

Minister for Environment / Minister for Heritage
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development
Friday 22 October 2021 – 9.30am to 12.00pm

BUDGET ITEMS		
1.	C18 Biosecurity response to the La Nina weather pattern in 2020-21	Environment, Heritage and Water
2.	E19 Increase Funding for Local Environmental Volunteer-based Groups	Environment, Heritage and Water
3.	C03 Funding of Env Offsets & Franklin NR Enhancement-Stage 2	Environment, Heritage and Water

ENVIRONMENT QTBS		
4.	EPA Guidelines for Construction & Land Development - NEW	Environment
5.	Red Hill Integrated Plan - Environmental Impacts	Environment
6.	Defence Housing Consultation - Multiple Threatened Species on Lawson Grasslands	Environment
7.	Status of the EPBC Act Review and Reforms	Environment
8.	Air Quality	Environment
9.	COVID 19 Stimulus package	Environment
10.	Biodiversity in the ACT	Environment
11.	Mouse plague	Environment
12.	Wombat Mange	Environment
13.	Kangaroo Management	Environment (PCS)
14.	Lower Cotter Bettong Experimental Release	Environment
15.	Banning and reduction of pesticides	Environment
16.	Invasive Species (weeds and pest animals)	Environment
17.	Threatened Species Management	Environment (PCS)
18.	Cat containment	Environment
19.	Catchment management groups and Volunteering	Environment (water)
20.	Mulligan's Flat - conservation activities and learning centre	Environment (PCS)
21.	COVID impacts on core environmental work	Environment
22.	Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the ACT	Environment, Water and Emissions Reduction

23.	ParkCare - NEW	Environment (PCS)

HERITAGE QTBS		
24.	Hall Showground heritage building	Heritage
25.	22 Brockman St Narrabundah	Heritage
26.	National Heritage listing of Canberra	Heritage
27.	Nomination of Lake Burley Griffin	Heritage
28.	Planting at The Bradfield	Heritage
29.	Heritage Nomination List	Heritage
30.	DOMA Group development at Mount Ainslie	Heritage
31.	Ginninderra Creek Corroboree Ground Cultural Gathering Place	Heritage
32.	Council Membership	Heritage



Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Managing invasive species (EPSDD C18CB)		Environment and climate			
	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	414	839	851	864	2,968

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will establish an Invasive Species Rapid Response Biosecurity Team to undertake early containment of invasive plants, animals, and diseases to reduce the biosecurity risk in the ACT. This initiative builds on the activity funded in the 2020-21 Budget.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 4 ACT Greens Policy Platform for 10th Assembly, 17.4:

"Increase funding for weeds and invasive species management (\$7.5M over 4 years)."

This initiative will align with the Parliamentary Agreement (17.4) by focusing funds to establish a dedicated biosecurity response unit specifically to identify and address high priority invasive species (plants and animals) that may impact the natural environment, urban areas and productive agricultural land within the ACT.

With a changing climate and under the current La Nina weather pattern (which is favourable to invasive species establishment), it is expected that biosecurity incursions will increase and therefore the early identification and response to these early invaders is critical to ensuring that they do not establish and impact identified values.

The project is focused on critical on ground works to reduce threats from invasive species and build response capability of the ACT Government to biosecurity incursions.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Recruitment of dedicated invasive species rapid response unit to bolster current biosecurity response capability within EPSDD	EPSDD	Dec 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Prioritise new and emerging biosecurity threats that have been exacerbated due to La Nina weather patten.	EPSDD	Dec 2021
	Develop a monitoring and reporting framework to ensure consistency in reporting project outputs and outcomes across all invasive species managed.	EPSDD	June 2020
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Develop the ACT government's ability, through skilled staff and proactive management and response procedures, to protect the natural environment and productive agricultural land within the ACT from biosecurity incursions in a changing climate.	EPSDD	June 2025
	Biosecurity threats identified in Step 2 above managed and impacts on the environment and agricultural production mitigated.	EPSDD	June 2025

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2020-21 Budget initiative *Biosecurity response to the La Nina weather pattern in 2020-21* provided a one-off funding of \$626,000 in 2020-21 for management of significant invasive species growth resulting from the La Nina weather pattern experienced in the ACT (2020-21 Budget Outlook, page 85).



Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Support for local volunteer-based environmental groups (EPSDD E19CB)

Social connection

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	824	856	893	926	3,499

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue support for community delivery of environmental outcomes through volunteer programs and expand the ACT Environment Grants program.

This initiative builds on the 2019-20 Budget Review initiative *Supporting volunteers to undertake environmental conservation*. The initiative will support the ACT's three catchment groups, which includes the delivery of FrogWatch and Waterwatch. Funding has also been provided to ACT Wildlife, and to support the ongoing employment for a second ParkCare Ranger.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Social connection and Environment and climate.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 4 ACT Greens Policy Platform for 10th Assembly, 17.5:

"Increase funding for local environmental volunteer-based groups (\$3.2M over 4 years)".

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Prepare and execute funding agreements for the three Catchment Groups and ACT Wildlife	EPSDD	ASAP, 2021
	Review the ACT Environment Grants program and increase the level of funds available to support the delivery of community environment projects.	EPSDD	ASAP, 2021
	Recruit a ParkCare Ranger North within the ACT Parks and Conservation Service to support delivery of the ParkCare program.	EPSDD	ASAP, 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Review and update funding agreements with the three catchment groups and ACT Wildlife	EPSDD	2022/23
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Evaluate the outcomes of the three Catchment Groups and ACT Wildlife	EPSDD	2023/24 – 2024/25

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2020 August Economic and Fiscal Update (EFU) initiative *Volunteer Activation – Getting more people, more active in caring for nature* provided a one-off funding of \$475,000 in 2020-21 to support catchment management groups and ACT Wildlife (August 2020 EFU, page 83).

Portfolio/s: Environment
Planning and Land Management



Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Franklin Nature Reserve enhancement (EPSDD C03CB)		Environment and climate			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	310	2,529	147	69	3,055
Depreciation	0	6	91	93	190
Expenses	799	871	714	718	3,102
Net cost of services	799	877	804	811	3,292

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue to deliver environmental biodiversity offset commitments to support land releases as part of the West Belconnen and Gungahlin Strategic Assessments. This includes employment of rangers and other staff to deliver *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (Commonwealth) requirements.

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

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
2	Finalise recruitment of 3 Ranger positions for the Northern Offsets Team, an Assistant Director Environmental Offsets Team and Assistant Director Biodiversity Policy Team	Environment Heritage and Water	2021
3	Nadjung Mada (Kenny) Nature Reserve Establishment Phase – Reserve infrastructure including signs and boundary fencing and land management, restoration and MNES monitoring activities	Parks and Conservation Service	2021-2022
5	Budjan Galinji (Franklin Grasslands) Nature Reserve Landscape Plan – Final Sketch Plan and Detailed Design phase and land management activities including pest plant and animal control, restoration activities and MNES monitoring (Initiative year 1)	Parks and Conservation Service	2021-2022
6	Jarramlee (Gooromon Grasslands) – Golden Sun Moth habitat restoration and ongoing reserve infrastructure, landmanagement, and GSM population monitoring activities (Initiative year 1)	Parks and Conservation Service	2021-2022
SHORT-TERM			
8	Nadjung Mada – land management, restoration and MNES monitoring activities (Initiative year 2)	Parks and Conservation Service	2022-2023
9	Budjan Galinji Nature Reserve Landscape Plan – Construction	Parks and Conservation Service	2022-2023
10	Budjan Galinji – Land management activities including pest plant and animal control, restoration activities, and MNES monitoring (Initiative year 2)	Parks and Conservation Service	2022-2023
11	Jarramlee – Riparian restoration	Parks and Conservation Service	2022-2023
12	Jarramlee – Ongoing reserve infrastructure, landmanagement, and GSM population monitoring activities (Initiative year 2)	Parks and Conservation Service	2022-2023
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
13	Nadjung Mada – Ongoing management of new reserve infrastructure such as fencing, tracks and signage and land management, restoration and MNES monitoring activities (Initiative year 3+)	Parks and Conservation Service	2023-2024 onwards
15	Budjan Galinji – Ongoing management of new reserve infrastructure such as fencing, tracks and signage and land management activities including pest plant and animal control, restoration activities and MNES monitoring (Initiative year 3+)	Parks and Conservation Service	2023-24 onwards
17	Jarramlee – Ongoing reserve infrastructure, landmanagement, and GSM population monitoring activities (Initiative year 3+)	Parks and Conservation Service	2023-24 onwards

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

This initiative does not ask for funding for activities that have already been funded by previous business cases.

In 2019-20 Budget process (EPSDD C13), funding was provided to partially fund sites in both the WBSA (Gooroomon Grasslands: Jarramlee and West Macgregor) and the GSA (Kenny/Nadjung Mada). The funding provided in 2019-20 was insufficient to fund the capital and recurrent expenditure for these sites

Six (6) months of partial funding of this initiative was also received in the 2020-21 delayed 'urgent and unavoidable' budget process

Portfolio/s: Environment

Business and Better Regulation

Environment Protection Guidelines for Land Development and Construction in the ACT

Talking points:

- The draft version of the updated Environment Protection Guidelines for Construction and Land Development in the ACT went out for public consultation in February 2020, before the consultation process was put on hold due to the COVID-19. The consultation period was then extended until 17 July 2020. This draft version of the updated guidelines is available on the Environment website.
- The updated guidelines are currently in final editing and formatting stages and are expected to be published early 2022.
- The previous version of the guidelines (2011) are still current and available on Access Canberra's website.

Key Information

- The current version of the guidelines are available on Access Canberra's website: (<https://files.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/legacy/3391/Environment%20Protection%20Guidelines%20for%20Construction%20and%20Land%20Development%20in%20the%20ACT.pdf>).
- \$25,000 was paid for a review of current guidelines undertaken by the environmental firm Prentice Eco Systems.

Background Information

- The consultation version was reformatted and incorporated comments from internal stakeholders and the results from the review undertaken by Prentice Eco Systems.
- Over 120 comments were received, including technical, visual and structural suggestions. Additional research, photographs and technical discussions with internal and external stakeholders were required on several issues, including climate change aspects, before final decisions were made to accept or reject each suggested change.
- The guidelines's focus is on major land development and construction with guidance for smaller scale residential development (<https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/article/environment-protection-guidelines-tab-overview>).
- The current guidance for smaller scale residential development (Information Sheets 1-6) is also being consolidated into a single user friendly booklet and is also anticipated to be released alongside the new guideline .

Cleared as complete and accurate:	19/10/2021	
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Portfolio: Environment**Red Hill Integrated Plan – Environment Considerations****Talking points:**

- The ACT Government endorsed the final Integrated Plan for Red Hill Nature Reserve and Surrounds on 9 June 2021.
- The Red Hill Integrated Plan is strongly supported by local stakeholder groups including: the ACT Conservation Council, Red Hill Regenerators, Friends of Grassland, the Hughes Woodland Group, Garran and Hughes Residents Action Group and the Deakin Residents Association.
- A key recommendation is to investigate options to incorporate woodland areas of high ecological values in the northern section at Deakin Section 66 and at the Federal Golf Club into the adjoining Nature Reserve.
- There is consensus amongst experts that the high ecological values are concentrated in the northern section of the Federal golf course.
- The Red Hill Integrated Plan provides the best way forward by protecting the key environmental values for this area by limiting the scale and location of any development to a small scale, low density retirement village on the southern section.
- It strikes the balance between the important need to provide strong protection for biodiversity both inside and outside of the Red Hill Nature Reserve, protecting the amenity of residents and allowing for some limited development activity on the southern end of the golf course.

Plan Variations

- Two Territory Plan variations are currently being prepared as part of the implementation:
 - One variation applies to land at Deakin sections 66 and 78 and includes land proposed to be zoned for open space and incorporated into Red Hill Reserve—consistent with recommendation 6 of the Integrated Plan; and
 - Another relates to enabling development for a retirement village at the southern part of the Federal Golf Course – consistent with recommendation 7 of the Plan.

Petition

- The Garran Resident's Association and Hughes Residents Association have lodged a petition in the Legislative Assembly via Guilia Jones MLA against recommendation 7 of the Integrated Plan (for the retirement village at the Federal Golf Course).

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- The Garran Residents Association and Hughes Residents Association have also published a petition flyer that states *Keep Federal for Birdies and Birds*. The flyer states “the Federal Golf Course and surrounding green spaces are home to up to 12 species of parrots and cockatoos, some listed vulnerable, as well as 2,000 other native species. It is also part of the second largest remnant of Yellow Box-Blakely’s Red Gum Woodland in Australia, with 95% already destroyed”.

Potential Environmental Impacts

- The following concerns were raised about potential impacts of development of a retirement village at the golf course during the engagement process for the draft Plan in 2019/2020:
 - the potential impacts on ecological values at the southern end of the Golf Course
 - potential impacts on amenity of low-density residential areas surrounding the Golf course; and
 - traffic impacts on Kitchener Street
- The ecological features identified by Ecologists from the Environment, Heritage and Water Division, EPSDD who have undertaken a rapid site assessment are:
 - areas of native vegetation (approximately 12 ha)
 - two significant bird species (superb parrot and gang gang cockatoo).
- Some key features of the Federal Golf Course site include mature native trees, many of which are hundreds of years old and are breeding sites for gang gang cockatoos. There are also known nesting trees across the Deakin sites, which is at the northern end of the site and are protected.
- RT1027-Group Deakin is a group registration of trees under the Tree Protection Act 2005 on account of their high habitat value. The Tree Advisory Panel and the Conservator have agreed to the registration due to their significance for habitat and the scientific importance of being part of the Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland community. The registration can be found at:
https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/act_tree_register/registered_trees
- The final Red Hill Integrated Plan was amended to stipulate 50 metre wide buffers between development at the golf course and surrounding residential. The buffers are intended to:
 - Retain and enhance ecological values and corridors at the golf course and to maintain connectivity to the surrounding open space network and the Hughes woodland; and
 - Minimise potential impacts on the amenity of surrounding residential areas.

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- A detailed site assessment and habitat assessment will be required to be undertaken by the proponent to address the requirements of environmental assessment and approvals under ACT and Commonwealth legislation.
- The removal of mature native trees is listed as a Key Threatening Process under the Nature Conservation Act and must be considered as planning progresses for the retirement village at the Federal Golf Course.
- An independent traffic analysis was conducted as part of the integrated planning process. It was endorsed by Transport Canberra and City Services and found that the surrounding road network has capacity to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed retirement village at the golf course.

Background Information

- An internal Implementation Strategy has been prepared to map out next steps associated with the Plan recommendations. Implementation involves coordination of a number of agencies, consideration of implementation timeframes, Government resources and priorities.
- The mature native trees over the Federal Golf Course may also hold cultural significance for the traditional custodians of the land and their views and advice may have influence over the development outcomes.

Portfolio: Environment

Multiuple threatened species on Lawson Grasslands

Talking points:

- ACT Government Conservation Officers undertook a site visit on 30 June 2020 to discuss a proposed development in Lawson with Defence housing Australia (DHA).
- The site is known to have conservation values including Natural Temperate Grassland and Box Gum Woodland threatened ecological communities which were confirmed on site at this time.
- Lawson is also habitat for threatened species 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 present.
- There is also a known population of Ginninderra Peppercress (an endangered plant under the Nature Conservation Act and EPBC Act) occurring adjacent to the proposed development area.

Key Information

- Future development within parts of Lawson North will be subject to environmental approval by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and planning approval by the National Capital Authority (NCA) consistent with Development Control Plan (DCP) No. 12/09 (Belconnen Naval Transmission Station).
- The project timeline on the website (www.dha.gov.au/development/residential/lawson-act) states that construction will commence in 2023 and be completed in 2024.
- The land is likely to remain National Land as the website states that applications will be lodged with DAWE and the NCA.
- The referral (DAWE) will be sent to EPSDD for comment, however, a bilateral agreement would not be available as it is National Land. As such, the NCA is the decision maker on all aspects of the proposed development. The ACT Government has no specific approval role.
- The DCP 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.

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- Following approval of the concept plan by the NCA, a works approval (development) application will be lodged with the NCA for assessment and determination. Further public notification will occur at this stage.

Background Information

- Lawson North is declared National Land and is administered by the National Capital Authority (NCA) on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.
- The proposal is for Defense Housing Australia (DHA) to cater for a 570 dwelling estate, north of the existing Lawson estate.
- The Conservation Council Act Region requested a meeting with the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and representatives of the Conservator met with the Conservation Council to discuss ecological and environmental issues related to the proposed development at Lawson North on Wednesday 21 July 2021. It was noted that there is little information available about the development proposal from the DHA and that any publicly available information that either group is made aware of will be shared.

Portfolio: Environment**Status of the EPBC Act Review and Reforms****Talking points**

- On 30 October 2020, Professor Graeme Samuel AC provided the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, with the Final Report on his independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The Final report
 - covers the context of the Act, various aspects relating to its effectiveness and efficiency, and 38 recommended reforms..
 - was released publicly on 28 January 2021 and is available on the internet (<http://www.epbcactreview.environment.gov.au>)..
 - paints an alarming picture of the rate of environmental and biodiversity decline in Australia.
- The Cwlth recently released the document *A pathway for reforming national environmental law* and proposed timeline of their staged approach to reform of Australia's national environmental law. The pathway document and timeline were provided to all State and Territory Environment Ministers and are online at: www.environment.gov.au/epbc/about/environmental-law-reform.
- The EPBC Act Amendment (Standards and Assurance) Bill 2021 and the EPBC Amendment (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020 are listed on the Australian draft legislative program. Both Bills have been subject to Senate inquiries.
- National Cabinet debate on the EPBC reforms could include discussions on the Amendment Bills, the National Environmental Standards, and reducing unnecessary, overlapping or duplicative cross-jurisdictional regulatory burden.
- Senior officials (ACT /Cwlth) are discussing development of an approval bilateral agreement including benchmarking of ACT approvals processes. A benchmarking template and accreditation criteria will be used for accrediting ACT processes.
- A parallel process under the reforms by the Cwlth is the development of a national Digital Environmental Assessment Program including a Biodiversity Data Repository.
- The previously provided Accreditation criteria for 'single touch' approvals under the EPBC Act 1999 were published at: <https://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/accreditation-criteria-for-single-touch-approvals>.
- The Commonwealth has been aiming to sign bilateral agreements with all jurisdictions by the end of 2021.
- For an approval bilateral agreement to be operational in 2021, an agreement would have needed to be signed and tabled in Parliament by 30 August 2021. Some

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jurisdictions were working towards this timeframe, others are working towards the end of the year to have an agreement signed. Should the ACT sign an agreement towards the end of 2021, accreditation would occur in early 2022.

Key Information

- In July 2020 and reaffirmed in December 2020, National Cabinet agreed in principle to support 'single touch' environmental approvals through negotiation of approval bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and states and territories.
- The benefits of the ACT entering into an approval bilateral agreement potentially include reducing regulatory duplication, increasing certainty for developers, quicker regulatory timeframes, a reduction in unnecessary costs for business and more streamlined assessment and approval processes.
- The ACT is in a good administrative position to negotiate an agreement given its preparatory work for an approval bilateral agreement in 2014 as part of 'one stop shop' reforms, including amending the *Planning and Development Act 2007*.
- The Standards and Assurance Bill enables the establishment of legally enforceable National Environmental Standards and an Environment Assurance Commissioner to independently monitor and audit environmental approval systems.
- National Environmental Standards, which are less strong and comprehensive than those recommended by Prof. Samuel, were presented in April 2021 to the ACT by Minister Ley. The Cwlth has stated that the Standards meet the 'current requirements' of the EPBC Act. The strength of the standards is a critical factor in whether the recommended reforms can address the serious environmental challenges outlined in the review report.
- DAWE officials have indicated that resourcing will be dealt with during negotiation of the bilateral agreement. The ACT's concerns about resourcing have been included on a Cwlth issues register. Consideration of resourcing may focus on approvals processes gaps identified in the benchmarking phase.
- The issue of the ACT (and some other jurisdictions) wanting to potentially meet a higher standard than present EPBC requirements has been raised, along with resourcing issues to do so.
- The EPSDD will be provided with DAWE timeframes on cabinet processes and the ACT items for which accreditation will be sought (e.g. just the mechanisms under the PD Act and PD Regs, or also policy documents). The EPSDD is consolidating a list of all relevant assessment documents for consideration in the accreditation process.
- Workshops between Cwlth and ACT officials on the proposed single touch approval are held fortnightly, with the most recent being on 25 August 2021.

Background Information

- Independent review of the operation and effectiveness of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is a statutory requirement. It must be completed at least once every 10 years. The Terms of Reference for the Review encompass the operation of the Act and the extent to which the objects of the Act have been achieved.
- The ACT Government has provided input into the EPBC Act Review in various official forums. These include:
 - in May 2020 a preliminary submission on the 2020 EPBC Act Review
 - in September 2020 a submission relating to the Interim Report on the EPBC Act Review
 - in November 2020 a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020 (Streamlining Bill)
 - in December 2020 correspondence to Minister Ley with preliminary feedback on the National Environmental Standards (NES).
- Official responses from the Commonwealth to this feedback have not been received.

