemic to the ACT region.
- Habitat fragmentation has led to isolated populations of CGED.
- Genetic studies show that the isolated populations of CGED have high levels of inbreeding, which reduces their ability to successfully reproduce.
- Isolated populations with high levels of inbreeding are characteristic of an extinction vortex. This means that without careful management of remaining genetic variation this species will go extinct.
- Melbourne Zoo have pioneered husbandry and breeding of CGED in captivity.

**Portfolio/s:** City and Government Services

**EPSDD E09 - Bushfire Operations Plan**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	13,375	0	0	0	<b>13,375</b>
Offset – Expenses	-10,406	0	0	0	<b>-10,406</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>2,969</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,969</b>

The ACT Government will undertake critical activities to reduce bushfire risk across the ACT's parks and reserves as part of the delivery of the annual Bushfire Operations Management Plan (BOP).

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2024-25 Budget initiative '*Bushfire Safety Risk Reduction*' which provided funding to reduce the health risks of smoke exposure for firefighting staff, and boost road maintenance equipment for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

**Talking points:**

- I am pleased that an additional almost \$3 million has been allocated to the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to deliver the Bushfire Operations Management Plan (BOP) in 2025-26 financial year. This additional funding will help PCS deliver fuel reduction activities and maintain firefighting access to our parks and reserves into the upcoming fire season and beyond.
- The BOP is vital to reducing bushfire risk to Canberra; the BOP does this through hundreds of individual projects including undertaking fuel reduction activities such as grazing and burning on ACT Government land, ensuring that the road network is serviceable for emergency vehicles during times of fire response, and building capacity in our team of over 150 PCS firefighters.
- The essential new works in this year's BOP will tie in with the purchase of machinery provided in the 2024-25 BOP, meaning PCS will be able to in-source some roading work to reduce costs and improve preventative fire road maintenance within our parks and reserves.
- I am aware that the ACT's Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Version 5 (SBMPv5) is currently being finalised, and that this document provides overall strategic direction for fire management over the next five years.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
 Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- The funding provided in this budget initiative is for existing commitments and land management requirements for fire purposes, and PCS will work with the Emergency Services Agency to propose any additional works once SBMPv5 is finalised.

### Key Information

- The Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP) is developed and executed to meet the requirements set out by the *Emergencies Act 2004*, ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) and ACT Bushfire Management Standards 2023.
- \$13.375 million has been allocated to deliver the BOP in 2025-26 FY (this is \$2.969mil above the existing \$10.406mil budget). This will maintain the existing staff complement of 53.6 FTE over the coming year.

### Background Information

- PCS within EPSDD is responsible for delivery the annual BOP, which applies to all unleased Territory lands under the custodianship of EPSDD and TCCS. This includes over 70 per cent of overall ACT land, such as Namadgi National Park, Canberra Nature Park, the Lower Cotter Catchment, Googong Foreshore, and TCCS urban sites.
- The BOP is an annual plan outlining bushfire management activities PCS will implement each financial year. The BOP details the works and activities that PCS aims to achieve within each financial year to mitigate bushfire risk within the ACT, consisting of fuel and access management plans, adequate fire response capacity, and other capability-building activities.
- ACT Bushfire Management Standards 2023 is subordinate legislation to the *Emergencies Act 2004*. These standards legislate details to PCS, like the need to keep fuel risk at very low levels close to assets and rural roads to be cleared of vegetation at a certain distance. The BOP works proactively seek to meet these standards as the Rural Fire Service can issue formal improvement directions to land custodians if these standards are not met.
- Accordingly, the BOP includes a wide range of fuel load management strategies including prescribed burning, slashing, spraying, physical removal and the use of cattle grazing, along with fire trail network maintenance. The application and effectiveness of these methods are regularly reviewed and improved.
- Following the 2023-24 BOP, the residual risk to the community was reduced from 37% to 31% which is an even stronger result than the target band of 47% - 33% outlined in the Regional Fire Management Plan 2019-2028. The 2024-25 BOP program is underway to maintain a reduced level of risk.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Michaela Watts  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

**Portfolio: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water**
**EPSSD E10 – Delivering offset commitments under the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment**


	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	429	0	0	0	429
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>429</b>

The Government will undertake preparation activities to best position itself for future works to meet the offset commitments required under the Gungahlin Strategic Assessment (GSA).

