

# Sports and Recreation

## Talking points

### 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's response to the further information request was accepted by the Authority on 8 August 2025.

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- The amended application (s168D) has been referred to all original entities and will be publicly notified from 18 August 2025 to 12 September 2025.
- ~~†~~The Authority will ~~then then~~ consider all representations and entity advice received in response to the s168D amended application and assess the DA against the requirements of the *Planning Act 2023* and Territory Plan 2023 prior to making a decision.
- The statutory due date for the Authority's decision is currently 7 July 3 November 2025. ~~However, the due date for a decision is subject to change in response to the second further 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.

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# 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.

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

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# 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 public notification, the Authority included a notification on their website to alert interested parties to the two, separate DA processes.
- 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.
- The Developer must meet the conditions of approvals for both the subdivision DA (202342252) and the lease variation DA (202442898) before any building work on the golf course can commence. These conditions are still outstanding, so no work can begin on the golf course reconfiguration until they are satisfied. 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.

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

- The proponent for the development has lodged four DAs under the Act; all were publicly notified for 25 working days, concluding on 4 June 2024.

<u>DA</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status (as of 1 Sept. 25)</u>
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<a href="#">DA-202442898</a>	<a href="#">Lease variation to add retirement village (maximum 125 units) and ancillary uses to the Crown Lease Purpose Clause</a>	<a href="#">Conditionally approved (on 1 November 2024)</a>
<a href="#">DA-202442899</a>	<a href="#">Construction of a water storage dam</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Conditionally approved (on 20 December 2024)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Third-party application for review lodged with ACAT on 22 January 2025.</a></li> <li><a href="#">Directions hearing held 4 March 2025, application dismissed as ACAT decided application was not reviewable.</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">DA-202442900</a>	<a href="#">Construction of a public road</a>	<a href="#">Under assessment by the Authority</a>
<a href="#">DA-202442901</a>	<a href="#">Design and siting of a retirement village</a>	<a href="#">Under assessment by the Authority</a>

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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\*.](#)

<u>DA</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status (as of 1 Sept. 25)</u>
<a href="#">DA-202342252</a>	<a href="#">Subdivision of Block 1 into two parcels</a>	<a href="#">Conditionally approved (on 7 November 2024)</a>
<a href="#">DA-202342260</a>	<a href="#">Redesign of the golf course to accommodate a retirement village development</a>	<a href="#">Conditionally approved (on 19 April 2024)</a> <a href="#">(See further information below)</a>

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<u>DA-202342264</u>	<u>Retirement village and access road, with:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><u>77 single storey dwellings, 48 apartments and an amenities building</u></li><li><u>maximum building height proposed is three storeys</u></li></ul>	<u>Conditionally approved (on 18 November 2024)</u>
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- ~~— 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~~
  - ~~○ 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 DA 202442899.~~

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- ~~• 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 added that, had the application been properly made, the DA would not have been approved regardless due to environmental issues and would have remitted it back to the Authority for greater consideration given to these environmental issues.
- ~~• The concerns with related to 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 [\(SCA 14 of 2025\)](#).
- ~~• The court has listed the matter for a one-day hearing on a date to be determined in the week commencing scheduled for 4 September 2025. Parties to indicate to the Court after all materials are provided (Due 22 August) whether the hearing on 4 September is required.~~

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# 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 *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)).
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- ~~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 [then](#) 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 [Government's](#) position and expectations ~~outlined above for the site~~, 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 has also been asked to engage meaningfully with the community on any revised proposal.
- Woolworths has acknowledged this correspondence. A revised proposal has not been received by the City and Environment Directorate (CED) to date.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [06/06/2025](#)[21/08/2025](#)

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City and Environment

- ~~Woolworths to engage meaningfully with the community on any revised proposal. Should a revised application be provided, EPSDD-CED 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.~~
- A key component of the investigations includes subsurface boring to understand the geotechnical, groundwater and contamination conditions.

## 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)).~~

### Site Investigations

- CED is undertaking site investigations within the public car parks at the Hawker group centre to inform the Government in its considerations as to the future use of the land.
- The Stage 2 site investigations involve onsite and technical investigations including geotechnical, tree survey, utilities, services, infrastructure, traffic, and transport assessments.
- A key component of the investigations is the subsurface boring to determine geotechnical, groundwater and contamination conditions, which was completed onsite on 14 August 2025. The samples have now been sent to a laboratory for technical assessment with results expected shortly. Three groundwater monitors/samplers were also installed for one week and were removed on 21 August 2025.
- The Stage 2 investigations build on the Stage 1 investigations that were completed in 2024. The Stage 1 investigations involved desktop analysis covering a range of matters including land-use and planning; site description and location; existing site servicing; proposed site servicing; site opportunities, constraints and risk assessment; and recommendations for future detailed investigations.

### Planning and land release

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- ~~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.~~

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# Bluetts Block (Minor Plan Amendment MA2024-m)

## Talking points

### 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.
- [On 30 June 2025, The the Authority is currently preparing released a major plan amendment to remove the future urban area overlay from Block 403 Stromlo and part Block 12 Section 1 Denman Prospect \(Bluetts block\) for public consultation. ~~It is anticipated this will be placed on public consultation by the end of the month. The public consultation period closed on 11 August 2025. The Authority are currently considering consultation comments.~~](#)
- This will provide further certainty to the community that the site will be protected in perpetuity.

### Key Information

Cleared as complete and accurate:	<a href="#">30/07/2025</a> <a href="#">22/08/2025</a>	
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- 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.

# 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 CED 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
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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  
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# Hot topic: Planning Priorities – Community Facility Land

## Talking points

- From 2 September 2024 to 21 November 2024, a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) was conducted seeking responses from community organisations with regard to the proposed sale of the following ~~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.
  - **MOLONGLO**
- ~~The EOI closed on 21 November 2024 and responses have now been assessed.~~
- ~~All respondents were have been notified of the outcomes of REOI process.~~
- There were no successful responses found for the Kambah and Gowrie sites. These sites are being considered for re-release through a future REOI process, potentially with broader permissible land uses.
- Successful respondents – two for Evatt, two for Chisholm and one for Gungahlin - will be in early April 2025 with four community organisations being ~~invited to participate in a second stage request for tender (RFT) process.~~
- Site studies and land valuations, necessary for the release of the second stage RFT process are underway. Subject to the outcomes of this work, it ~~is anticipated that the second stage RFT will commence in late 2025. in mid-2025 for the Evatt, Chisholm and Gungahlin blocks.~~
- ~~No respondents have been shortlisted for the Kambah and Gowrie blocks.~~

Cleared as complete and accurate:

06/06/202521/08/2025

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## 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. [11 responses where received showing interest in further community facility opportunities in the town centre.](#)

- 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, [and the timing](#), is subject to [the work being undertaken by the](#) Suburban Land Agency and a forthcoming Subdivision Design Application.

## Background

- The two-stage sales process commenced with an ~~an expression of interest (EOI)~~ [REOI](#) that was open to community organisations interested in purchasing a non-concessional crown lease (market value lease) to establish a community facility.
- Applicants ~~must were required to~~ demonstrate [financial capacity](#), community demand for the facility, and [show consideration for the](#) potential impacts to the surrounding area including traffic, noise and lights, parking and tree cover. Importantly, the ACT Government is interested to see how the [broader](#) 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.

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# Heritage Matters

## Talking points

### Funding for the National Trust (ACT)

- [Following an external review of 2021-2024 National Trust \(ACT\) funding to determine the extent funding has supported the delivery of the ACT Government's heritage priorities, I have directed ACT Heritage to work with the National Trust on development of a deed of agreement for 2025-26.](#)
- [The review found that the National Trust's unique strengths and valuable community outreach that cannot easily be replicated by government.](#)
- [Its recommendations include improving strategic alignment, streamlining administration and clarifying roles and responsibilities to reduce overlap or duplication with government activities.](#)
- [A copy of the report was provided to the National Trust and I greatly appreciate their positive participation in both the review and current work on the 2025-26 deed of agreement.](#)
- [Funding of \\$75,000 will be provided in 2025-26 for flagship events like the annual Heritage Symposium, Heritage Oration and open days in the 2026 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival.](#)
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### 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

- [The ACT Heritage Council decided to heritage list the Early Kingston Shops at its meeting on 20 August 2025.](#)
- [In May 2024, the Council provisionally registered identified blocks that relate to the Early Kingston Shops, and part of the road verge. The decision followed a rigorous process that](#)

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included provisional registration in May 2024 and public consultation on the heritage values.

- ~~• 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.~~
  - The heritage registration includes the first 10 metres from the front block boundary of the remaining blocks with original 1920s shops along Giles, Jardine and Kennedy Streets.
  - It also includes the public space in front of the shops, including the footpath, awnings, and kerb areas up to the edge of the road.
  - The registration does not stop maintenance by shop owners and managers or development.
  - Changes that are sympathetic to the heritage values are allowed, including mixed-use development in line with existing planning controls.
  - The Council briefed me that the registration under the Heritage Act aligns with the intent of the Inner South District Strategy, and generally applies a less stringent approach to planning.
  - The Council conducted extensive consultation on the heritage significance and as a result revised the statement of significance, reduced the boundary and more clearly stated key features.
- 
- ~~• 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~~

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~~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 workmet 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. The proponents are currently finalising a scope of works for the conservation and adaptive reuse of the Bakery, which will then be considered by Council.
- 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.
- Representatives for the Council met with the owner to discuss essential maintenance and repair works, and preparation of a condition assessment. Urgent maintenance works have been completed, and a scope of repair work is under assessment.
- ~~• 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.~~

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## 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~~2~~ and the Heritage Core DA and two residential precinct DAs.
- 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 have now commenced on site. ~~soon~~.
- The Heritage Council is continuing to work closely 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.~~

## Kingston Arts Precinct Redevelopment

- The Kingston Arts Precinct Redevelopment is a significant urban renewal project for the ACT Government which aims to conserve and reuse an industrial heritage site consisting of the Kingston Power House Historic Precinct and the Former Transport Depot.
- Master Plan including the adaptive reuse of heritage structures and public realm works was presented to the Council for review and endorsement earlier this year.
- The Council has provided advice and broadly supports project approach for infill buildings supported by more intensive adaptive reuse of the heritage structures subject to a few adjustments and provision of further details.
- The design team is currently working on detailed design which considers the Council advice provided.

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- The Heritage Council is continuing to work closely with SLA regarding heritage conservation outcomes to be delivered as part of the project.

#### Canberra Theatre Centre Redevelopment

- The Canberra Theatre Centre Redevelopment is a significant urban renewal project for the ACT Government which aims to revitalise the Civic Square precinct as a performance destination for the region.
- The concept plans for the proposal including the upgrade of the Canberra Theatre Centre and the new Lyric Theatre were presented to the Council for review and endorsement.
- The project is to be delivered in two stages with the Lyric Theatre to be commissioned first.
- The Council has provided advice broadly supporting the project approach along with in principle endorsement for Stage 1 (the Lyric Theatre) and associated infrastructure works. It has requested details of further design development.
- The design team is currently working on detailed design which considers the Council advice provided.
- Representatives of the Heritage Council are continuing to work closely with iCBR regarding heritage conservation outcomes to be delivered as part of Stage 1 and the overall project.

#### 'Missing Middle' Housing Reform

- The Missing Middle Housing is primarily aimed at increasing housing choices within existing residential blocks, which reflects the 2018 ACT Planning Strategy to provide 70% of new dwellings within the existing urban footprint.
- The draft Territory Plan Variation DPV04 for reform implementation was presented to the Council for comments.
- The Council provided detailed guidance on opportunities to deliver sensitive and appropriate densification in heritage areas including specific requirements that could be included in the planning policies and specifications. It is noteworthy that the majority of these heritage blocks are located in the Inner North and the Inner South, which are significant areas for reform delivery.
- Of note is that Heritage Act requirements for development vary by place, but for most blocks, secondary dwellings and unit titling are permitted subject to a range of other requirements, including site coverage limits, planting area requirements and tree conservation.

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- The Council will continue engagement with the planning team as they develop the design guide and pattern books.

## Namadgi Huts

- In January 2020, the Orroral Valley fire destroyed Demanding Hut (built c.1945) and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut (built c.1967) located in Namadgi National Park.
- Both huts are listed on the ACT Heritage Register as part of the "Stockmen's Huts in Namadgi National Park" registration, along with five other huts and are therefore subject to Heritage Act 2004 provisions. All huts are significant for their association with high country pastoralism.
- The 2010 Namadgi National Park Plan of Management sets out that where culturally significant buildings are severely damaged or destroyed, decisions regarding restoration, reconstruction or replacement shall follow the Burra Charter principles and advice from the ACT Heritage Council (the Council).
- On 8 April 2021, following receipt of a heritage report from the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) documenting the condition of both huts and available management options informed by a heritage specialist, Council delegate advice was issued with the following key matters and position:
  - The condition of each hut does not allow for 'restoration' – as defined by the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 2013) – given the extent of fire damage and the loss of significant fabric.
  - While Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut were good examples of their type, five other examples of this type remain in Namadgi National Park, and these huts continue to demonstrate this aspect of the ACT's pastoral history.
  - A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) should be prepared for the remaining Stockman's Huts as a priority, to guide their necessary conservation and responsible management.
  - Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut should be managed in situ as ruins with on-site heritage interpretation, as this approach would continue to express the significant association of both places with ACT high country pastoralism.

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- Replica hut constructions at each site are not supported, as new construction could damage remaining significant fabric, could damage the surrounding archaeological features and deposits, and could confuse the historical understanding and heritage significance of each place.

### Ginninderra Police Station

- Ginninderra Police Station, an ACT Heritage Register listed property, burnt down in April 2024.
- In response, Council commissioned a condition assessment of the ruins, to inform future advice.
- The Council are continuing to work with the asset owner on urgent works, and the future management of the place.

### Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment

- Planning has identified the Eastern Broadacre area for economic growth and development.
- Council have provided a range of advice on the project, including on Aboriginal cultural places, built and historic heritage places, and natural places.
- To inform project planning, key heritage assessment requirements have been identified, including an Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment to establish an understanding of the Aboriginal cultural significance and a Cultural Heritage Assessment to make recommendations for heritage conservation and management outcomes.
- The Council will continue to work closely with Planning on the strategic assessment.

### Heritage Council Appointments

- The process to appoint Five new members have recently been appointed to the ACT Heritage Council 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 included 3 Expert members and 2 Aboriginal Community Representatives.
- A new Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were also selected from the membership.
- ~~These new members bring to the Council expertise in archaeology, heritage management, architecture cultural history and cultural consulting.~~

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- ~~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.~~
- In early July an additional Expert member resigned from the Council and the process for appointing a replacement is underway.
- When these last appointments is complete, it will 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-making on the recognition and preservation of heritage place and objects in the ACT, among several as well as other statutory responsibilities.

### Community Engagement:

#### Canberra and Region Heritage Festival

- The 2025 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival (~~Festival~~) ran from 18 April to 11 May.
- 143 events were hosted by 82 community groups, First Nations organisations, government agencies, museums and many others, across Canberra and surrounding regions.
- OverMore than 10,500 visitors attended tours, talks, exhibitions, workshops, bike rides and open days to explore the unique heritage of our city.
- Festival attendees shared enthusiastic feedback, highlighting how much they valued the chance to connect with and care for local heritage places and stories.
- Event holders noted the valuable role the fFestival plays in helping them achieve key organisational goals, such as boosting visitation and creating meaningful connections with new audiences.
- The fFestival's popularity among Canberrans is a testament to our community's active interest in, and appreciation of, our unique local heritage.
- Planning is underway for the 2026 festival.

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### ACT Heritage Grants

- The ACT Heritage grants program for 2025-26 opened for applications ~~on from 7 July 7 and closed on 15 August 2025~~.
- 27 hHeritage grant applications were received and are currently being assessed.-
- Successful grant recipients will be announced in October.
- Funding priorities focus on the conservation, interpretation, education and engagement related to places and objects on the ACT Heritage Register or Aboriginal heritage protected through the *Heritage Act 2024*.
- ~~Grants assessment will take place in September and successful recipients will be announced in October.~~

### Heritage System Reforms

- ACT Government decided not to progress funding for a new heritage database in the 2025-26 Budget.
- The two procurements associated with system implementation (System of Record and System of Engagement) have been closed and the prospective vendors were advised on 16 August 2025.
- Alternate strategies for mitigating risks associated with data management, sharing and accessibility are being explored.