Portfolio: Environment

AIR QUALITY

Talking points:

- The ACT Government has committed to developing a Smoke and Air Quality Strategy in 2021 which will outline the ACT's initiatives and future actions to address smoke from bushfire events and domestic wood heaters for the benefit of the community.
- On 15 April 2021 Environment Ministers agreed to a variation to the Ambient Air Quality National Environment Protection Measure to strengthen air quality standards for ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide. This is the conclusion of an extensive process, including community and stakeholder engagement, to strengthen and modernise ambient air quality standards to reflect the latest scientific understanding of the health effects of air pollution.
- Air quality monitoring is undertaken by ACT Health at three locations; Monash, Civic and Florey in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environment Protection Measure made under the *National Environment Protection Council Act 1994*.
- The Environment Protection Authority within Access Canberra reports annually on the air quality in Canberra in accordance with the Ambient Air Quality National Environment Protection Measure.
- ACT Health provides hourly advice to the public on the levels of these pollutant above the national ambient air quality standards through the online Air Quality Index and AirRater App.
- Smoke from bushfires is likely to become an increasingly significant issue due to climate change, resulting in increased fire frequency, fire intensity, drought and extreme weather events and decreased suitable prescribed burning days.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has developed a risk assessment framework for its staff and volunteers working outdoors based on the air quality criteria and advice provided by ACT Health.

Actsmart Wood Heater Replacement Program (WHRP)

- The Actsmart Wood Heater Replacement Program (WHRP) aims to improve the ACT's air quality by offering financial incentives for the removal and disposal of domestic wood burning heaters and their replacement with efficient electric heating systems.
- The following rebates are currently being offered:
 - \$250 for the removal of a wood heater
 - \$750 for removal of a wood heater and installation of electric reverse cycle system (minimum of 3 stars)
 - \$750 for removal of a wood heater and upgrade of electric reverse cycle system (minimum of 3 stars)

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- \$1250 for removal of a wood heater and installation of electric ducted reverse cycle system.

Key Information

- EPSDD is responsible for the Ambient Air Quality National Environment Protection Measure (AAQ NEPM) and *National Environment Protection Council Act 1994* (NEPC Act). The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for implementation of the AAQ NEPM and annual reporting, and ACT Health operates the AAQ NEPM monitoring stations and is responsible for live reporting of data and public health messaging.
- The ACT Air Quality Report 2020 (published June 2021) presents the results of ambient air quality monitoring in the ACT for the 2020 calendar year.
- The ACT Government has a range of programs to address emissions from domestic wood heaters. These include regulation of commercial firewood to ensure it is sold in a seasoned condition, the Wood Heater Replacement Program to remove old inefficient heaters, and the Burn Right Tonight public education campaign on how to correctly operate a wood heater.
- The ACT Government has also recently announced the Sustainable Household Scheme which will offer zero-interest loans of between \$2,000 to \$15,000 to support eligible ACT households to live more comfortably, reduce emissions and their energy costs. This scheme will complement the Wood Heater Replacement Program to assist with covering the additional cost of replacing a wood heater with an energy efficient electric system for eligible households.
- The ACT Health Directorate, in consultation with the Environment Protection Authority and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, has engaged the Centre for Air Pollution, Energy and Health Research, a cooperative research centre funded by the National Health Medical Research Council, to undertake more detailed research into the health impacts and costs associated with wood smoke pollution in the ACT. This work will inform future policy direction.
- 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 in the last decade. Information about these initiatives and copies of the ACT Annual Air Quality Reports, can be found at www.accesscanberra.gov.au.

Background Information

- The ACT monitors four of the six NEPM pollutants: Carbon monoxide (CO); nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); photochemical oxidants as ozone (O₃); particulate matter PM₁₀; and particulate matter PM_{2.5}.
- The ACT has never monitored sulfur dioxide (SO₂) 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.

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Portfolio/s: Environment

Planning and Land Management

COVID 19 – STIMULUS PACKAGE

Talking points:

Jobs for Canberrans

- The ACT Government created the \$20 million ‘Jobs for Canberrans’ fund to provide secure, short-term employment opportunities with the ACT Public Service from now until June 2021 (the time may vary per position and Directorate).
- The fund has meant 250 new jobs for Canberrans – whose income has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 public health emergency. It is aimed at providing opportunities for those in the casual workforce who might not benefit from other programs announced, such as the Australian Government’s JobKeeper wage subsidy program.
- For the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), 31 new Park Ranger and Field Officer positions were employed to support the recovery efforts after the summer bushfires, assisting with catchment restoration, and undertaking track and trail maintenance. Staff commenced work on 18th May 2020 in contracts lasting six months. Many of these staff were further extended until February 2021.

Fast-tracked Projects

- The ACT Government fast tracked additional infrastructure projects to keep Canberra working through the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- The program focused on work that delivered support for local jobs, businesses and our Canberra community.
- For EPSDD, the program included two ‘screwdriver ready’ projects, one in the Lower Cotter Catchment and one in Namadgi National Park, that began in early April and have already been completed. These programs helped to keep local businesses operating and their workers employed.
- Approximately \$0.350M was allocated to improve Canberra’s water quality by supporting land restoration in the Lower Cotter Catchment. Local contractors were engaged to plant native seedlings, remove invasive weed infestations, and control soil erosion in targeted areas.
- Approximately \$0.625M was allocated to repair and replace boundary fences between rural properties and Namadgi National Park, that were damaged in the Orroral Valley bushfire. This stimulus supported local fencing business, suppliers and rural landholders.

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Key Information

- On Friday, 3 April 2020 the ACT Government announced it would establish the 'Jobs for Canberrans Fund' as part of the Economic Survival Package in response to COVID-19.
- To be eligible to apply for roles, people must have lost their job, or have been significantly impacted as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Roles will be made available to people most in need. Highest priority is given to people ineligible for any Australian Government income support (e.g. Jobseeker).
- Opportunities have been identified across the ACT Public Service with minimal prerequisites that can be undertaken in a manner that is compliant with health restrictions. 150 jobs were announced in April; a further 100 jobs were announced in June.
- The ACT Government is also fast-tracking additional infrastructure and capital work projects to aimed at providing income to businesses to support local jobs while improving services to the Canberra community.
- Other projects include infrastructure and maintenance work on government-owned community, schools and other buildings.

Background Information

- The Orroral Valley bushfire started in Namadgi National Park on Monday 27 January 2020 and continued to burn until it was declared out on Thursday 27 February 2020. The fire burnt through 88,000 hectares, including approximately 80% of the National Park.
- The Parks and Conservation Service (within EPSDD) is implementing a recovery program and has had crews assessing the fire's impact on infrastructure, walking tracks, roads and park assets. Removal of dangerous trees and trail clearing commenced post fire and is ongoing. Work to protect catchments, restore habitat and heritage values is underway. This work has been supported by those employed through the Jobs For Canberrans program.

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Portfolio: Environment

BIODIVERSITY IN THE ACT

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to conserving and managing our environment. Approximately 70% of the ACT is conserved in parks and reserves; exceeding the Aichi Biodiversity Target of 17%.
- The ACT has legislative and policy frameworks to conserve, maintain and enhance biodiversity across the ACT and within protected areas. Our parks and reserves are undoubtedly among Canberra's greatest assets and contribute to our high quality of life.
- A new panel of expert scientists has been formed as the next ACT Scientific Committee to provide advice on nature conservation to the ACT Government.
- Funding from the Australian Government was agreed for several new initiatives relevant to biodiversity conservation in the ACT:
 - \$1.2 Million for further bushfire recovery work to protect biodiversity.
 - \$78,000 for research on habitat supplementation to protect threatened species.
 - \$125,000 to establish and coordinate a national working group to identify priority recovery actions for the Gang-gang Cockatoo.
 - \$300,000 to support scoping activities that will facilitate the future establishment and interoperability of biodiversity data repository systems and/or exchange of biodiversity data between the Commonwealth and the ACT.
- A new initiative to pilot approaches to climate change adaptation for threatened species is currently under implementation in partnership with the University of Queensland.
- Considerable efforts and resources have gone into biodiversity conservation in 2020-2021 through our Bushfire Recovery Program, including:
 - \$232,800 into monitoring and protecting threatened species of plants, frogs and fauna such as the Broad-toothed Rat and the Reik's Crayfish.
 - \$318,289 to increase natural regeneration of native flora species and communities through invasive plant control.
 - \$206,088 to allow sensitive vegetation communities and species recover through feral herbivore control.
 - \$678,698 to minimise hillslope and bank erosion, protect riparian vegetation and improve water filtration functions by implementing erosion control and stabilisation measures.

- \$155,000 to prevent degradation and loss of the ACT's Alpine Bogs and Fens communities through a range of on-ground stabilisation and protective actions.
- Other biodiversity conservation projects are progressing through delivery of funding under the National Landcare Program Phase 2 (2018-2023):
 - Protecting and connecting endangered woodlands in the ACT program which is funded at \$1,505,997 over 5 years.
 - Safe haven for Quolls and Bettongs in the ACT program which is funded at \$803,470 over 5 years.
 - Reducing the impacts of Sambar Deer in the ACT's Ramsar site - the Ginini Flats Wetlands Complex program which is funded at \$604,500 over 4 years.
 - Restoring riparian areas along the Naas river which is funded at \$305,000 over 1 year.
- Biodiversity conservation support is available to community and other stakeholders through: ACT Environment Grants and Nature in the City Grants
- As well as these specific projects, ACT Government carries out a wide range of ongoing biodiversity conservation programs, including monitoring and research to track our threatened species and ecosystems and generate key knowledge to shape our approaches and strategies, including on prescribed burning, feral animal control, kangaroo management, and aquatic ecosystem conservation and restoration.

Key Information

- The ACT contains a diverse range of species and ecosystems with some of national significance. This includes six threatened endemic species that occur nowhere else, and significant remnants of nationally threatened ecosystems such as Natural Temperate Grassland and Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland .
- The ACT contains some of the most intact woodlands in Australia, including the Critically Endangered Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland . In terms of size, connectivity, diversity and habitat for threatened species, ACT's woodlands are exceptional. Our extensive areas of Critically Endangered Natural Temperate Grassland are also significant with a high proportion of the community protected within the ACT's reserve system.
- The ACT Government is responsible under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for protection of a range of Matters of National Environmental Significance. These include Ramsar wetlands (Ginini Flats Wetland Complex Ramsar Site), migratory species (27 birds), threatened species and ecological communities (42 of 52 threatened ACT species and three ecological communities are nationally listed), and national heritage (the ACT portion of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves).

Background Information

- Two story maps were released online recently (at <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/science-platform>) telling the story of natural resilience and recovery following the Orroral Valley Fire:
 - “Namadgi Phoenix” describes the park biodiversity rising from the ashes one year on.
 - “Bushfire Ecosystem Recovery” outlines the ecological impacts of the Orroral Valley fire and our actions to mitigate risks.
- The *Nature Conservation Act 2014* is the chief legislation for the protection of biodiversity in the ACT and for the management of the conservation reserve network. The Act protects native plants and animals, and provides management authority for conservation lands. It provides the legal underpinning of nature conservation policy, management and action across the Territory.
- Underpinning the Act is the Nature Conservation Strategy 2013 – 2023 (the Strategy) which sets the direction for the integrated conservation management of the natural environment, across nature reserves, and rural and urban areas in the ACT. The ACT has made significant progress towards protecting and enhancing the ACT’s natural environment since the introduction of the Strategy in 2013.
- Through continual implementation of the Strategy, the ACT Government aims to further improve and maintain native vegetation and biodiversity, ensure landscapes are more resilient, including to climate change, and increase community health and wellbeing through use and appreciation of natural areas and ‘green assets’ in urban areas.
- The Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Program is a notifiable instrument under the Nature Conservation Act 2014, and establishes biodiversity research and monitoring priorities for a two-year period. The requirements of the BRAMP are currently met by the EPSDD
- Science Plan 2020-2025, which establishes a broad strategic framework for the EPSDD’s research and monitoring, and establishes a set of 11 priority themes for this period. See https://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1675233/science-plan-2020-25.pdf

Portfolio: Environment

Mouse Plague

Talking points:

- Mouse plagues are common in the grain belt of Australia when large food sources become available.
- Plagues traditionally start quickly, usually after extended dry patterns when food becomes plentiful and natural predators are low (mice can reproduce very rapidly whilst natural predators may only have young once a year).
- Mice plagues also end quickly due to disease and starvation when food sources are exhausted.
- Although mouse numbers may increase in the ACT in response to improved climatic conditions, Canberra has a lesser probability (albeit not non-existent) of a mice plague, as it does not have the food source (grain crops) of areas being reported in the national media.
- Ongoing ACT Government research has found evidence of off-target impacts of anticoagulant rodenticide poisons in over 80% of samples taken from predatory wildlife.
- The ACT Government is aware of the significant risk to pets and native wildlife posed by many readily available mouse and rat poisons. We urge the Canberra community to carefully consider their use of these products and if possible avoid using products containing anticoagulant rodenticides, to reduce the risk of poisoning children, pets, and vulnerable native species that might access baits directly or encounter sick or dead mice. Non-toxic options such as snap traps, electronic traps or “natural” baits are a good alternative to avoid off-target impacts.
- In the event that there may be an incursion of mice into the ACT, EPSDD has convened a cross directorate working Group to develop contingency plans and provide support to the Canberra Community. The working group provides representation from EPSDD (Biosecurity and Rural Services/Policy and Planning/PCS/Conservation Research/Comms Branch), TCCS, Health and Act Housing
- I also encourage the use the MouseAlert app which can help notify about changes in mouse activity.

Key Information

- The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has extensive information on mice: www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/mouse-infestation

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- CSIRO researcher and mouse expert Steve Henry said the following:
<https://www.csiro.au/en/news/News-releases/2021/Mouse-plague-in-Queensland-and-New-South-Wales>
 - Mice are not migratory animals, but they are present across Australia. Mice can move 100m from their nest or burrow to forage, but they will return at the end of the night.
 - Mice live everywhere humans do, however, and most of the time go undetected. Recent reports of increased mouse activity in urban areas are due to a localised build up in the system.
 - The following reasons explain why there is more mouse activity than usual in city areas:
 - Existing populations are increasing because they have access to good food and shelter.
 - The cooler weather encourages mice to find shelter inside homes, making them more likely to be seen.
 - Following a successful breeding season, juvenile mice may be more apparent as they disperse to find other places to live.
- Useful tips
 - Keep food (including pet food and chicken pellets) covered in sealed containers or bags.
 - Do not leave scraps of food lying around & ensure your compost is covered.
 - Seal any points of access around your home which may allow mice to enter (e.g. under doors).
 - If encountered, carefully clean up and disinfect areas containing any mouse droppings or urine to reduce the risk of disease transfer to members of your household.
 - If used, carefully follow instructions included with baits and traps. Keep baits and traps (and any sick or dead mice) away from children, pets and native wildlife as they can pose a risk to human and animal health.
 - Do not construct improvised traps.
 - Every location is different. Contact a registered pest controller for advice on how best to treat your property.

High Level Mice Management Contingency Plan.

- In the event that there may be an incursion of mice into the ACT, EPSDD has convened a cross directorate working Group to develop contingency plans. The working group provides representation from EPSDD (Biosecurity and Rural Services/Policy and Planning/PCS/Conservation Research/Comms Branch), TCCS, Health and Act Housing

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- Following a good season in NSW for the resumption of mice numbers post winter, EPSDD has reactivated this group (plus reengaged with NSW counterparts to monitor mice populations in the broader region) and revising public messaging , in the event that forthcoming warmer weather reactivates the mouse population and sees a return of national media attention.

Portfolio Environment**WOMBAT MANGE****Talking points:**

- Since September 2019, the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has been leading a collaborative effort involving community groups and the University of Tasmania (UTAS), in developing a wholistic approach to addressing the issue of sarcoptic mange in wombats in the ACT.
- EPSDD currently convenes the internal Wombat Management Working Group (initiated September 2019), involving scientists, policy, communications, PCS Area Managers, the Chief Veterinary Officer and wildlife experts from across EPSDD.
- EPSDD also convenes the Wombat Stakeholder Working Group (initiated March 2021). Members include rural leaseholders (representing the Rural Lands Association), two community wildlife care groups, The University of Tasmania (UTAS) and EPSDD staff. The objective of this group is to bring community and external stakeholder input into decision making on wombat management in the ACT.
- A sub-group of the Wombat Stakeholder Working Group, known as the Wombat Mange Stakeholder Sub-group, has been developed specifically to coordinate activities of the community and ACT Government for a more collaborative approach to addressing the issue of wombat mange.
- Current activities of these groups include:
 - Trialling the use of an alternative veterinary chemical, Bravecto, as a potentially longer-lasting, more effective, and target-specific treatment for mange.
 - EPSDD and UTAS are working together to develop a new method for remote delivery of Bravecto. Concept trials were undertaken in April 2021 and were successful. The first pilot studies will treat a small number of wild wombats, and are due to commence in November 2021
 - The Wombat Mange Stakeholder Sub-group is developing a collaborative community-led monitoring program to provide information on mange prevalence and distribution across the ACT. An Honours student from the University of Canberra is assisting by looking at using new technologies such as drones and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging, a remote sensing technique) to detect burrows.
 - The monitoring program will be supported by a spatial resource (map and data gathering application) that will be shared between stakeholders and help coordinate mange treatment.
 - A web-based communications portal on wombat mange for the wider community has developed by the Conservation Research spatial team in collaboration with wildlife carer groups and PCS. The community portal

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allows members of the wider public to report mange wombats and also tracks treatments and recovery.

- A standardised protocol for mange identification in wombats, including thresholds for euthanasia of mange wombats, for both rangers and wildlife carers, has been produced.
- The ACT Wombat Management Working Group will continue to guide development of strategy and approaches to wombat management in the ACT.
- To date, ACT Government wombat mange initiatives have been funded from recurrent base funding. In the 2021 grant rounds, the community groups of ACT Wildlife and Wombat Rescue, in addition to the University of Tasmania, were successful in their application for a \$10,000 ACT Environment Grant to continue work on addressing wombat mange in the ACT.
- Implementation of a strategy, presuming initial Bravecto trials in FY 21/22 are promising, will involve approximately \$30,000 annually.

Key Information

- The recent 10th Legislative Assembly PAGA Appendix 5 included the following item (1.1) related to wombat mange:
Secure long-term funding for wildlife carer groups and fund an ACT Wildlife Wombat Mange Management Program.
- In June 2020 and again in September 2021, representatives from EPSDD partook in a national roundtable on sarcoptic mange in wombats, with the purpose of developing of a national framework for wombat mange management in collaboration with other jurisdictions, universities and Wildlife Health Australia.
- The approach by EPSDD to this issue is highly collaborative, involves community stakeholders, draws on leading scientific innovations, and is coordinated with national efforts and other leading jurisdictions.

Background Information

- Wombat sarcoptic mange is a disease caused by a parasitic mite, which burrows into the skin causing thick, crusty skin, and hair loss. Wombat mange has significant health and welfare impacts for individual wombats. If left untreated, mange can result in the death of affected individuals.
- In the ACT, mange is frequently observed in wombats, but little systematic information is currently available on mange prevalence, distribution and severity.

Current treatment of mange in wombats is limited to use of the veterinary chemical Cydectin, which has limited efficacy and known adverse impacts on aquatic life. Cydectin will continue to be used for mange treatment in appropriate areas while alternatives are under development, as part of a coordinated approach.

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Portfolio/s: Planning & Land Management
Environment

KANGAROO MANAGEMENT**Talking points:****Background:**

- Kangaroos are recognised as an important part of healthy, functioning grassy ecosystems in the ACT. In our highly fragmented urban reserves, however, and in the absence of natural predation (e.g. from dingoes), their numbers can increase above sustainable densities. This results in over-grazing and significant negative impacts on the grassy habitat required by kangaroos and other native plant and animal species.
- Kangaroos are managed in the ACT in accordance with the ACT Kangaroo Management Plan (2010), and the Eastern Grey Kangaroo: Controlled Native Species Management Plan (EGK: CNSMP, 2017; the latter being an instrument under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*) to mitigate their environmental, economic and social impacts across public and private land.
- Kangaroos have been culled annually in the ACT since 2009 for the purposes of protecting flora and fauna communities.
- As a custodian of public lands, the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) has a legislative responsibility under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 to ensure that the risks to protected ecological communities are mitigated.
- The ACT Government has shown its commitment to protecting threatened flora and fauna from the effects of overgrazing by allocation of funding to continue the macropod management program in the recently announced 21/22 Budget.

2021 Kangaroo Management Program

- This years program commenced 16 May 2021 and were finalised on 9th July 2021 with 1505 Eastern Grey Kangaroos removed from several priority reserves within Canberra Nature Park.
- This figure represents 96% of the target quota from Canberra Nature Park. Wet conditions prevented access to some reserves later in the program, hindering efforts to achieve 100%.
- This years activities were uneventful with minor protester activity.

Reserve closures

- Six of the 39 Canberra Nature Park reserves were closed to the public between 6pm and 8am, from Sunday night to Friday morning whilst the cull was in operation. Reserves were reopened on 14th July 2021.

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- These closures were in place to allow the safe delivery of this important program in the highly urbanised Canberra environment.

Welfare considerations

- All shooters involved in culling in the ACT have completed a rigorous Shooter Proficiency Test that examines their ability to accurately identify kangaroos, their awareness of animal welfare obligations pertaining to kangaroos, and their marksmanship ability.
- Restrictions to the timing of culls in the ACT are also enforced to reduce the risk of orphaning dependent young.

Evidence base

- The ACT government relies on annual scientific monitoring to inform management decisions including current kangaroo densities in these habitats; the level of grass biomass and habitat condition; and sustainable kangaroo densities based on site-specific circumstances.
- Above average rainfall throughout 2021 has allowed the recovery of grassy habitat across many areas of Canberra Nature Park, particularly where kangaroo numbers have been managed to sustainable levels in previous years. These recent improvements in ecosystem condition resulted in a reduced need to cull kangaroos in many sites in 2021. As such, the overall number of kangaroos culled in 2021 was lower than it has been in recent years.