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Housing and home, Health and Education and life-long learning.

**Talking points:**

- The ACT Government has a legal obligation under the EPBC Act to manage and report on the environmental offset sites that enabled the development of suburbs in Gungahlin.
- This funding will support the Parks and Conservation Service to prepare for future works to meet restorations obligations associated with the GSA, on behalf of the ACT Government.

**Key Information**

- Funding in 2025-26 will enable planning for future restoration works required for the ACT Government to remain compliant with its obligations under the EPBC Act.
- This funding will also enable the continuation of:
  - monitoring and compliance reporting capabilities across all offset sites;
  - spatial data expertise to inform on-ground operations; and
  - some native seed production for future restoration works.
- Priority future restoration activities include:
  - threat management, primarily of intensive weed loads;
  - plant community type and Golden Sun Moth mapping; and
  - applied research to address superb parrot predation.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 24/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ext:  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Background Information

- The development of Gungahlin and its suburbs were made possible via legal approval for the GSA (which includes a grouping of environmental offsets) under the EPBC Act, due to the impact to nationally-listed species (Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)).
  - MNES impacted include:
    - Box-gum woodland
    - Golden sun moth habitat
    - Superb parrot breeding habitat
    - Pink-tailed worm lizards
    - Striped legless lizards
- The GSA Biodiversity Plan 2013 sets out the 38 commitments the ACT Government agreed to with the Commonwealth. These commitments span planning, conservation, management, reporting and financial requirements.
- The ACT Government is obligated to implement these commitments through to 2033.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSDD E11 – Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme  
 including delivery programs for low-income  
 households and small businesses**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	4,148	3,920	3,339	3,406	<b>14,813</b>
Revenue	-3,600	-3,800	-4,000	-4,150	<b>-15,550</b>
Offset – Expenses	-176	0	0	0	<b>-176</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>-661</b>	<b>-744</b>	<b>-913</b>

The Government will continue the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme; the Home Energy Efficiency Program to deliver free in-home energy assessments; the Sustainable Business Program to offer free energy assessment for small businesses; the First Nations Home Energy Support program to provide free support to First Nations households; and support for apartment buildings to electrify. This funding will also see the commencement of the Commercial Building Electrification pilot program to transition commercial buildings off gas. This initiative is offset against revenue from the Energy Saving Contribution Fund and existing resourcing within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2021-22 Budget initiative *Climate action – Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme – continuation* which provided funding to support emissions reductions and lower household and small-to-medium business energy use and cost.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Living standards and Access and connectivity.

**Talking points:**

- Through the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS), electricity retailers operating in the ACT are required to help households and small-to-medium businesses save energy and reduce emissions under the [Energy Efficiency \(Cost of Living\) Improvement Act 2012](#) (the Act).
- Some retailers meet their Scheme obligations by contributing to the Energy Saving Contribution (ESC) Fund. This provides ongoing revenue for the ACT Government to support energy efficiency programs aimed at households and small-to-medium businesses. The ACT Government is responsible for managing and administering the Fund.

- As part of the 2025-26 Budget, \$14.637 million will be allocated from the ESC Fund over four years for programs that assist vulnerable and low-income households, First Nations households and small-to-medium businesses to reduce energy costs and support the transition to net zero.
- This includes:
  - **\$4.198 million** to continue the Home Energy Efficiency Program (HEEP) and deliver 700 free in-home energy assessments per year;
  - **\$1.2 million** to continue the Sustainable Business Program and provide rebates for businesses;
  - **\$1.022 million** for the administration of the EEIS;
  - **\$766,000** to expand the current First Nation Home Energy Support program to continue delivering culturally appropriate energy efficiency support to first nation households;
  - **\$200,000** to commence the Commercial Building Electrification pilot and transition three to four commercial buildings off gas;
  - **\$100,000** to support apartment buildings to electricity; and
  - funding for staff to support the operation of these programs over the four years.