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# 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 25-metre-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~~ was also 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~~ is considering all representations and entity advice received, in accordance with the requirements of the Territory Plan and *Planning Act 2023* prior to making a decision.
- 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.

## 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/202520/08/2025

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- 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.
- 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.

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# Public Protection Measures

## Talking points

- The ACT Government is committed to action that protects homeowners and the community from harm arising from poor building quality.
- Partnering with local industry, we also need to address building safety and improvements in community confidence in the building and construction industry through improved industry accountability and transparency.
- There are several areas of reform that we are focussed on delivering in this term of government.
- If consumers have a complaint about building work, they should contact their builder or insurer in the first instance. There is information on the Planning website under “Disputes and complaints” about further options, including contacting Access Canberra, the Conflict Resolution Service, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal or the consumer representative for the Master Builders Fidelity Fund. If you make a complaint to Access Canberra, they will keep you updated about the progress of your complaint.

### Residential building work insurance settings

- This includes reforms to residential building work insurance, which is an important consumer protection measure. I am committed to regulatory settings that are fit for purpose and support a viable insurance market in the ACT.
- From 1 January 2025 the minimum residential building work insurance amount increased from \$85,000 to \$200,000, and the time limit a homeowner has to lodge a claim doubled to 180 days.
- In addition, a consumer representative has been appointed to advise me on issues that arise for homeowners engaging with the approved fidelity fund scheme, and other matters relating to residential building work insurance in the ACT.
- The ACT Government is continuing to progress work to deliver on the final recommendations and I expect to have this work completed in the coming months.

### Security of Payments

- ~~In relation to Security of Payments, t~~The ACT Government is committed to a detailed review of the ACT’s security of payment laws, scheduled to begin in late 2025. This review will consider ways the legislation could be improved to make the building industry fairer. Consultation with all areas of the sector will be an important component of this work, with consultation expected to commence in 2026.

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Security of Payment issues are on the national agenda, with interest from Building and Small Business Ministers, and a desire to support contractors within the sector to be paid in a reasonable time and not be left vulnerable to insolvencies.

### Developer Licensing and Regulation

- We have taken significant steps in the regulation of property developers. The *Property Developers Act 2024* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2024 and parts of the Act commenced on 11 July 2024.
- The Act applies to residential building projects with 3 or more dwellings. It does not apply to single dwellings and dual occupancies.
- Developers will be able to apply for licences from October 1, 2025, as part of a one-year transition period. It will be mandatory to hold a licence from October of the following year.
- From 1 October 2026, a property developer licence will be required if you are the person or entity that is doing any of the following related to building and construction projects for 3 or more residential dwellings:
  - Applying for development approval
  - Applying for a building approval, building commencement notice, or a certificate of occupancy
  - Selling or advertising the sale of residential property off-the-plan.
- Costs will include a one-off application fee of \$1000; an annual licence term fee, also \$1000; an activity-based fee when the building approval stage is reached, at \$500 per residential dwelling; and a fee to vary a licence at \$500.
- 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	22/08/2025	
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# Ster Missing Middle Housing Reform

## Talking points

- Community engagement for the first stage of the Missing Middle Housing Reforms project wrapped up, with no further submission on the reforms being accepted after 5 August 2025.
- All written submissions, including surveys were published on the YourSay website on 19 August, as part of the Major Plan Amendment process.
- Throughout the engagement period, we saw a high-level of community participation across 19 diverse engagement activities, hearing from a total of 544 people at in-person and online events across Canberra.
- In addition to the engagement activities, Canberrans contributed 149 quick comments via the YourSay website. Detailed feedback on the reforms was also received through nearly 400 online surveys and 76 written submissions from individuals, community groups, and industry bodies.
- From the nine pop-up events we held across the city, over 70 per cent of participants across all locations were in favour of the reforms.
- Key themes that have arisen from the [review of](#) feedback so far includes:
  - support for diverse housing types that suit different life stages, improve affordability, and promote vibrant communities;
  - support for efficient land use and alternatives to urban sprawl;
  - a strong desire for subdivision resulting in separately titled dwellings, rather than unit titled dwellings;
  - a desire to see infrastructure delivery, such as community facilities and transport, coordinated with greater housing density, as assurance any impacts on amenity, such as traffic, ~~neighborhood~~ neighbourhood character, solar access and privacy, will be managed; and
  - how financial and taxation settings will interact with the viability of new missing middle type developments.
- The feedback provided at the engagement sessions, as well as through surveys and written submissions, will directly shape the final planning reforms, and inform changes to the Territory Plan, which sets out what can be built in each land zone in the ACT. It will also guide the final version of the Missing Middle Housing Design Guide, which will ensure new homes are well-designed, sustainable and respects local character.

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- It is expected that the changes to the Territory Plan proposed through the draft Major Plan Amendment and any associated documents will be complete in late 2025 for referral to the Standing Committee. The Major Plan Amendment is likely to take affect in late 2026.
- A listening report will be released on the YourSay website, which summarises what we heard during the engagement period. This will accompany a comprehensive consultation report that will provide a more detailed analysis of the themes raised from both community and key industry and community stakeholder groups.

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## YourSay Data – 18 August 2025

	Views	Visitors	Contributions			
			Survey	Quick Comment	Poll	Written Submissions
<b>Total Data</b>	<b>29,435</b>	<b>16,053</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>76</b>

## Engagement Events – 18 August 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	3
	Listening Space – Belconnen	-	41
	Pop-up – Woden		51
	Pop – up – Tuggeranong	-	42
1 July	Belconnen Community Workshop	35	27
3 July	Online Listening Space – Missing Middle	3	0
<b>Total attendance</b>			<b>544</b>

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# Major Territory Plan Amendments

## Talking points

### Approved by the Minister

<u>Draft Plan Amendment (DPA)MPA</u>	<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
<p><u>DPA-01 - Fraser Primary School Expansion</u>  (government initiated)</p>	<p><u>This amendment proposes rezoning</u> 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><u>DPA-01 was approved on 3 June 2025 and was tabled on 24 June 2025. If no motions are moved to disallow during the 2-4 September sitting period, the MPA will be able to commence.</u></p> <p><u>Public consultation:</u> 9 Dec 2024 to 21 Feb 2025 (<u>1 submission received</u>)-</p> <p><u>Submissions Received: 1</u></p> <p><u>Next Steps:</u> DPA-01 was notified on 3 June 2025: <b><u>2025-286.PDF</u></b>.</p>
<p><u>DPA-02 - Ainslie Football and Social Club</u>  (proponent-initiated)</p>	<p><u>Rezoning northern parts of Section 26 Ainslie from Restricted PR22 (Restricted Access Recreation) to both RZ5 High Density Residential and CZ5 Mixed Use.</u></p>	<p><u>DPA-02 was approved on 21 August 2025 after the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning and Transport and City Service notified the Minister of their decision to not report into DPA-02 on 30 June 2025.</u></p> <p><u>Public consultation:</u> 2 Dec 2024 to 3 Feb 2025 (147 submissions received; late submissions were accepted until 14 Feb 2025)</p> <p><u>Petitions:</u> Two petitions (E-PET-018-25 and PET PET-023-25) were received requesting the Legislative Assembly to refer DPA-02 to</p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 30/07/202522/08/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703

Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670

Lead Directorate: City and Environment

Draft Plan Amendment (DPA) MPA	Proposed Change	Current Status
		<a href="#">the Standing Committee to undertake a full public inquiry, including public hearings.</a>

### Recommended to the Minister

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
<p><u>Revised DPA-B - Forrest Section 19 Blocks 5,6, 9, 11 and 12</u></p> <p>(proponent-initiated for blocks 5, 6, 9, 11 and Authority-initiated for block 12)</p>	<p><u>This draft amendment proposes rezoning</u> 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><u>Revised DPA-B, and consultation report, was referred by the Minister to the Standing Committee on 16 July 2025.</u></p> <p><u>The Standing Committee decided to conduct an Inquiry. Their report is due 18 January 2026.</u></p> <p><u>Public consultation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>1<sup>st</sup> round: 6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024 (15 submissions received)</u></li> <li>• <u>2<sup>nd</sup> round: 7 March 2025 to 22 April 2025 (15 submissions received; the Authority accepted late public submissions until 6 May 2025 in response to representations to extend the public consultation timeframe).</u> <b><u>1st Round Public Consultation:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024.</u></li> <li>• <b><u>1st Round Submissions Received: 15</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>2nd Round Public Consultation:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>7 March 2025 to 22 April 2025.</u></li> <li>• <b><u>2nd Round Submissions Received: 15</u></b> 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.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><u>Next Steps:</u></b> <u>The Authority is considering public consultation comments on revised</u></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 30/07/2025 22/08/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703

Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670

Lead Directorate: City and Environment

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
		<p><del>DPA-B. Consultation comments will be summarised in a consultation report. Revised DPA-B (which may contain changes resulting from consultation) will be presented to the Standing Committee.</del></p> <p><u>Revised DPA-B</u></p> <p>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 <del>the</del> <u>the</u> second round of public consultation.</p>
<p><del>DPA-C - Watson Section 95 Block 3 (proponent-initiated)</del></p>	<p><del>This amendment rezones Watson Section 95 Block 3 from Commercial CZ6 (Leisure and Accommodation) to Residential RZ4 Medium Density Residential.</del></p>	<p><del><u>Public Consultation:</u> 6 September 2024 to 21 October 2024.</del></p> <p><del><u>Submissions Received:</u> 5</del></p> <p><del><u>Next Steps:</u> 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.</del></p>
<p><del>DPA-02 - Ainslie Football and Social Club (proponent-initiated)</del></p>	<p><del>This amendment proposes rezoning northern parts of Section 26 Ainslie from Restricted PRZ2 (Restricted Access Recreation) to both</del></p>	<p><del><u>Public consultation:</u> 2 Dec 2024 to 3 Feb 2025. Late submissions were accepted until 14 Feb 2025.</del></p> <p><del><u>Submissions Received:</u> 147</del></p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: ~~30/07/2025~~ 22/08/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703

Contact Officer name: Brad Maxwell Ext: 57670

Lead Directorate: City and Environment

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
	<p><del>RZ5 High Density Residential and CZ5 Mixed Use.</del></p>	<p><del><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.</del></p> <p><del>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.</del></p> <p><del>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.</del></p>

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 Lead Directorate: City and Environment

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
<p><u>DPA-03 - Holt Aged Care, Section 74</u> (proponent-initiated)</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 <u>has prepared a consultation report and revised DPA for my consideration. It was referred is-considering public consultation comments on DPA-03. 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 who on 18 August 2025 decided not to undertake an Inquiry.</u></p> <p><u>The Standing Committee requested a briefing on DPA03. Directorate officials will meet to the Standing Committee on 11 September 2025.</u></p> <p><u>The Standing Committee has 15 working days to decide if it will undertake an inquiry and report.</u></p>

### Closed for consultation

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
<p><u>DPA-04 – Missing Middle Housing Reform</u> (<u>Authority-initiated</u>)</p>	<p><u>This amendment proposes</u> <u>€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.</u></p>	<p><u>The Authority is considering public comments in the context of the broader missing middle project that is undergoing public engagement during the same timeframe as consultation on DPA-04. This may result in revisions to DPA-04 before it is recommended to the Minister.</u></p> <p><u>Public consultation: 20 May 2025 to 22 July 2025 and written submissions <del>will be</del> <u>were</u> accepted until 5 August 2025.</u></p>

Cleared as complete and accurate: 30/07/202522/08/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 79703

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Lead Directorate: City and Environment

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
		<del>Next Steps: 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.</del>
<u>DPA-05 – Future urban area overlay (including Block 403 Stromlo and par Block 12 Section 2 Denman Prospect (Bluetts Block))</u> <u>(Authority-initiated)</u>	<del>This amendment proposes to</del> 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).	<u>The Authority is considering public comments and may result in revisions DPA-05 before it is recommended to the Minister.</u>  <u>Public consultation: 30 June 2025 to 11 August 2025 (7 submissions received)</u>  <del>Next Steps: The Authority is preparing DPA-05. It is anticipated that the DPA will be placed on public consultation by the end of June 2025.</del>

### Applications under consideration by the Authority

<u>DPA</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
<u>DPA-07 Braddon Bowls Club – Block 16 Section 25 Braddon</u> <u>(proponent-initiated)</u>	<u>Rezone a portion of the site from CZ6 Leisure and Accommodation to RZ4 Medium Density Residential.</u>	<u>On 1 August 2025 the Authority accepted the proponent’s application for an MPA.</u>  <u>The Authority are currently preparing a DPA for public consultation. It is anticipated the DPA will be released for public consultation in September 2025.</u>
<u>Thoroughbred Park</u> <u>(proponent-initiated) – under consideration)</u>	Rezone the Thoroughbred Park site from NUZ1 (Broadacre) to a mixture a number of zones including high density residential, services zoning, mixed use,	The Authority is considering the MPA request. It is identified as a category 2 change area in the Inner North and City District Strategy.

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	urban open space and broadacre.	
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Lead Directorate: City and Environment

# 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 City and Environment 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	19/06/2025	
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Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	

- A draft [Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment \(EBSA\)](#) was submitted to the Commonwealth for review and endorsement in April 2024. The Commonwealth provided substantive comments on the draft EBSA report. [In reviewing these comments and considering the next steps to finalise the EBSA, the ACT Government is currently reviewing these comments and considering next steps. It is now undertaking the following additional studies:](#)
  - [Time-critical striped legless lizard surveys for Eastern Broadacre from August 2025; and](#)
  - [Is currently procuring an expert to finalise the EBSA, including the Strategic Assessment Report and Supplementary Report, remaining surveys and future statutory public engagement activities on the draft report.](#)

#### *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 have 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.

#### Northern Gateway – Watson/Downer Change Areas and Thoroughbred Park Precinct

- The ACT Government are undertaking planning work across multiple sites within the Northern Gateway across Watson, Downer and Lyneham. This seeks to implement the objectives of the Inner North and City District Strategy.

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- The areas being considered as part of this work include parts of Downer and Watson adjacent to Northbourne Avenue and the Federal Highway and the Thoroughbred Park Precinct, comprising of the Thoroughbred Park racecourse, Canberra Equine Hospital, Canberra Vet Hospital and Pony Club sites.
- The Thoroughbred Park Precinct is being considered as part of this work with context of an application for a proponent-initiated major plan amendment (MPA) that was lodged for just the Thoroughbred Park site (Block 9 Section 69 Lyneham). The Territory Planning Authority are still considering this proponent-initiated MPA application in accordance with the requirements under the *Planning Act 2023*.
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# 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-June](#) quarter 2025 data from Colliers shows that between now and 2030, the private sector is anticipated to contribute an estimated **9,5009,200** 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 [in the new housing segment of the market](#) remain subdued in the ACT as high cost of living and high mortgage interest rates continue to affect consumer confidence. The [50-basis75-basis](#) points interest rate cut by the RBA [in since](#) February [and May](#) 2025 is expected to fuel consumer confidence and lift activity in the housing market [going forward](#).
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that total value of 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-December](#) quarter [2024](#), the number of dwelling commencements [increased](#) by [50.0171.2](#) per cent to [410724](#) commencements in the [December-March](#) quarter 2025. [However, this and](#) was [67.824](#) per cent lower than its level in the [December-March](#) quarter 2024.
- There were [867-915](#) new dwellings approved but not yet commenced construction in the [December-March](#) quarter 2025, [an decrease](#) of [6.824.1](#) per cent from the [September-December](#) quarter 2024 [and but](#) [28.950.9](#) per cent lower than its level a year ago. This indicates construction activity has [not](#) moved to dwelling commencement phase.
- [1,644509](#) new dwellings were completed in the [March](#) quarter [2025](#), [an decrease](#) of [69.269.7](#) per cent from the [September-December](#) quarter 2024 and [19.358.4](#) per cent [higher-lower](#) than the [December-March](#) quarter 2024.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [19/06/202521/08/2025](#)

Cleared for public release by: [Executive Branch](#)  
[Manager Executive Group](#)  
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Contact Officer name:

Natalia Guzman

Ext: 78422

Lead Directorate:

City and Environment

- 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-higher than the ACT’s population growth of 1.4 per cent (as at 31 December 2024).