Carcass use

- At present, the ACT does not support commercial use of kangaroo carcasses for meat or skins.
- The Biosecurity and Rural Services unit of ACT EPSDD commissioned a discussion paper on options for reducing the waste of kangaroos taken under both parts of the ACT's kangaroo management program. The Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) were consulted as part of the development of the paper along with the Representative Aboriginal Organisations and other members of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- The paper has now been completed and will be taken to the DNCCC for review to ensure their aspirations and values have been captured in the paper.
- For the first time, up to 720 kangaroo carcasses from the 2021 conservation culling program were donated to an endangered native species breeding program. This initiative supports conservation of an endangered species and reduces waste produced by the conservation cull. This newly identified opportunity for carcass utilisation reflects the commitment of the conservation cull program to continuous improvement, and better reflects the expectations of the Canberra community.

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- A small number (approx. 20) carcasses and skins have been supplied for cultural purposes.

Fertility Control

- The 2021 Conservation Culling Advice includes a list of priority sites and target numbers for fertility control for the first time.
- Delivery of the fertility control program is being planned for implementation this year at priority sites pending available resources.
- More detail on the kangaroo cull can be found at www.environment.act.gov.au.

Portfolio: Environment**Lower Cotter Bettong Experimental Release****Talking points:**

- Australia has the worst record of mammal extinctions of any country on Earth. Foxes and cats have been instrumental in driving the local extinction of bettongs (and many other small native animals) across much of Australia.
- To reverse these extinctions and avoid accepting permanently degraded landscapes, land managers and conservationists need to explore ways in which native animals can be re-introduced. This includes a key “ecosystem engineer” that once existed in the wild in Eastern Australia, the Eastern Bettong.
- Fenced, predator-proof sanctuaries such as Mulligans Flat provide crucial secure refuges for these species. But settling for endangered species to exist only behind fences in safe havens is not good enough. To re-establish broader populations in our landscapes we need to look at reintroductions “beyond the fence”.
- The experimental release of Eastern Bettongs into the Lower Cotter Catchment from 2015-2018 was a carefully planned and carefully managed exercise to generate knowledge to inform potential full scale reintroduction efforts.
- The objective of this experimental release was to assess under what conditions Eastern Bettongs could persist in an unfenced environment, in the presence of foxes (and cats). It asked the questions: To what levels must fox populations be controlled to enable a bettong population to survive in their presence? Can bettongs learn to avoid lower levels of fox predation, enough to enable individuals to breed and for a population to survive in the landscape?
- There is sound scientific evidence that returning small mammals that are vulnerable to fox and cat predation beyond-the-fence can work. Other researchers, for example, have demonstrated that the related Burrowing Bettong can persist in the presence of one of their primary predators, the cat. Reducing foxes to low levels has been shown to result in increases in the Brush-tailed Bettong as well as several other species.
- In 2015-18, following intensive fox control efforts, bettongs from Tidbinbilla and Mulligans Flat were released at an unfenced site in the Lower Cotter Catchment in the ACT.
- Foxes were rigorously and intensively controlled in the lead-up to the trial. The baiting frequency was at least four times more than recommended in the scientific literature. Thresholds of fox activity density were established by the project team, with bettongs only released once these had been met.
- The presence of low levels of fox activity at the site was important, as testing whether bettongs would show behavioural adaptations to enable them to avoid predators was a key part of the experiment.

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- The experiment was successful in achieving its objectives. Under the fox control regime implemented, extensive and sustained monitoring indicated that some bettongs persisted in the landscape for more than 450 days – four times longer than similar trials of related species in Australia. Larger bettongs also survived longer.
- Cats were viewed as a lesser threat to Eastern Bettongs and were present in only low densities at the site so were not specifically controlled in this trial. In addition, Eastern Bettongs are known to co-exist with cats in Tasmania (where the founding population from the ACT was sourced).
- The results from this experiment provide valuable insight into the level of fox control needed for bettongs to persist in this environment, and what traits could be selected for to increase bettong survival, potentially allowing for the establishment of viable populations in the presence of low numbers of introduced predators.
- This work will inform tactics to enhance chances of success of any future full reintroduction efforts in Australia. Land managers and conservationists can use these insights and further refine them in their own landscapes.
- The ACT is a research leader in reintroduction science, based on cooperative work in Mulligans Flat with the Australian National University, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust, the ACT Government and many other research and conservation partners. The ACT Government and its partners maintain the long-term vision of re-establishing reintroduced species outside fenced reserves and will consider opportunities as they arise.
- The Mulligans Flat partnership have recently engaged broadly with the local and national conservation community on the role of the Sanctuary in this ‘pathway to the wild’ for species that have been lost in the broader landscape. This strategy has now been widely endorsed and supported by the community, and this research has made an important contribution to that pathway.

Key Information

- 67 Eastern Bettongs in total were released into the Lower Cotter Catchment, by a partnership comprised of the Australian National University, the ACT Government, and the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust.
- Results from the first stage of the experiment have now been published in a leading international conservation journal (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-021-02166-y>)
- The ACT Government spent a total of approximately \$600 000 over four years. The Government investment leveraged a considerably larger total investment through the Australian Research Council and the Commonwealth Threatened Species Hub, as well as inputs from the Australian National University.

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Portfolio: Environment

Banning and reduction of Pesticides

Talking points:

- The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the Australian government authority responsible for the assessment and registration of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia.
- A formal reconsideration process is initiated by the APVMA when new scientific information raises concerns relating to the safety or effectiveness of the agvet chemical.
- Glyphosate was subject to consideration in 2016 with the AVPMA concluding glyphosate can continue to be used safely in Australia according to label directions.
- In November 2019, the APVMA decided to commence a chemical reconsideration of neonicotinoid insecticides to reconsider approved active constituents, registrations of selected products containing neonicotinoids, and all associated label approvals on the basis of risks to the environment, including bees. This assessment is ongoing with the outcomes to inform any restrictions on use when completed. Key Information
- The APVMA is the authority responsible for the assessment and registration of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia up to the point of retail sale. The states and territories are responsible for regulating the use of agvet chemicals in accordance with the APVMA registration.
- The APVMA uses a scientific, evidence-based approach and aligns its regulatory efforts with the risks associated with each active constituent or product. Risks are considered in terms of both the likelihood of exposure and the potential effects of exposure.
- The APVMA regulates agvet chemicals in line with responsibilities described in the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992* and the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994 up to and including the point of sale*.
- A formal reconsideration process is initiated by the APVMA when new scientific information raises concerns relating to the safety or effectiveness of the agvet chemical.

- The reconsideration process incorporates legislative, administrative and scientific elements that contribute to the final decision to affirm, vary, suspend or cancel an approval or registration. A reconsideration must be completed within a maximum timeframe of 57 months.
- The APVMA continues to monitor and assess new information and credible scientific reports as they become available.

AVPMA Assessments and Reconsiderations for:

Glyphosate (Roundup)

- Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide that works by inhibiting an enzyme found in plants; this enzyme is not found in humans. There are around 500 products containing glyphosate registered for use in Australia. Glyphosate has been registered for use in Australia for over 40 years.
- In 2016, following the 2015 International Agency for Research on Cancer assessment, the APVMA considered glyphosate and found no grounds to place it under formal reconsideration again.

Neonicotinoid insecticides

- There have been scientific studies published that suggest a link between the use of neonicotinoids and the declining health of honey bees in some regions.
- In November 2019, the APVMA decided to commence a chemical reconsideration of neonicotinoid insecticides to reconsider approved active constituents, registrations of selected products containing neonicotinoids, and all associated label approvals on the basis of risks to the environment.

Anticoagulant rodenticide products

- Products considered anticoagulant rodenticides have been prioritised for reconsideration by the APVMA on the basis of concerns for worker exposure, public health and environmental safety.
- The use of these products in domestic premises, animal production facilities and food production facilities is currently allowed.
- International jurisdictions (including the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the European Chemicals Agency) have taken action to limit access to these products by non-professional users, and to restrict the product formulations available and the situations in which these products may be used.
- The APVMA consulted with the states and territories and relevant holders regarding the registered particulars and conditions of use for anticoagulant rodenticide products. Consultation closed on 17 July 2020 with 3,391 submissions received. This assessment is ongoing with the outcomes to inform any restrictions on use when completed.

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Pindone

- Pindone is a first generation anticoagulant poison commonly used to manage rabbits in the ACT where alternative poisons (nominally 1080) are considered to pose too great a risk to domestic pets, particularly dogs.
- Pindone has been considered for some time to be a possible threatening process for native predatory species including the Little Eagle. To quantify the risk of using this compound, the ACT Government Environment Division is currently undertaking research in partnership with researchers at Edith Cowan University to assess the prevalence of secondary poisoning by Pindone and other anticoagulant compounds in a range of predatory wildlife species.
- To date, 83 liver samples collected opportunistically from deceased predatory animals across Australia have been tested for anticoagulant compounds. None of these samples have demonstrated evidence of exposure to Pindone. However, 80.7% of samples tested positive to second generation compounds including Brodifacoum, the common active compound in many over-the-counter rodent poisons used ubiquitously in both commercial and domestic settings across the country.
- In light of these findings, Pindone is still used by ACT Government to manage rabbits in the ACT in accordance with best practice approaches which minimise the risk of secondary poisoning of non-target species.
- Data from this study was submitted to the AVPMA to aid in the current review of anticoagulant rodenticide product usage in Australia.

Chlorpyrifos

- Chlorpyrifos is an insecticide used to control different kinds of pests, including ants, termites and mosquitos. Products containing chlorpyrifos are used in and around the home, in home gardens, in public spaces, and in agriculture.
- On 25 July 2019, the AVPMA suspended the labels of chlorpyrifos products for use in both domestic and home garden, and agricultural uses. On 25 September 2019, we cancelled the registration of chlorpyrifos in domestic and home garden products, and in certain public spaces such as parks and footpaths.
- On 24 July 2020, the AVPMA cancelled the remaining product registrations and label approvals of products for use in both home garden and agriculture after allowing 12 months for holders to vary their labels to remove domestic and home garden uses.

Background Information

- The use of APVMA approved agvet chemicals is regulated in the ACT under the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (the EP Act) and Environment Protection Regulation 2005.

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- Agvet chemicals must be used in accordance with Part 6 of the Environment Protection Regulation 2005 which specifies they must be used in accordance with their AVPMA approved label or an off label permit. It is an offence to use a chemical which is not registered by the APVMA.
- The commercial use of agvet chemicals is a Class A activity under the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (the EP Act) and a person must not undertake his activity unless they hold an environmental authorisation issued by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Access Canberra.
- ACT Government's approach to pesticide regulation aligns with national best practice. Commercial operators (including government agencies) licensed by the EPA are required to hold nationally accredited competencies delivered by registered training organisations and it is a requirement for all users, both commercial and non-commercial, to use agvet chemicals in accordance with their conditions of registration which are set by the national regulator the APVMA.

Portfolio/s: Environment

Planning and Land Management

Invasive Species Management

Invasive Species budget initiative 2021-2025

Recent budget allocations in line with Parlenentry Agreement (17.4) has seen 2.9 million over the next 4 years dollars being allocated to increased management of invasive species within the ACT. These funds will se the employment of around 5 new staff as a dedicated Biosecurity rapid response unit which will enhance the capacity of Biosecurity and Rural Service in its ability to coordinate, respond to and manage biosecurity threats that may impact of the Territories environmental, agricultural and social values.

Invasive plants:

Talking points

- The 'Lockdown program' of control work is focusing on the highest risk invasive plants and protecting wildflower sites of significance.
- Two years of above average rainfall has benefited recovery of fire effected areas but has also resulted in an increased number of new and emerging invasive plants.

Key Information

- 'Invasive plants' are introduced plants that threaten biodiversity. 'Weeds' are plants growing where they are not wanted.
- Since work recommenced, after ceasing during the first phase of the lockdown, there has been 485ha of control work across 1,300 sites.
 - The top six species controlled have been: serrated tussock, pine wildings, Chilean needle grass, African lovegrass, great mullein, and fireweed.
 - Twelve small businesses (contractors) have recommenced work with COVID safe restrictions in place.
- Invasive species staff have controlled thirteen new and emerging invasive plant species, including one species, lesser celandine, discovered by a CSIRO botanist in Narrabundah. This species is at the early stage of invasion in Australia, so a very important find.
 - Other new and emerging species controlled: large Mediterranean spurge, *Cyperus albotriatus*, fireweed, bridal creeper, Oregon grape, Spanish heath, Coolatai grass, angled onion, Spanish lavender, ox-eye daisy, African feather grass, South African daisy.

Background Information

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- Full details of the control work can be viewed on the Operations Dashboard:
<https://actgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/c6083d9db4f240c7a93f39dcb06244e2>
- 2020-25 Operations Plan:
<https://actgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=cd59d70662c94c75a0492635f7925384#>
- 2020-21 Annual Report:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/90c4936a79e74a9fbe77cd877baadc50>

Invasive animals (ie. high risk 'pest animals'):

Rabbits

- Rabbits impact on natural and rural systems by causing a loss of vegetation cover which can result in unusable grazing land. They exacerbate erosion and weed colonisation and threaten the survival of native birds, small mammals and insects that rely on groundcover plants for food and shelter.
- Monitoring to understand population trends and to allow targeted management is regularly conducted across the conservation estate.
- Annual control programs to keep rabbit numbers at levels where impacts are minimised are conducted in Canberra Nature Park and Namadgi National Park.

Wild Dogs

- Namadgi National Park and adjacent areas of timbered land in the ACT and surrounding NSW support populations of wild dogs (dingoes and 'dingo like' dogs which are dingoes with a small proportion of domestic dog genes).
- Wild dogs, if unmanaged, can inflict significant stock losses on sheep graziers. The objective for management of wild dogs is to minimise the negative impacts on agricultural production (sheep graziers) in the ACT and nearby NSW.
- In addition to controlling wild dogs to protect livestock on ACT rural lands, the ACT Government is also signatory to three cooperative Wild Dog Management Plans with New South Wales authorities which are aimed at protecting livestock from wild dogs originating from Namadgi National Park. These efforts have resulted in no increase in the number of sheep killed in the ACT in recent years and minimal losses in the last seven years in the Shannon's Flat area in neighbouring NSW.
- Wild dog control programs have been largely unaffected and have continued to be conducted within COVID safe guidelines during the lockdown period.

Feral Horses

- Feral horses pose a significant potential threat to the natural values of the Namadgi National Park. Of particular concern is the potential for damage to the sensitive sub-alpine wetlands of the Cotter River catchment in the ACT border region with NSW.
- Feral Horses are managed in accordance with the recently revised Namadgi National Park Feral Horse Management Plan (2020) which provides the basis for feral horse

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management in Namadgi National Park and has a zero tolerance policy towards feral horses in Namadgi National Park.

- Significant feral horse populations are present in neighbouring Kosciuszko National Park and regular monitoring is conducted by EPSDD to ensure early detection of new incursions.
- The ACT Government regularly contributes to the discussion on the management of feral horses right across the Australian Alps through its involvement on the Australian Alps Feral Horse working group and continues to communicate regularly with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service on feral horse management issues in northern Kosciuszko National Park.
- During a recent aerial control program targeting feral ungulates in the upper cotter catchment area of Namadgi national Park, one horse was shot.
- A small group of horses (approx. 10) originating from straying stock from NSW freehold land on the eastern border of Namadi have taken up residence in the park. A management response in accordance with the *Namadgi National Park Feral Horse management plan* to remove these animals from the park is underway, with one horse removed by ground shooting in this area to date.

Feral Pigs

- Feral pigs are widely distributed throughout the non-urban parks and reserves managed by the Parks and Conservation Service. Ground disturbance by pigs creates bare ground, contributing to erosion and weed invasion as well as causing loss of visual amenity for park visitors. Pigs have a varied diet including small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, bird's eggs, soil invertebrates and roots and tubers of native plants. On rural land they plough up pasture, kill lambs, damage fencing and are a potential vector for several serious endemic and exotic livestock diseases.
- The objectives for management of feral pigs are to maintain feral pig populations and resulting impacts on public land at current low levels and to assist the rural community and other land managers to manage impacts on primary production by encouraging coordinated pig control programs across land tenures.
- An aerial control program using cutting edge thermal technology has recently been undertaken in Namadgi National Park during, resulted in the culling of 53 pigs.

Foxes

- Foxes are ubiquitous in the ACT but effective management over large areas is constrained by restrictions in the use of 1080 poison. In special cases fox baiting is sometimes performed under tight restrictions to reduce predation of native species.
- EPSDD also provides 1080 baits to rural land holders under tight restrictions to aid in fox control during lambing season.

Deer

- Feral deer are an increasing environmental and agricultural threat in the ACT with populations of fallow, red and sambar deer across Namadgi and Canberra Nature Parks.
- Ground and aerial shooting programs are conducted in conservation reserves and at times cooperatively with neighbouring rural landholders.
- A multi year project focussed on the threat that Sambar deer pose to threatened subalpine Sphagnum bogs is underway in Namadgi national Park. A component of this program is trailing newly developed thermal technology to assist in detection of sambar deer in low densities . This technique is proving to be highly successful.

Indian Mynas

- Indian Mynas compete with native species for tree hollows and are a significant urban nuisance.
- No cost-effective, broad-scale control available. Trapping is labour intensive but can be effective at the small scale if effort is maintained. No control programs are conducted by the ACT Government.
- A community group, the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG), assist with trapping of mynas in back yards.
- A declaration under section 16 of the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005* has been made declaring the Indian Myna speices as a pest animal. DI2021-133 was notified on the Legislation Register on 21 June 2021 signed by yourself as Minister for the Environment.

Background

- EPSDD manages the impact of invasive pest animals through the control of rabbits, feral horses, wild dogs, feral pigs, foxes and feral deer in cooperation with neighbouring land managers to minimise their negative impacts on conservation reserves and agricultural land in the ACT.
- Management of Invasive Pest Animals is guided by the ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy, which details a strategic approach aimed at a reduction of impacts caused by pest animals.

Portfolio/s: Environment

Planning and Land Management

Threatened Species Management

Talking points:

- There are currently 53 ACT species and three ecological communities listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* and a further three species with Special Protection Status due to their listing under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC). This means that all these species have been assessed as likely to become extinct in the foreseeable future. This includes a new species for the ACT, the Bathurst (Purple) Copper Butterfly (listed as Vulnerable), that has been recently found in Namadgi National Park. There are a further 14 new species relevant to the ACT being assessed under the EPBC Act.
- Key threats facing these species and communities include the loss of mature native trees and habitat fragmentation caused by Canberra's urban expansion and land clearing; invasive plants and animals; disease; and increasingly in future years, climate change.
- Threatened species and ecological communities are important for the roles they play in ecosystem processes and services, including provision of clean water and air, climate regulation, pollination, and recreation opportunities, as well as for their intrinsic value and their contribution to our natural and cultural heritage.
- EPSDD currently runs over 20 threatened species programs working in strong collaborative partnerships with a range of universities, zoos, botanic gardens, state and federal government agencies, and community conservation organisations.
- The Orroral Valley bushfire severely impacted a range of species and communities. A suite of ecological recovery actions and research programs to benefit impacted species and communities and inform future bushfire recovery. A story-map update on these projects can be found at <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/science-platform/science-and-research-news/bushfire-recovery-programs>
- The EPBC listing status of many ACT species is currently being re-assessed. This includes some grassland-dependant species and species affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires in eastern Australia.
- The ACT Government is a key partner in the innovative citizen science platform Canberra Nature Map. Over the last year alone, 711 new rare and threatened flora and fauna records have been added to the platform. The ACT Government's ACTMAPi online spatial platform makes data on threatened species and communities from a range of sources available to inform conservation and planning stakeholders both within and beyond government. These two resources provide critical data to inform land management, planning, and conservation.

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- The development of an ACT Government Threatened Species strategy is in early stages of planning, to identify ACT Government priorities for threatened species management and research over coming years.

Key Information

- The production of genetically more robust southern brush-tailed rock-wallabies is proceeding according to plan. The animals produced by this breeding program are destined for the Jedbinbilla safe haven, a 120ha predator-proof enclosure at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve that will provide insurance for this critically endangered population.
- The Jedbinbilla safe haven fence incurred extensive damage due to an extreme rainfall event in March. Repairs to the fence are expected to be finished by June 2022.
- The continued success of the captive breeding program for the Northern Corroboree Frog at Tidbinbilla enabled the release, in late 2020, of 540 individuals to a new, carefully chosen trial release site in Namadgi National Park, in a collaboration the Australian National University. Monitoring a few months after release indicated that frogs are persisting, which is a promising result. Further follow-up monitoring and supplementary releases will occur in November.
- Novel methods of releasing Northern Corroboree Frogs are being trialled that may facilitate future releases of this critically endangered species.
- EPSDD is leading the National coordination of the Gang-gang Cockatoo recovery having secured \$125,000 from the Australian Government to provide this work.
- The Directorate is also negotiating with the Australian government to secure \$572 000 for additional recovery actions for Gang Gangs, Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies and Greater and Yellow-bellied Gliders in the ACT.
- Assessment of Grassland Earless Dragon populations was undertaken in 2020-2021, as part of a long-term monitoring program run by CR and PCS. Capture rates of wild animals have declined substantially in recent years, with drought and urbanisation likely contributors to the decline.
- A breeding colony of Grassland Earless Dragons was established at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve during May this year. The first breeding season is underway, with a number of clutches already laid and baby dragons expected any day now.
- EPSDD in collaboration with NSW DPIE and University of Canberra, are currently undertaking research into the bushfire impacts, genetic diversity and post-fire recolonisation of burnt areas by the threatened Broad-toothed Rat.
- EPSDD in collaboration with NSW DPIE and the University of Canberra, have successfully established a captive breeding colony of endangered Smoky Mice at the University of Canberra. Individuals bred at the colony will be used to trial soft release methods for the species at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

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- EPSDD has restored five hectares of Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat across the Molonglo Valley and restoration of a further two hectares is underway. Works have included the placement of approximately one million habitat rocks and extensive native grass and wildflower plantings.
- EPSDD has commenced experimental habitat restoration at Jarramlee for the Golden Sun Moth, and during the 2020 monitoring season presence of the species was confirmed at two new offset sites.
- Little Eagle breeding and movements have been monitored since 2016 by EPSDD in collaboration with CSIRO, ANU and Ginninderry. Sixteen birds have had backpack GPS transmitters attached, and 14 pairs have been recently tracked within the ACT and nearby NSW. We have discovered these birds travel great distances interstate during their winter migration.
- Research into the Superb Parrot is underway, including monitoring breeding output at two known colonies, containing 44 nest trees and 64 nesting hollows. GPS trackers have been attached to four birds and genetic analysis of populations has commenced.
- EPSDD undertakes annual monitoring of two threatened fish species - Macquarie Perch and Two-spined Blackfish, as well as near-threatened Reik's Crayfish. These monitoring programs have additional importance following the impacts on populations from the Orroral Valley fire.
- A number of threatened species have been successfully reintroduced into Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. Please see the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary brief for details.
- For ACT flora, EPSDD conduct annual monitoring of threatened species populations. Monitored species include the Small Purple Pea, Ginninderra Peppercreese, Hoary Sunray, Tarengo Leek Orchid, Button Wrinklewort and Tuggeranong Lignum..
- Threatened orchid seeds are being "banked" in an ongoing collaboration with the Australian National Botanic Garden, and planning for translocation of the Canberra Spider Orchid is underway.
- A collaborative project is underway to analyse the genetics of the few remaining individuals of the endemic Tuggeranong Lignum, to inform future in situ and ex situ population management and enhancement.