### Key Information

- Over 1.4 million energy saving items have been installed across ACT Households and small to medium businesses since the scheme commenced in 2013.
- Administering energy saving activities under the EEIS has not only met legislative requirements but has also addressed energy-related cost of living pressures (especially for vulnerable Canberrans and small business) and has supported the transition to net zero.
- The EEIS adds approximately \$23 per year to ACT household electricity bills in pass-through costs (for an average household that uses 6,370 kWh).
- The outcomes of the EEIS mean that energy efficiency is increased and reduces overall energy bills for participating households.

### Background Information

- The EEIS was established under the Act in 2013 and has the following four key objectives:
  - encourage the efficient use of energy;
  - reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use;
  - reduce energy costs; and
  - assist priority households to reduce energy use and associated costs.



## BUDGET DAY QTB

- The EEIS requires all electricity retailers operating in the ACT to meet an annual energy saving target (EST) to support the above objectives of the Act.
- While tier 1 retailers (retailers that have at least 500,000 MWh of annual electricity sales and 5,000 customers) must deliver eligible energy saving activities, tier 2 retailers (all other retailers) can either deliver energy savings activities or pay a financial contribution to meet their EEIS obligations.
- The EEIS is currently legislated to run until 2030 and is a key mechanism for delivering on priority actions agreed under the Integrated Energy Plan (IEP).

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
Lead Directorate: Choose directorate:

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSDD E12 – ZEV action plan to continue to deliver on the ZEV Strategy**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	1,650	2,000	0	0	3,650
Offset – Capital	-1,650	-2,000	0	0	-3,650
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Depreciation	0	66	146	146	358
Expenses	385	105	0	0	490
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>848</b>

The Government will continue to deliver a range of actions under the *ACT's Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy 2022-30* to promote the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) across the ACT including further rollout of charging infrastructure for the Government's commercial EV fleet and investigating the feasibility of Direct Current fast charging hubs across the ACT.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2022-23 Budget Initiative *Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy*, 2023-24 Budget initiative *Climate action – Continuing to deliver the Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy 2022-30* and the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy* which provided support for the implementation of the Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. The other domain which this initiative significantly contributes to is Economy.

**Talking points:**

- There are now more than 11,500 Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs) registered in the ACT.
- The ACT Government has met its target of a public charging network with 180 EV chargers by the end of 2025. There are now 190 EV chargers servicing 260 bays across 86 sites.
- The ACT Government currently has over 590 EV chargers installed across its government sites. The additional funding in this years budget will allow for another 100 chargers across 18 government sites over the next two years. This charging infrastructure is vital to ensure continued success transitioning the Government's

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

fleet vehicles to ZEV options. Funding is offset from the Zero Emissions Government fund, which supports Directorates across government to reduce emissions.

- DC fast charging hubs were identified in the Integrated Energy Plan 2024-30 as important enabling infrastructure for the transition to electric vehicles. Work is ongoing to identify viable locations for the development of DC fast charging hubs.

## Key Information

- To provide support for unit owners to transition to EVs, \$2.2 million was allocated in the 2024-25 Budget for an EV Ready Apartments loans program. The program will launch shortly and will offer interest free loans to owners' corporations to install backbone charging infrastructure. Residents can then purchase their own EV charger when they are ready to transition.
- The Public Charging Infrastructure Fund has delivered 58 chargers to date with another 62 to be installed under the program. The projects funded under the grant rounds fund EV chargers at new locations across the Territory, targeting gaps in the network, tourist destinations, shopping centres, and areas with high-density residential buildings.
- The ACT is a signatory to the Global MOU on Zero Emission Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicles (ZE-MHDV). The MOU sets a target of ZE-MHDVs to reach 30% of sales of new MHDVs by 2030, as well as enable a full transition to ZE-MHDVs in new fleets by 2040.