*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  
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# 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~~[City and Environment Directorate \(EPSDDCED\)](#) 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: [06/06/2025](#)[21/08/2025](#)

Cleared for public release by: [Executive Branch](#)  
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Portfolio/s: Planning and Sustainable Development

# Crown lease provision/ Richardson Shops

## Talking points

- I am aware that the Richardson Shops is boarded up, and currently not being used.
- The shop site is privately leased and is the responsibility of the lessee.
- It is the ACT Government's understanding that the lessee is experiencing difficulties securing a tenant.
- It is open for the lessee to submit a development application (DA) to the Authority for another development, subject to the provisions of the Territory Plan.
- Access Canberra [has investigated the matter and](#) will progress discussions with the owner of the Richardson Shops to pursue potential compliance pathways.
- The ACT Government is also looking for opportunities for the other surrounding sites to assist with revitalising the shopping centre.

## Key information

- The site is privately leased and is currently vacant.
- Access Canberra is currently liaising with the lessee.

## Background information

- The Richardson shops (Block 4 Section 454 Richardson) is currently vacant and is privately leased.
- The Crown lease was granted to Michalis Holdings Pty Limited for a term commencing on 16 February 1989 and terminating on 21 February 2082.
- The Crown lease permits the use of 'retail and/or personal services'.
- The existing building that is currently located on the site was constructed in 1984 with parking to the front of the building, on Clift Crescent, and service parking to the rear.
- Block 4 Section 454 Richardson is located in the CZ4 Local Centre Zone.
- The Territory Plan identifies a number of assessable uses for this zone under the Land Use Table in the E02 – Commercial Zones Policy.
- Access Canberra have been investigating the state of these shops since September 2023.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 29/08/2025  
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Lead Directorate: City and Environment  
TRIM Ref:

- There are currently no active DAs relating to this site.

# Manuka Cinema Development

## Talking points

- A development application (DA202038142) was conditionally approved by the Territory Planning Authority (DA-202038142) on 21 July 2021 for a commercial development comprising demolition of the existing building and construction of a 6-storey hotel, cinemas, commercial building, basement car parking and associated works included five cinemas in the proposal for the Capitol Theatre Manuka site.
- Plans endorsed as part of the development approval indicated five cinemas.
- Since the approval, there has been two amendment applications in 2022 and 2023.
- The amendments were in relation to the Crown Lease and amongst other things, to change the maximum gross floor size in relation to the cinema.
- To date there have been no amendments the approved plans for to the development approval to reduce the number of theatres. The reduction to the number of theatres has been revised through the construction process.
- Access Canberra is aware of the matter and is reviewing the matter to determine whether an amendment to the development approval is required.
- It is open for the applicant to submit an amendment throughout any stage prior to completion of the development.

## Key information

- Information on the development application DA-202038142 can be found at [Browse DAs webpage](#)
- Documents lodged and stamped plans are available for review upon request by contacting Access Canberra Customer Services - [ACEPDcustomerservices@act.gov.au](mailto:ACEPDcustomerservices@act.gov.au)

## Background information

- The development application DA-202038142 was approved by the Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) on 21 July 2021 and included five cinemas in the proposal. Since the approval, two amendment applications have been made to the development to, among other things, reduce the maximum floor sizes allocated for cinema use. The Authority approved the amendments in 2022 and 2023.

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Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	
TRIM Ref:		

- The second amendment, approved in June 2023, reduced the GFA permitted to be used by cinemas to 630sqm.
- An area plan submitted in support of the second amendment application demonstrated that it would still be possible to include four cinemas within 630sqm. However, the approved drawings for the development as such have not been amended to reduce the number of theatres.
- As for the amendments, pursuant to S198B of the Planning and Development Act 2007, the authority waived the requirement to publicly notify the amendment of the development approval.
- This site is a privately leased site and any changes or amendments to the development are at the discretion of the lessee. If an amendment was lodged to reduce the number of cinemas, the Authority has the discretion to publicly notify the amendment application.
- Amendments that substantially change the development as approved are generally subjected to public notification.
- The Access Canberra Compliance Assessment Team undertook inspections for the purposes of the compliance with the Building Approval and National Construction Code requirements for the site in July 2024 and March 2025. If they deem that the reduction of cinemas is not exempt, any amendment to the development approval required for compliance will need to be undertaken prior to issue of the Certificate of Occupancy and Use for the site.



# 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~~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.
- [Since the commencement of the scheme, there has been 643 registrations and a further 204 notifications under Automatic Mutual Recognition.](#)

### Trade Licensing

Cleared as complete and accurate:	22/08/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 77387
Contact Officer name:	James Bennett	Ext: 54877
Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	

- 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.

#### 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 ([AMR](#)) 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~~ [1 July 2025](#).
- [The declaration was signed on 17 June 2025. The Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, along with the Chief Minister, determined that the ongoing risks posed to the ACT unique demerit point scheme must be addressed prior to opening AMR to construction occupations.](#)
- [The Significant Risk Exemption does not prevent ACT licence holders utilising AMR to work interstate where that jurisdiction does not have a Significant Risk Exemption.](#)
- 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.
- [Both the ACT Government and local industry stakeholders support establishing an AMR pathway for construction occupations, provided it does not compromise regulatory integrity or construction quality outcomes.](#)

#### Developer Licensing and Regulation

- ~~We have taken significant steps in the regulation of property developers. The *Property Developers Act 2024* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2024 and parts of the Act commenced on 11 July 2024.~~
- ~~The Act applies to residential building projects with 3 or more dwellings. It does not apply to single dwellings and dual occupancies.~~
- ~~Developers will be able to apply for licences from October 1, 2025, as part of a one-year transition period. It will be mandatory to hold a licence from October of the following year.~~
- ~~Costs will include a one-off application fee of \$1000; an annual licence term fee, also \$1000; an activity-based fee when the building approval stage is reached, at \$500 per residential dwelling; and a fee to vary a licence at \$500.~~

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
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- ~~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.~~

### National electrical licensing

- The ACT Government has been engaging with the Commonwealth regarding its approach to the National Occupational Licensing Scheme for electrical trades.
- The Commonwealth has circulated a draft issues paper concerning a national approach to electrical licensing.
- Collaborating across multiple government agencies, including departments responsible for building policy, regulation, licensing, and economic policy, the ACT has reviewed and provided collective feedback on the draft issues paper.
- Our feedback includes:
  - Addressing misrepresentations of the ACT landscape concerning Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) and engagement with the East Coast Electrical Scheme
  - Requesting clarification around the problem statement
  - Seeking additional information on the context and previous challenges of National Occupational Licensing
  - Emphasising the importance of uniformity at the entry point for licensing, such as qualification requirements

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 77387  
Contact Officer name: James Bennett Ext: 54877  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

# Loose Fill Asbestos

## Talking points

- As of ~~31 July~~ 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


- The ACT Government will continue to consider compulsory acquisition on a case-by-case basis. At this time, none of the small number of remaining affected properties are being actively considered for compulsory acquisition. The next formal review point for this decision will be in 2027.
- ~~Notwithstanding, while not the preferred option, the ACT Government acknowledges it may need to undertake compulsory acquisition of any affected properties remaining privately owned.~~

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/06/202521/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch  
Manager Executive Group  
Manager

Ext: 5035170224

Contact Officer name: Madeleine Orbulove  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

Ext: 72182

- 
- 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.



Add reference number

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

Choose a Portfolio

# Namadgi Huts – decision not to rebuild

## Talking points

### Management considerations

- The ACT Government will not proceed with building new shelters near Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut.
- This decision reflects a strategic shift in focus toward conserving the remaining historic huts and ruins across the Namadgi National Park, many of which are under increasing threat from climate change (more frequent and intense fires) and natural deterioration.

### Decision points

- I relied on advice from the ACT Heritage Council and ACT Parks and Conservation Service in making my decision and have not set a timeframe on when the works will be completed although I anticipate it will be towards the end of the 2026 calendar year.
- I am aware of the YourSay feedback from the community and note that between 722-732 respondents supported rebuilding the huts and that 50% of respondents were from outside the ACT. The respondents were not aware of the ACT Heritage Council advice that the huts should not be rebuilt on the site of the ruins. The KHA position was very clear, and I did not consult further with them before making my decision.
- No advice was sought from Ministers on whether they agreed the huts should be rebuilt or not. Rather, it asked them to note that consultation would occur on a developed proposal for reconstruction of the huts.
- The prioritisation of other works in Namadgi, including preservation of the remaining huts, with limited funds available was a factor in making my decision.

### Funding (If asked):

- The Territory received an aggregated negotiated insurance settlement for the damages incurred in the 2019/20 bushfires and a subsequent flood event.
- The ACT Government will prioritise funding towards items covered by insurance and protected under relevant legislation.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 27/08/2025

Cleared for public release by:

Executive Branch Manager

Ext:x71831/MS Teams

Contact Officer name:

Charlie Stephenson

Ext:MS Teams

Lead Directorate:

City and Environment

TRIM Ref:

## Key information

- Namadgi National Park is home to 21 heritage sites associated with the region's pastoral history, seven of which are ACT Heritage-listed stockman's huts. Conservation works to improve the resilience of the remaining huts and other built heritage in Namadgi is a priority.
- Key considerations in the decision to no proceed with rebuilding the huts included:
  - ACT Heritage Council's recommendation to focus on the remaining huts and other important heritage sites, including Aboriginal cultural sites.
  - Pressing need to repair and improve the fire resilience of the remaining huts and other heritage in Namadgi National Park.
  - These huts are in areas of high bushfire risk, where protection during a fire is extremely challenging.
  - Demanding Hut is close to Horse Gully Hut (a 15-minute walk away) which is significantly more popular.
  - Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut is in a remote location, rarely visited, and not on an established walking route.
  - Namadgi huts are managed for their heritage value, not as back country shelters or emergency refuges.
  - Both huts can still be commemorated through high-quality interpretation.
  - Costs associated with investigation, planning, approvals, development, access, maintenance, staffing, insurance, and bushfire mitigation measures.
- The Government will invest in:
  - Research, conservation and interpretation of Demanding hut and Max and Bert's hut ruins and managing the ruins in situ.
  - Updating Conservation Management Plans for the Stockman's Huts heritage sites, to guide conservation efforts and ensure that heritage values are protected in a strategic and informed manner.
  - Undertake maintenance and repairs on the remaining huts.
- Full delivery of all works required to protect the existing huts and heritage associated with the pastoral history is expected to take several years.

## Background information

- In January 2020, the Orroral Valley fire destroyed Demanding Hut (built c.1945) and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut (built c.1967) located in Namadgi National Park.
- Both huts are listed on the ACT Heritage Register as part of the "Stockmen's Huts in Namadgi National Park" registration, along with five other huts and are therefore subject to Heritage Act 2004 provisions. All huts are significant for their association with high country pastoralism.

- The 2010 Namadgi National Park Plan of Management sets out that where culturally significant buildings are severely damaged or destroyed, decisions regarding restoration, reconstruction or replacement shall follow the Burra Charter principles and advice from the ACT Heritage Council (the Council).
- On 8 April 2021, following receipt of a heritage report from the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) documenting the condition of both huts and available management options informed by a heritage specialist, Council delegate advice was issued with the following position:
  - The condition of each hut does not allow for 'restoration' – as defined by the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 2013) – given the extent of fire damage and the loss of significant fabric.
  - While Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut were good examples of their type, four other examples of this type remain in Namadgi National Park, and these huts continue to demonstrate this aspect of the ACT's pastoral history.
  - Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut should be managed in situ as ruins with on-site heritage interpretation, as this approach would continue to express the significant association of both places with ACT high country pastoralism.
  - Replica hut constructions at each site were not supported, as new construction could damage remaining significant fabric, could damage the surrounding archaeological features and deposits, and could confuse the historical understanding and heritage significance of each place.
  - A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) should be prepared for the remaining Stockman's Huts, to guide their necessary conservation and responsible management

# 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.
- A development application supporting the demolition of the old visitors information centre has been lodged, with a notice of decision expected in the coming months.
- ~~The demolition works are expected to be completed/commence in the second half of 2025 by the end of this year, pending DA approval of the development application.~~
- while demolition and site remediation is expected to be completed by mid-2026

### Master plan Planning For a New Visitors Centre at Tidbinbilla

- The 2023/24 budget provided funding over 2 years to refine the scope and options for a new visitors centre at Tidbinbilla.
- ~~The ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) is currently progressing this work that considers the functional needs and requirements of a new visitors centre in the broader context, requirements and needs of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. 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 public consultation and detailed Options Analysis with via a consultant led survey the public (focussing on what type of visitor centre would be desirable), as well as targeted consultation with key representatives from user and stakeholder groups, PCS staff and the Ngunnawal community about a potential new location for a new visitor's centre. Further consultation is required, however this location has yet to be formally endorsed.
- There are wide ranging considerations for potential new visitor centre. This includes staff and visitor needs, location, infrastructure requirements, cultural and educational perspectives, and cost.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 12/06/2025 31/07/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager

Ext: 78628

Contact Officer name:

Luke Halls

Ext: [REDACTED]

Lead Directorate:

City and Environment

TRIM Ref:

~~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 artifacts and objects from the impacts of natural disasters.~~

### 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 visitors centre will also remain operational while the demolition works occur.
- Thee temporary visitor centre has Wi-Fi, accessible public toilets, drinks, snacks and ice creams and other amenities to facilitate critical visitor services for the foreseeable future while planning for a new permanent visitor centre is underway.

## Key information

- ~~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 information

- 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.



# Wildlife Injuries

## Talking points

### Urban Wildlife program

- 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.
- PCS Rangers attend animal-vehicle collisions across Canberra. There were 4,464 callouts attended by PCS for vehicle collisions with animals during the 2024-25 financial year. This is an increase from 3,864 call outs during the last financial year.
- There is no definitive reason for this, but the ACT environment in 2025 is drier than it was in 2024, which has resulted in reduced vegetation growth compared to recent years. Kangaroos are likely to increase their home range in dry periods when grass growth is reduced.
- During winter, there can be an increase in collisions due to higher traffic numbers coinciding with animal movements at dawn and dusk low light conditions. Kangaroos may also be more frequently observed near roadsides as road drainage promotes extra growth of grasses.
- If you see an injured kangaroo at any time of the year, please call Access Canberra on 13 22 81 and a Ranger will attend as soon as possible. Rangers are available during business hours and after hours to help and will attend as soon as they are able.

### 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.
- 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
Contact Officer name: Charles Stephenson  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

## Key information

### PCS Urban Wildlife Program

- The Urban Wildlife Program supports Rangers to attend to wildlife welfare issues, predominately injured kangaroos. 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.
- 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.
- PCS 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.
- Staff are licensed to discharge firearms and 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

- 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 information

- 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 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.