Portfolio: Environment

CAT CONTAINMENT

Talking points:

- The ACT Cat Plan was released on Friday 28 May 2021.
- The plan includes measures to improve the welfare of domestic cats and protect native wildlife including:
 - a. improve community education and engagement around responsible cat ownership and the impacts of roaming domestic cats on native wildlife;
 - b. improve desexing rates for domestic cats;
 - c. introduce registration for cats after July 1 2022;
 - d. expand compulsory cat containment across the ACT after July 1 2022;
 - e. reduce the number of semi-owned and unowned domestic cats; and
 - f. improve feral cat management including supporting implementation of the federal Threat Abatement Plan for feral cats and undertaking further research into effective control methods.
- Cat containment will be expanded across Canberra with a grandfathering clause so that cats owned prior to 1 July 2022 will not have to be contained but cats purchased after this date will need to be contained in all suburbs.
- Existing cat containment laws will remain in place in the 17 areas already declared as cat containment areas, so grandfathering will not apply in these areas. All new suburbs will continue to be declared as cat containment areas.

Consultation

- The Canberra Street Cat Alliance (CSCA) provided a response to the draft cat plan via YourSay. Domestic Animal Services maintains an informal relationship at an operational level with CSCA and will continue to work with them throughout the implementation of the ACT Cat Plan 2021-31.
- There is strong public commitment in the plan to work with groups including the CSCA over the five years of implementation. Action 8 of the implementation plan states “Work with animal care and rescue organisations to manage semi-owned and unowned cats in public places, through trap, de-sex and adopt activities.”

Key Information

- The plan recognises the importance of cats as companion animals; however, it also recognises that they are natural predators that may hunt native birds and animals. It is estimated that, in Canberra alone, roaming cats predate each year on 61,000 native birds, 2,000 native animals, 30,000 native reptiles and 6,000 native frogs.
- Improved cat management aims to improve the welfare of cats and native animals.

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- Community education and engagement will be undertaken to ensure community understanding of the new rules introduced under the Cat Plan and to provide information and resources to make the transition to cat containment and cat registration as easy as possible.
- The expansion of cat containment will be done with cat owners to make the transition as smooth as possible for cats and their owners.

Background Information

- A draft ACT Cat Plan was produced in order to engage the community on proposed strategies and actions for management of domestic and feral cats in the ACT.
- The draft plan was made available for community consultation from 6 April to 3 July 2019. The consultation period included an online survey on aspects of cat management, written submissions were invited, and public information events and meetings were held with stakeholder groups including the RSPCA, RSPCA ACT and the ACT Conservation Council.
- During the public consultation period, 4087 survey responses were received along with 120 written submissions, including 17 from organisations and 103 from individuals or families.
- The draft Cat Plan was developed under the ACT Government's Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017–22, and is a key plan as part of implementing Action 4.1.2:
 - Develop and implement policies and management plans to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce the impact of domestic species on the environment and the community.

Portfolio/s: Environment

Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Talking points:

- The ACT Government strongly supports the Catchment Groups and our community volunteers.
- The ACT Government oversees a range of volunteer programs including ParkCare and Waterwatch, that support successful environmental initiatives through significant community effort.
- Volunteers provide in excess of 50,000 volunteer hours a year to assist with the implementation of key environment and conservation objectives.
- The Ginninderra Catchment Group, Southern ACT Catchment Group, and Molonglo Conservation Group are peak community groups that play a key role in volunteer coordination and provide critical services to the ACT.
- The Catchment Groups will be receiving significant funding for the 21/22 financial year:
 - \$375,000 for community engagement in relation to:
 - Strong community stewardship of urban waterways
 - Measurable improvement in community 'stormwater literacy'
 - Reducing stormwater pollution, especially nutrient pollution, coming from suburbs
 - A more resilient and nature-connected community
 - Ecological and social fire recovery
 - \$270,000 for coordination of community Waterwatch volunteers
 - \$87,000 for coordination of community Frogwatch volunteers
 - \$220,000 in successful 2021/22 ACT Environment Grants
- In the 2019/20 midyear budget review and the 2021/22 budget, the ACT Government provided additional ongoing support to community volunteers through increased funding for the ParkCare Ranger Program.
- The 2021/22 budget provides \$103,000 in funding to ACT Wildlife and an additional \$130,000 on top of the current \$200,000 for the ACT Environment Grants.
- The Waterwatch program is a successful citizen science program which has significant community support and provides vital water quality monitoring information. It was funded for \$539,000 per annum, of which a large portion of the funding goes directly to the Catchment Groups for volunteer coordination.

Background Information:

- In the lead up to the 2020 ACT Election, election commitments were made to fund a number of initiatives undertaken by the three Catchment Groups. This included base funding to the three groups, Waterwatch and Frogwatch funding, increases to the ACT Environment Grant funding pool and increased support to ParkCare.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement offers an increase in funding for local environmental volunteer-based organisations of \$3.2M over 4 years at item 17.5, however, it does not provide the details of which organisations will be funded.
- EPSDD is currently developing a new environment volunteering policy and supporting IT system that will significantly assist in managing and supporting environmental volunteers.

Portfolio/s: Planning & Land Management

Environment

MULLIGANS FLAT conservation activities and learning centre**Talking points:**

- The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary sits within the largest tract of critically endangered Box-Gum Grassy Woodland in public management within the ACT.
- In 2009 an 11.4 kilometre predator-proof fence enclosing 484 hectares of Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve was completed. In 2019 another 11.4 kilometres of predator proof fence was erected enclosing an additional 794 hectares within the Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. The total area of the Sanctuary is 1,278 hectares.
- Significant work has been undertaken to remove foxes, feral cats, rabbits and hares within the Sanctuary. Foxes and cats were eradicated from the original Sanctuary in 2010 and feral animal control in the new Sanctuary is nearing completion.
- The fence, along with the feral animal control, has allowed the reintroduction of locally extinct native animals – Eastern Bettong, Eastern Quoll, Bush Stone-curlew, and New Holland Mouse – which are vulnerable to predation by foxes and cats. These reintroductions are informed by research undertaken by The Australian National University (ANU).
- The trial introduction of Spotted-tail Quolls into the Sanctuary is on track to be undertaken before the end of 2021. The introduction of this apex predator is an important step in recreating the foodweb and will allow us to test how these predators behave.
- The partnership is constructing a Woodland Learning Centre in Throsby that is due to open the first quarter of 2022. As of October 2021, the building is currently approaching lock up stage however final works are delayed due to COVID lockdown and wet weather.
- The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is a partnership between the ACT Government, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and the ANU. The public comment period on the Mulligans Flat draft strategy has closed and feedback is being considered by the partners before the strategy is finalised.

Key Information**RESEARCH AND PROJECTS**

- There is a new research agreement under development between the ACT Government and The Australian National University to facilitate further research in the Sanctuary.
- Eastern Bettongs, Eastern Quolls, Bush-stone Curlews, and New Holland Mice have been reintroduced to the Sanctuary. A number of other species have been identified for reintroduction, however no timeframes have been put on any future releases.

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MULLIGANS FLAT STRATEGY

- The public comment period on the Draft Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary strategy closed in March 2021 and comments are being considered by the partners. Two public information sessions were held in December 2020 and February 2021.

LEARNING CENTRE

- The construction progress for the Woodland Learning Centre in Throsby has been impacted by COVID-19 and wet weather. The estimated completion timeframe is now the first quarter 2022.

RABBITS AND FOXES IN MULLIGANS FLAT AND GOOROOPYAROO

- Rabbits were eradicated from the original Sanctuary in 2016 and from the extended Sanctuary in 2020.
- Rangers are in the final fox eradication phase within the extended sanctuary in Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. Staff are currently undertaking fox baiting and conducting intense monitoring using remote cameras, spotlighting and detector dogs.

KANGAROO MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Kangaroo populations are controlled in Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves to relieve grazing pressure on the critically endangered Box-Gum Grassy Woodland. The number of kangaroos culled for conservation purposes in each location is assessed annually by Conservation Research ecologists on a location by location basis using a series of scientific assessments.

Portfolio/s: Environment

Planning and Land Management

COVID impacts on core environmental work

Talking points:

- To support the current ACT Government health restrictions, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate closed a number of reserves and campgrounds, paused all environmental volunteering activities and limited operational works to essential functions only.
- Parks and reserves outside of the urban area such as Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and the Cotter Precinct had been closed to support health directives that restrict travel to within regions and limit the time permitted for outdoor recreation.
- All parks re-opened to the public on 1 October 2021 noting that both the Tidbinbilla and Namadgi National Park Visitor Centres remain closed as does the Tidbinbilla playground.
- To date, operational works are limited to critical business continuity tasks only. These critical tasks included captive animal management, emergency park maintenance and ranger patrols in re-opened parks and reserves.
- In September, the team recommenced high priority fire mitigation activities in preparation for the upcoming fire season. High priority invasive plant and vertebrate pest tasks have also re-commenced.
- Ecologists are currently finalising the planning for some key species recovery tasks such as threatened species translocation and monitoring projects that can re-commence in a COVID safe way this spring.
- Then some work will re-commence on minor construction activities and broader park maintenance.
- Some community based ParkCare activities recommenced from 15 October, with volunteers working to a Covid Safe Plan. The timing of recommencement of the balance of ParkCare activities is being carefully considered.

Key Information

- While the Directorate has recommenced some key components of our invasive plant, vertebrate pest and species recovery programs, there will be a reduction in onground delivery, attributable to the lost time during lockdown.
- The exact detail of this reduction in program delivery will not be known for some months, noting that some programs will require a lead in time before they can once again commence even after lockdown is lifted.
- Key aspects of the Bushfire Operations Program are on track to be delivered. While this program was initially paused as a result of the lockdown, works have

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recommended and the lost time is not likely to be a material concern. Planning suggests that all critical fire preparedness works will be delivered on schedule.

- A large component of the threatened species monitoring program is undertaken in spring each year. The current health restrictions has seen this program reviewed with only high priority monitoring being proposed. This will result in some commitments, such as those associated with environmental offsets, being delayed until next year.
- A detailed COVID Safety Plan has been developed to guide all operational activities.

Background Information

- When parks and reserves were reopened following the lockdown in 2020, the public responded with high levels of visitation to parks and reserves. This was the case again this year, with very high visitation reported at Tidbinbilla and Namadgi National Park. Carparks were full, although there were no major incidents.

PFAS IN THE ACT

Minister for Emergency Services may take the question if asked as it is a cross-portfolio matter

PFAS at the former Charnwood Fire Station and adjacent sites**Talking points:**

- On 2 December 2019, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) issued an order to investigate PFAS soil and water contamination at the former ACT Fire and Rescue (ACTFR) West Belconnen (Charnwood) fire station. The investigation was to determine the offsite environmental impacts of the adjacent sites.
- Environmental consultant GHD conducted testing and found that three sites in Charnwood have higher levels of PFAS than recommended and people at or working on these sites may be exposed to elevated PFAS concentrations if they eat or drink contaminated soil or water. Elevated concentrations were found:
 - in soil, surface water and groundwater on and adjacent to the St Thomas Aquinas Primary School oval
 - in soil at the Ginninderra Christian Church
 - in the drainage channel south of the church which ultimately drains to Ginninderra Creek.
- These findings triggered a Human Health Risk Assessment, which was tailored to the people who use the contaminated area. This assessment found the presence of PFAS in the soil represents a low risk to the people attending the school, church and childcare centre and the levels of PFAS exposure were well below the safe doses published by Australian regulatory agencies.
- An interim management plan has been in place and the affected area has been fenced off while the final plan is being prepared on expert advice.
- Works will be carried out at the same time the school builds a new early learning centre (ELC) and upgrades the playing fields.
- Management works are expected to involve taking out potentially contaminated soil from the ELC construction site. The fields may then be 'capped' with a geotextile fabric, 300mm of soil and turf. This would prevent contaminated soil being accessible to the public. This work would form the basis of the school's upgrade to the playgrounds.
- The ACT Government will review the works throughout the process and on completion to ensure the works meet the requirements of the Auditor approved remedial action plan

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and the EPA (as advised by GHD and auditor Ramboll).

- The school community has been kept updated through the school newsletter, fact sheets and an information session for parents.
- The EPA has reviewed and provided comments on the draft audit documents for these sites and will regulate, through provisions of the *Environment Protection Act 1997*, any long-term management requirements deemed necessary by the Auditor for the school and the adjacent Ginninderra Church and road reserve and drainage channel.
- The ACT Government and GHD will continue to keep the community informed about the contamination and steps to further protect the community.

PFAS at the Forrest Fire Museum and Residence and Telopea High School

Talking points:

- In 2020, the ACT Government appointed environmental consultants, GHD, to assess current and former Fire and Rescue Station sites that may be impacted by PFAS. The Forrest Fire Museum and Residence at 14 Empire Circuit was included in this proactive testing program as the site was used as a fire station until 1984.
- The investigation at the Forrest site found that there is a low risk to visitors, workers and people undertaking maintenance at the Forrest Fire Museum and Residence from PFAS in the soil. The results suggest low volumes of firefighting foam were used across the site with no single source area identified.
- GHD recommended that further studies be done to determine the extent of PFAS impacts on areas that may have been subject to run-off from the site or movement through the underlying aquifer, including the Telopea Park School overflow playing field.
- Given current investigations, the health risk to children, school students and others who use or access the playground is considered low.
- A sign at the museum advises visitors about PFAS on the site.
- In May 2021, the Chair of the Barton and Kingston Residents Association was informed about the investigations and plan for further testing.
- In May 2021, the school community was advised, through the school newsletter, about the investigations and plans for further testing. A fact sheet is available for parents.

Other current and former Fire and Rescue stations

Talking points:

Cleared as complete and accurate:	29/09/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Deputy Director-General	Ext: 75001
Contact Officer name:	Eliza Larson	Ext: 77009
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- The ESA has undertaken testing for PFAS contamination at other current and former ACT Fire and Rescue stations.
- Preliminary testing identified contamination in the soil and/or groundwater at all eight sites that exceeds either or both human health and ecological levels.
- Temporary management measures such as fencing and signage have been put in place at these sites to protect staff and the community.
- Major Projects Canberra has been engaged to facilitate a procurement process to engage an environment consultant to conduct secondary testing at the ESA sites.

Emergency Services Agency (ESA) —worker’s compensation claim

Talking points:

- ESA can confirm that the Government insurer, EML, have reviewed a workers compensation claim relating to a claim by an ACT firefighter for a cancer related illness.
- In that case, the insurer has accepted that the disease in question was substantially contributed to by their work and assessed the claim under presumptive legislation in the Safety and Rehabilitation Compensation Act.
- In coming to that decision, the insurer took into account:
 - the firefighter’s length of service; and
 - the accepted view that firefighting duties involve exposure to a range of harmful chemicals and conditions which increase the risk of several types of cancer and that these risks increase with the length of service.
- ESA will not be commenting on the case due to medical privacy issues.

Emergency Services Agency—Vehicles:

Talking points:

- ESA has tested all frontline ACT Fire & Rescue fire trucks for PFAS contamination levels. The tests have returned a negative result on all vehicles and have classified the vehicles to drinking water standards.
- The Firefighters Union has been consulted and agree this is a good outcome for firefighters.

Background Information

Cleared as complete and accurate:	29/09/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Deputy Director-General	Ext: 75001
Contact Officer name:	Eliza Larson	Ext: 77009
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are manufactured chemicals used in products that resist heat, oil, stains and water. PFAS was a commonly used substance in firefighting foam in NSW and the ACT. This foam is understood to have been used for training purposes at ACTFR sites.
- At present, the former Charnwood fire station site is privately owned and operated by the Ducklings Early Education Childcare Centre. There are already long-term management measures in place for the Ducklings Early Education childcare centre. GHD's report recommends no change to the centre.
- Remediation costs for the interim and long-term management measures at the Charnwood-adjacent sites will be covered by JACS/ESA.

Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

PARKCARE

Talking points:

- All volunteering activities associated with Environment, Planning and Development Directorate had been paused until COVID 19 restrictions allowed. From 15 October, ParkCare Patch volunteering has recommenced consistent with revised health directions and a Covid-safe plan.
- The ParkCare initiative has been a flagship community volunteer program hosted by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service since 1989. In that time some nature reserves have been transformed as weeds have been removed and native vegetation allowed to recover.
- ParkCare is comprised of 4 streams each specialising on an aspect of assisting land managers with looking after the ACT's unique natural and cultural heritage. The streams are ParkCare Patch, VisitorAssist, WildlifeAssist, and RangerAssist.
- ParkCare Volunteers provide in excess of 29,000 hours per annum (in a standard year) to assist with the development and implementation of key environment, educational, and conservation objectives.
- The ACT Government provided further ongoing support to the ParkCare volunteer program by funding a new position to coordinate the growing RangerAssist stream, and announced in the 21/22 Budget, funding for an additional ParkCare Patch ranger for Canberra Nature Park north.

Key Information

- EPSDD is updating the environment volunteering policy, and this will encompass all volunteering groups inclusive of the Catchment Groups, WaterWatch, and ParkCare.
- ParkCare volunteers work alongside staff from ACT Parks and Conservation Service to protect, enhance and promote the reserves within our Canberra Nature Park.

Background Information

- The ParkCare program has undergone a variety of changes and improvements in the past 4 years, including:
 - Implementation of a digital platform to manage communications, opportunities for volunteering, registration, records management, and data collection/reporting.
 - Introduction of new volunteer stream and opportunities, such as RangerAssist.
 - Addition and recruitment of ongoing full-time position to support and develop ParkCare volunteering.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	14/10/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Branch Manager	Ext: 0412 215 754
Contact Officer name:	Lisa Testoni	Ext: 0422 069 693
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- Increase of registered volunteers to 1705(as at 14 October 2021) with a more diverse range of demographics.
- ParkCare celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019 and is a critical asset in contributing to the management of the Parks and Conservation Service estate.
- 2020/21 was a challenging time due to Covid-19, however more than 24,000 hours were still logged by our ParkCare volunteers at an estimated contribution of \$1,034,280 worth of value to the ACT environment.

Portfolio: Heritage**Hall Showground heritage building****Talking points:**

- Repair of the damaged Pony Club building at Hall is to be undertaken by its manager, being Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) within the portfolio of Mr Chris Steel MLA.
- The building is heritage registered, and repair works will need to be undertaken in accordance with Heritage Act requirements.
- The ACT Heritage Council, as the independent statutory authority for heritage, has provided advice to TCCS to guide these repair works.

Key Information

- On 24 August 2020, the building was damaged by a fire, which badly affected its southern portion.
- On 14 September 2020, the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) provided advice to TCCS on heritage requirements for repair works.
- TCCS has advised that they recognise the value of this heritage building to the local community, and are committed to undertaking repairs to restore it for use.
- Most recently, TCCS met with Hall community groups on 2 July 2021 to seek feedback on planned repairs.
- The Council is available to provide further advice on this matter to TCCS as required.

Background Information

- The building is registered on the ACT Heritage Register as part of the 'Hall Village Heritage Precinct'.
- The building was originally constructed in c.1925 as a stable complex to accommodate horses during the annual Hall Show.

Additional Information regarding correspondence from Ms Castley, MLA

- I thank the member for her question and for the correspondence received on the matter.
- A response is forthcoming, but for Ms Castley's awareness, I am advised that TCCS is committed to undertaking repairs to the building, and to restoring it for community use.
- I am also advised that, to support delivery of these repair works, the ACT Heritage Council provided advice to TCCS in 2020, and are available to provide further advice as needed.
- I have also responded to Ms Kerkhoff's enquiry directly to ensure she is aware of the progress on this matter.