## Background Information

- At 65.5% of our total emissions, transport is the ACT's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and a priority for emissions reduction action.
- The Strategy released in July 2022 sets ~~out a range of commitments and targets~~ including a sales target of 80-90% of all light vehicle sales being zero-emission by 2030.
- ~~and is supported by a suite of actions including~~Current Government commitments include:
  - ~~commitments to explore~~exploring the phase-out of new internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035.
  - ~~a target to prohibit~~prohibition of new internal combustion engine vehicles onboarding into taxi and ride-share fleets by 2030.
  - ~~continued~~financial incentives for ZEV purchases such as ~~stamp~~lower cost motor vehicle duty ~~waivers, 2 years free~~lower cost registration for new and used ZEVs (~~now lower cost registration~~), as well as ~~zero~~low interest loans of up to \$15,000.
  - changes to the Territory Plan to make new builds electric vehicle ready.



## BUDGET DAY QTB

- continued action to ensure that 100% of all newly leased Government vehicles are ZEVs where fit for purpose and explore opportunities to replace ACT Government heavy fleet vehicles with ZEVs.
- The ACT Government non-passenger fleet includes an electric van, electric ride-on mowers, electric forklifts and a hybrid-electric fire truck.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

Choose a Portfolio

**EPSDD E13 – Community outreach program for household energy support (CO2025/25)**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	479	486	0	0	965
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>965</b>

The Government will deliver a community outreach program to continue to assist low-income and vulnerable households in understanding how to reduce their energy bills and access energy efficiency supports to help mitigate cost of living pressures.

This initiative will be partially offset from a rollover of unused funding under the 2021-22 Budget Initiative *2021-22 Tax Settings - Expanding concessions and assistance measures*.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2021-22 Budget Initiative *2021-22 Tax Settings - Expanding concessions and assistance measures* and provided funding will combine the Utilities Hardship Fund and Energy Assistance Community Partnerships programs into a streamlined community outreach program.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Living standards. The other domain which this initiative significantly contributes to is Access and connectivity.

**Talking points:**

- This initiative will support low-income and vulnerable Canberrans experiencing energy hardship through community outreach activities and 'energy wallet' vouchers to support cost of living pressures.
- Access to information, supports and services to assist with energy hardship are key to ensuring a just transition and help mitigate the cost of living pressures faced by the community.
- Program design is underway. The program will be delivered over two years from October 2025.
- The program will be delivered in partnership with a contracted community partner with trusted relationships with smaller community organisations who support hard-to-reach, low-income and vulnerable households.
- The program will:

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext:75335  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- provide community outreach activities aimed at increasing referral pathways to organisations and support;
- provide immediate energy bill relief through ‘energy wallet’ vouchers;
- improve energy education and advocacy; and
- build stronger networking pathways between community organisations and to government funded supports.

## Key Information

- The ACT Government’s Integrated Energy Plan prioritises support to those in our community who need the most assistance. The government has committed to consider a range of funding mechanisms and support measures including concessions and rebates.
- Energy Consumers Australia’s annual Consumer Energy Report Card in published in December 2024 showed that 35 per cent of ACT respondents were finding it difficult to pay energy bills in the previous six months.

## Background Information

- This initiative seeks to continue support measures provided by the Utilities Hardship Fund (UHF) and the Energy Assistance Community Partnership (EACP) program.
- A review of the UHF and EACP programs was undertaken in December 2024 and involved a range of external stakeholders. The review identified an opportunity to increase program delivery efficiency and streamline administration. Streamlining the programs into one targeted program will maintain existing cost of living measures in a cost-effective manner while still providing an immediate and long-term impact on the energy bills of vulnerable and low-income households.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSSD E14 – Water Efficiency Program (CO2025/26)**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	673	0	0	0	<b>673</b>
Offset – Capital – Provision	-3,000	0	0	0	<b>-3,000</b>
<b>Net capital</b>	<b>-2,327</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2,327</b>
Expenses	2,370	0	0	0	<b>2,370</b>
Offset – Expenses – Provision	-3,000	0	0	0	<b>-3,000</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>-630</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-630</b>

The Government will continue to design and implement various initiatives under the Water Efficiency Program (WEP) to recover water equivalent to 6.36 GL/year granted to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. This program will be funded from the one-off payment of \$58.830 million by the Commonwealth to the Territory in 2023-24.