Add reference number

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

Choose a Portfolio

# Woodlands and Wetlands Trust

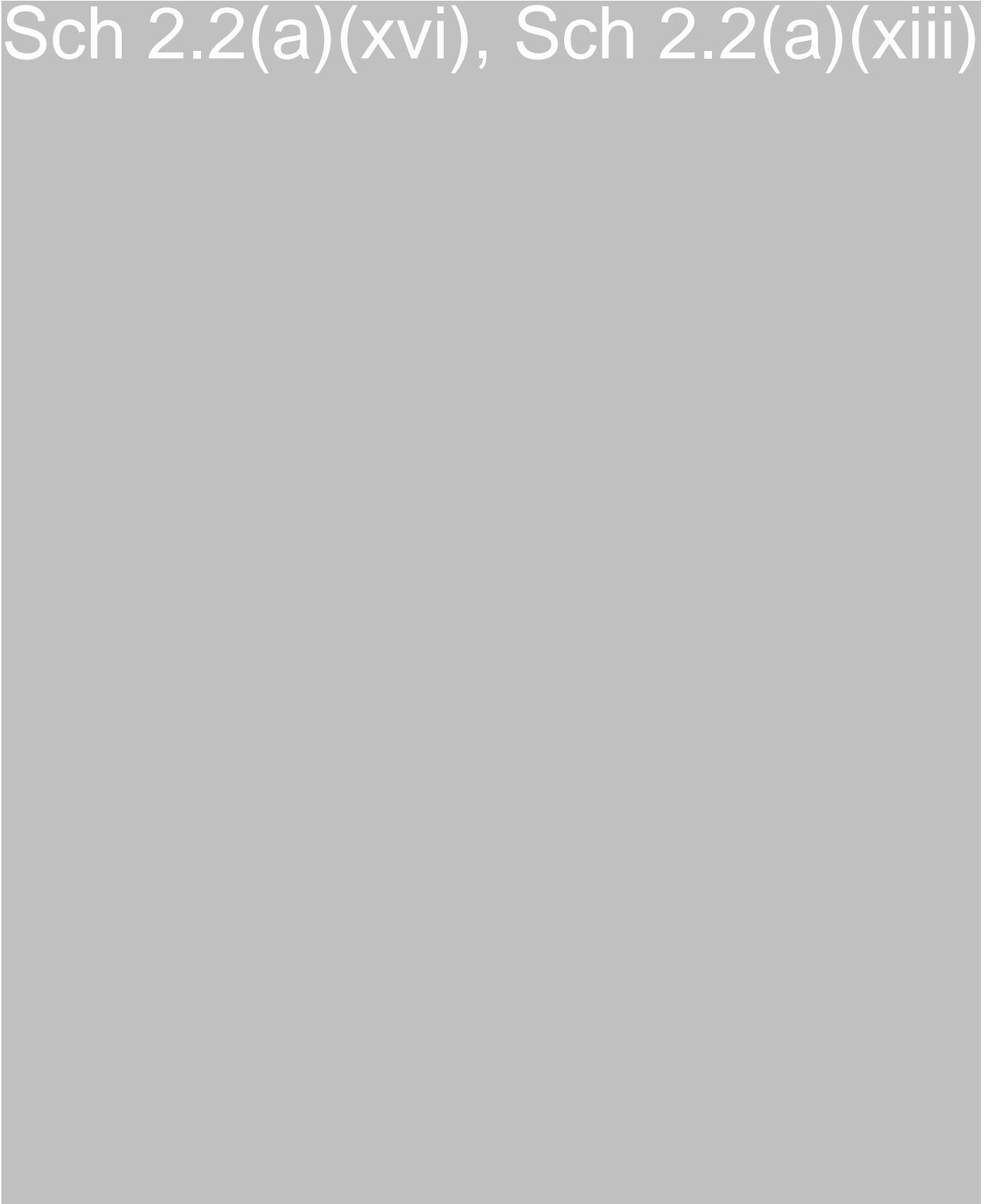
## Talking points

- Government is committed to the success of the Mulligans Flat - Gorooyaroo Sanctuary (The Sanctuary) as a thriving grassy woodland that brings together nature, community, culture and education.
- Over the past 20 years the Sanctuary has made significant achievements through its conservation programs and community outreach. This includes the re-introduction of species lost to endangered Box-Gum Grassy Woodland including Eastern Bettongs, Eastern Quolls and Bush stone-curlews.
- We are currently reviewing arrangements with our two partners, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and the Australian National University.

Sch 2.2(a)(xvi), Sch 2.2(a)(xiii)

Cleared as complete and accurate:	28/08/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Branch Manager	Ext:71831/MS Teams
Contact Officer name:	Charlie Stephenson	Ext:MSTeams
Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	
TRIM Ref:		

# Sch 2.2(a)(xvi), Sch 2.2(a)(xiii)



# Prescribed Burn Program

## Talking points

### Prescribed Burns

- Throughout Spring, the [ACT](#) Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) will continue to conduct smaller hazard reduction and ecological burns across Canberra, subject to suitable weather and site conditions.
- Planned prescribed burns, pending conditions, include: Gungahlin Eucalypts, Hall, Gubur Dhaura, McQuiods Hill, Pine Island, Denman/Bluetts, Mount Taylor, and Stromlo (Old Cotter Depot).
- Prescribed burns help to reduce biomass, promote new growth, reduce bushfire risks and heal country. While smoke is an unavoidable by product, PCS actively manages operations to minimise public impact.
- In addition to burning, PCS continues regular hazard reduction activities such as mowing, slashing, physical removal and grazing to prepare for the 2025–26 fire season.
- ~~It is too early to forecast the severity of the upcoming bushfire season. However, the Bureau of Meteorology predicts slightly above average rainfall and warmer than average temperatures in Canberra from September to November.~~

### Deployments to Canada

- Due to severe fire conditions in Canada, Australian firefighters have been deployed to assist. The ACT contributed 20 personnel to Alberta, including 15 from PCS, on a cost-recovery basis.
- ACT firefighters returned on 31 July. An additional 4 Incident Management specialists [from the ACT \(2two from PCS\)](#) were deployed to Manitoba in early August and are scheduled to return on 17 September. These deployments offer valuable experience in managing large-scale and complex wildfires.

### 2025-26 Bushfire Season Preparations

- Preparation for the ~~2025-~~26 bushfire season and prescribed burn season is on track.
- Seasonal fire fighters commenced employment Monday 1st September and all fire-trained staff are currently undertaking their annual fitness assessment and mandatory refreshers.
- It is too early to forecast the severity of the upcoming bushfire season. However, the Bureau of Meteorology predicts slightly above-average rainfall and warmer than average temperatures in Canberra from September to November.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	29/08/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
Contact Officer name:	Nicolas Daines	Ext: <span style="background-color: grey; color: grey;">          </span>
Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	

- 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](https://parks.act.gov.au) website and adopt the bushfire and storm-ready advice of the Emergency Services Agency (ESA).

### 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.
- All of our PCS managed parks and reserves, including areas of Namadgi National Park, are accessible to fire fighting and maintenance vehicles. We are assessing and prioritising maintenance works, and some known repairs required on minor trails, as part of routine fire season preparation.
- The public is encouraged to check for local or temporary closures via parks.act.gov.au before visiting, as road conditions can change rapidly due to weather events.

### 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 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. The BOP for 2025-26 is currently undergoing internal consultation and is scheduled to be submitted to the Emergency Services Commissioner for approval in October.
- 2024-25 BOP completion was 88 per cent (2 per cent below the target rate). Following the 2024-25 prescribed burn program, the residual risk to the community was reduced from 37% to 31% is calculated to be 34 per cent, which is a an even stronger result than the target band of 35-45-33% - 47% per cent outlined in the Regional Fire Management Plan 2019-2028. Residual risk modelling is currently being calculated based on the work conducted during 2024-25, but early indications are it will remain within or below the target band.



- ~~Urge the Canberra community to continue to keep up to date with park closures and other notifications available on the [parks.act.gov.au](https://parks.act.gov.au) website and adopt the bushfire and storm-ready advice of the Emergency Services Agency (ESA).~~

# Invasive Animals~~Insert Brief~~ ~~title here~~

## 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 47,700 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.~~

### General~~invasive animals~~

Cleared as complete and accurate:	17/07/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 71831
Contact Officer name:	Luke Halls	Ext: 77112
Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	

- The Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) manages the impact of invasive pest animals this includes through controlling rabbits, ~~feral horses~~, feral pigs, foxes, feral deer, feral horses 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 several ACT conservation areas, with and Rob Roy being is currently the most recent the only known population within the ACT.
- ~~{Feral goats do occur at Googong Foreshores}.~~

#### • Thermally Assisted Aerial Control

- ~~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.
- A Spring program is being planned.

~~The 2025 TAAC program concluded on the 30 May 2025.~~

~~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 this year's 2025 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

- Rabbits pose a serious risk to the ACT's environment. If left uncontrolled, rabbits will degrade ecosystems leading to environmental devastation.
- ~~In the 2023-24 2024-25 ACT Budget, the Ggovernment increased provided further investment towards rabbit its investment in rabbit control. This has resulted in a significant increase in control action across the ACT. control which seeks to~~
- ~~Control programs aim to~~ keep rabbit numbers at levels where impacts are minimal.
- ~~Over the past 12 months, PCS has implemented Rabbit control programs have been implemented control programs~~ throughout Canberra Nature Park, Namadgi National Park and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.
- ~~Urban rabbit control programs have also been undertaken at 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. Control, with control action will continue~~ across all urban sites throughout 2025.
- ~~14 reserves and 12 urban sites have received rabbit control action as part this year's program. This control involved the~~
- ~~fumigation of 6,219 burrows, ripping (collapsing warrens), and the removal of an estimated 2,225 rabbit through targeted ground shooting.~~
- ~~The Parks and Conservation Services is working~~
  - 
  -
- ~~collaborative with the CSIRO, contributing carcasses to support their ongoing research into biological control methods. This partnership strengthens the scientific foundation of our management efforts and ensures our programs remain informed by the latest research.~~
- ~~With funding now secured for continued control, we are currently in the planning phase for the next 12 months of programs, tailored to each site and land tenure.~~
- ~~The Government EPSDD is using 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.
- ~~Rabbit control Oo~~ operations are listed on the City and Environments 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 ~~were have been~~ captured, overtaking the 2023 total by 733. A further update on trapping outcomes is expected in April 202~~6~~5.
- 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 triaged to ensure there is no need to collect further information to investigate. Requests are then ~~it is~~ prioritised based on various factors such as location, public safety, and 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.



# Invasive Weeds ~~sert~~ Brief title here

## 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.~~
- ~~In the 2024/2025 financial year, There has been 10.47,700k ha of plant control work done so far this year was completed.~~ The main species controlled ~~in 2024/25 has were been~~ St John's Wort, Serrated Tussock, African lovegrass and Blackberry.
- ~~Efforts to manage invasive species in the ACT's parks and reserves continues. Monitoring data guides where and how we act.~~
- ~~Weed mapping and surveillance helps prioritize control efforts, ensuring resources target high-risk areas. This data-driven approach improves response times and supports more effective, targeted management.~~
- ~~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 the amount of herbicide use. This is evident in the Rrecently ~~the PCS staff efforts using a~~ 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 17/07/2025~~27/08/2025~~

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 71831

Contact Officer name: Luke Halls Ext: 77112

Lead Directorate: City and Environment

- 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 prioritised d funding of projects that control invasive weeds to benefit ecosystem and biodiversity functions and encourage projects adjacent to areas of high conservation value.

## Regular communication and collaboration

- ~~City and Environment Directorate PCS Invasive Plants Team and City Services Specialist Weeds Team staff~~ maintain ongoing dialogue with PCS through meetings, emails, and informal updates. This ensures timely sharing of weed-related intelligence, seasonal priorities, and operational challenges, helping both teams stay aligned across rural, ~~and~~ urban and nature reserve landscapes.
- Both teams utilise a common spatial platform to record and view weed treatment data. PCS ~~Rangers, select~~ City Services staff, and volunteers use this tool to identify treated and untreated areas, enabling coordinated planning, reducing duplication, and supporting strategic prioritisation of weed control efforts.

## Complementary but distinct management objectives:

- The formation of the City and Environment Directorate will provide strengthened opportunities for collaborate in weed management.
- PCS focuses on weed control for environmental conservation and asset protection in rural and natural areas with the goal of protecting threatened species and ecosystems and to stop the spread of invasive plants in-to sensitive natural environments.
- City Services approach weed management is prioritised with a social amenity lens, prioritising urban aesthetics, public space maintenance and access, safety and community expectations.
- Weed infestations often span land managed by both areas requiring PCS-managed reserves and City Services-managed urban lands, requiring collaboration to ensure consistent treatment and management across boundaries.
- Both teams work together on high-risk species and shared areas of concern, they operate under different program timelines and funding arrangements, with separate budget sources aligned to their respective mandates and priorities.
- Both teams actively support and engage with community volunteers, often through joint initiatives or shared training. Volunteers benefit from access to the mapping tool and guidance from both PCS and City Services staff on priorities and goals. Our Volunteers significantly enhance the reach and effectiveness of weed control programs.
- ~~Despite operating under different frameworks,~~ PCS and City Services are exploring adaptive approaches to weed management. The sharing of insights on treatment methods, seasonal timing, and emerging threats ensure coordinated effort. This fosters a more adaptive and informed approach to managing invasive plants across the ACT landscape based on emerging risks and priorities.



# Gibraltar Falls and Woods Reserve

## Talking points

### Gibraltar Falls and Woods Reserve

- 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 has improved infrastructure at the site by installing a 1.5m high, 210m long fence along the walking track near the falls, upgrading the visitor warning signs and building an upgraded walking track from Woods Reserve to Gibraltar Falls.
- Gibraltar Falls carpark has also been closed. A new carpark for Gibraltar Falls visitors will be part of the Woods Reserve development to alleviate dangerous parking along Corin Road.
- Woods Reserve will close from 3 November 2025 to prepare for construction at the Woods Reserve campground to provide modern facilities for visitors. This work will also include expanding car park facilities to enable day visitation to Gibraltar Falls utilising the upgraded walking track.
- Until this redevelopment occurs, there is no dedicated day use area at Woods Reserve Campground for visitors to Gibraltar Falls.
- As a result, Gibraltar Falls is expected to reopen mid-late 2026, pending completion of Woods Reserve precinct redevelopment, that will enable appropriate visitor support infrastructure including parking and toilets.
- I appreciate the community's patience while these important safety measures are implemented.

### 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.
- A Development Application was successfully submitted on 10 June (DA 202544213 - 331/0 Paddy's River).
- The Request for Construction Tenders was also released on Tuesday, 24 July 2024. <https://www.tenders.act.gov.au/tender/view?id=292334>.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 27/08/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager

Ext: 71831/MS Teams

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Lead Directorate:

City and Environment

TRIM Ref:

- A construction contract is expected to be in place by the end of 2025, with construction works commencing in early 2026. Site closure of Woods Reserve is expected to occur by 1 November 2025 with demolition and early works of the campsite occurring ahead of construction.

## Key information

### Closure & Safety Review

- Gibraltar Falls was formally closed by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna in February 2023 under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 following two tragic deaths. A Coronial Investigation is still underway.
- A site safety review was completed in 2023 by expert design and behavioural consultants.
- Recommendations included improving safety infrastructure, closing the falls carpark, and shifting the visitor experience from passive to active recreation, where the falls is visited as part of a walk from Woods Reserve campground.

### Government Action in Response to the Safety Review

- Installed a 1.5m high, 210m long safety fence at the top of the falls.
- Constructed a new footbridge and installed new warning signage.
- Closed the Gibraltar Falls car park at the top of the falls.
- Constructing a new carpark, picnic area, and upgraded walking track from Woods Reserve to Gibraltar Falls.

### Woods Reserve Redevelopment

- ACT Government is investing \$3.6 million to redevelop the Woods Reserve campground to provide modern facilities for visitors.
- A redevelopment tender was released on 24 June 2025. The closing date has been extended to 12 August 2025 due to high interest, and pending a hydraulics package may be extended again.
- Woods Reserve will close from 3 November 2025 to prepare for construction.

### Road Safety Measures

- Historically, parking at Gibraltar Falls has been limited, resulting in visitors parking dangerously along Corin Road.
- The closure of the Gibraltar Falls carpark and construction of a new carpark for Gibraltar Falls visitors at Woods Reserve Campground will alleviate dangerous parking along Corin Road.
- ACT Roads installed temporary roadside barriers along Corin Road near Gibraltar Falls to prevent unsafe parking.
- Permanent roadside barriers will be installed in late 2025 as part of a broader ACT upgrade.
- Roadside signage has been upgraded in preparation to redirect visitors to Woods Reserve.

### Gibraltar Falls Reopening Timeline

- Redevelopment of the Woods Reserve precinct is specifically around refocusing visitation at “Gibraltar Falls Lookout” – to encourage the walk, and enjoy the day use facilities and interpretation. In terms of visitor messaging and behaviour it will be much clearer to open the Woods Reserve site with this new focus.
- Until this redevelopment occurs, there is no dedicated day use area at Woods Reserve Campground for visitors to Gibraltar Falls and very limited parking (8 dedicated car parks), which creates the potential for conflict with campers who pay to enjoy a peaceful, nature-based experience.

- Opening the Gibraltar Falls before this redevelopment is completed will encourage informal carparking in the campground and may increase risks to public safety, conflict between visitors, conflict with staff, and the potential for environmental damage.
- Furthermore, due to aging infrastructure, there is only one toilet block functioning at Woods Reserve (2 female, 1 male). An additional 100 – 200 Gibraltar Fall visitors per day using this facility during weekends, will place it under extreme pressure.
- As a result, Gibraltar Falls is expected to reopen mid-late 2026, pending completion of Woods Reserve precinct redevelopment, that will enable appropriate visitor support infrastructure including parking and toilets.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna will determine if the Gibraltar Falls precinct is suitable to be reopened.
- Updates are available on the Parks ACT website:  
<https://www.parks.act.gov.au/find-a-park/namadgi-national-park/gibraltar-falls>

## Background information

- Parking at Gibraltar Falls (11 spaces) has been a longstanding safety concern, with dangerous overflow parking along Corin Road during busy periods that previously required police intervention.
- Visitor data since 2021 shows around 30,000 annual visitors, with daily averages of 81 and peaks of up to 321. Weekends and holiday periods are the busiest.
- 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.