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 59027
Contact Officer name: Edwina Jans Ext: 59237
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Portfolio: Heritage

22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah (Paral House)

Talking points:

- On 22 July 2021, the ACT Heritage Council (the **Council**) accepted a nomination application to the ACT Heritage Register (the **Register**) for 22 Brockman Street, Narrabundah (also known as **Paral House**).
- The Council will not take further action under the Heritage Act in respect to the Narrabundah residence, and has advised the nominator and the owners of this decision.
- The Council has decided not to issue a Heritage Direction under section 62 of the Heritage Act, and will not pursue a decision to provisionally register Paral House.
- To issue a Heritage Direction, the Council must be satisfied the place has heritage significance, and meets the criteria under section 10 of the Heritage Act.
- The threshold levels required to demonstrate significance in the case of a Heritage Direction are exceptionally high, and Council is of the view that the Narrabundah property will not meet criteria to the degree high enough required in order to issue a Heritage Direction, which is a reviewable decision in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
- This decision is based on a history of some modification, a lack of professional recognition, and the fact that the design work of architect Derek Wrigley (OAM) at the Australian National University is more highly regarded.
- The submission of a nomination application made after demolition approval under the Building Act represents a rare circumstance of unfortunate timing beyond the ability of the Council to undertake detailed research and a full assessment against the heritage significance criteria – a process that generally takes some months to complete.

Key Information

- The nomination application for 22 Brockman St did not meet dismissal conditions.
- Nomination acceptance is a standalone, preliminary process in which the Council is only required to consider the merits of the application received. Nomination acceptance should not be taken to mean a place has heritage value and has been registered on the ACT Heritage Register.
- The nomination was received after the property was approved for demolition in accordance with a building approval (BA) under the *Building Act 2004*.
 - As documented in the nomination itself, the nominator was aware of the likelihood of imminent demolition.
- The acceptance of a nomination does not invalidate the BA, which can proceed without an offence occurring under the Heritage Act 2004 (the Heritage Act).

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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- In due course, the Council will enter a Statement of Reasons not to provisionally register Paral House on the Heritage Register, formally setting out the reasons for its decision to not pursue heritage registration, or a Heritage Direction.
- The decision does not prevent Council from considering other houses by Mr Wrigley for heritage registration, should the Council receive and accept a nomination application for these.
- The processes to nominate, register and protect heritage places and objects are legislated under the Heritage Act, which also establishes the Heritage Council as an independent expert statutory body with decision making powers on registrations and heritage directions.
- The Minister ensures that all matters have been appropriately considered prior to the Council making a final decision on whether or not a place or object has heritage significance.
- Decisions about registrations can be controversial with a wide range of often opposing views expressed from interested parties and the community. As such, there is benefit in having an independent and expert Council responsible for the decision-making process to remove political interference in the decision making process.
- The Heritage Act provides the nationally accepted principle of separating the identification, assessment and registration of heritage places from decisions about their conservation and management.
- The Heritage Council provides entity advice on Development Applications (DA), however, Ministerial call-in provisions under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* enables the Planning Minister to consider a broader range of issues in making a decision on a DA when exercising this power.

Background Information

- Paral House was designed by architect Derek Wrigley, who passed away in June 2021. Built in 1959. Nominated by a member of the Wrigley family.

Portfolio/s: Heritage

Planning and Land Management

National Heritage Listing of Canberra

Talking points:

- Government has been working with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment to understand the detail of a proposed National Heritage Listing (NHL) of Canberra under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The Commonwealth Government is seeking the ACT Government's views on the proposed NHL, before determining the listing.
- A NHL recognises places that have outstanding heritage value to the nation.
- The proposed listing would formally recognise the symbolic and physical importance of Canberra as the nation's seat of government and planned capital city.
- The proposed listing includes the town centres (as structural elements of the city); inner hills; early garden suburbs (roads and suburban parks); central national area and views to the distant mountains (from defined public vantage points).
- The NHL excludes private property and individual buildings.
- Once listed, the heritage values of a place included in the NHL are protected under the EPBC Act. This means that a person cannot take an action that will have a significant impact on the heritage values of the place, without approval.
- However, the NHL is at a broad (thematic), rather than detailed level. So it is unlikely to result in many proposals requiring approval under the EPBC Act.
- The NHL would continue to allow growth and change and is not intended to limit development or 'preserve' features in their exact current form.
- The ACT Government is currently considering the proposed NHL and will communicate its position to the Commonwealth by the end of 2021.
- The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment (Sussan Ley MP) will make the ultimate decision on the proposed listing.

Key Information

- The proposed listing recognises features of the city that are important to Canberrans and seeks to protect these, while allowing for sympathetic change.
- The proposed listing will help educate the community and build awareness of the importance and value of Canberra as the planned National Capital.

- The proposed listing could have a positive impact on the image and status of Canberra as a place to visit, live and do business by recognising its unique character and planning legacy.
- The proposed listing is complementary to the Territory Plan and National Capital Plan.
- The proposed listing may raise concerns, such as another layer of approval, or restrictions on development. However, as I have mentioned, it does not affect private property and the heritage values are at a very broad, rather than detailed level.
- Most of area subject to the proposed listing is Designated land under the National Capital Plan, and so is already subject to detailed planning and design provisions.
- In addition, there are many existing heritage items at ACT, National and Commonwealth levels already within the proposed listing area.

Background Information

- A proposed National Heritage Listing of Canberra has been contemplated for over a decade. The Commonwealth Government is seeking to determine and finalise the proposed listing, and is seeking the position of the ACT Government.
- Formal consideration of the matter by the ACT Government was deferred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and again in early 2021 to take account of proposed reforms under the EPBC Act.
- Consideration has been given to how the proposed reforms under the EPBC Act interact with the proposed NHL. The reforms are likely to lead to streamlined processes and improved timing and costs where an action affecting the NHL requires assessment and approval.
- Consideration has also been given to other cities with a NHL, including Adelaide, Broken Hill and inner Melbourne. The NHL has not had a limiting impact on development in those cities. A large part of the Sydney CBD (from Hyde Park to Farm Cove – an area of 118 hectares) was added to the NHL in February this year.

Portfolio: Heritage

Nomination of Lake Burley Griffin

Talking points:

- Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands' (the Lake) is nominated for Commonwealth Heritage Listing, under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The Commonwealth Heritage List includes places that are under the control of the Commonwealth Government on Commonwealth land or in Commonwealth waters, or that are owned or managed by the Commonwealth Government.
- As this area is National land, 'Designated Area', the ACT Government has limited influence on the area proposed for listing.
- The National Capital Authority, not the ACT Government, has the responsibility for determining detailed planning policy and works approval.
- In addition, there are already well-established planning requirements to consider impacts on the Lake and surrounds under the National Capital Plan.

Key Information

- Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands has been identified as an Australian Heritage Council priority assessment since at least 2017.
- On 27 January 2021, as part of the Commonwealth heritage assessment process, the Australian Heritage Council sought public views on whether Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands meets significance criteria.
- The ACT Heritage Council has no jurisdiction in this space, and the *Heritage Act 2004* does not apply.

Background Information

- The EPBC Act establishes both the Commonwealth and National heritage lists, they are separate lists with similar criteria. The key difference is the level or 'threshold' of significance required to reach the criteria; 'significant' for Commonwealth, 'outstanding' for National.
- The Commonwealth Heritage List, lists places under the control of the Commonwealth Government on Commonwealth land or in Commonwealth waters, or owned or managed by the Commonwealth Government.
- As distinct from the National Heritage List, which lists places deemed to be of outstanding heritage significance to Australia, contributing to Australia's identity and could be owned by other governments or in private ownership.

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 59027
Contact Officer name: Edwina Jans Ext: 59237
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands' (the Lake) is nominated for Commonwealth Heritage Listing. The nominated area covers approximately 6,640 hectares including:
 - Lake Burley Griffin bounded by the entrances of the Molonglo River, Jerrabomberra Creek and Sullivans Creek, and Scrivener Dam;
 - Springbank and Spinnaker Islands. The Carillon is listed separately on the Commonwealth Heritage List;
 - Scrivener Dam;
 - Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and Kings Avenue Bridge;
 - Stirling Ridge, Stirling Park, Attunga Point, Yarramundi Grasslands, Roman Cypress Hill and the Lindsay Pryor Arboretum.

Portfolio: Heritage**Pine plantings at The Bradfield development - Downer****Talking points:**

- The existing Monterey Pine trees along Bradfield Street, Downer, were planted in the early 1940s as a windbreak to protect the former Council for Science and Industry Research, Dickson Experiment Farm.
- These trees are of heritage significance and are registered on the ACT Heritage Register.
- The Heritage Act requires that registered heritage places are conserved and responsibly managed, for current and future generations.
- In this instance, conservation requires the replacement of trees when they reach their end of life, and that these replacement trees be pines planted in a windbreak formation.
- The replanting of the historic windbreak is a requirement of heritage and planning approvals for the redevelopment, which date to 2017.
- A change to deciduous trees would result in the loss of a registered place of heritage significance.

Key Information

- Heritage requirements for The Bradfield development have been identified by the ACT Heritage Council, who is the independent statutory body established to administer the Heritage Act.
- The Heritage Council has decision making authority at arms-length from the government of the day.
- The ACT planning and land authority also considers the expert advice of the Heritage Council in development applications for registered heritage places.
- For Stages 1 and 2 of the development:
 - On 1 August 2017, a Heritage Act approval was issued, which permitted the removal of the existing Monterey Pine trees and their replacement with Canary Island Pine trees.
 - On 5 September 2017, the ACT planning and land authority conditionally approved development, which also required the replanting of the historic windbreak.
- For Stage 3 of the development:
 - On 24 August 2021, a Heritage Act approval was issued, which permitted the removal of the existing Monterey Pine trees and their replacement with Canary Island Pine trees.

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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- A development application (DA) has been submitted, which is currently under assessment by the ACT planning and land authority. The DA has also been referred to entities for advice, including the Heritage Council, whose advice on the DA is to be provided by 22 October 2021.

Background Information

- The 'Trees of the Former CS&IR Experiment Station' was registered on the ACT Heritage Register on 26 June 1998.
- Canary Island Pine trees are to be used for replanting of the historic windbreak, as Monterey Pine trees are now a declared pest species in the ACT.

HERITAGE NOMINATION LIST

Talking points:

- The ACT Heritage Council is an independent statutory authority established under the *Heritage Act 2004*. The Council is responsible for the assessment of nominations to the Heritage Register and decisions on the inclusion of heritage places and objects in the Register.
- Heritage nominations are prioritised by the Heritage Council for assessment based on a range of factors including imminent threat, thematic representation, and pressures from development or other works.
- Since reaching a peak of 320 nominations in 2008, hundreds of decisions have been made, resulting in a current nomination list of 85.
- ACT Heritage within EPSDD conducts research and makes recommendations to the Heritage Council, which then reviews this work before making a decision, applying the knowledge of Council members. The steady and carefully considered addition of places and objects to the Heritage Register is a significant conservation outcome for the ACT community.

Key Information

- Nominations receive statutory recognition under the Heritage Act, which requires the Heritage Council to advise on any proposed development impacts.
- Nominations older than 20 years were made under the repealed *Land (Planning and Environment Act) 1991* which did not require the same level of information upon submission as those made under the current Heritage Act. As such, research and assessment of older nominations is more resource intensive.
- The Heritage Council determines priority assessments at the beginning of each financial year. Priorities include older nominations, private residences and Aboriginal heritage.

Background Information

- ESPDD provides 2.2 FTE to assist the Council in assessing nominations.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021 to date
Nominations accepted	2	10	1
Nominations dismissed	1*	1	
Provisional registration decisions (including decisions to not provisionally register)	6	6	1
Registration decisions (including further registration decisions)	4	3	1

*Includes the removal of identified duplicate entries on the nomination list.

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 Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 59027
 Contact Officer name: Daisy Chaston Ext: 77379
 Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Portfolio: Heritage**THE FOOTHILLS CAMPBELL– DOMA GROUP, “AINSLIE VOLCANICS” HERITAGE****Talking points:**

- On 9 December 2020, the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) accepted a nomination to the ACT Heritage Register (the Register) for the Ainslie Volcanics (the Nomination), submitted by Ngambri Elder Shane Mortimer.
- The Nomination includes the former Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) headquarters site, at Blocks 4 and 5 Section 38 Campbell.
- Doma Group propose to develop this site as ‘The Foothills’ residential complex.
- As the Foothills includes National Land, development approval authority does not lie with the ACT Government. However this did not prevent the Council from accepting the Nomination as per the requirements of the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Heritage Act).
- The Nomination encompasses both National Land and Territory Land, and claims there are Aboriginal, historic, natural and geological heritage values present on both the National Land and Territory Land portions of the Nomination.
- The ACT Heritage Council called a special meeting for 2 August 2021 to address two matters concerning the Nomination:
 1. The National Land portion of the nomination
 2. The Territory Land portion of the nomination

Key Information

- National Land (Campbell Section 38 Blocks 4 and 5)

The *Heritage Act 2004* (the Heritage Act) has no effect on National land, and so the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) has no jurisdiction to make a decision on this part of the Nomination. Doma Group and the nominator have been advised of this.

- Territory Land (Campbell Section 63 Block 4; Ainslie Section 60 Blocks 2 and 3; Wolseley Road Reserve)

- The Territory land part of the Nomination will remain nominated to the ACT Heritage Register (the Heritage Register), until such time as the Council makes a decision to, or not to provisionally register the place under the Heritage Act. Doma Group and the nominator have been advised of this.
- A provisional registration decision requires the Council to assess whether the place meets, or does not meet one or more of the heritage significance criteria under section 10 of the Heritage Act.
- The Nomination includes outcroppings of the Ainslie Volcanics geology which have overlapping Aboriginal heritage values that the Council will be required to assess in the future as part of the heritage registration process.
- The nominated geology and overlapping Aboriginal heritage values are protected by, and subject to the requirements of the Heritage Act.

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- The Nomination also includes the following species/habitats (the 'Natural Values') which are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act):
 - Natural Temperate Grasslands;
 - Yellow Box Blakeley's Redgum Woodland;
 - Canberra Spider Orchid habitat;
 - Golden Sun Moth habitat; and
 - Hoary Sunray habitat.
- The Planning and Land Authority (PLA) is the decision maker on development applications that occur on the Territory land portion of the Nomination.
- Any development on Territory land would be subject to the provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. In an area where the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* applies, the requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement would need to be submitted to the ACT Planning and Land Authority. A referral would be made to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna as part of that process.

Background Information

- At the time of accepting the Nomination in December 2020, the Council understood that Territory enactments do not bind a Commonwealth entity unless agreed to by the Commonwealth, however, the matter of private entities on National land was unclear at that time.
- The Heritage Act stipulates conditions under which the Council can dismiss a nomination application, and the Ainslie Volcanics nomination did not meet any conditions for dismissal.
- Note that acceptance of a nomination does not equate to heritage listing on the Register. Nomination acceptance is a separate and preliminary step.
- The Nomination includes Blocks 4 and 5 Section 38 Campbell, which Doma Group propose to develop as 'The Foothills' residential complex.
- As the Foothills is National Land, development approval authority does not lie with the ACT Government, and the National Capital Authority (NCA) granted approval for the development on 26 February 2021.
- Redevelopment has also been subject to heritage impact assessment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- The NCA advise that a 2020 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment by Navin Officer Heritage Consultants sufficiently informs the management of Aboriginal heritage matters on the Foothills development site, enabling approval of the Foothills development.

Ginninderra Creek Corroboree Ground Cultural Gathering Area

Talking points:

- The ACT Heritage Council registered the Corroboree Ground at its meeting on 27 May 2021.
- The registration decision was preceded by a provisional registration period of five months, which included a period of public consultation, which closed on 15 March 2020.
- Two comments were received from members of the public during this time. Both submissions expressed support for the provisional registration.
- One comment was received from the Director-General (DG) Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, who did not put forward a view on provisional registration, but indicated support and interest in the long term conservation management of the place following registration.
- Additional comments received outside the public consultation period revealed a preference to see the name of the place changed in favour of a more culturally appropriate title derived from the language of the Traditional Custodians of the ACT region.
- The Council supports this and intends to re-title the heritage listing under a separate process following additional consultation and engagement.

Key Information

- The Ginninderra Creek Corroboree Ground Cultural Gathering Area (the Corroboree Ground) was nominated in May 2020.
- The nomination was submitted by the Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group (GAAG), which is comprised of Aboriginal knowledge holders from within and around the Canberra region.
- The Corroboree Ground is associated with intangible heritage values relating to corroborees. As such, the place is relevant to the history of the region and Aboriginal cultural values.
- Corroborees were special community events and as such have endured in oral resources and collective consciousness. The place has a strong association for the Aboriginal community in the ACT.
- The importance of the place is also embedded within a broader associative cultural landscape.

Background

- The ACT Heritage Register Database (HERO) records **87** Aboriginal places and objects on the Register.
- Many of these registrations contain information about more than one Aboriginal place or object.
- Citations on the Register currently include information on over **3000** Aboriginal sites, of which many have been recorded as salvaged.
 - (*HERO does not further break down this information into site types, significance, etc).
- Development of a new ACT Heritage Register Database and Website will assist in being better able to capture Aboriginal heritage information, including the types of places registered, and the current location, status, and condition of many places.
- In **2019-20**, the Council registered **three** Aboriginal places on the ACT Heritage Register:
 - Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2 in Hume; and
 - Mulligan's Flat Aboriginal Stone Quarry.

Portfolio: Heritage

Council Membership

Talking points:

- On 22 February 2021, I notified the appointment of a new Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and five members of the ACT Heritage Council for a three-year term commencing 2 March 2021.
- The Council membership is follows:
 - Dr Ken Heffernan – Chairperson (expert in the discipline of archaeology);
 - Dr Laura Dawes – Deputy Chairperson (expert in the discipline of history, other than Aboriginal);
 - Prof Roz Hansen – Member (expert in the discipline of town planning);
 - Dr Doug Hassall – Member (expert in the disciplines of history, other than Aboriginal, and town planning);
 - Prof Nick Brown – Member (expert in the discipline of urban design);
 - Ms Sarah Jane Brazil – Member (expert in the discipline of architecture);
 - Mrs Alison Archer – Member (representative of the community);
 - Mrs Caroline Hughes – Member (representative of the Aboriginal community); and
 - Ms Gay Williamson – Member (representative of the property ownership, management and development sector)

Key Information

- The Council is an independent, statutory body established under the *Heritage Act 2004*. The Council's role includes, among other functions, identification and assessment of nominations to the ACT Heritage Register, providing advice on appropriate conservation of cultural, natural and Aboriginal heritage places and objects in the ACT and encouraging public interest in, and awareness of the ACT's heritage.
- In 2019-20 Council made the following decisions on registrations:
 1. Nominations accepted:
 1. Canberra Fire Museum Large Technology Object Collection
 2. Roche House, Deakin
 2. Decisions to provisionally register:
 1. Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong
 2. The Civic Square Precinct, City

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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

3. Mulligan's Flat Aboriginal Stone Quarry, Gungahlin
4. Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2, Hume
3. Decisions not to provisionally register:
 1. 9 Ord Street, Forrest
 2. 8 Westgarth Street, O'Connor
4. Decisions to register:
 1. Norwood Park Crematorium, Mitchell
 2. Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong
 3. Mulligan's Flat Aboriginal Stone Quarry, Gungahlin
 4. Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2, Hume

Background Information

- In addition to two permanent ex-officio members - the Chief Planning Executive and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna - a maximum of nine members are appointed to the Council by the Minister.
- Expressions of interest for membership were invited on 17 July 2020 from persons in the ACT Region with experience in the following areas of expertise; Aboriginal culture; Aboriginal history; archaeology; architecture; engineering; history; landscape architecture; nature conservation; object conservation; town planning; or urban design.
- Appointment to Council is for a three year period.

Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development
Major Projects Canberra

Friday 22 October – 3.45pm to 5.00pm

BUDGET		
1.	E01 & E02 Combustible Cladding	Major Projects Canberra

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION QTBs		
2.	Living Infrastructure Plan (including DV369)	Planning & Urban Policy/ Climate Change & Energy
3.	Property Developer licensing	Building Reform
4.	Minimum Accessibility Standards	Building Reform
5.	ABCB Consultation on high-risk products	Building Reform
6.	Cladding Ban – Announcement by the Victorian Government 1 Feb 2021	Building Reform
7.	Fidelity Fund	Building Reform
8.	Government Response to the Building Quality Inquiry	Building Reform
9.	Building Reforms	Building Reform
10.	Energy Efficiency Standards	Building Reform
11.	Professional Indemnity insurance	Building Reform
12.	Implementation of Building Confidence Report in the ACT	Building Reform
13.	Building Quality Initiatives (Engineer Registration, Developer Licensing and Government Certifiers)	Building Reform
14.	Home Swimming Pool Safety	Building Reform
15.	Minimum Energy Requirements for rental properties	Climate Change & Sustainability
16.	ACT Government – Response to Asbestos - Remaining Affected Properties – Pathways Package - Management of newly identified affected properties from 18 August 2021 Asbestos Disease Assistance Fund	Asbestos Response Taskforce
17.	Cladding rectification	Major Projects Canberra
18.	Construction Industry Arrangements	Major Projects Canberra

Portfolio/s: Sustainable Building and Construction

Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE (including DV 369)

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to achieving sustainable development outcomes that meet the needs of the growing population, while retaining the values, features and landscape setting that make Canberra unique.
- We recognise that population growth, urban densification and climate change pose challenges for how we achieve this outcome.
 - Continued urban expansion puts pressure on the valued natural resources that surround the city such as our bushland and grasslands, landscape setting and connectivity of ecosystems.
- Urban densification introduces new challenges for which innovative and ecologically sustainable urban development solutions will need to be considered and adopted.
- The Government is committed to planning for connected open space networks and sufficient tree canopy cover for public spaces and to mitigate against the loss of tree canopy cover, permeable surfaces and planting area as a result of urban intensification.
- *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* outlines the ACT Government's commitment to addressing urban heat, primarily by protecting and improving living infrastructure within urban Canberra.
- Living Infrastructure helps to make our city 'climate-wise', enhancing its capacity to cope with the impacts of urban densification and climate change by reducing urban heat island effects, increasing access to shade, and safeguarding urban landscape function and health.
- The Living Infrastructure Plan has established targets of 30% tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30% permeable surfaces by 2045 within the built environment footprint. They are an important element of achieving the sustainability and resilience objectives for our city set out in the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*.
- Achieving the Plan will rely on collective and collaborative efforts across Government, community and the business sector.
- Current action being undertaken by the ACT Government includes:
 - Planting of 54,000 trees in Canberra between 2020-21 and 2023-24 to contribute to the 30% canopy cover (or equivalent) target for Canberra's urban footprint.