Funding of \$250,000 in expense and \$100,000 in capital against this initiative will be from a rollover of unused funding under the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Safeguarding the Territory's Water Resources – Water Efficiency Program*.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2024-25 Budget initiative *Safeguarding the Territory's Water Resources – Water Efficiency Program* which provided funding to design various initiatives under the WEP.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. The other domain which this initiative significantly contributes to is Economy.

**Talking points:**

- The objective of the WEP is to improve the ACT's drought and climate resilience and support the ACT's long term water security.
- This will be achieved by improving the water efficiency of ACT households, businesses, schools, and government facilities.
- This budget measure will support design and planning of:
  - Water efficiency programs for households, businesses and schools (both public and private)

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Cameron Knight Ext: 620 52978  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- A community water efficiency education initiative
- A review of legislative and regulatory settings to improve water efficiency outcomes in our built environment.
- This budget will also support water efficiency upgrades of public sites, including:
  - ACT Government facilities
  - ACT sports grounds.

### **Key Information**

- The ACT Government received \$58.8 million for granting a 6.36 GL/year in water entitlement to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. These funds were provisioned in the Budget to fund the WEP.
- The WEP is designed to achieve water efficiency savings of 6.36 GL/year to offset the entitlement granted to the Commonwealth.

### **Background Information**

- This budget measure continues funding for the WEP, originally established in the 2024-25 ACT Budget.
- During 2024-25 the WEP has:
  - Audited ACT Government facilities to assess the extent and use of water efficient fittings and adherence to existing codes and standards;
  - Audited and commenced preliminary irrigation infrastructure upgrades for ACT sports grounds; and
  - Established a monitoring framework to measure progress of the WEP against the 6.36 GL/year water recovery target.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSSD E15 - Establishment of the Office of the ACT  
Landscape Architect and works supporting a Canberra  
Landscape**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	2,943	981	0	0	3,924
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>2,943</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,924</b>

The Government will appoint a Government Landscape Architect and office to deliver the ACT's first Landscape Plan and undertake conservation and restoration works to support the Canberra landscape. The Government will undertake critical conservation and invasive plant and animal control actions, enhance natural and urban climate adaptation and preparedness, and develop environmental and urban adaptation policy, along with supporting data and spatial mapping.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Conserving Canberra and Strengthening the ACT's biosecurity*, the 2023-24 Budget Initiative *Action on Climate Change*, and the 2021-22 Budget initiative *Climate action – adaptation and resilience*.

This initiative contributes primarily to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. The other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Access and connectivity and Health.

**Talking points:**

This initiative will deliver an election commitment to establish a Government Landscape Architect and develop the ACT's first Landscape Plan.

The Office of the Government Landscape Architect is a new role with three distinct elements.

- **Design** – Three new staff to create a small but impactful design team
- **Landscape Plan** – Responsible for delivering the Landscape Plan.
- **Adaptation** – Continuing the Government's focus on urban living infrastructure and urban heat mitigation to support a climate ready city in the landscape

This work will be:

- **Informed by spatial data and evidence** – continue our work on mapping the blue-green infrastructure of Canberra and biodiversity of Canberra.

This work will be supported by

- **On ground works** – in the first year, the priority will be habitat restoration and protecting our landscape through direct intervention on invasive pest management – animals and weeds,

### Design

- Three new staff will be recruited to lead the design elements for the landscape architect. These will be highly sought-after, high-profile roles within the City and Environment Directorate.

### Landscape Plan

- Canberra's bush capital status and 'city in the landscape' are much loved by the Canberra community. The Landscape Plan will ensure that this is protected as our city grows.
- It will deliver integrated landscape planning that brings together urban planning, climate adaptation, nature conservation, open space planning and heritage.