# Reduce your risk around waterways

## Talking points

### ACT Waterway Safety

- The ACT's waterways can be fun and attractive places to swim over the warmer months.
- The Government has worked to make popular areas for swimming safer through the instalment of safety signage, trialling safety equipment, and by improving sight lines and access to waterways.
- Despite safety these precautions it is recognised that the risks associate with swimming in the natural environment cannot be eliminated.
- Anyone 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 and those entering the water.
  - 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 Deaths

- 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	27/08/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 78628
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Lead Directorate:	City and Environment	

- 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 2024-25 Reduce Your Risk Around Waterways campaign commenced on 1 December 2024 and ran until 28 February 2025. The campaign achieved more than 7 million impressions and 5,845 clicks through our webpage on the ACT Parks and Conservation website.
- 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.
- City and Environment Directorate 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 ahead of summer 2025-26

### Key information

- 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 equipment (life buoys and emergency phones) are checked at least weekly. Two out of the 9 life rings have been lost, and a few instances of rings being used/moved. It is not known if this use was for emergency situations. The emergency phones (locked in to dial only triple

zero) have been subject to vandalism with one being replaced by Telstra and charged back to PCS as recently as early August.

- 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.
- An additional drowning death occurred at Uriarra West on the Murrumbidgee River on 8 February 2024.
- The most recent drowning death occurred at Pine Island Reserve in Greenway on 29 December 2024.
- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service will continue to collaborate with the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia (NSW/ACT/Tas region) on risk assessments for some sites in the ACT.
- Some additional on site works are being considered at sites that present a potential risk for swimming or accessing waterways and this will be informed by the RLSSA options
- 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 if funding is available through operational plans.
- The communications campaign is expected to cost around \$25 000 for 2025-26.
- 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.

# Parks and Reserves

## Talking points

### 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, 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 18/07/2025

Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager

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Lead Directorate: City and Environment

### **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.
- 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 and the opening will be linked to the works being undertake at Woods Reserve.
  - The Yankee Hat rock art precinct remains closed until post-fire renewal works are completed. Consultations with Traditional Custodians have now concluded, and ACT Heritage has approved the program of infrastructure renewal works. Works are expected to be completed by the first half of 2025 and a reopening later in 2025.

# Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (known publicly as the 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.
- The Government's focus for this term is to ensure that supports are available to help our community members become early beneficiaries of the transition from gas to electric.
- The Home Energy Support Scheme offers a range of financial and other support for Canberra’s most vulnerable households to replace inefficient appliances and improve thermal efficiency.
- Participating low-income households benefit from reduced energy costs and improved wellbeing.
- There are several streams of support available under the Scheme, including:
  - *Home Energy Support: Rebates for Homeowners Program* providing homeowners with an eligible concession card access to a rebate up to \$2,500 for rooftop solar and a further rebate up to \$2,500 for energy efficient appliances. As of 18 August 2025, 1,568 rebates have been paid.
  - *Public and Community Housing Upgrades Program* delivering ceiling insulation and upgrades from gas to efficient electric appliances in social housing properties. The program will ensure all social housing meets the minimum ceiling insulation standard by November 2026. As of 18 August 2025, 3,515 social (public and community) housing properties have received ceiling insulation and/or electrification upgrades.
  - Rebates of up to \$2,500 are available to rental providers registered under the *Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme* to upgrade ceiling insulation in their rental properties. As of 18 August 2025, 63 rebates have been paid.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

## Key information

- Through the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (VHESS) (known publicly as the Home Energy Support Scheme), the ACT Government committed \$50 million over five years to deliver a range of measures to reduce energy hardship for low-income homeowners as well as public, private, and community housing renters.

### Home Energy Support: Rebates for Homeowners Program

- 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 18 August 2025, 676 Category A and 892 Category B products have been installed with \$3.7 million paid in rebates.
- 2025-26 is the final year of this funding.

### Public and Community Housing Upgrades Program

- The Public and Community Housing Upgrades Program is the largest component of the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (VHESS) and delivers 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 18 August 2025, 3,515 social (public and community) housing properties have received a ceiling insulation and/or electrification upgrade:
  - Ceiling insulation only = 1,936 properties (1,908 public + 28 community)
  - Electrification only = 835 properties (612 public + 223 community)
  - Ceiling insulation and electrification = 744 properties (708 public + 36 community)
- A further investment of \$21.776 million was announced in the 2025-26 Budget to bring forward provisioned funding to fully electrify all feasible public housing properties by 2028, as part of the Integrated Energy Plan. This work, which will build on progress under the VHESS will commence in early 2026.

### Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme Rebates

- Rebates of up to \$2,500 are available to rental providers registered under the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme to upgrade ceiling insulation in their rental properties. As of 18 August 2025, 63 rebates have been paid.
- 2025-26 is the final year of this funding.

### Chronic Health Conditions: Home Energy Efficiency Upgrades pilot (closed)

- 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.
- Monitoring and evaluation reports on the VHESS, 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.

# Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy Implementation

## Talking points

- As of 11 August 2025:
  - there are 12,239 Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs) registered in the ACT, this is compared to 9,043 registered at 12 August 2024
  - the ACT has 198 individual public EV chargers servicing **275 charging bays across 86 sites**, noting some chargers are capable of charging two EVs at once

### Government funded supported public charging

- As of 1 August 2025, there are 62 public chargers (with **106 charging bays**) that have been installed. This has been undertaken through a series of competitive grant rounds.
- The latest round of grants awarded \$887,355 to support 40 chargers (with 70 charging bays) to be installed, announced on 17 July 2025. These installations are expected to be completed progressively up to the end of 30 July 2027.

### 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. Work is underway to determine suitable sites.

### 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 backbone charging infrastructure. Residents can then purchase their own charger at an equitable cost when they are ready to transition. The ACT Government is working with the Commonwealth Government on a partnership arrangement to co fund this program.

### ACT Government Passenger Fleet Transition

- As of 1 August 2025, the ACT Government has over 590 EV chargers installed across Government sites, with its Passenger Fleet comprising 566 vehicles of which 45% are fully electric (zero emission) and 79% are zero or low emissions making it the biggest government fleet in Australia by proportion.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 19/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

## 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. (This was achieved in May 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).
  - financial incentives for ZEV purchase such as stamp duty waivers (now emissions-based duty rates), 2 years free registration for new and used ZEVs (now lower cost registration), as well as low 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.

### 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 fast charging hub has opened in Goulburn. The Tesla charging location provides 20 DC charging bays offering speeds of up to 250kW per plug and is open to all EV models.

### Public Charging

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

- 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.
- There is one Direct Current (fast) (DC) charging bay for every 107 registered electric vehicles in the ACT, which exceeds the Australian Government’s suggested 2025-26 target of 165 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 (20)
  - East Canberra (30)
  - Inner South (73) and
  - Gungahlin (89)
- The urban zones with the highest plug ratios (i.e. least chargers) are
  - Belconnen (553)
  - Weston/Molonglo (313) and
  - Woden Valley (216)

#### DC Charging Hubs

- 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.

#### ACT Government Passenger Fleet Makeup

Vehicle Category	Vehicle Type	Number	Percentage
Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV)	Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV)	253	44.7%
	Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles (FCEV)	7	1.2%
Low Emissions Vehicles	Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEV)	186	32.9%
Vehicles	Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Vehicles	120	21.2%
	<b>Total</b>	566	100%

- The ACT Government non-passenger fleet includes an electric van, electric ride-on mowers, an electric forklift and a hybrid-electric fire truck.

# Biosecurity Threats – Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases

## Talking points

### 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.

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- 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.

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

- Varroa mite is now in the ACT.
- The ACT Government is working with affected beekeepers 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 is continuing to work with local beekeepers to help build resilience and prepare them for the ongoing impacts of Varroa mite as it becomes endemic in the ACT.
- 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 Government 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.
  - The National Fire Ant Eradication Program is focusing monitoring and surveillance efforts in areas that received significant rainfall.
- Restrictions currently apply under the *Biosecurity Act 2023* 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 information

- 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.

### **Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB, *Euwallacea fornicatus*)**

- Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) is a tiny beetle that bores into tree trunks, stems and branches and can lead to tree death. The beetle is an agricultural and environmental pest. It has over 500 host species, including amenity, native and horticulture production trees. It spreads with the movement of infested trees (nursery stock), firewood and green waste material.
- PSHB was detected in Western Australia in August 2021. It is unknown how and when the pest entered Australia.
- There have been no detections of PSHB outside the Perth metropolitan area.
- National Management Group agreed on 18 June 2025 that PSHB is no longer technically feasible to eradicate and agreed that the response will now move into an 18-month Transition to Management (T2M) phase.

- Industry, community and government parties will work together as part of the transition to slow the spread of PSHB and minimise the spread beyond the Perth metropolitan region. The ACT continues to participate in these discussions.
- The ACT Government will continue to monitor any potential increased risk associated with PSHB and develop appropriate communication, surveillance and statutory controls as necessary.

# Urban Development Proposals and the Environment

## Talking points

### 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
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### Development at the Federal Golf Course

- I am aware that ACAT have made a determination about the Development Application 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).
- This matter is now with the proponent for their consideration.

### 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 Peppercreess 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 information**

- 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.



# 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.
- The proposed development has been assessed in accordance with the ACT's planning laws and frameworks that include environmental assessments.
- 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).
- I am also aware that this decision was recently appealed through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) and a decision has been handed down.
- I understand that the Tribunal's decision is largely consistent with the Authority's decision to approve the development but varied the Authority's decision by adding further conditions of approval.
- The new conditions imposed by ACAT are focused on Crown lease provisions, improved tree retention and planting, and changes to the internal road alignment; again for improved tree retention.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
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# Regulatory and Compliance Action

## Talking points

### Talking Points

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

- In the 2023-24 Budget included funding towards a dedicated fisheries compliance conservation officer to help protect the ACT's native fish and to provide information on legal and ethical fishing practices to stakeholders.
  - Since conducting compliance activities the encountered non-compliance rate has fallen from 20% to 11%.
  - The compliance officer undertook 8 club talks and education evenings, installed 15 information signs, stocked 146,000 native fish in ACT lakes and ponds, updated the ACT fishing brochure, and assisted the ACT PCS Licensing and Compliance Unit in drafting a proposed new Fishing Gear Declaration under the Fisheries Act.
  - Whilst education has been a priority, more than 50 warnings and 4 infringement notices have been issued as well as 19 illegal fishing traps and lines located and removed( some of these had turtles, rakali or threatened crayfish caught in them).
- Noting the low level of non-compliance, the government has decided to invest in other environmental priorities. Whilst there will no longer be a dedicated fisheries compliance conservation officer, some of the functions will be included in the ACT's broader environmental conservation regulatory program.
- Brochures about fishing in the ACT are available in English, Chinese and Vietnamese on the [ACT Government website](#).
- Anyone with information about illegal fishing is encouraged to contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 71831  
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## 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 has increased the number of Conservation Officers that can undertake regulatory activities.
- 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 and Fisheries 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.

# Schedule 1.2

Current compliance matters

# Sch 1 1.14

# Sch 1 1.14

# Dingoes

## Talking points

### Attacks on Stock

- The ACT Government acknowledges that the Dingo known as the Waragul in Ngunnawal language may threaten and harm stock that is managed by rural lessees.
- The Government undertakes control in designated management zones to reduce livestock losses on neighbouring rural properties. This work is undertaken in collaboration with rural landholders and the NSW Government.
- The current Dingo management program uses a range of methods that include trapping, baiting, and thermal shooting.
- Trapping is considered the most effective management tool for wild dog/dingo control. Baiting and shooting operations if increased in lieu of trapping would be unlikely to achieve program objectives.
- Property owners are encouraged to report Dingo sightings or attacks to the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

### Amendments to Animal Welfare Regulation (Minister for C&GS)

- The ACT Government has recently amended the Animal Welfare Regulation 2001 to permit the use of soft jaw traps in the ACT.
- This amendment will allow the Government, and people with a permit to licence, to undertake management and control action against Dingoes to lessen the risk of attacks on livestock.
- The amendment was prepared by the ACT's Animal Welfare Authority pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act.
- Rural landholders have been informed of the amendment and can apply for a trapping permit to the Animal Welfare Authority to enable the lawful use of soft jaw traps.
- All trapping using soft jaw traps is delivered in accordance with the National Codes of Practice for the particular pest animal being managed.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 02/09/2025  
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### **When were traps suspended from use?**

- Amendments to the Animal Welfare Regulation in 2019 imposed restrictions on the use of soft jaw traps.
- Soft jaw traps were removed from service by the Parks and Conservation Service earlier this year after they were notified of the regulation.
- Baiting and shooting in identified management areas continued.
- ACT rural landholders were briefed in July that soft jaw traps had been removed from service.

### **Will any action be taken on PCS that traps have been used illegally?**

- The Animal Welfare Authority as the regulator has advised that no action will be taken against PCS.
- Decisions regarding any actions related to this matter is for the Animal Welfare Authority as the regulator.
- The use of traps was made via self-disclosure to the Authority by the Conservator or Flora and Fauna. Following this disclosure PCS immediately ceased the use of soft jaw traps and removed of all traps from the territory.
- It is therefore inappropriate that I comment on this matter.

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

- On 5 July 2024, the ACT Government announced plans to formally recognise Dingo as a native animal.
- A policy approach is under development to ensure that:
  - Dingo are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
  - Appropriate mitigation measures are maintained that limit, as far as possible, the impacts of Dingo -related livestock losses on rural properties.
- To progress these changes over the coming months, CED proposes to:
  - Draft a Controlled Native Species Plan for the 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 Dingo will continue in their current form.

## Key information

- Dr Kylie Cairns, University of NSW has now undertaken genetic analysis of 50 ear samples taken from Dingo in Namadgi National Park.
- 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.
- 20 additional samples from areas adjoining the ACT population showed no indication of any domestic dog ancestry.
- 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 Dingo should be managed as a controlled native species.

## Background information

### Terminology

- Domestic dogs and Dingoes are sometimes currently considered the same species, but this taxonomy is disputed, with multiple species names used in scientific literature. Dingoes represent a distinct 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 Dingo holds a special place within the Ngunnawal society and dreaming since the first sunrise, representing resilience and protection. Within Ngunnawal family groups, Dingo 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, Dingo are not currently afforded protection as a native species under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

- Current management of Dingo 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 livestock 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 Dingo in the ACT, including Namadgi National Park.

# 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 purpose and function of 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.

**Note:** The Ngunnawal Cultural Advisors received the NAIDOC Caring for Country award for 2025.

- The Environment Portfolio 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 in the process of undertaking a review of the DNCCC.
- ETM Perspectives have been engaged through a competitive procurement process to undertake the review.
- The initial meeting between DNCCC members and the consultants occurred on 20 August 2025 with consultation expected to continue in September and October.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
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- Since the establishment of the DNCCC in 2019, it has been an effective mechanism for engagement between the directorate and representatives/elders of the Ngunnawal Community.
- 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.

#### First Nations Conservation Training Program

- The ACT Government, in partnership with 18fifty3 Group, is delivering a First Nations Conservation Training Program.
- The program offers structured employment and accredited training for eight First Nations individuals over four years, with two cohorts of four trainees.
- Trainees are employed full-time and supported to complete a Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management, alongside additional certifications including First Aid, Chemical Application, Chainsaw Operation, and Working with Vulnerable People.
- Preference is given to Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians, with recruitment prioritised through community networks to ensure culturally appropriate engagement and representation.
- Employment outcomes include paid work aligned with award wages, cultural leave entitlements, and structured career pathways in land management and conservation.
- The program integrates cultural mentorship and on-Country learning, guided by Ngunnawal Elders and Aboriginal NRM facilitators, strengthening cultural connection and leadership.
- Trainees contribute directly to government restoration projects, including tree planting, weed control, erosion management, and habitat connectivity works across priority sites.
- The initiative supports Closing the Gap objectives by building capacity, creating employment, and embedding First Nations leadership in environmental stewardship

#### 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.

# Kangaroo Management

## Talking points

### 2025 Kangaroo Management Program

- The culling component of the 2025 Kangaroo Management Program commenced on 10 June and concluded on 31 July.
- Sixteen (16) reserves were 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 recommended number of kangaroos to be culled this year was higher than recent years, with a total target of 2981.
- The total number of kangaroos culled during the 2025 program was 2978, 3 short of the target.
- 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.
- The GonaCon fertility control program has also concluded for the year. GonaCon was administered to 4 female kangaroos at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, 6 females at Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve, and 8 females at Mulanggari Nature Reserve.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 71831  
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- GonaCon has been used at these sites in previous years, therefore only a small number of additional treatments were required this year to maintain the desired proportion of infertile females.
- Administration of GonaCon also started at a fourth site this year – Red Hill Kangaroo Management Unit (which includes Red Hill Nature Reserve and Federal Golf Club). This year, 133 female kangaroos were treated with GonaCon at this site.