- The Development of an Urban Forest Strategy to support the long term strategic management and growth of the urban forest. The final Strategy was released on 30 March 2021.
- Demonstration projects such as the Whitlam Display Village which trials innovative living infrastructure solutions such as passive irrigation, permeable driveway surfaces and advances street tree planting.
- Introducing changes to the Territory Plan requirements, notably draft Territory Plan Variation 369 – Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones. This draft Variation proposes higher requirements for minimum planting area, along with new requirements for planting of trees.
 - These requirements don't go all the way to achieving the Plan's targets, but significantly improve on business as usual.
 - Further amendments to planning processes in the future will be introduced to support the ACT reaching its targets by 2045.
 - The recommended version of DV369 is currently being prepared, taking into consideration the submissions received during the public consultation process.

Key Information

- In 2017, the ACT Government commissioned CSIRO to study Canberra's urban heat island effect. The research found that Canberra's summer land surface temperatures can be up to 10°C hotter than surrounding rural areas.
- Common measures to reduce urban heat include trees, watered grass, shading structures, wetlands, green walls and appropriate building and surface materials.

Background Information

- The Plan was released in September 2019. Canberra currently has an estimated 22.5% tree canopy cover, although this is not evenly distributed across the city.
 - This latest estimate has been prepared using LiDAR data captured in 2020 and represents the most recent analysis of TCC in urban Canberra.
- The urban heat island effect occurs when urban areas are warmer than surrounding rural areas. This is often due to buildings, roads and pavements (built environment) absorbing heat, which is then slowly released, leading to higher temperatures at both day and night.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

Property developer licencing

Talking points:

- The ACT Government remains committed to introducing a licensing scheme for property developers during this term.
- The ACT Government has already implemented and continues to implement reforms designed to lift standards and practices across the building and construction sector.
- Introducing a licensing scheme for property developers is another way the Government is taking action to increase the accountability of practitioners in the building industry.
- The Government's aim is to make sure that property developers are accountable for the work they do and the decisions they make.
- Establishing a licensing scheme for property developers will require a new legislative framework be established. EPSDD has undertaken the initial policy and regulatory analysis and will shortly appoint a consultant to further develop the scheme.
- The next stage of work will involve consultation with stakeholders in industry and the community before the legislation can be finalised and introduced to the Legislative Assembly in 2022.
- Introducing a licensing scheme for property developers is just one way the ACT Government is taking action to lift standards and practices across the building and construction industry.
- EPSDD is also undertaking important projects to introduce a registration scheme for engineers and to establish a public sector building certification service in line with the Government's commitments to deliver both during this term.

Key Information

Next steps and timing

- EPSDD has undertaken initial policy and regulatory analysis and has identified a range of matters that need to be further considered and issues that will need to be resolved. For example, property developers can have complex legal and corporate structures and this needs to be well understood to ensure any new laws are effective. EPSDD is in the process of appointing a consultant, with the necessary expertise, to further resolve these issues and to develop options for the Government's consideration and final agreement to implement.

- As noted above stakeholder engagement will be required to inform development of the licensing scheme also. The anticipated staging and timing for the development of the scheme is as follows:
 - Q3-4 2021 – consultant engaged, further policy and regulatory analysis undertaken, targeted consultation
 - Q1-2 2022 – proposed legislative model developed and presented to government for consideration, further stakeholder consultation on implementation matters as required, legislation drafted.
 - Q3-4 2022 – legislation introduced and passed; new provisions commence.

Background Information

- Policy considerations by EPSDD to date have included - an appropriate definition of property developer, interactions between the different parties involved in projects and how to treat instances where the developer and builder are one and the same, interactions with existing law and how best to increase the community's awareness of who is involved in development projects so that they can make informed decisions.
- The current regulatory framework that exists for occupations in the building and construction industry is the *Constructions Occupations (Licensing) Act 2004* (COLA). Other property occupations, such as real estate agents, are regulated under other laws.
- COLA focuses on construction services, rather than the general business operations and industrial relations practices of licensed entities. A licence that applies to a broad range of activities and obligations and/or the business practices of developers requires a new legislative model separate to COLA to be developed.
- No other jurisdiction currently has property developer licensing legislation. Queensland is the only jurisdiction to have enacted a licensing regime but repealed the legislation in 2014. NSW recently passed legislation that gives the relevant regulator the ability to issue property developers:
 - Prohibition orders to block the issue of an occupation certificate (or strata plan, in ACT referred to as unit title).
 - Stop work orders; and
 - Building work rectification orders (with the ability to recover costs associated with such orders).
- The NSW legislation does not license developers; however, it does allow for oversight and sanctions to be issued to the developer.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

Minimum Accessibility Standards

Talking points:

- On 30 April 2021, at the Building Ministers Meeting (BMM), the majority of Ministers agreed to include minimum accessibility provisions for residential housing and apartments in the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022 based on the Livable Housing Design Guidelines (LHDG) silver standards.
- The standards will require simple features such as doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and step free access, a bathroom on the ground floor and structural reinforcements to allow for the installation of supports like grip rails if they are needed in the future.
- In agreeing to implement a regulatory solution, Ministers took into consideration the feedback from industry, advocates and the lived experience of members of the community affected by the lack of accessible housing. They also considered the findings of the Decision Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) prepared by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB).
- Draft provisions for the accessibility standards have been included in the NCC Public Comment Draft which was initially released for consultation by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) between Monday 10 May and Friday 2 July 2021. The ABCB, cognisant of the on-going impact on industry of COVID-19 and the flow on effect of the various lockdowns experienced in many jurisdictions, extended the public comment period until 11 July 2021.
- Ahead of the national meeting I announced that the ACT Government was supportive of the inclusion of the minimum standards in the NCC. Introducing minimum accessibility standards for new homes in the ACT is a commitment in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement to increase the availability of homes able to be adapted and accessible to all members of the community regardless of age, disability, or other factors.
- Ministers also agreed that senior building officials lead work with the ABCB to provide advice to support implementation, including any exclusions, as well as appropriate transition timeframes.

Key Information

- In my announcement ahead of the BMM, I noted that the building and development industry would need to be supported to meet the new standards with reasonable timeframes for implementation.
- The ACT is participating in this work nationally and is also engaging with the ACT building and development industry to inform the development of implementation arrangements for the ACT. These arrangements will be subject to further consideration and decision by the ACT Government.

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Background Information

- The ACT Government has a long-standing commitment to universal design standards. Since, 2002 ACT planning laws have required that at least 10 percent of dwellings in townhouse and multi-unit housing developments with ten or more dwellings must comply with at least Class C Adaptable in Australian Standard AS 4299.
- The ACT first committed to introduce minimum universal design standards for new houses in 2008. In 2009 targets were included in Phase II of the *ACT Affordable Housing Action Plan*. The Plan included a commitment to work with industry to develop universal design guidelines for the ACT and the initial target was for at least 20 percent of new detached houses to be required comply by the end of 2010, ramping up to 100 per cent by the end of 2020. In 2012, the ACT Government agreed to require that all new detached houses (Class 1a) meet LHDG Silver level standard commencing 1 May 2013, bringing forward the original target to have this requirement in place by 2020.
- The Government subsequently agreed to suspend work to implement the requirement for new houses in the ACT to be built to the LHDG Silver level standard for up to three years. This decision was made following a request from Livable Housing Australia and national and local branches of associations represented on the Livable Housing Australia Board to pause the ACT reforms to allow more time for a voluntary approach to be pursued with industry.
- In 2016, through the Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Assembly, the Government committed to encourage universal design initiatives, including advocating for genuine progress on the 2010 agreement for new housing to meet universal design standards. Work to implement the ACT specific requirements has been on hold pending the outcome of the national work agreed in 2017 under the BMF.

Regulatory Impact Statement

- The former Building Ministers' Forum (BMF), with the support of all COAG First Ministers, directed the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to undertake a regulatory impact analysis (RIA) into the possible inclusion of minimum accessibility requirements for new housing into the National Construction Code (NCC).
- The ABCB conducted an extensive public consultation process due to scale and importance of this project, with the RIA process commencing in 2017-18 and completed in 2020-21.
- Governments required the options assessed to be based on the 'Silver' and 'Gold' specifications in the Livable Housing Design Guidelines (LHDG), along with other options as appropriate.

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- The Centre for International Economics (CIE) was engaged by the ABCB to independently undertake the Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) process. A Consultation RIS was released for public comment from 6 July to 31 August 2020. CIE were then engaged to independently undertake the subsequent Decision RIS.
- Although a lack of accessible housing imposes a significant and growing cost to the community, incurred mostly by people with a disability and older people the DRIS concluded that regulatory options (1-4) to amend the NCC for all new houses and apartments based on Silver, Gold, and Gold Plus impose costs that outweigh the benefits. The estimated additional construction cost per dwelling, which for the Silver level standard was between 0.69 per cent and 1.49 per cent, is a relatively modest increase when factoring in the potential significant cost to retrofit a house or apartment that had not originally been designed with these features.
- The Decision RIS is not a decision in its own right, being one input to the decision making process.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

Australian Building Codes Board Consultation of framework for high-risk build

Talking points:

- In 2017, Building Ministers commissioned an independent expert examination of systemic problems affecting compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC).
- The resulting *Building Confidence Report* (BCR) made 24 recommendations for a best practice model for compliance and enforcement, to strengthen effective application of the NCC.
- **Recommendation 21 of the BCR is that:** Building Ministers agree a position on the establishment of a compulsory product certification system for high-risk building products.
- Following initial analysis by the BCR Implementation Team, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) advised Building Ministers that a compulsory scheme for high risk building products may not address the compliance issues identified in the BCR. Building Ministers subsequently agreed to consider *“a holistic package of measures to provide a reliable conformity assessment framework, including product conformance information, particularly where those products are used in complex buildings.”*
- In response to this, the BCR Implementation Team has prepared a discussion paper to aid in the development of a National Building Product Assurance Framework. The Framework seeks to address the problems associated with building product safety.
- The paper explores a number of areas for reform and seeks views on the current problems and proposed solutions. Feedback received via the consultation survey will shape the final National Building Product Assurance Framework.
- Once the final National Building Product Assurance Framework has been developed and release we will consider what if any changes to the ACT regulatory system are needed to support the national framework.

Key Information

- The discussion paper and consultation survey can be found on the ABCB website - <https://consultation.abcb.gov.au/>.
- Consultation closed on 6 June 2021

Background Information

- In 2017, the Building Ministers’ Forum commissioned a national report into compliance and enforcement systems as they relate to the National Construction Code.
- The Building Confidence Report was released in March 2018.

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- In March 2019, the Building Minister's Forum published the first Implementation Plan, which outlined the current position and proposed work in each state and territory in relation to the recommendations.
- The discussion paper on the development of a National Building Product Assurance Framework has proposed the following elements for inclusion in a national framework.

Element 1: Strengthened evidence of suitability requirements in the NCC

- 1.A Set minimum information requirements to demonstrate evidence of suitability
- 1.B Amend the NCC evidence pathways to increase rigour
- 1.C Investigate comprehensive changes to the NCC evidence of suitability provisions
- 1.D Add further guidance in the NCC Evidence of suitability handbook

Element 2 – Building product information obligations for manufacturers and suppliers

- 2.A Introduce information obligations in the form of Product Technical Statements
- 2.B Facilitate the development of industry conformance schemes
- 2.C Require minimum product conformance assessment for select product types

Element 3 – Improved product labelling and traceability

- 3.A Extend requirements for product labelling
- 3.B Further explore digital tracing and information solutions

Element 4 – Increased research, surveillance and information sharing

- 4.A Improve oversight and coordination of the product assurance system
- 4.B Develop a central building product information portal 4.C Develop a conformance and specification guide and training

Element 5 – Strengthened compliance and enforcement

- 5.A Strengthen building product auditing and enforcement
- 5.B Introduce and enforce accountability obligations relevant to Element 2

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**Cladding Ban – Announcement by the Victorian Government****Talking points:**

- The ACT along with all other jurisdictions, through the Building Ministers’ Meeting (BMM) and its Senior Officials Group (SOG), has been undertaking work to address problems associated with non-conforming building products including the issues associated with combustible cladding.
- Building Ministers have all agreed to use their available laws and powers to prevent the inappropriate use of predominately polyethylene core panels (including aluminium composite panels (ACPs) on buildings.
- It is important to remember that the Building Code clearly requires any use of materials to be appropriate for the type of building and meet fire safety requirements. Building Ministers have already changed the Code to further clarify when materials must be non-combustible.
- The ACT already has processes in place that other jurisdictions did not or do not have. The government will continue to use the processes that were implemented in 2009-10 to assess the use of aluminium composite panel on medium-high rise buildings in the territory, through the building approval process.
- Additionally, the government will continue to consider the best long term arrangements for the Territory.

Key Information**VICTORIAN BAN**

- On 1 Feb 2021 the Victorian Minister for Planning Richard Wynne announced, “a prohibition on flammable aluminium composite panels and rendered expanded polystyrene as external wall cladding on all future multi-story developments.” The ban applies to apartment buildings and other residential buildings such as hotels and aged care facilities with two or more storeys. The ban also applies to office buildings, shopping centres or other retail premises, warehouses, factories and car parks with three or more storeys.

Background Information

- At its October 2017 meeting Building Ministers recognised the public safety concern and clear risk arising around the use of cladding that does not comply with the National Construction Code (NCC). All Ministers agreed that they will use their available laws and powers to prevent the use of aluminium composite cladding with a polyethylene (PE) core for class 2 (apartment), 3 (other long term residential), or 9 (aged care and public) buildings of two or more storeys, and class 5 (commercial), 6 (shopping centres), 7 (carparks and warehouses) or 8 (factories) of three or more storeys, until such time as they are satisfied that manufacturers, importers, and installers, working in collaboration with building practitioners, will reliably comply with:

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- the newly established standard setting test against which fire retardant cladding products are deemed to be reasonable for use in high rise settings; and
- an established and implemented system of permanent labelling on cladding products to prevent substitution.
- At a roundtable on 8 February 2019, industry representatives and Ministers agreed the focus should remain on enforcing the Code to ensure public safety and trust in our buildings.
- At a meeting on the same day Ministers agreed in principle to a national ban on the unsafe use of combustible ACPs in new construction, subject to a cost/benefit analysis being undertaken on the proposed ban, including impacts on the supply chain, potential impacts on the building industry, any unintended consequences, and a proposed timeline for implementation.
- It was noted in discussion that the building code is intended to prevent the unsafe use of combustible cladding, which is why any further restrictions would need to be subject to a cost benefit analysis.
- Victoria commissioned scientific work on the combustibility of specific products and regulatory impact analysis. Victoria has also undertaken consultation on a proposed restriction on use of certain products in that jurisdiction.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE ACT

- The ACT Government will continue to participate in national work, through the BMM and the SOG, considering the best long-term solution for addressing any issues associated with combustible cladding on buildings. This includes assessing how the Victorian ban introduces new processes beyond what is already in place in the ACT and that go beyond the technical requirements of the Code.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

Master Builders Fidelity Fund

Talking points:

- In the response to the Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT the Government has committed to undertake work in relation to the Master Builders Association Fidelity Fund (the Fund).
- This includes reviewing provisions in the Building Act that relate to both fidelity funds and residential building insurance products. The work will consider potential changes to the overall insurance and fidelity fund system that could be made while keeping the system viable in the long term.
- Fidelity Funds are not government bodies and are required to provide financial information and reports to a range of public officials under the Building Act.
- The ACT Government, in the Inquiry response, did not agree these reports also need to be provided to the Assembly, but we have committed to provide information annually on the general operation of Fidelity Funds and insurers authorised under the Act, including an overview of the number of claims made and paid out on, and compliance with reporting obligations.

Key information:

- The Fund is a discretionary fund operating under a Trust Deed. The Fund is, and operates as, a wholly private sector commercial business, competing with the insurance industry. It is not a government business enterprise or agency. As such, any requirement to provide commercially sensitive audited accounts would place the Fund at a commercial disadvantage relative to its competitors.
- The Fund is not an insurance scheme and as such is not subject to the Insurance Act 1973 (Cth) and the Insurance Contracts Act 1984 (Cth) so the Building Act 2004 establishes appropriate prudential standards to govern the operation of fidelity fund schemes approved under that Act. The Trustees of the Master Builders Fidelity Fund provide audited reports in accordance with the prudential standards.

Background Information:

Inquiry into building quality in the ACT

- The 9th Legislative Assembly's Economic and Tourism Standing Committee conducted an Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT.
- The Government response to the Inquiry's recommendations noted the extensive work already completed under the ACT's reform program and the further work the government has already committed to.

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- The Government did not agree in full with all of the Committee’s recommendations, the response does outline how the intention of the recommendations can still be met by alternative means.
- One of the recommendations (number 15) that was “not agreed” asked the ACT Government to - “provide the Assembly with audited accounts and an annual report on the performance of Fidelity Funds established under the Building Act 2004.”
- The detailed reasons for not agreeing to the recommendation is outlined in the response.
- The Government did agree or agreed in principle to a further 3 recommendations relating to the MBA Fidelity Fund as follows:
 - Recommendation 16 – Agreed – if not already in place, appropriate prudential standards are set for fidelity funds under Part 6 of the Building Act 2004 (and section 103, in particular) and further, that once set, such prudential standards are maintained and enforced.
 - Recommendation 17 – Agreed – review the fidelity fund and report the findings of that review to the Assembly.
 - Recommendation 18 – Agreed in principle – The Committee recommends that, as part of its review of the fidelity fund, the ACT Government consider expanding the scope to allow Owners’ Corporation Executive Committees to make claims for common areas.

Statutory warranty

- The Building Act provides a statutory warranty for building work on a residential building that requires a building approval and has a cost of \$12,000 or more. This does not include structures you can’t live in such as swimming pools, driveways and fences.
- Every contract for the sale of a residential building covered by the warranty, and every contract to carry out residential building work to which the builder is a party (excluding owner–builder licence holders) is taken to contain a warranty.
- The statutory warranty operates for:
 - six years after the completion day for the work for residential building work in relation to a structural element of a building, which includes components of external walls (including weatherproofing), and
 - two years after the completion day for the work for residential building work in relation to a non-structural element of a building

Residential building insurance

- Building work on residential apartment buildings and houses three storeys and below, excluding any storey used exclusively for carparking, must also be covered by complying residential building insurance.

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- This is sometimes referred to as warranty insurance or builder's warranty insurance, but it includes coverage for more than the statutory warranty, including subsidence and other matters.
- A complying policy is either:
 - a certificate issued by an approved insurer stating that the insurer has insured the work under a residential building insurance policy, or
 - a fidelity certificate for the work issued by the trustees of an approved scheme (currently the Master Builders Fidelity Fund)
- The minimum total coverage required for an insurance policy or fidelity certificate to be compliant with the Building Act - is at least the amount prescribed by regulation (currently \$85,000), or the cost of the work, whichever is less.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

Government Response to the Building Quality Inquiry

Talking points:

- The ACT Government response (the response) addresses each of the 48 recommendations, including: to agree to 12 recommendations, agree in principle with 20 recommendations, note 12 recommendations and not agree with 4 recommendations.
- The ACT Government recognises the importance of compliance with building standards for health, safety, amenity and sustainability in maintaining our quality of life, and the extensive work undertaken to date to improve the ACT's building regulatory system and lift practices across the construction industry.
- The ACT Government undertook a comprehensive review of the ACT Building Act 2004 and the associated building regulatory system, which was completed in 2015. This review led to extensive reforms to improve the ACT building regulatory system and practices in the local building industry.
- The reforms were chosen to target the cause of problems and cover design and documentation; stage inspection and supervision; practitioner licensing; contracts for residential buildings and building work; project funding, payment, claims and retentions; auditing; and dispute resolution.
- A second stage of reforms will include addressing issues of licensing and accountability for people designing, building, certifying and contracting for off-the-plan; insurance and other protections for clients and building owners; implementing a residential building dispute resolution scheme; and security of payment issues.
- The ACT Government has also committed to introducing a licensing scheme for property developers, establishing a team of building certifiers within the ACT Public Service and introducing a registration scheme for engineers in the building sector in this term of government.
- This work and the existing laws have or will address many of the issues raised during the Inquiry into Building Quality.
- The ACT also continues to work with other jurisdictions on building reforms and standards at a national level including work to address the recommendations of the Building Confidence Report.
- Although the response does not agree with all recommendations, we believe the intent of these recommendations is already met under the existing regulatory scheme or can be met by alternative means.