### A climate ready City in the Landscape

- Excessive urban heat can have health impacts, increase household cooling bills and impact our quality of life in summer.
- The Office and the Landscape Plan will continue the Government's focus on keeping Canberra cool through increasing urban living infrastructure such as tree canopy.
- Following the success of previous work, the Landscape Plan will include a new action plan for increasing living infrastructure and reducing urban heat across the city.
- This work will also provide additional support to the outcomes-based planning system, with the creation of a Landscape Design Guide, and a review of the Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide.

### Informed by spatial data and evidence

Continued work to develop or improve our evidence base. This will, over time, create a spatial overlay to support decision making to preserve, conserve or rehabilitate our valued areas across the Territory.

### On ground works

- Continue vital habitat restoration by integrating cultural knowledge, supporting active ParkCare groups, reconnecting habitats for woodland birds and other species, and targeting weed threats in priority areas to rebuild biodiversity.
- Sustain efforts to manage invasive plants and animals threatening natural values, agriculture, and urban areas over the next two years.
- Key actions include: Ongoing rabbit control in urban areas and ACT parks and reserves and, thermally assisted aerial control of deer, pigs, and other vertebrate pests across Namadgi National Park, Lower Cotter Reserve, Tidbinbilla, Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors, and Googong Foreshores.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	23/06/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Deputy Director-General	Ext: 75001
Contact Officer name:	Geoffrey Rutledge	Ext: 75001
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- These pests damage sensitive ecosystems like upland wetlands – they also carry disease, pose risks to peri-urban and urban environments and community safety, and harm agricultural productivity. This funding ensures their populations remain at low densities to protect these critical natural assets.

#### **Short term Funding (if asked)**

- The funding covers establishment of the Office and initial funding towards developing the Landscape Plan.

#### **Key Information**

##### **Landscape Architect and Plan**

- Initial scoping and internal consultation for the Landscape Plan has commenced.
- The **ACT**-Landscape Architect and Office will be recruited during 2025.
- The **ACT**-Landscape Architect will improve design outcomes by providing advice to ACT Government projects and the planning system, including during development assessment

##### **Climate ready city**

- Canberra is already feeling the impacts of climate change, including more hot weather and more severe weather events. This will worsen over time.
- Tree canopy is the best way to keep Canberra cool during hot weather. Suburbs with high tree canopy are on average much cooler than suburbs with low tree canopy.
- The Government has set a target of 30% tree canopy by 2045. Canberra had 22.5% tree canopy cover in 2020. New 2025 data is being analysed now and is expected to be available later in 2025.

##### **On ground Works**

- Canberra’s biodiversity and ecosystems – particularly threatened species and communities - have been declining due to habitat loss and fragmentation (by urban development and infrastructure), invasive species, new diseases, and other threats.
- Threatened species populations have declined by about 60 % since 2000, largely driven by loss and fragmentation of habitat due to urban and infrastructure development, as well as invasive species, bushfire, and other threats.
- Strategic, proactive habitat restoration is critical in order to avert declines and risky, expensive “last ditch” measures to save species from extinction.
- Weeds are increasing in native grasslands and woodlands despite control efforts, raising costs annually. Invasive species can quickly disrupt ecosystems, causing lasting harm. Early weed control is cheaper than restoring degraded ecosystems later.