### **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, which includes large pouch young and small young at foot).
- 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 four sites as part of the Kangaroo Management Program to date. From 2022 to 2025, a total of 344 GonaCon doses have been administered to female kangaroos at these sites as follows:

Site	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Farrer Ridge Nature Reserve	18	35	7	6	66
Mulanggari Nature Reserve	0	0	53	8	61
Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary	41	24	15*	4	84*
Red Hill Nature Reserve and Federal Golf Club	0	0	0	133	133

\* includes one booster dose administered to a previously treated kangaroo who had regained fertility

- 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.
- This is the first time that GonaCon has been trialled in kangaroos at a large management scale. Earlier small-scale research trials across 5 sites in the ACT have shown that GonaCon causes long-term infertility in female kangaroos when it is injected by hand and when it is delivered remotely via a dart; and that it can limit population growth in small, discrete populations. Monitoring at these sites is ongoing.

#### 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.
- The Mulligans fence means kangaroos and wallabies are protected from mortality factors such as predation and motor vehicle collisions. As a result, wallaby populations have increased considerably.
- The ACT Government monitors and actively manages kangaroo and wallaby populations in Mulligans, undertaking conservation culling and fertility control trials to maintain ecosystem condition and ensure survival of all species.
- Culling of wallabies at Mulligans has been undertaken periodically since 2019 and is licenced under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.
- In 2025, 90 Red-necked Wallabies and 35 Swamp Wallabies were culled.
- The first ever GonaCon Immunocontraceptive Vaccine trial in Red-necked Wallabies and Swamp Wallabies commenced at Mulligans in 2018. To date, 66 female Red-necked Wallabies and 21 female Swamp Wallabies have been treated with GonaCon. This trial has been expanded to the adjoining Goorooyaroo Sanctuary in 2025, with 22 female Red-necked Wallabies treated to date.
- Initial results indicate that GonaCon is highly effective in Swamp Wallabies, but less effective in Red-necked Wallabies. Booster doses have been administered to Red-necked Wallabies to test 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.
- 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 in accordance with the Eastern Grey Kangaroo Controlled Native Species Management Plan to minimise their impact on the economic viability of rural properties.
- 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.

# Air Quality and Wood Heaters

## Talking points

### Air Quality

- The [2024 ACT Annual Air Quality Report](#) prepared by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) shows Canberra's air quality is very good.
- There were only two minor exceedances of the national health-based air quality standards with one exceedance for PM2.5 in winter at Monash associated with wood heaters and one exceedance for PM10 at Civic associated with earthworks for the light rail. There were no exceedances for 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.
- The 2025 campaign commenced in June and will run till the end of August 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.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 71831  
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Lead Directorate: City and Environment

- 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 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 will provide further advice on next steps on wood heater policy matters in due course.

### Wood Heater Removal Program

- The [Wood Heater Removal Program](#) 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 14 August 2025, 1,358 wood heaters have been removed since the program commenced in 2004.
- 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 and replaced their wood heaters.

Rebates available through the Wood Heater Removal Program	
\$500	All ACT homeowners
\$1250	ACT homeowners with an eligible concession card: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Government Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card</li> <li>• Australian Government Health Care Card</li> </ul>

## Key information

- ACT Health monitors 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)*. CED is responsible for the legislation and implementation of the NEPM.
- 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 is 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 meet 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.
- Information about these initiatives and copies of the ACT Annual Air Quality Reports, are available on the [Access Canberra website](#).

## Background information

- 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 Canberrans.
- 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 consultants 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.
- The ACT Government has successfully lobbied the wood heater industry to reduce the emission standards for wood heaters (AS4013) from 1.5g/kg to 1.0g/kg. The revised standard was published on 20 June 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 which completed the action in the Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality Strategy to review the campaign.



# 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.
- The ACT Government provides significant funding to support community environmental groups to deliver outcomes for the ACT community and environment.
- Under the *Financial Management Act 1996* the ACT Government has a responsibility to ensure due process for expenditure of public funds.
- 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. The review is underway and will hopefully be finalised soon. 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.
- City and Environment Directorate officials have met with 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 and advised them of the review. These groups have received an extension in current funding for one year to 30 June 2026 whilst the review is underway.
- Following the review, a process to procure community organisations to deliver the future community-led environmental programs will commence shortly. It will involve a two stage process. The process is only open to community not for profit groups.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 71831  
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- The first stage is intended for gauge organisations that may be interested and if they have the capacity and experience to deliver the programs.
- Organisations found to be capable of delivering the service in stage one will be invited to submit detailed proposals in stage two.
- The new funding period will be for 4 years with the potential for two 1 year further extensions. It is hoped successful organisations will be announced in early 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.

#### 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.
- We have also committed to employing additional dedicated volunteer co-ordinators 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 volunteer 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 **Urban Parks and Places Volunteer Program including the Adopt a Park grants program** (\$215,000 a year). 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 2.2 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 \$40,000 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.
  - This funding includes significant investment in volunteer-led environmental and community wellbeing outcomes, currently delivered by the three ACT **catchment groups**, The **FrogWatch Program** 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 closed on 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 2024-25 over **\$3.9 million in supplementary grants**, including funds administered on behalf of the Australian Government, was invested in community and volunteer groups to deliver important environmental work.
- ACT Government was proud to collaborate with Landcare ACT to host the **2025 Environmental Volunteers Conference** in August. Building on the success of the event in 2023, the conference brought 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

## 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.



# Environment Programs and Initiatives

## Talking points

### Regional Delivery Partners Program

- City and Environment Directorate has been successfully selected as a regional delivery partner by the Australian Government to deliver priority environmental and agricultural investments through the Natural Heritage Trust.
- The Australian Government has elected to fund:
  - Restoring grassland and woodland ecological communities in the ACT (\$2,250,000) – Investigating improvements to the condition of *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) critically endangered Box-gum Woodland and Natural Temperate Grassland ecosystems.
  - Managing threats to high country wetlands (\$1,750,000) – Investigating ways to manage threats to the threatened ecological community of Upland Bogs and Fens which includes the ACT Ramsar site, the Ginini Flats Wetlands Complex.
- Project outlines were developed during workshops to consult with key stakeholders in November 2023 and were approved by the Australian Government in April 2024.
- On-ground activities in both projects commenced in May 2024, the projects will run until July 2028.
- The projects will be managed by ACT Natural Resource Management (NRM) and will utilise a range of partners to deliver outcomes. Partners include ACT Landcare, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Office of Nature Conservation and the National Parks Association of the ACT.
- A portion of the on-ground works for these projects will be delivered, by a work team of four First Nations individuals coordinated by an indigenous NRM staff member.
- Team members will receive training in land management techniques. The team commenced in January 2025.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 71831  
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## **Habitat Restoration with the Ngunnawal community**

- The Government invested additional funding through the 2023-24 ACT Budget towards habitat restoration.
- This program is managed by the Office of Nature Conservation and delivered with Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) and ParkCare groups, in collaboration with the Ngunnawal community.
- Three sites have been initially identified as a focus for restoration. These sites are Mount Ainslie/Mount Majura, Urambi Hills/Bullen Range and grassy valleys of Namadgi.
- Office of Nature Conservation and Ngunnawal Cultural Advisors are co-designing an ecocultural project that brings indigenous knowledge and western science together to restore Country and to provide opportunities for traditional owners to reconnect to Country.
- Nine On-Country days have been held across the project sites with another seven days planned including a Singing to Country event and Emu reintroduction workshops.
- On-ground restoration work to date includes planting over 2,200 native plants in woodlands and riparian zones, direct seeding, weed control, and removal of redundant fences.
- Future work includes planting over 8,000 tree and shrubs, direct seeding, burning and bush regeneration.

## **Connectivity Projects**

- ACT NRM is improving habitat connectivity within Canberra's urban environment, building on the Connecting Nature Connecting People initiative from 2022-2024.
- Connecting Nature Connecting People addressed key challenges in the ACT's urban environment, including biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation, climate change, Closing the Gap, and the right to a healthy environment.
- An initial project was completed last financial year in the upper section of Sullivans Creek within Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. It focused improving riparian conditions, reducing erosion and sedimentation, and enhancing butterfly habitat. This project is informed by the [Sullivans Creek Renaturalisation Opportunities Report](#).
- Restoration works included the construction of 5 small ponds and placement of timber at 7 sites to mitigate erosion and provide habitat in the upper catchment. First Nations business, Dreamtime Connections undertook a cultural training day with the First Nations Conservation Trainees which involved identification of bush tucker foods and medicines and planting of 150 tube stock. Friends of Mulligans Flat ParkCare group planted 150 shrubs, trees and grasses on the 14th May 2025. A further 2300 grasses were planted by a contractor at 5 sites in association with the frog ponds / woody debris sites.
- Projects for this financial year are focusing on small mammal habitat in the North Gungahlin Woodlands and Rakali and Platypus habitat around Giralang Ponds.
- Restoration works in the North Gungahlin Woodlands are improving habitat connectivity for small mammals such as Antechinus and Common Dunnart. The project includes the

installation of eight habitat nodes using large woody debris and the planting of 800 native trees, shrubs, and grasses across 6.76 hectares.

- The Northern Woodlands complex contains 1,875 ha of critically endangered Box-Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grasslands, representing 23% of the ACT's total extent. Restoration efforts aim to protect and connect these high-value ecological patches to support threatened species including the Golden Sun Moth and Pink-tailed Worm-lizard.
- The Giralang Wetlands project focuses on enhancing habitat for Rakali and Platypus along Ginninderra Creek. Works include the installation of habitat logs and rocks, and the planting of grasses and sedges, to improve water quality and riparian condition.
- Giralang Pond serves as a vital stepping stone between Gungahlin Pond and Lake Ginninderra. Restoration activities are designed to improve ecological function in this urban corridor, supporting birds, reptiles, and aquatic mammals.
- Habitat structures—referred to as “fauna furniture”—are being installed to mimic natural Rakali environments. These include submerged logs anchored with hardwood pins and strategically placed rocks to provide refuge and feeding platforms.
- Both projects incorporate baseline and follow-up monitoring using drone imagery and field surveys. This ensures restoration efforts are effective and responsive to environmental conditions.
- Both projects are working with local land managers from the City and Environment Directorate and are due to be completed later this financial year.

#### **Urban Rivers and Catchments Program**

- The ACT is receiving \$3.225 million over 4 years (to 2026-27) through the Australian Government's Urban Rivers and Catchments program. The projects are being administered through ACT Government and delivered by Landcare ACT and Woodlands and Wetlands Trust.
- The projects are working to conserve native plants and animals and improve access to waterways which provide for health and social wellbeing.
- Landcare ACT's project will help improve the health of significant urban waterways in Canberra. It will undertake works in areas requiring riparian restoration or water quality improvement across the ACT.
- Woodlands and Wetlands Trust is leading the Jerrabomberra Creek restoration project, which will deliver a range of on-ground and outreach activities to enhance the condition of the riparian zone, promote education and awareness of the values of riparian systems and enhance the quality of engagement with nature for users of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve.



# Threatened Species Management

## Talking points

- There are currently 68 native species and three ecological communities threatened with extinction in the ACT.
- 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).
- The Government collaborates with research institutions, other government agencies, and citizen science groups on threatened species conservation.
- While this work contributes significantly to averting decline, the number of listed species continues to increase in the ACT.
- There are two key threatening processes listed under the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014*; Loss of Mature Native Trees (including hollow-bearing trees) and the Unnatural Fragmentation of Habitats.
- Recent additions to the threatened species list on 16 June 2025 include the Alpine Water Skink, and four migratory species: Latham's Snipe, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank.
- A further four 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.
- 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 Spiny Crayfish – Murunung Naruwi) for potential listing as Endangered under the NC Act.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 02/09/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: 71831  
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## Key information

- The new Action Plan for the **Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon** (CGED) 2025-2035 was released in May 2025. The ACT Government recently announced injection of \$4.5 million 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.
- 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 April 2025, a predation event occurred involving part of the Tidbinbilla CGED population. Two Antechinus and a Praying Mantis bypassed predator barriers and entered an outdoor enclosure where CGEDs were temporarily being maintained for research purposes. Around 38 CGEDs may have died as a result of this predation, noting that attrition of these older individuals had been occurring due to natural mortality. These CGEDs were part of a separate research group and not involved in the breeding program.
- In August 2025, Tidbinbilla received an additional 6 **southern Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies** (BTRWs) from Odonata Foundation, a key partner in our breeding program. These additional wallabies will increase the genetic diversity of the Tidbinbilla population, and will be released into the safe haven in September 2025.
- A captive population of **Northern Corroboree Frogs** was established in 2003 at Tidbinbilla, in response to a dramatic decline primarily due to Amphibian Chytrid Fungus. Eggs and frogs produced by this program have been released into historic sites since 2011 to bolster wild historic populations.
- An assisted colonisation trial of frogs into a lower elevation site in Namadgi National Park commenced in 2021. Results are promising, with more frogs detected in 2025 compared to previous years. Further annual releases and surveys are planned.
- Two hundred 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 Small Purple Pea 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. Monitoring in 2025 has found the constructed habitat to be successful, with 50% of fish captured at the structures, which cover only 4% of the sampling area.
- In Autumn 2025, 23 adult male Endangered **Trout Cod** were translocated from the Murrumbidgee River and Cataract Dam to Bendora Dam to provide genetic rescue for the resident population. Fish were quarantined and tested for disease in the ACT before release into the existing population. Monitoring will be conducted by ACT Government and University of Canberra over the coming years.

- The Commonwealth Government is funding a partnership to conserve the Endangered **Tuggeranong Lignum** (*Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong*). A genetically diverse ex-situ population has been established to support future translocations and population augmentation. Partners include the ACT Government, Australian National Botanic Gardens, University of Canberra, and Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney.



# Canberra Region Local Food Strategy

## Talking points

- The [Canberra Region Local Food Strategy 2024-2029](#) (the Strategy) will guide future planning and management of our region's agriculture production.
- The ACT Government invested \$200,000 in the 2024-25 ACT Budget for the first year of implementation of the Strategy.
- A feasibility study, investigating the options of establishing an ACT food hub to support local food production and consumption within the Territory, was recently completed. The ACT Government is considering the outcomes from the study.
- This feasibility study includes a market demand analysis, key functions determination and prioritisation, location examination, governance options, cost and revenue options, operational diagrams and a risk analysis. The ACT Government is currently reviewing the final report.
- Key stakeholders involved in ACT agriculture and local food production participated in project workshops in April and May 2025.
- A 12-month project is also underway to identify and address policy, planning and regulatory barriers to support ACT farmers to adapt to drought.
- Removing barriers to diversification would potentially enable landholders to explore alternative income sources such as farm tourism and value-added produce.
- This would also potentially enhance farm resilience to climate variability by diversifying income streams and reduce reliance on single commodities. This project is funded by the Australian Government Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program.

## Key information

- The Canberra Region Local Food Strategy launched on 12 June 2024.
- The ACT Government continues to work with the Canberra Region Local Food Strategy's Community Reference Group (CRG) to identify priority actions to support the implementation of the Strategy.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
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## Background information

- The ACT has rural and urban agriculture production.
- There are approximately 160 rural farms which collectively manage 15 per cent of the ACT's land area. The majority operate in sheep, wool and cattle production, horse agistment and other equestrian activities. Other enterprises include eggs, fruit, vegetables, and wine.
- In urban areas there are numerous backyard gardens, a growing number of popular community gardens, and urban farms with vegetable or seedling production.
- There are also enterprises along the food supply chain. This includes farmers markets and direct sale businesses like those offering fresh food and produce boxes, and bakeries, breweries and restaurants that use local produce.
- Although the Strategy is an ACT Government policy to set the strategic direction for the ACT, it is also intended to be used to facilitate connections and collaboration with the wider Canberra region. Despite the existing agricultural enterprises, the ACT is highly reliant on food produced elsewhere and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

# 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
- The ACT Government engaged an external consultant, Communication Link, to conduct a listening exercise, which gathered views and information on the best long-term use of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands block. The site is currently licenced for sustainable agricultural and educational activities.
- Consultation for the listening exercise included meeting with key stakeholders who have an on-going interest in the use of the site.
- Stakeholder meetings commenced in the first week of June.
- A summary listening report, which will be circulated to participating stakeholders in the coming weeks, is being prepared by the consultant. 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:	28/08/2025	
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# Illegal Tree Removal Gungahlin

## Talking points

- I am aware that on 23 June 2025 Urban Treescapes identified that the registered tree located adjacent to the Gungahlin Bunnings store at 10 Gribble Street Gungahlin has been removed without approval ([PTR146-Gungahlin](#) ).
- While it is not yet known exactly when the tree was removed, it is believed to have been removed sometime in the fortnight preceding 23 June 2025.
- The tree, registered on the 22 July 2014 was a remnant *Eucalyptus blakelyi* (Blakely's red gum) was included on the ACT Tree Register due to its high landscape and aesthetic value.
- The tree was an exceptional example of a remnant tree that provided excellent habitat for wildlife. Numerous native bird species were observed in the tree, making use of these hollows.
- Whilst the tree did decline and eventually died in 2023, it still provided essential habitat elements and continued to be listed on the ACT Tree Register as a significant tree. Given its location and structural stability of the tree there was no risk in retaining the dead tree.
- I can advise that this incident has been referred to the City and Environment Directorate Licencing and Compliance team and is currently being investigated.