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Background Information

- The 9th Legislative Assembly's Economic and Tourism Standing Committee conducted an Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT.
- Written submissions to the Inquiry closed on 30 November 2018. The ACT Government made a submission.
- The Committee tabled its report on 23 July 2020. It included 48 recommendations across a variety of subjects.
- There are overlaps between matters that are the subject of recommendations and the scope of some of reforms already completed or underway as part of the Improving the ACT Building Regulatory System reform program. Particularly those relating to residential building contracts (reform 22), accountability and protections (reforms 36 and 39), licensing (reform 35), dispute resolution (reform 43), and consideration of other issues (reform 42).
- The Government response to the Inquiry recommendations noted the extensive work already completed under the ACT's reform program and the further work the government has already committed to.
- Although the Government does not agree in full with all of the Committee's recommendations, the intention of the recommendations is or can be met by alternative means.
- The four recommendations that were "not agreed" asked the ACT Government to:
 - establish a new statutory office of Building Commissioner to ensure building code and standards compliance
 - provide the Assembly with audited accounts and an annual report on the performance of Fidelity Funds established under the Building Act 2004
 - make it a standard contract requirement that the display unit of a project dwelling be the same as used in the development it represents.
 - include minimum specifications for seals or membranes in standard contracts to ensure suitable waterproofing.
- The detailed reasons for not agreeing with these recommendations are outlined in the response.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**BUILDING REFORMS****Talking points:**

- As Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction I look forward to working with industry and the community to support the continued improvement of building practices in the ACT.
- During the last term, the ACT Government undertook a substantial program of 43 interconnected reforms arising from a review of the ACT building regulatory system. The majority of the reforms were completed with the remainder progressing under a second stage of the reform program.
- Completed reforms include development of a new building audit and inspection tool, guidelines for builders for final industry comment before they are adopted as a code of practice, a new online training course for building surveyors, and legislation for a dispute resolution scheme for residential building work.
- These are important reforms that set standards of practice for people designing, building and certifying buildings in the ACT.
- Unfortunately, conditions caused by COVID-19 prevented wider public consultation on some of the reforms during 2019. However, as part of the 2019/2020 mid-year budget, the Government committed to a second stage of work. Further consultation on dispute resolution, licensing, practitioner accountability and security of payment in the industry will be part of this second stage.
- The Government has also introduced legislative amendments to make sure that building and construction legislation operates effectively and as intended, including that directors associated with licensed construction corporations can be issued rectification orders even if the corporation is wound up.
- We have considered the recommendations from the Economic Development and Tourism Standing Committee's Inquiry and formally responded Committee's report. Importantly, many of the recommendations have been, or will be met under the Government's existing reform program.
- There will always be suggestions for further reforms to be added to the program, and while we are open to considering additional measures, the current reforms have been chosen as the most effective in increasing compliance and resolving defects. We are focused on completing the existing program and the additional commitments we have made in response to the Inquiry report in this term of government.
- We will also continue working with colleagues in other jurisdictions on specific national reforms including progressing work arising from the recommendations of the Building Confidence Report.
- This work is complemented by increased enforcement of building laws.

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Background Information

- EPSDD carried out a full policy review of the ACT building regulatory system and Building Act, including its supporting administration and compliance systems. The review was a recommendation of the 2010 Building Quality in the ACT report and was completed in 2015.
- The reform program (stage 1 and 2) complements previous administrative, policy and legislative reforms, which improved licensing and compliance powers, offences and penalties for failing to comply with a rectification order and building standards, and information for consumers.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS****Talking points:**

- As Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction, Building energy efficiency standards falls within my portfolio responsibilities.
- The 2019 National Construction Code included substantial increases in the stringency of the energy efficiency standards for non-residential buildings and common areas of multi-residential buildings.
- It also included improvements in how individual dwellings are assessed for compliance, including how they operate in both winter and summer.
- The new standards came into effect on 1 May 2020 following a national transitional period.
- The ACT Appendices to the National Construction Code also introduced corresponding amendments to recognise the ACT's nation-leading policies for renewable electricity by allowing a wider range of electric appliance options so that people can more easily have all-electric, low emissions buildings. The changes to water heater standards give owners more choice, while at the same time creating consistency between options for gas and electric water heaters.
- Nationally, changes to residential standards for the next Code in 2022 are being considered, including a possible increase in the level of thermal comfort and a whole-of-house-energy use budget. These changes are included in the second tranche of the NCC 2022 public comment draft which has been made available for community feedback until 17 October along with a Regulatory Impact Statement that is available for community feedback until 7 November.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement includes commitments to improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of our buildings including setting sustainability standards that new buildings must meet and commencing a 10-year pathway to shift to world's best practice on climate-ready and environmentally sustainable buildings.
- As I have noted, the next update of the National Construction Code is expected to include increased energy efficiency requirements for residential buildings. In line with the commitments in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, I look forward to working with building Ministers nationally to introduce these important changes.
- The Government offers a range of different programs and schemes to help people improve their existing properties and reduce their energy costs, including options for low-income earners.
- The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) and ACTSmart also have great advice on how to keep healthy and safe in hot and cold weather.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Talking points:

- Availability of professional indemnity (PI) insurance for practitioners operating in the building industry is an international issue.
- From 1 July 2019, there have been exclusions in building surveyors policies issued by private sector insurance bodies for certain projects involving combustible cladding. These exclusions do not prevent a building surveyor from continuing to operate in the ACT, but may restrict the kind of work they can undertake under their licence.
- While we expect that unlawful approval of non-compliant products would not be covered by PI insurance policies, any exclusions must be clearly expressed.
- At the July 2019 Building Ministers' Forum (now called the Building Ministers Meeting), states and territories recommitted to working towards a coordinated approach to deal with the issues surrounding professional indemnity insurance.
- A professional indemnity options paper was released for targeted consultation with insurers and the building industry.
- In December 2019, Building Ministers discussed the outcomes of the consultation and agreed there is no single solution and that a range of responses may be necessary. There was agreement to a nationally consistent amount of required insurance coverage, which is at the level already in place in the ACT.
- Building Ministers met with the Insurance Council of Australia in mid-February 2020 to discuss ways that could reduce the cost and improve the availability of professional indemnity insurance premiums for building industry practitioners.
- Ministers have also met with building surveyor and certifier industry associations to discuss their implementation plans for raising standards within the industry and reducing risks.
- Regulation alone will not address this issue. The insurance sector and professionals in the construction industry all have a critical role to play in developing solutions.
- We also encourage local building surveyors to provide information and feedback on any changes in the market directly to EPSDD or Access Canberra, so they can help determine the best way to respond to the issue.

Key Information

- ACT licensing laws allow licenses to be issued as long as the practitioner has adequate insurance. The scope of the licence can be matched to the scope of the insurance.

Background Information

- From 1 July 2019, insurance professional indemnity (PI) insurance policies for building surveyors have included exclusions for work in relation to combustible cladding.
- Due to international contraction and subsequent adjustment in the insurance market, the cost of premiums for PI policies has also increased. Increases in costs are not primarily in relation to combustible cladding.
- While there have been reports, from building surveyors in the ACT, that it can be more difficult (take longer and cost more) to obtain the required PI insurance, it is still possible to find the required cover.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**IMPLEMENTATION OF BUILDING CONFIDENCE REPORT IN THE ACT****Talking points:**

- At the July 2019 Building Ministers' Forum (now known as the Building Ministers' Meeting), all jurisdictions undertook to develop a national framework for implementation of the Building Confidence Report (BCR) recommendations.
- As the report mentioned, this does not necessarily require a one-size-fits-all approach to implementation.
- The suggested inclusions in the Building Confidence Report are not unique to that report. Many are already in place in the ACT and do not require further work to implement.
- For those recommendations requiring national work, such as the development of training on the National Construction Code, implementing the recommendation will be dependent on the timing of the relevant national work.
- The Building Ministers Meeting will release further information about timing and outputs of national work.
- We will continue to work with colleagues across other states and territories to progress work on the recommendations of the Building Confidence Report.
- The 24 recommendations in the Building Confidence Report are high level recommendations that relate specifically to NCC compliance. The ACT reform program related to the whole system, and included aspects such as contracting, education, dispute resolution and interventions for specific issues such as documentation that are not in the report but important to lasting reform. Work to reform the ACT Building Regulatory system is ongoing and will be progressed alongside work undertaken to meet the recommendations of the Building Confidence Report.
- Four of the Building Confidence report recommendations are for the Building Ministers' Meeting as a collective and not for individual states and territories to implement separately.
- Of the 20 recommendations that relate to state and territory systems, 7 require no further action for implementation in the ACT as the recommended features are already in place, 1 is not applicable to the ACT as we do not have multiple layers of government and regulatory bodies, 1 is of limited relevance given that the ACT does not allow issue of retrospective building approvals, and 8 are already partially in place.

Background Information

- In 2017, the Building Ministers' Forum commissioned a national report into compliance and enforcement systems as they relate to the National Construction Code.
- The Building Confidence Report was released in March 2018.
- In March 2019, the Building Minister's Forum published the first Implementation Plan, which outlined the current position and proposed work in each state and territory in relation to the recommendations. An update to the implementation plan (state and territory work) was published in March 2020 and is current to December 2019.
- The ABCB BCR Implementation team has consulted on potential reforms including a model code of conduct for building surveyors, a draft National Registration Framework for Building Practitioners, on recommendations relating to audit strategies and potential for peer review of certain designs, the integrity of private building surveyors and their role in the enforcement, building manuals, a draft national product assurance framework, a definition of building complexity, and process for documenting performance solutions.
- On 27 November 2020 the Building Ministers' Meeting agreed to prioritise the Building Confidence National Framework outcomes that deliver the greatest benefit, including the National Registration Framework and safeguards for more complex buildings.
- At that meeting Ministers also agreed to the publication of a model code of conduct and a minimum list of powers for jurisdictions to draw on to enforce compliance with building regulations. The ACT already has the majority of suggested conduct requirements and powers and will consider whether any further revisions to ACT legislation are necessary in the short and long term.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**BUILDING QUALITY INITIATIVES****Talking points:**

- The ACT Government has committed to several measures aimed at improving building quality and the operation of the building regulatory system in the ACT.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement states that during this term the Government will:
 - Establish a public sector building certification service;
 - Introduce a registration scheme for engineers; and
 - set up a licensing scheme for property developers¹.
- These commitments follow on from the extensive reforms the ACT Government has already implemented, and continues to implement, designed to lift quality and accountability across the local building sector.
- We have been working to address issues and lift the quality of work by the different sub-sectors this includes delivering a code of practice for building certifiers, tightening licensing and requirements for builders and introduced clear and robust documentation guidelines for building designers.
- Work underway now is considering a fee-for-service public sector or government run building certification service that would run alongside private certification services currently available. It is also considering how a public sector certification service may be applied to different types of buildings.
- As I have already stated, the Government has already implemented a number of reforms to improve quality and accountability across the local building sector. This has been further backed up by findings of the Building Confidence Report, commissioned by the Building Ministers Meeting. Design practitioners, such as engineers, should be accountable for the work they do, and any contribution it makes to non-compliant and defective buildings.
 - The Government is committed to introduce a regulatory scheme and associated framework, for the accountability of engineers within this term of Government. Work underway now is considering the appropriate model for the ACT taking into consideration view of industry stakeholders and schemes recently introduced and underdevelopment in other jurisdictions.
- I acknowledge that there are many individuals and businesses across operating in the building and construction sector who do good work and provide quality services to their customers. These reforms intended to give greater choice and protection for the community and make those who are not up to standard accountable for their actions.

¹ See QTB No.2 on Property Developer Licensing

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext:50030

Contact Officer name: Bethel Sendaba Ext:50030

Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Background Information

Government Building Certification Service

- To meet obligations under competition laws, any certification services set up in competition with private practitioners will not be provided by the regulatory agency, but by a separate entity. Services provided by this entity would be subject to the same regulatory system as private sector certification, including auditing, inspection and complaints processes.
- The Government indicated in its submission to the Legislative Assembly inquiry into building quality in the ACT that it is considering the most appropriate model for certification in the long term and that while this is under consideration, recent reforms already implemented will support building certifiers to carry out their functions by improving building approval applications, providing clearer expectations for certification and stage inspections and improving the skills and competencies of people designing and constructing buildings in the Territory. Reforms completed that relate to clarifying the role of the certifier or minimum standards of practice and documentation for building approvals are:
 - Minimum documentation requirements for building approval applications, which provides the baseline for building approvals for apartment and other complex buildings. The guideline supports building certifiers in their discussions with applicants, establishes a starting point for auditing approvals and indicates what the builder and owner can expect to be provided.
 - A new code of practice for licensed building surveyors, which came into effect on 1 September 2019, and new provisions in the Building Act outlining the functions of the certifier and the purpose and scope of stage inspections and supporting codes of practice.
 - Lodgement of stage inspection information shortly after the inspection is complete
 - New pre-licence application assessment for building surveyor licence applicants.
 - Online course for building surveyors, compulsory for new building surveyor licensees.
 - Regulations to delineate agency agreements (including those for appointing certifiers) from building contracts.
 - New risk-based auditing system for building certification and building work.

Engineer Registration

- During 2020 officers from EPSDD met with representatives of the three main engineering industry groups, Engineers Australia, Professionals Australia, and Consult Australia. The discussions outlined the ACT Government's intentions to pursue detailed policy development which will support future enactment of an engineer registration scheme. Feedback from the industry groups during these discussions have provided useful inputs to the development of an ACT scheme to date. EPSDD has continued policy development for the scheme in 2021.
- The BCR Implementation Team, established within the Australian Building Codes Board Office to progress the recommendations, has developed and consulted on a draft National Registration Framework (NRF) for Building Practitioners to support implementation of recommendation one of the BCR. It is anticipated that the registration framework will be finalised in the coming months. The ACT Government has agreed to the recommendations of the BCR so the final registration framework will be an important and necessary input to the design and implementation of an engineer registration scheme in the ACT.
- EPSDD is continuing to develop a registration and certification scheme for the ACT, as a priority project.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**Home Swimming Pool Safety****Talking points:**

- The Government, during the last term, announced it will begin to take steps to ensure every backyard pool in the Territory meets modern safety standards.
- The work commenced with conversations with industry about how a pool safety inspection regime might work. This was undertaken by EPSDD in June 2018.
- Development of the scheme is considering fair transition times, potential concessions for properties where there are physical constraints to installing a fully compliant barrier, and the possibility of extensions to comply in particular circumstances – for example, if a pool owner is in financial hardship but needs a new pool barrier or substantial upgrade to the existing barrier.
- All the materials from the Backyard Lifeguard campaign are still available online, including a checklist on the campaign website that can help people check if their pool has a barrier that meets current safety standards.
- Close adult supervision is also critical to keeping our kids safe around backyard pools and spa pools.

Background Information

- In 2017, in response to the Coronial Inquiry on the drowning death of a toddler in an ACT swimming pool, the ACT Government agreed in principle to the ACT legislative framework requiring all existing home swimming pools to comply with the latest version of the Building Code. It noted the government was considering potential schemes for improving the safety of existing swimming pools.
- Some pools already have barriers isolating the pool that may need only minor upgrades. Many backyards have some structures that may be able to form part of a barrier already in place. Any swimming pools or spa pools built since mid-2010 has to comply with the safety standard currently in place. So for many people there may be no or low costs to have a compliant pool barrier.

Portfolio/s: Sustainable Building and Construction
Sustainable Building and Construction
Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction
Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

MINIMUM ENERGY PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR RENTAL PROPERTIES

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that renters can enjoy the liveable homes that all Canberrans have a right to expect.
- Recent summers have shown the importance of homes being resilient to our changing climate. Poorly insulated and energy inefficient housing can contribute to high energy bills and poor thermal comfort, affecting health and liveability.
- Renters living in these properties are either unable to make significant changes to the property or less able to afford energy efficiency measures like curtains, shading devices and more efficient appliances, leaving them subject to either discomfort or high energy costs.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly includes a commitment (A1.iii) to enact minimum energy efficiency standards regulations for rental properties in 2021.
 - This reiterates Action 4.7 of the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025
- To support delivery of this action, a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) was undertaken which considered minimum standard options along with consideration of issues such as safety and potential consequences for rental prices and availability. ACIL-Allen were commissioned to deliver this RIS. A round of engagement of key stakeholders to inform the RIS was undertaken in April and May. This included a survey of renters and rental providers through the ACT YourSay website. The results of the survey are now available on the YourSay website.
- Three main options have been considered through the RIS:
 - a minimum ceiling insulation standard; or
 - a minimum energy efficient heating standard; or
 - a 'performance' based standard, such as a minimum star rating, that gives rental providers a choice of upgrades to make.
- In developing the minimum standard, the focus will be on requirements that are cost-effective and, whichever option is adopted, the regulation will seek to target only the worst performing properties. There will be a phase in period of a number of years to allow rental providers that don't meet the standard plenty of time to comply.

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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Recognising that a minimum energy performance requirement may potentially impose costs on rental providers, the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement also commits to a \$50 million program to improve efficiency of housing for vulnerable households, including “financial incentives to implement minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.”
- Another round of stakeholder engagement will be undertaken in the near future to garner views on the proposed minimum standard and on how it should be implemented. The RIS will be publicly released at that time.

Key Information

- The 2016 Census identified that there were approximately 45,000 residential rental properties in the ACT.
- Housing ACT has close to 12,000 dwellings, representing about 25% of the total rental market, and about 50% of the low income rental market, in the ACT.
- A study undertaken by Better Renting in 2019 analysed around 11,000 rental advertisements. The report found that of the 5,000 rental properties that disclosed their Energy Efficiency Ratings in the study, around only 29% met the minimum 6-star rating which has been required for new homes since 2010.
- The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* as amended in 2020, allows for a regulation to be made to require minimum standards for residential rental properties. The Act specifies that regulated minimum standards may relate to energy efficiency.
- There is a ‘split incentive’ barrier to landlords investing in energy performance improvements as tenants end up as the beneficiary through reduced energy costs and improved thermal comfort.
- Many rental properties are already energy efficient. Well-performing properties are unlikely to be affected by these minimum requirements.
- The survey of rental providers and renters was open for two weeks. It did not seek to assess approval of the overall policy to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards, but rather it was seeking information on preferences around the options being considered and other information to inform the RIS.

Portfolio: Sustainable Building and Construction**ACT Government – Response to Asbestos – Asbestos Response Taskforce****Talking points:**

- As Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction I am responsible for the work carried out by the Asbestos Response Taskforce (the Taskforce) in its delivery of the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme (the Scheme).
- The vast majority of homes identified as affected by loose fill asbestos insulation have now been demolished from Canberra suburbs– 995 of 1,028 as at 18 October 2021.
- The Taskforce remains focused on supporting homeowners of the remaining affected properties and any newly discovered affected properties as they consider their options to manage their property – either privately or through the Scheme; and addressing the residual risks associated with the presence of loose fill asbestos in the community.
- The Taskforce is continuing to progress this by:
 - administering a Buyback Program;
 - providing personal support and assistance to homeowners and residents who remain in their homes;
 - making sure that appropriate supports remain accessible in the community for members of affected households that may require tailored support options;
 - progressing demolition and remediation activities as properties are surrendered to the Territory; and
 - supporting the sale of remediated blocks in Canberra streets and suburbs that were once affected by loose fill asbestos insulation.

Management of newly identified affected properties from 18 August 2021

- The Scheme’s original voluntary Buyback Program operated from 2014 and closed on 17 August 2021.
- Since commencement of the Scheme, six new properties have been identified as affected by loose fill asbestos insulation, including one newly identified property which was added to the Affected Residential Premises Register on 18 August 2021. It is likely that further undiscovered affected properties exist across Canberra suburbs, and will continue to present a potential health risk to the occupants and the wider community.
- The ACT Government announced a new voluntary, ongoing Buyback Program and associated initiatives, which commenced on 18 August 2021 upon conclusion of the Scheme’s original Buyback Program. This new offering continues to support community safety through the identification of newly discovered properties

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containing loose fill asbestos insulation, and effectively manage their removal from the community.

- The new voluntary, ongoing Buyback Program for affected and impacted properties, is similar to the original Buyback Program, with adjusted timeframes to take into account the number of properties the ACT Government will likely manage at any one time going forward.
- Homeowners of these properties also have access to a similar:
 - Demolition and disposal program
 - Sales program incorporating existing processes
 - Transition Assistance
 - Purchaser of Last Resort option
 - Waste Disposal Fee Relief for homeowners who undertake a private demolition
- A Request for Acquisition option for deceased estates is a new offering available to executors or beneficiaries of deceased estates for properties not surrendered under the relevant Buyback Program. It allows the executor or beneficiary to request the ACT Government to acquire an affected property after the homeowner has seen out their final years in their home.
- For all affected properties, longer term Compulsory Acquisition action will continue to be considered, on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances, two years after the affected premises is placed on the Affected Residential Premises Register, or mid 2025, whichever is later.
- These initiatives make sure that homeowners who may discover loose fill asbestos insulation in their property at some point in the future will still be supported by the ACT Government and will have options and assistance available to them, like homeowners whose properties were identified earlier.
- The Personal Support Team in the Asbestos Response Taskforce remains available for homeowners and residents who may have any questions. The team can be contacted by phone on 6205 4700 or by email at asbestostaskforce@act.gov.au.

Newly identified Mr Fluffy property – 36 Elimatta Street, Reid

- A newly discovered residential property was added to the Affected Residential Premises Register on 18 August 2021.
- The owner of the property in Reid contacted the Taskforce on 12 August 2021 while undertaking renovations, advising that a contractor located suspicious material he believed was loose fill asbestos insulation in the ceiling cavity.
- A full assessment of the property and testing of the material by a professional, licensed asbestos assessor confirmed that loose fill asbestos insulation was present in different areas of the ceiling cavity.

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- It is the sixth affected property to be identified since the Scheme was announced on 28 October 2014. There is also no indication on the building file that the property was previously identified as containing loose fill asbestos insulation during the original survey program from the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- While an asbestos assessment report from the assessors advised there is no immediate risk to anyone living in or visiting the home provided recommendations in the report and the property's loose fill asbestos management plan are followed, we know that the only enduring solution to eradicating the ongoing exposure risks of loose fill asbestos is the removal of affected homes from the community.
- The homeowner of the property has accepted the invitation to participate in the Scheme's new, ongoing Buyback Program, which commenced on 18 August 2021.
- The new voluntary, ongoing Buyback Program is similar to the original Buyback Program, with adjusted timeframes to take into account the number of properties the ACT Government will likely manage at any one time going forward.
- The Personal Support Team in the Taskforce continues to work closely with the homeowner and offering support and assistance as required.