## Background Information

- The following elements have been funded:
- Expertise on climate adaptation and urban biodiversity in order to advise the development of a Landscape Plan (1 year)
- One year's funding for continuing on-ground ecosystem restoration with the Ngunawal community. It is envisaged that this will continue the success of the last two year's work focused on three priority areas: Ainslie-Majura Nature Reserve; Urambi Hills/Bullen Range Nature Park; and the grassy valleys of Namadgi National Park.
- Weeds work - Each year, around 10,000 hectares of land in the ACT are treated for weed control, supported by a base funding allocation that covers essential operations like spraying and monitoring.
- Continuation of living infrastructure and urban heat island urban climate adaptation, including conducting tree canopy modelling which is a key input to the Landscape Plan (1 year)
- Ceasing work from *Conserving Canberra and Strengthening Canberra's Biosecurity* includes:
  - Recently established Fisheries Compliance function in ACT Government, working to address the known problem of noncompliance with fisheries regulation and engage and educate the angling community. This function will cease June 30<sup>th</sup> (last patrol has already taken place).
  - Work to provide restoration ecology expertise into the building of an online restoration platform to prioritise, guide and inform cross-tenure restoration efforts and track impacts for multiple government agencies and the community.
  - Work to guide government in adapting to climate change in the domain of land management and nature conservation, including preparing for increased bushfire risk, drought, movements of species and new invasives threats.
  - Work to enable the use of citizen science, support robust spatial planning, and translate biodiversity into decision support tools for prioritised and effective decision making.
  - The invasive plant and plant pests team will have its personnel resourcing cut by 33% reducing its ability to respond to the threat of invasives across Government lands and the support it is able to provide to volunteers and government officers.

**Portfolio/s:** Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

**EPSSD E16 – Healthy Waterways – Improving Lake Tuggeranong**


	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	327	0	0	0	327
Offset – Expenses	-150	0	0	0	-150
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>177</b>

The Government will continue the Healthy Waterways program to improve waterway health and water quality. This initiative is partially offset against existing funding and resourcing within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Protecting Canberra's unique environment – Expanding the Healthy Waterways project* which provided funding to reduce nutrient load and algal blooms in urban lakes and ponds.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domain of Environment and climate. Other domains which this initiative significantly contributes to are Health, Social connection, Economy and Governance and institutions.

**Talking points:**

- A Government priority is to deliver a 10-year plan for a healthier Lake Tuggeranong.
- This priority builds on a significant investment of new ponds, wetlands and raingardens in Tuggeranong in the last ten years, most recently with a 500m section of Tuggeranong Creek concrete stormwater channel renaturalised in Calwell.
- The program continues to investigate additional options to restore the water quality of Lake Tuggeranong. Behaviour change in our community and in our city operations are key to addressing nutrient pollution at the source, and reducing the frequency of lake closures because of blue-green algae events.

**Key Information**

- Of the three broad options – prevent, reduce or remediate pollution – the most cost effective solution is to prevent pollution entering water.
- Based on rigorous scientific research and modelling, a 700kg/year reduction of phosphorus nutrients would improve water quality and reduce the number and duration of lake closures to acceptable levels.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ext:  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Background Information

- Since 2014, the ACT Government has invested around \$44 million in Tuggeranong with Stage 1 and Stage 2 Healthy Waterways projects.
- 8 wetland projects were delivered in Tuggeranong in Stage 1, with a further 6 wetland projects in Tuggeranong from Stage 2 completed or currently underway.
- There is a sound scientific base of research, monitoring and water quality modelling in collaboration with University of Canberra that demonstrates phosphorus nutrient pollution needs to be reduced further to improve water quality of Lake Tuggeranong.
- Impacts of climate change will continue to add pressure on water quality with increased temperatures and larger storm events.
- The nutrient pollution source is diffuse, coming from each upstream household, shopping precincts, sportsgrounds and the upstream rural area.
- Lake closures occur when there are blue-green algae events because of public health risks from primary and secondary contact with water. The persistent odour during these times is unpleasant for nearby residents, businesses and community recreation activities.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Ext:  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

## Portfolio/s: Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

### Fees and Charges - EV Motor Vehicle Duty and Utilities Tax increase

#### Talking points:

#### Electric Vehicle (EV) Motor Vehicle Duty ([commonly known as Stamp Duty](#))

- The new 2025-26 ~~motor vehicle stamp~~ duty rates [for EVs](#) starting 1 September 2025:

Dutiable value	Current AAA (Zero Emissions Vehicle) Duty	New 2025-26 AAA (Zero Emissions Vehicle) Duty	Curent AA (Environment Leading Edge, PHEVS & Hybrids) Duty	New 2025-26 AA (Environment Leading Edge, PHEVS & Hybrids) Duty
\$0 to \$45,000	Nil	2.50%	Nil	2.67%
\$45,000 to \$80,000	Nil	4.00%	Nil	4.41%
Above \$80,000	Nil	8.00%	Nil	8.00%

- [The stamp duty waiver for EVs has been in place for nearly 3 years and has been a successful incentive to support EV uptake. However, given the current constrained budget environment it is no longer feasible to offer the full waiver for EVs. The new EV stamp duty rates brings the ACT in line with other jurisdictions.](#)
- [The stamp duty rates are based on emissions performance categories which means that EVs will incur a lower rate compared to combustion engine vehicles of the same value.](#)
- ~~The program of stamp duty waivers was introduced to increase uptake at a time when EV's were more costly and less available.~~
- ~~As time has progressed and uptake has increased, these incentives are no longer necessary.~~

#### Utilities Tax Increase

- In 2025-26 and 2026-27, the Utilities Network Facilities Tax (UNFT) will increase by an additional 2.5 percentage points above the wage price index.

## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The increase to Utility Network Facilities Tax will increase bills for everyone that uses the electricity, gas, sewage, water and telecommunications network. The tax will be recovered through increased customer bills.
- The Utility Network Facilities Tax has been raised as a significant driver of energy bills by Evoenergy. This was prior to the recent increase.

### Key Information

#### EV ~~Motor Vehicle Stamp~~ Duty

- The generous ~~motor vehicle stamp~~ duty exemption has been in place for nearly 3 years (started 1 August 2022) as well as no cost registration for 2 years which has contributed to the ACT having the highest uptake of EVs per capita in Australia.
- The ~~motor vehicle stamp~~ duty being introduced will be lower than the rates used by most other jurisdictions.
- The Government has range of other incentives available including the \$15,000 low-interest loans for new and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand EVs.

#### Utilities Tax Increase

- By increasing the UNFT the own-source taxation to support sustainable delivery of public services and infrastructure for the Canberra community will also increase.
- There are opportunities through electrification and water efficiency, supported by a range of ACT Government programs, to reduce consumption. This may reduce the impact of the bill increase.

### Background Information

#### EV ~~Motor Vehicle Stamp~~ Duty

- EVs are typically still more expensive than equivalent petrol or diesel vehicles, so consumers will pay more stamp duty, particularly if they are above the \$45,000 threshold. The table below provides some examples of ~~motor stamp~~ duty payable between comparable models:

Vehicle	Category	Purchase Price	Motor duty
Hyundai Kona <b>petrol</b> base model	C	\$ 35,446	\$ 1,124
Hyundai Kona <b>electric</b> base model	AAA	\$ 57,016	\$ 2,281
MG 5 <b>petrol</b> base model	B	\$ 24,990	\$ 750
MG 4 <b>electric</b> base model	AAA	\$ 37,990	\$ 950

- 9 out of the top 10 most popular EV models sold in the ACT in recent years are priced over \$45,000 and will now be charged 4% ~~motor vehicle stamp~~ duty.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Choose an item. Ext:  
 Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development



## QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The table below shows the comparison ~~motor vehicle~~stamp duty rates from other jurisdictions:

State/Territory	Vehicle Duties
NSW	No ZEV concessions. Overall <\$45,000 duty rate is \$3 per \$100 and >\$45,000 is \$1,350 + \$5 per \$100
Victoria	ZEVs of any value has a duty rate \$8.40 per \$200 or part thereof. ICE vehicle rate increases above \$80,567
Northern Territory	Free rego and stamp duty concession for ZEVs of up to \$1,500 for vehicles up to \$50,000 and 3% rate outside of this
QLD	ZEV/Hybrid rate of 2% for the first \$100,000 and then 4% over \$100,000 for vehicles less than 4.5 tonnes. Flat 2% rate for heavy vehicles

Cleared as complete and accurate: 23/06/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Choose an item. Ext:  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335  
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development