## Key Information

- Under the Urban Forest Act 2023 (The Act), The penalty for removing a protected tree without approval can be up to 500 penalty units, which is equal to \$80,000 for an individual or \$405,000 for a corporation..
- The Act includes a provision for a Site Declaration to be made, in the situation where a registered tree has been damaged by conduct that has been given prior approval.
- A Site Declaration means that the entry about the tree must remain in the register while the site declaration is in force. Therefore the site is still afforded protection from development, despite the Registration being cancelled.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	28/08/2025	
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# ● Waste Policy

## Talking points

### Current work program

- **Investigate the feasibility of a textiles hub to reduce problematic textile and clothing waste.**
  - A project was developed, in consultation with textiles stakeholders, to investigate ways to improve textiles waste management and support circular economy goals.
  - The project resulted in a report recommending two key actions:
    - establishing a community textiles hub to promote reuse and creative engagement; and
    - developing a coordinated system for collection, sorting, and reprocessing to divert textiles from landfill.
- **Explore the potential to expand the ACT CDS to include more eligible items.**
  - The CDS expansion work is aiming to align with national harmonisation efforts. The scope includes all beverage containers (wine, spirits and cordial) up to three litres and all plastic fruit/vegetable juice and cordial containers up to three litres, excluding plain milk, health tonics and containers less than 150 millilitres.
- **Continue to identify problematic waste streams, including single-use plastics with suitable alternatives, that can be phased out from circulation.**
  - 11 single-use plastic items are currently banned in the ACT under the *Circular Economy Act 2023*, with the latest ban introduced in January 2024.
  - Waste Policy is developing a draft Problematic Products and Single-Use Plastic Reduction Plan discussion paper as the next step to facilitate community consultation and potential future action on problematic and single-use plastic items.
- **Implementation of ACT's National Waste Policy Action Plan (NWPAP) implementation plan.**
  - The ACT NWPAP implementation plan captures activities already underway by the ACT Government, to grow the circular economy. It has been made publicly available on the City Services website.
- **Waste to energy policy – currently to 2025.**
  - This is intended to be reviewed and consulted on, in parallel with a project to develop a Waste Management Action Plan, which will sit underneath the ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2030.



- **Investigating the potential to develop circular economy legislation that sets product stewardship requirements for batteries.**
  - Waste Policy is investigating potential legislative product stewardship requirements for batteries. This follows a commitment at the December 2024 Environment Ministers' Meeting for jurisdictions to report back on whether they intend to implement proposed reforms about this, and the passage in the New South Wales Parliament of the *Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act 2025* (The PLR Act).
  - The PLR Act sets a general framework for establishing product stewardship schemes for various products with details specific to each product to be established by regulation.
  - At a meeting of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council (the Council) in August 2025, Commonwealth, state and territory governments agreed to progress work towards a national product stewardship scheme for solar panels, ensuring they are managed from start to end of life.
  - It is the intention of the Council that a product stewardship scheme for solar panels could be established under the same legislative framework.
  - Waste Policy are considering if similar legislation to The PLR Act is developed in the ACT, it should have capability to be applied across multiple product streams including solar panels and be harmonised with other jurisdictions where possible.

# Electricity and Gas Prices

## Talking points

### Electricity prices

- **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.**
- 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.

### Gas prices

- **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.**
- ActewAGL Retail has published fossil fuel gas prices which came into effect on 1 July 2025.
  - From 1 July 2025 a typical ACT residential household will see an increase of approximately \$0.55 per week.
  - A typical ACT small business will see a **decrease** of approximately \$11 per week.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
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### Electricity Gas and Water Rebate

- The Electricity Gas and Water Rebate is expected to support around 41,000 eligible low-income households with a \$800 contribution toward their energy and water bills in 2025-26.
  - The 2023-24 ACT Budget included expanding the Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate eligibility criteria to include anyone with a Commonwealth Health Care Card, meaning 12,000 more households will benefit from this support.
  - The rebate permanently increased by \$50 for 2025-26, raising the amount of the concession from \$750 to \$800, to help further relieve cost of living pressures.

### Cost of Living Relief

- The Australian Government announced an extension to the Energy Bill Relief Fund for six months from 1 July this year until December 2025.
  - The rebate, of up to \$150, 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.
- 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.

## 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.

### ICRC regulated Standing Offer

- Each year the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC), in its annual price determination, sets the maximum percentage 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 **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.

# Smart Meter Rollout and Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) Ruling

## Talking points

- In November 2024 the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) finalised a rule change to accelerate the deployment of smart meters across the National Electricity Market (NEM). The rollout is scheduled to commence on 1 December 2025 and will continue till 30 November 2030.
- The rule change aims to achieve a critical mass of smart meters in a timely and cost-effective way to deliver benefits to consumers and support the energy transition.
- Smart meters are foundational to a connected, modern, and efficient energy system. They support a clean energy system by enabling the integration of consumer energy resources, such as rooftop solar, into the electricity grid.
- Energy retailers, network businesses, and metering service providers will work together to progressively retire and replace legacy meters by 2030.
- The AEMC's rule change includes measures to support customers through the rollout, including:
  - greater transparency,
  - free access to power quality information for distribution network service providers (DNSPs), and
  - safeguards to protect consumers from unexpected costs and charges (e.g. in the transition to cost reflective tariffs). The ACT Government is taking steps to enact safeguards in the ACT.

## Key information

### Implementation

- Evoenergy, as the ACT's distribution network operator, has developed a Legacy Meter Replacement Plan (Plan) to drive efficient delivery and industry collaboration.
- The Plan outlines the timing and sequence of replacements and will be approved by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) before implementation. In drafting this plan Evoenergy consulted with retailers and metering coordinators to ensure appropriate and efficient use

Cleared as complete and accurate: 21/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
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of resources. A copy of this plan was submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator for their approval on 30 June 2025.

### AEMC Review

- In 2023, the AEMC completed a *‘Review of the Regulatory Framework for Metering Services’* (Review). The Review recommended a target of universal uptake of smart meters by 2030 in NEM jurisdictions, which includes the ACT.
- The Review included a cost benefit analysis for the accelerated deployment of smart meters. It found the overall benefits to be greater than the costs, with a positive net present value of \$256 million (\$2021/22) for New South Wales and the ACT.
- The ACT had around 90,677 electricity customers with smart meters at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. As of January 2025, there are 137,582 remaining legacy meters (both induction disc and electronic accumulation type) in the ACT.
- The rule change does not allow customers to opt-out. However, practical barriers such as defects, safety issues or the need for remediation works may prevent or delay the installation of smart meters at certain sites.
- While there is no upfront cost for a smart meter installation, the costs associated with remediation works are the responsibility of the customer and need to be paid upfront. Jurisdictions have been encouraged to consider financial options that assist customers, especially vulnerable and low-income households with these remediation works.
- Smart meter installations will allow retailers to pass on network charges from DNSPs to consumers, through cost-reflective retail tariffs e.g. time-of-use tariffs. The AEMC has proposed a range of safeguards to protect consumers. One such safeguard includes an option for jurisdictions to implement a requirement for designated retailers to offer a flat retail tariff to small customers with a smart meter, to minimise any disruption through the transition. Flat rate tariffs offer consumers a simpler pricing structure for electricity usage and more predictability in their bills. This supports consumers who are unable to modify their energy usage to avoid high-cost periods.

The disadvantage of these pricing structures, however, is that they don’t incentivise energy efficiency or load shifting, which would benefit the distribution network.

- Consumer knowledge is key to consumers experiencing and obtaining the benefits associated with smart meters. Smart meters will provide consumers with greater visibility and control of their electricity consumption and costs. This knowledge can empower consumers to access cheaper electricity at different times during the day. Work is underway by the AEMC to determine a pathway by which consumers can access their smart meter generated, electricity consumption data in real-time. A draft determination around this matter is expected to be released in late 2025.
- In addition to consumer specific benefits, the power quality data made available under the accelerated rollout will help DNSPs to improve network utilisation and make better investment decisions. This can lead to lower average network costs for all consumers in the long-term and support the integration of more renewable generation into the National Electricity Market.



## Background information

- Smart meters record electricity consumption and power quality parameters at pre-determined intervals, have a two-way communication capability, and can be read remotely.
- The AEMC makes the rules governing the regulation of energy markets. Their objective is to promote efficient, reliable, and secure markets which serve the long-term interests of consumers.

## 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. These actions include commitments such as electrifying all feasible public and community housing by 2030; programs such as the \$5.2m pilot to electrify the appliances of households most needing support; and policy/regulatory measures such as frameworks to support the safe, efficient and equitable decommissioning of the gas network and interventions to support electrification.
- The IEP establishes five key priorities that guide government decision-making and actions: **ensuring a clear and implementable pathway; enabling Canberrans to act; prioritising support for those who need it most; ensuring secure and reliable energy systems and removing barriers to the energy transition.**

#### Policy and regulatory interventions to support electrification

- The IEP committed to investigating current regulatory frameworks applied to the gas network during the transition to electrification; development of a forthcoming gas meter disconnection policy and an assessment of measures to maximise replacement of gas appliances with electric appliances at end-of-life.
- Other policy and regulatory development includes measures to maintain the ACT's 100% renewable electricity as the city grows and electrifies and measures to further improve customer outcomes with the electricity network and consumer energy resources.

#### 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 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.
- As part of the 2025-26 budget, \$1.695 million was reprofiled to 2026-27 to extend delivery of the pilot program through to June 2027 allowing for three-years delivery. Underspend in 2024-25 was a result of slower than anticipated uptake of the pilot by eligible households in the first six months of delivery.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
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- 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 15 August 2025, 49 households have been assessed as eligible. A further 32 households are undergoing eligibility assessments.
- Contractor ActewAGL has completed upgrade works in 31 eligible households.

#### 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 \$21.776 million over three years from 2025-26 to ensure all feasible public and community housing in the ACT is electrified by 2030.

### 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 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.
- 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.

# Regulation preventing new gas connections

## Talking points

- In December 2023, the ACT Government introduced a regulation under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act*, restricting access to new fossil fuel gas network connections.
- The regulation prevents new connections to the gas network in all residential, commercial and community facility land planning zones.
- The regulation also prevents new connections for all residential (class 1-4) buildings in any Territory planning zone. Connections are still permitted in industrial, transport and services, parks and recreation and non-urban planning zones.
- The regulation does not impact existing meters and connections. This means that a business or household can seek gas supply at premises where a connection and gas meter is already in place.
- A transition period for properties designed with gas that had actively commenced planning to lodge development and building approval applications ended on 1 March 2024. Connections for buildings approved and developments lodged before the end of the transition period can proceed with their connections, provided their approval has not expired..
- The Regulation includes an exemptions framework that allows proponents in Commercial and Community facility Territory land planning zones to apply for an exemption.
- If an exemption from the Regulation is sought, the process requires applicants to contact CED's Sustainable Business Program Team for advice, prior to submitting an application.
  - This process ensures businesses have access to information about electrification options, as well as providing broader advice and information on a range of efficiency and sustainable business matters, including access to rebates and other resources.

## Key information

- To date, the Sustainable Business Program Team in CED has had 19 businesses register for advice (3 in 2023-24, 15 in 2024-25 and 1 in 2025-26) that relate to potential future exemption requests. After receiving electrification advice from the team, the majority have not proceeded with a request for an exemption.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
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- Nine businesses (all restaurants) have applied for an exemption. Six of these were not approved, as it was found that electric alternatives were available and that the potential benefits to the community did not outweigh the costs. Three applications are still being assessed.
  - For context, there were more than 400 new food businesses registered in 2024-25. This demonstrates that the regulation is relatively well known within the community.
- The rate of disconnection of gas in the ACT is now outstripping new connections, and the average amount of gas being used by connections across the Territory is falling.
  - There are large numbers of customers using a process called ‘disconnection’ rather than decommissioning or ‘abolishing’ their gas connection. As of June 2025, there were 15,565 connections that had not reported any gas use for more than 12 months.
  - Disconnected services where a meter is still in place, are not captured by the Regulation and gas services can be resumed in the future.
  - The ACT Government is currently working with Evoenergy, the Utilities Technical Regulator and the Australian Energy Regulator, on gas meter abolishment policy options and ways to reduce the cost of leaving the gas network.
- Since the announcement of the intention to regulate, the gas connection rate has declined significantly. Historically gas connections grew by an average of 3% per annum. In 2021-22 Evoenergy reported 0% growth in connections and the following 2 reporting years record declines in connections, with a 2% (-2,705) decline in 2022-23 and a further 1% (- 1,106) decline in 2023-24.

## Background information

- Fossil fuel gas (including LPG) currently accounts for around 21% of the ACT’s greenhouse gas emissions.
- In the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25*, the Government committed to develop a plan for achieving zero emissions from gas use by 2045, including setting timelines with appropriate transition periods for phasing out new and existing gas connections.
- A variation to the Territory Plan to remove the mandatory requirement for gas connections to new suburbs was implemented on 28 August 2020.
- The Integrated Energy Plan released in 2024 highlights actions that work towards preventing new gas connections. These actions include:
  - Developing policy and regulatory frameworks to support safe, efficient and equitable decommissioning of the gas network,
  - The electrification of public and community housing where the cost of gas abolishment will be covered under the National Social Housing Energy Efficiency program funded in partnership by the Australian Government.

### Sensitivities

- Master Plumbers ACT (MPA) raised concerns that the Regulation doesn’t apply to ‘designated land’ under National Capital Authority (NCA) control. The NCA’s new sustainability plan aligns with the Regulation’s intent, and NCA officers have indicated a willingness to work with the ACT Government to consider including designated land in the Regulation’s 2026–27 review.

# Election Commitment – Water Quality – Lake Tuggeranong

## Talking points

- Since 2018, the ACT Government has invested \$40 million to construct wetlands and other water quality assets in the Lake Tuggeranong catchment to clean polluted stormwater, resulting in a 15% reduction in pollution in Lake Tuggeranong.
- For several years the Healthy Waterways team within the Office of Water has conducted research, monitoring, modelling and other data analyses to understand the water quality problems in Tuggeranong and solutions to them. Based on this work, the Office of Water has reported to Government with options for mitigating the pollution and algal bloom problems in Lake Tuggeranong.
- Community consultation on options for restoring Lake Tuggeranong is planned for the latter half of this year. This consultation will feed into Government's development of the *Healthy Waterways Plan for Lake Tuggeranong*.

## Background information

- Water quality in Lake Tuggeranong is poor, resulting in potentially toxic blue-green algal blooms for an average of around three months in summer and closing the lake to primary (e.g. swimming) and secondary (e.g. kayaking) contact due to health risks.
- Excessive levels of faecal coliforms sometimes also occur in the lake, leading to closures.
- The main finding for research is that contemporary pollution from the catchment is the primary driver of algal blooms in Lake Tuggeranong. In-lake interventions (e.g. bubblers) will have little impact until the catchment inputs of pollution can be curbed.
- Since 2018, ACT Government has invested around \$40 million to build 12 constructed wetlands and other water quality assets in the Lake Tuggeranong catchment to clean polluted stormwater.
- According to water quality models, seven of the recently built assets are intercepting 15% of the pollution destined for Lake Tuggeranong. The modelling has demonstrated that water quality assets are necessary to intercept unavoidable pollution but are not sufficient to solve the pollution problem on their own.
- The most impactful and cost-effective options for mitigating pollution in catchments are ones that prevent the stormwater from getting polluted in the first place. Initiatives like targeted street sweeping and community partnerships to prevent pollution have the potential to make a real difference on the quality of our urban lakes.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager  
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- Over the past three years, Healthy Waterways has trialled community partnerships to prevent pollution from resident's blocks and road verges and have worked with city operations teams to improve the management of Government-owned green space.
- Since many catchment pollution mitigation options involve changes to the management of blue-green corridors, Healthy Waterways plans consider how options will also affect other objectives for blue-green space, e.g. flooding, Ngunnawal values, urban heat, biodiversity, amenity and travel, recreation etc.
- The anticipated schedule for release of draft Healthy Waterways plans for community consultation is:
  - Lake Tuggeranong – Q3 2025
  - Yerrabi Pond – (initial Q4 2025 targeted stakeholder engagement), full community engagement in 2027/28
  - Lake Burley Griffin – 2027
  - Lake Ginninderra – 2027/28
- The aim is for the Healthy Waterways plans, and similar plans to be living documents that are updated as new knowledge comes to hand.

### History

- Healthy Waterways is a program to address water quality and quantity problems in Canberra and the ACT through planning and on-ground actions.
- Stage 1 of ACT Healthy Waterways began in 2014 as a \$94 million joint initiative of the Australian and ACT Governments. It was completed in June 2021.
- In 2020, the ACT Government invested a further \$1 million to build a floating wetland in Lake Tuggeranong, to begin planning for the next stage of works, and to extend the research program.
- From February 2021, a total of \$29.66 million in ACT Government initiative funding was invested in 4 tranches. Most of the funding was for activities to June 2025, with recurrent annual funding from the 2025-26 FY for 8 FTE of staff and \$287,000 for operation and maintenance of newly built water quality assets.
- Healthy Waterways funding has been used to:
  - Design and build 27 constructed wetlands and other water quality assets.
  - Run pilot community partnership programs targeting leaves on verges and fertiliser use in residential gardens.
  - Work across Government to adopt water sensitive practices.
  - Build an evidence base—research, monitoring, data analysis and modelling—to underpin planning and on-ground actions.
  - Carry out planning and restoration activities in the rural Naas-Gudgenby River catchment.
  - Draft two of five Healthy Waterways plans for solving water quality problems in selected waterbodies. The remaining plans will be produced over the next two to three years with existing funding.



# Water Pricing – Water Abstraction Charge Review

## Talking points

- The Water Abstraction Charge which applied in the 2024-25 financial year has been increased by 3.00% for the 2025-26 financial year, as per the decision in the 2016-17 Budget.
- Work is underway to better understand the relationship between the Water Abstraction Charge (WAC) and expenditure on water planning and management activities.
- This is a complex matter which requires a considered and informed approach underpinned by a thorough understanding and assessment of the WAC's methodology.
- Given the wide-reaching impacts associated with any changes to water pricing, the government will ensure that any changes are framed by an appropriate transition plan to ensure consumers are afforded additional stability.
- A review of Non-potable Water was undertaken by ACT Treasury in 2021. It made a range of recommendations including that the appropriateness of the current pricing framework for non-potable water should be considered.
- The government notes that addressing issues with the WAC will impact both potable and non-potable water pricing and is carefully considering how to address this matter.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
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# Key information

## *WAC Fee determination*

- The Water Abstraction Charge is made by the ACT Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water through a determination under Section 107 of the *Water Resources Act 2007*.
- The current Water Abstraction Charge is made in the *Water Resource (Fees) Determination 2025*. The WAC is separately determined for two categories including:
  - water taken for the purposes of urban water supply (i.e. potable/drinking water use) – \$0.732 per kilolitre in 2025-26; and
  - surface water or groundwater taken for non-potable use - \$0.354 per kilolitre in 2025-26
  - Revenue from the WAC is currently collected as consolidated revenue and is not hypothecated. Expenditure of consolidated revenue is set out in the ACT Budget.
- While Revenue Policy is a matter for Treasury under the Administrative Arrangements, the City and Environment Directorate prepares the proposed fee determination, in consultation with Treasury, for the Minister's consideration.
  - City and Environment Directorate areas that reviewed the proposed 2025 determination include the Finance and Legal teams; the Environment, Land and Technical Regulation Branch of Access Canberra; and policy areas with responsibility for environment and water.
- The potable WAC was increased in 2006-07 and the ACT Government has applied annual indexation of three percent since 2017-18.

## *WAC methodology*

- The ACT's method for calculating water charges has not been updated since the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's (ICRC) 2003 review.
- The ICRC calculated the Water Abstraction Charge based on three components:
  - Water Supply Costs: this is the recovery of costs for catchment management, biodiversity and environmental monitoring, environment protection, water utility regulation, health monitoring and regulation, water policy and legal services,
  - Environmental Cost: this is a value estimated for the cost to the environment caused by altering the timing and magnitude of downstream flows by retaining water in dams and abstracting it in the ACT, and
  - Scarcity Value: this is the value associated with the consumptive use of water in the ACT that prevents alternative use for other economically valuable purposes such as irrigation.
- The Territory has since agreed to several policy and legislative instruments, including the *Water Act 2007* (Cth), 2010 National Water Initiative (NWI) Pricing Principles and the Commonwealth Water Charge Rules (WCRs).
- In September 2023, the then Treasurer and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction agreed to review the ICRC undertaking an in-confidence review of the WAC methodology. The ICRC's final report was received in February 2024 and is informing methodological options currently being considered.
  - The report has not been publicly released.
  - The then Treasurer referred to the ICRC's review in response to a QTON (No.140) during the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-25 public hearings.

- ‘The *State of the Lake and Waterways Report (2022)*, prepared by the Office for the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, recommended that the ACT Government publish an annual detailed breakdown of how WAC revenue is expended.
- The government’s response agreed in-principle to this recommendation, noting its support for transparency in applying charges for cost recovery and relevant expenditure.
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has an existing statutory role under the *Water Act 2007 (Cth)* to monitor and report annually on regulated water charges.
  - The report includes government expenditure and revenue for water planning and management activities within the Murray-Darling Basin.
- The ACT Government is required to collate and report its water management expenses to the ACCC each year.
- The WAC is set and collected by the ACT Government. The ICRC has no legislative responsibilities for setting or regulating the WAC.
  - The ICRC makes price directions to Icon Water for charges to recover water delivery and sewerage costs. The ICRC has no legislative responsibilities in setting the Water Abstraction Charge.

#### *National Water Reforms – Recovery of water planning and management cost*

- Microeconomic reforms related to water pricing have been agreed by successive governments under the National Competition Policy, National Water Initiative (NWI, 2004), *Water Act 2007 (Cth)* and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (2012).
- The ACT is a signatory to inter-governmental agreements that give effect to these water reforms. Specifically, the ACT has agreed to implement water pricing and institutional arrangements that promote economically efficient and sustainable use of water resources, water infrastructure assets, and government resources devoted to the management of water.
- The NWI pricing principles promotes user-pays and pricing transparency, in respect of water supply systems and cost recovery for water planning and management.
- In line with the NWI, pricing principles, the WAC is intended to recover water planning and management costs not included in the provision of water supply, reflect the environmental costs from water abstraction, and the value of water as a natural resource.

# Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River Program

## 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 near Yass.
- Funding provided under the Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River FFA agreement provides the ACT with \$7.58m over five years. The funds are supporting an expansion of current river health science and monitoring programs, on ground river restoration activities and First Nations and broader community engagement in program delivery.
- This work will enhance our understanding of how the upper Murrumbidgee River responds to different flow regimes which has the potential to better protect the environmental, cultural, social and critical human water needs that our region relies on.
- 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.
- The ACT Project Work Plan that outlines how the \$7.58m will be spent over the next four years have been signed off by the Australian Government. It includes \$3 million for erosion control, fencing, riparian planting, and instream habitat structures.

The work has potential to benefit the river well beyond the 5-year timeframe 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.

### A note on Snowy Hydro

- Since the establishment of Tantangara Dam, over 95% of the headwaters from the Murrumbidgee River is diverted under the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Woo O'Reilly  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

- 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.
- We are conscious, however, 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 in March 2025 and will shortly be published on the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website..
- The Project Work Plan outlines four years of restoration activities, with over \$3 million allocated to erosion control, fencing, planting, and instream habitat structures.
- An additional \$2.5 million will fund research and monitoring, focusing, in part, on the ecological impacts of Snowy Hydro flow diversions.
- The Project Work Plan also supports community-led initiatives and prioritises meaningful engagement with Ngunnawal people, including a co-designed Cultural and River Health project.

## Background information

- In November 2023, the Australian Government committed more than \$55m to improve the health of the Upper Murrumbidgee River (ACT and NSW). This included:
  - \$15m over 3 years to address river health, water quality and habitat
  - \$5m over 5 years for new science and monitoring projects
  - \$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.
- The Restoring the Upper Murrumbidgee River Program is funded through the first two dot points.

# ACT Water Strategy - refresh

## Talking points

- Work is continuing on the refresh of the ACT Water Strategy. The Strategy and its associated implementation plans will guide the next 20 years of water resource management. It will also provide an opportunity to reflect more contemporary information and emerging priorities, including climate change, a growing population, urbanisation and ageing infrastructure.
- In response to the call for greater integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and objectives in to the Strategy, further targeted engagement is being undertaken. The new strategy will seek to reestablish a shared vision for water that embodies the values and aspirations of Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians.
- The Office of Water has procured an Aboriginal consultant to support relationship building and collaboration across a range of water resource management matters.
- In alignment with this commitment, the ACT Water Strategy has been identified as a foundational water policy and a priority item to progress, with a strong focus on embedding Aboriginal knowledge systems, values, and voices to guide inclusive and culturally responsive water management.
- This consultation is underway and involves working collaboratively with First Nations communities to identify their priorities, concerns, and desired levels of involvement in decision-making processes.
- A Listening Report, which provides a summary of the feedback received during May/July 2024 engagement has been released on the YourSay webpage. An addendum will be released following targeted consultation with First Nations people.
- The Strategy refresh will be finalised post First Nations engagement.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 22/08/2025  
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager  
Contact Officer name: Maria Mangeruca  
Lead Directorate: City and Environment

## Key information

- The *ACT Water Strategy 2014-44: Striking the Balance* (Strategy) is the ACT Government's central policy position guiding the direction of water policy within the Territory.
- In line with the ten-year review period, the Office of Water has been progressing a project to refresh the Strategy and the associated Implementation Plan. The main changes to the Strategy being that there is a greater focus on:
  - providing strategic direction and aspirations,
  - improving monitoring and evaluation,
  - improving reporting requirements to support information sharing, and
  - incorporating water interests and values of First Nations people (an additional outcome has been added).
- Public consultation occurred between 15 May and 28 June 2024 and included a community information and feedback session, a **targeted stakeholder** session as well as a short and long form survey on YourSay.



Add reference number

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

Choose a Portfolio

# 2025-26 Budget Initiatives

## Talking points

**Climate action – Continuing climate change action and environmental protection**



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	4,426	3,540	1,448	1,375	<b>10,789</b>
Expenses – Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	207	0	0	0	<b>207</b>
Expenses – Justice and Community Safety	296	0	0	0	<b>296</b>
Offset – Expenses – Provision	-505	-513	-338	-343	<b>-1,699</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>3,027</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>9,593</b>

# Sch 1 1.6

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/08/2025  
 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 78628  
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 TRIM Ref:

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## Climate action – Continuing the Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'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>

# Sch 1 1.6

## Climate action – Electrification of Public Housing



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital	13,423	5,355	176	0	18,954
Capital – Housing ACT	0	333	338	0	671
Offset – Capital – Provision	0	0	0	-10,000	-10,000
<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	823	571	412	1,999
Expenses – Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	0	152	0	0	152
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>2,151</b>

# Sch 1 1.6

## Climate action – Improving energy efficiency for Canberra's homes and businesses



	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	4,627	4,406	3,339	3,406	15,778
Offset – Expenses	-176	0	0	0	-176
Offset – Revenue	-3,600	-3,800	-4,000	-4,150	-15,550
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>-661</b>	<b>-744</b>	<b>52</b>

Using revenue collected through the EEIS, deliver 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.

# Sch 1 1.6

## Combatting invasive species and protecting Canberra's biosecurity



	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>

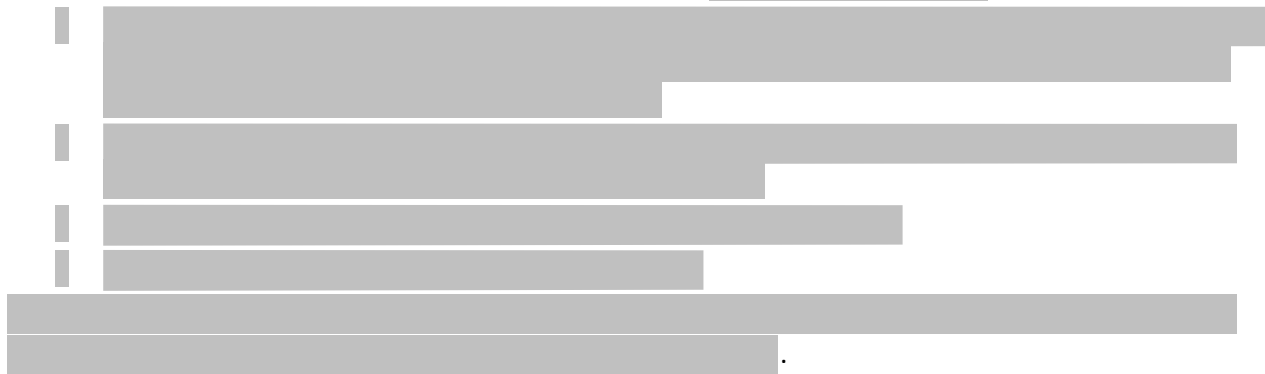
# Sch 1 1.6

## Delivering the ACT's Landscape Plan



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'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>

**\$3.924 million** in expense funding over two years from 2025-26 to undertake critical conservation action, enhance natural and urban climate adaptation developments, and develop environmental and urban adaptation policy to deliver the ACT's first Landscape Plan. [Sch 1 1.6](#)



## Protecting 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	5,018
Offset – Expenses	-545	-187	-125	-127	-983
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>4,035</b>

# Sch 1 1.6

## Safeguarding the Territory's water resources – Continuing the Water Efficiency Program



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

# Sch 1 1.6

## Safeguarding the Territory's water resources – Improving Lake Tuggeranong



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'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>

# Sch 1 1.6

## Sustainable revenue – Motor vehicle duty (CMTEDD initiative)



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Revenue	19,170	25,300	27,300	29,200	100,970
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>-19,170</b>	<b>-25,300</b>	<b>-27,300</b>	<b>-29,200</b>	<b>-100,970</b>

Reflecting the increasing preference for low and zero emissions vehicles, from 1 September 2025, the complete concession for motor vehicle duty for zero emission vehicles will be replaced with a minimum 2.5 per cent duty and with increasing duty rates proportionally based on emissions and value. There will also be a new tax rate of eight per cent for motor vehicle duty on the value of vehicles above \$80,000.

## Sustainable revenue – Utilities Network Facilities (CMTEDD initiative)



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Revenue	1,300	2,600	2,600	2,600	9,100
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>-1,300</b>	<b>-2,600</b>	<b>-2,600</b>	<b>-2,600</b>	<b>-9,100</b>

The Government will increase the Utilities Network Facilities Tax, charged on the owners of network facilities on land in the ACT, by an additional 2.5 percentage point increases above the wage price index (WPI) for 2025-26 and 2026-27. This will increase own-source taxation to sustainably deliver public services and infrastructure for the Canberra community.

## FFAs not included in Budget Outlook as an initiative.

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



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	780	655	390	0	1,825
Revenue	-780	-655	-390	0	-1,825
<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.

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



	2025-26 \$'000	2026-27 \$'000	2027-28 \$'000	2028-29 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	2,580	2,200	500	500	5,780
Revenue	-2,580	-2,200	-500	-500	-5,780
<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.

# Sch 1 1.6

## Key information

The above provides a complete listing of initiatives funded in the 2025-26 Budget under the Climate Change, Energy and Water portfolio, revenue initiatives that may have impacts on your portfolio policies, and new FFAs that were signed.



## Background information

- Information provides further breakdowns of what was funded in initiatives included in the 2025-26 Budget Outlook.