Asbestos Disease Assistance Fund

- The ACT Government and Federal Government have committed to contributing \$8 million each to establish a fund to support people who suffer from an asbestos related disease as a result of exposure to loose-fill asbestos from living in a Mr Fluffy property.
- The fund will be administered by the ACT Government, and the structure of the fund is currently under consideration.
- A diagnosis of an asbestos related disease such as mesothelioma presents a very difficult path ahead for the individual as well as their family and I acknowledge how challenging it must be to receive such unwelcome news.
- On 26 August 2020, the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing released the Mesothelioma in Australia 2019 Report¹ (the Report). The Report notes that due to its aggressive nature, mesothelioma has a very low survival rate.
- The ACT Asbestos Health Study, conducted by the ANU, looked into the health impacts of having lived in a house with Mr Fluffy loose fill asbestos insulation. That study found that the risk of contracting mesothelioma was low but living in a Mr Fluffy house increased the risk for men by two and half times.
- The Personal Support Team in the Asbestos Response Taskforce remains available to provide guidance and support access to health services to assist current and former residents of Mr Fluffy properties who have been diagnosed with an asbestos related disease.

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/558c0b6d-e872-4a0f-953d-23ae6afab3b0/aihw-can-134.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

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Key Information

- As at 18 October 2021, a total of 995 out of 1,028 residential properties identified as affected by fill asbestos insulation have been demolished:
 - 965 by the Taskforce through the Scheme
 - 12 through assisted private demolition
 - 17 self-funded demolitions
 - One surrendered to the Territory following demolition.
- There are 36 residential properties remaining on the Affected Residential Premises Register. Of these:
 - 3 are owned by the Territory, have been demolished and are in the process of being remediated and deregistered
 - 11 are owned by the Territory with demolition planning underway
 - 22 remain privately owned. Of these:
 - one is a newly discovered property added to the Register on 18 August 2021, the owners of which have accepted the invitation to participate in the ongoing Buyback Program
 - three had an expected settlement date of 17 August 2021 (the closure of the original Buyback Program) but have not surrendered to date
 - two have expected settlement dates during November 2021 under Transition Assistance arrangements
 - one has an expected settlement date during February 2022 under Transition Assistance arrangements
 - one is likely to have an expected settlement date during April 2022 under Transition Assistance arrangements
 - 14 elected to not participate in the Scheme. Of these:
 - two have been approved for waste disposal fee relief to privately demolish the property
 - two have exchanged contracts on the private market and will be privately demolished.

Background Information

- All remaining homeowners, regardless of whether they are participating in the buyback program, continue to have access to financial supports such as relocation assistance.
- Additionally, Scheme participants also have access to:
 - A stamp duty concession on their next residential purchase in the ACT; and

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- \$1,000 towards the cost of legal advice, plus an additional sum of up to \$550 per Deed of Variation exchanged resulting from extensions to closure of the Buyback Program due to COVID-19, payable on surrender.

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Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

BUDGET ITEMS		
1.	C13 Gungahlin Common Ground Build to Rent	Development & Implementation
2.	E08 East Lake Urban Renewal-Site Investigations and Planning	Development & Implementation

HOUSING AND SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT QTBS		
3.	Rental prices – measures/policies	Planning & Urban Policy
4.	2021-22 Housing Targets	Planning & Urban Policy
5.	Housing Affordability	Planning & Urban Policy
6.	Housing Strategy	Planning & Urban Policy
7.	Parkwood Egg Farm (Pace)	Planning & Urban Policy

Portfolio/s: Housing and Suburban Development



Maintaining and growing affordable housing - Gungahlin Common Ground Build to Rent (EPSDD C13)

Housing and home

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	440	0	0	0	440
Expenses	200	0	0	0	200

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will support initial works and planning and design for the first stage of a build-to-rent affordable rental project, co-located with Common Ground Gungahlin.

This initiative complements other Government commitments to increase access to affordable housing.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, B1 (v)

“Constructing a build-to rent affordable rental co-located with Common Ground Gungahlin and complete Common Ground Dickson.”

To meet the delivery target and timing, the project will be delivered over two stages. The funding provided through this Budget is for Stage 1 of the project which includes due diligence, site feasibility investigations and concept design and will be delivered by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD). Stage 1 will then inform a later budget business case for detailed design and construction funding, to be brought forward for the 2022-23 Budget with funding over three years to 2024-25.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Commencement of the project includes due diligence activities such as site planning and blocking/stacking to better understand the capacity of the residual land on the existing Common Ground site. This will inform a BtR development dwelling yield that can potentially support a sustainable economic model, a major factor in feasible private BtR developments. Concept design will also be undertaken, following completion of due diligence activities including stakeholder consultation.	EPSDD	Q4 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	A Development Application (DA) will be lodged, following ministerial approval, at the end of stage 1.	EPSDD	Q1 2022
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Based on the outcomes of Stage 1, a further budget business case will be brought forward for the 2022/23 financial year for funding over three years for detailed design, procurement, and construction.	EPSDD	Q1-Q2 2022
4	Detailed design, procurement, and construction with proposed asset delivery in December 2024.	EPSDD, MPC	Q3 2022 – Q4 2024

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

Nil previous funding or project development undertaken.

Portfolio/s: Housing and Suburban Development Planning and Land Management



East Lake urban renewal - Site investigations and planning (EPSDD E08CB)	Housing and home				
	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	Total \$'000
Expenses	1,036	779	296	28	2,138

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will undertake planning and preliminary site investigation work to prepare the East Lake Urban Renewal area for development; with land release programmed for 2025/26, building on the 2019-20 Budget initiative *Scoping for East Lake urban renewal*. The work includes finalising key site investigations, place planning and statutory planning changes to shape the future of this precinct in consultation with the community.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Housing and Home, Environment and Climate and Access and Connectivity.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA)/Government priorities alignment

The planning phase of the East Lake urban renewal will contribute to the following items in the PaGA Appendix 1 Part A Section 3:

3. *Reform the ACT's building and planning systems to ensure a transition to best practice climate-ready and environmentally sustainable buildings and planning. This includes:*

- iii. Increase new dwelling site supply to meet increased demand across the housing spectrum.*
- iv. Require at least 70% of new housing development to be within Canberra's existing urban footprint, with an ambition to increase this share, in the context of an overall increase to the number of dwelling sites released over the coming decade.*

Site investigations and planning for this important part of Canberra's inner south will contribute to:

- Making Canberra a more compact and efficient, diverse, sustainable and resilient, liveable, and accessible city as outlined in the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*.
- Facilitating future housing supply, choice and affordability as outlined in the *ACT Housing Strategy* and the *ACT Indicative Land Release Program*.
- Delivering on government's commitment to urban renewal in the East Lake precinct protecting and being well-integrated with the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.¹

Future development phases of the project are likely to present additional opportunities to deliver on PaGA and Government priorities through green infrastructure, sustainable development, public housing renewal, transport and climate change subject to government processes and approvals.

¹ See Government response tabled 13 August 2019 to Recommendation 145 of Report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2019-2020 – Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2019-2020 (source: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/select_committees/estimates-2019-2020)

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Finalise key site investigations.	EPSDD	Jun 2022
SHORT-TERM			
2	A Place Plan developed in collaboration with the community and key stakeholders to establish the vision and principles for the development of this area.	EPSDD	Dec 2023
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Complete a Territory Plan Variation including preparation of relevant technical studies.	EPSDD	Dec 2024

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2019-20 Budget initiative *Scoping for East Lake urban renewal* provided a total funding of \$608,000 over 2019-20 and 2020-21 years for early planning to increase housing supply in Canberra (2019-20 Budget Paper 3, page 105).

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

Rental prices – measures and policies

Talking points:

- The ACT is now the fourth most affordable jurisdiction to rent in Australia as measured by the proportion of family income needed to meet rent payments.
- The ACT Government is continuing to increase affordable rental housing, as set out in the ACT Housing Strategy (2018) and supported by the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly.
- Each year the ACT Government sets an annual target for community housing to increase the supply of affordable rental homes in new developments across Canberra.
- The ACT Government is expanding the affordable community housing land tax exemption for properties rented at below 75 per cent of market rent.
- The ACT Government is committed to improving housing affordability, diversity and choice for Canberran's by supporting affordable rental properties built under a Build to Rent model.
- The Build to Rent model focusses on increasing the supply of long-term rental homes.

Key Information

- The ACT does well on many measures of housing affordability and continues to experience comparatively low levels of housing stress (generally defined as paying more than 30 per cent of household income on rent or mortgage costs).
- The ACT Government has taken proactive steps to assist tenants during the pandemic, including a range of temporary changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to protect tenants impacted by COVID-19 and rates and land tax rebates for landlords who reduce their tenants rent by 25 per cent until the end of June 2021. Under this initiative the Government matches 50 per cent of the rent reduction through rebates to a maximum of around \$100 per week. The rebate has been offered since April 2020 and has helped over 750 households to date.
- Key actions under the ACT Housing Strategy supporting affordable rentals include:
 - Setting an annual community housing target to provide additional affordable rental properties managed by registered community housing providers, as part of the commitment to dedicate 15 per cent of the Indicative Land Release Program to public, community and affordable housing;
 - Under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, facilitate a project to develop community rental housing on underutilised leased community facility land;
 - Explore opportunities to extend land rent to community housing providers for the provision of affordable rental properties;

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- Establish an Affordable Rental Real Estate Management model as a pilot under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund; and
 - Work with community housing providers to develop more affordable rental properties.
- Commitments under the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement toward affordable rental housing include:
 - Constructing a build-to-rent affordable rental co-located with Common Ground in Gungahlin;
 - In close partnership with the community and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, supporting the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community housing provider;
 - Expanding further the existing land tax exemption program for affordable rental housing by increasing the cap to 250 properties and removing the time limit for this exemption;
 - Ensuring the planning and housing system continues to deliver affordable housing; and
 - The Government will strive to deliver additional affordable housing dwellings despite constraints, with a goal of 600 additional dwellings by 2025-26.

Background Information

- According to the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA), 21.5 per cent of family income was needed to meet median rent payments in the ACT in the June quarter 2021, the fourth lowest jurisdiction in Australia.
- REIA median rent for a 3-bedroom house increased by 1.8 per cent to \$580 a week in the June quarter 2021, while median rent for a 2-bedroom unit decreased by 1.9 per cent to \$510 a week.
- Compared to the June quarter 2020, median rent for both a 3-bedroom house and a 2-bedroom unit increased by 7.4 per cent and 6.3 per cent, respectively.
- Domain data released on 7 July 2021 shows that Canberra's median rent for a house was \$630 a week in the June quarter 2021, 5.0 per cent increase from the March quarter 2021. Median rent for units was unchanged in the March quarter 2021 at \$500 a week.¹
- Compared to the June quarter 2020, median rent for both houses and units increased by 10.5 per cent and 6.4 per cent, respectively.

¹ <https://www.domain.com.au/research/rental-report/>.

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- The ACT rental vacancy rate of 0.9 per cent recorded for the March 2021 quarter, is the equal second lowest in the country, and 0.2ppt lower than 1.1 per cent recorded in the March quarter 2020. A rental vacancy rate of less than 3 per cent (the industry benchmark rate) generally indicates strong demand for rental accommodation.
- With international borders remaining closed since March 2020 impacting international student arrivals and overseas migrants, demand for rental properties is anticipated to slow and the rental vacancy rate increase as a result.
- Latest data from Domain recorded a rental vacancy rate of 0.9 per cent in September 2021, a 0.1 percentage point decrease from August 2021.
- The property market in the ACT has been remarkably resilient, with the take-up of Commonwealth and ACT stimulus measures exceeding expectations. ACT's median property prices have steadily increased since early 2020, rising by 11.1 per cent (March 2020 – July 2021).
- Building activity in the ACT has been solid, supported by a continuing pipeline of dwelling investment for detached and semi-detached houses heading into 2021 and policy stimulus offered by the Government. However, there has been signs of slowing. Despite the number of residential building approvals increasing by 78 per cent in August 2021, it was 5.8 per cent lower than its level in August 2020. The slowdown is likely a result of expiry of HomeBuilder stimulus in March 2021 and the ACT stamp duty concession ending on 30 June 2021.
- In addition, the land sales program, which has seen a significant increase in activity supported by the Government's temporary stamp duty exemption for the purchase of single dwelling blocks and off-the-plan apartments by owner-occupiers from 4 June 2020 to 30 June 2021, will slow as the incentives expire.
- Following a review in 2016 that involved extensive community consultation, the ACT Government has undertaken an ambitious reform program to further support residential tenants. Recent reforms specifically aimed at increasing rental affordability include:
 - Improving protections for tenants against excessive rent increases by limiting increases to a prescribed amount (which is linked to inflation) unless exceptional circumstances apply;
 - Lowering upfront costs for tenants by reducing the maximum amount of rent that can be charged in advance from 4 weeks to 2 weeks. This reduces the upfront costs of entering a new tenancy and smooths payment amounts during the tenancy; and
 - Easing the financial burden when transitioning into to social housing or aged care by allowing tenants to terminate their fixed term leases at short notice and without paying compensation if they have accepted a place in social housing or aged care.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

2021-22 Housing Targets

Talking points:

- Targets for public, community and affordable housing have been agreed for Government land releases across the Territory for 2021-22. Targets for 2021-22 were released as part of the Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) in conjunction with the Budget on 6 October 2021.
- These targets align with residential land releases identified in the ILRP for 2021-22.
- For 2021-22, a target of 307 dedicated public, community and affordable dwellings has been determined. This target is made up of:
 - 155 public housing dwellings;
 - 30 community housing dwellings; and
 - 122 affordable housing dwellings.
- The 2021-22 targets take into consideration sector need, delivery capacity, amenity, proximity to schools, transport and employment centres, public open space and existing concentrations of affordable, community and public housing in each suburb.
- Under the affordable housing targets, the dedicated affordable dwellings are sold to people who have registered and been assessed as eligible via the ACT Government's Affordable Home Purchase Database.
 - If the database is exhausted, properties can then be offered to registered community housing providers (CHPs), and then Housing ACT, at the affordable housing price threshold. If the properties are not taken up, they can be sold on the open market, at the affordable price threshold.

Key Information

- Under section 65 of the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017* (the Act), relevant Ministers are required to set affordable, community and public housing targets for residential development in an urban renewal precinct, within an urban renewal area other than in an urban renewal precinct, and in new suburbs.
- As required by the *ACT Housing Strategy* (2018), the housing targets will be presented for Cabinet's consideration as part of the *Indicative Land Release Program* (ILRP). The Government has committed to at least 15 per cent of residential land releases in the ILRP being dedicated to affordable, community and public housing.

Background Information

- The agreed targets were developed by a cross-Government Reference Group, with representatives from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, Community Services Directorate, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Suburban Land Agency and City Renewal Authority.

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- The targets include provision for dwellings in greenfield suburbs for separately titled homes, as well as 122 affordable home purchase opportunities in urban renewal/infill sites including the Gungahlin Town Centre and Kippax Group Centre (Holt).
- A copy of the 2021-22 housing targets is provided in the attached table.
- The 2021-22 target is equal to 15 per cent of eligible residential sites planned for release in 2021-22, noting residential land to be released in Casey, Taylor, Kingston, Oaks Estate, Belconnen, Lawson and Turner has been excluded from the target calculation, as these suburbs already have an allocation of public, community and affordable dwellings, or have been identified for other housing projects.

Table 1: Indicative Housing Targets by Suburb and Individual Site

Suburb	Block	Section	Affordable Purchase Dwellings	Public Housing Dwellings	Community Housing Dwellings	Total Targets Numbers	Total res dwellings from ILRP	% P/C/A Housing
Casey*	12,13	132	0	0	0	0	100	0%
Gungahlin			20	30	10	60	300	20%
Jacka			10	20	0	30	200	15%
Whitlam			10	20	0	30	200	15%
Strathnairn			10	25	0	35	250	14%
Denman Prospect			60	60	20	140	1,000	14%
Taylor*			0	0	0	0	157	0%
Kingston*	1	68	0	0	0	0	518	0%
Oaks Estate*	5,8,11		0	0	0	0	6	0%
Oaks Estate*	5,6,9	7	0	0	0	0	11	0%
Holt (Kippax)	37, 47, 66 (part) 6, 22, 36, 64 (full)	51	12	0	0	12	80	15%
Belconnen*	26,30,1	52,151	0	0	0	0	500	0%
Lawson*			0	0	0	0	850	0%
Turner*			0	0	0	0	565	0%
Subtotal			122	155	30	307	4,737	
*Housing Target – excludes Casey, Taylor, Kingston, Oaks Estate, Belconnen, Lawson and Turner						307	2,030	15%

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Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Talking points:

- As part of *10th Legislative Assembly Parliamentary and Governing Agreement*, the Government has committed to improving social housing and housing affordability over the next four years as part of the roadmap for increased supply of affordable housing that is outlined in the ACT Housing Strategy.
- As part of the ACT Government's continued tax reform program of phasing out of stamp duty and replacing with more efficient land based taxes, stamp duty for off-the-plan apartment and townhouse purchases up to \$500,000 has been abolished, effective from 1 July 2021.
- This initiative is in addition to the ACT Government's extension of the *Home Buyer Concession Scheme* last year to include all new and established dwellings and vacant land purchased by eligible first home buyers regardless of price and the Commonwealth Government's *First Home Loan Deposit Scheme* for first home buyers.
- Improving housing affordability for all Canberrans has been an objective of the ACT Government for many years. Increasing the supply of land available for new homes and increasing the total housing stock has been an effective way to improve housing affordability for home buyers and renters.
- The ACT Government is making every effort to maintain a sustainable and affordable supply of residential land for new home buyers to take up the stimulus measures currently on offer.

Key Information

Housing affordability

- The ACT does well on many measures of housing affordability and continues to experience comparatively low levels of housing stress (generally defined as paying more than 30 per cent of household income on rent or mortgage costs).
- This is due to Canberra's low unemployment and comparatively high income, though the overall prosperity of the ACT can conceal disadvantage at the individual level. The ACT's full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings was \$1,910 compared with the national average of \$1,737 in May 2021¹.
- The ACT's 170,000 households are divided into income quintiles and EPSDD analysis updated in September 2021 shows that an average household in the ACT (earning an average gross household income of \$144,939)², affordable rents start at \$836 per week and an affordable mortgage enables the purchase of a home starting at \$798,500.
 - This is below the median rent of \$580 a week for a 3 bedroom house and \$510 a week for 2-bedroom unit in Canberra and a median dwelling price of \$649,950 recorded in July 2021.³
 - Domain data released on 7 July 2021 shows that the ACT recorded a median rent of \$630 a week for houses and \$500 a week for units in June 2021.
- At these levels there are many homes available on the private market, suggesting that Government focus should be on supporting households with incomes below \$100,000.

Housing Affordability contracted in the June quarter 2021⁴:

- The ACT's *Home Loan Affordability Indicator* decreased further in the June quarter 2021, however, the ACT remains the second most affordable jurisdiction in Australia, behind the Northern Territory.
- The ACT was the second most affordable jurisdiction to buy a home with 26.3% of family income required to meet home loan repayments.
- The decline in affordability was due to a 3.8% increase in average loan size which led to a 3.8% increase in average monthly loan repayment.

Rental affordability contracted over the June quarter 2021⁵:

- Rental affordability was unchanged in the June quarter 2021, however the ACT is now the fourth most affordable jurisdiction to rent a home with 21.5% of family income required to meet rent payments.

¹ Source: ABS Full-Time Adult Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings publication, May 2021.

² Calculations are based on mean gross household income per week from the ABS Income and Wealth Survey 2018-19. The 2019-20 and 2020-21 weekly mean disposable income has been calculated by inflating the 2018-19 ABS data with financial year Wage Price Index (WPI). While income has not increased much, the prevailing record low mortgage interest rates are increasing people's borrowing capacity.

³ Median rent is based on Real Estate Institute of Australia data, June Quarter 2021 and median house price is from sales data from Access Canberra, July 2021. Note the median dwelling price includes prices for all dwellings (both houses and units).

⁴ Source: Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) Housing Affordability Report, June Quarter 2021.

⁵ Source: Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) Market Facts Report, June Quarter 2021.

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- The median weekly rent for a 3-bedroom house in Canberra was \$580, the highest weekly rent of all capital cities. The median weekly rent for a 2-bedroom unit was \$510, also the highest of all capital cities.
- The high rent is due to Canberra recording a low rental vacancy rate of 0.7% in the June quarter 2021, the equal lowest vacancy rate of all capital cities along with Adelaide (0.7%).

Domain Rental data:

- Domain data released on 7 July 2021 shows that Canberra's median rent in the June quarter 2021 for both houses and units were the highest of all capital cities at \$630 a week and \$500 a week, respectively.⁶
- Domain data also shows that rental vacancy rate remained low in Canberra, decreasing by 0.1 percentage point to 0.9 per cent in September 2021.⁷

Median house price increase in July 2021⁸:

- The ACT was the only jurisdiction to record stable house prices during the pandemic. This is attributable to Canberra's having better job security with employment in the public sector and higher median income compared to other jurisdictions.
- In July 2021 the *median transaction house prices* increased by 3.2% to \$877,500, while the *median transaction unit price* decreased by 5.3% to \$539,900.
- In July 2021 the *average transaction house price* was \$1,009,915 (an increase of 4.2%) and the *average transaction unit price* was \$594,648 (a decrease of 1.8%).
- There was a 7.4% increase in turnover of houses (622 sales) in July 2021. There were 1,022 sales recorded for units, an increase of 37.0% in July 2021.

First Home-buyer activity:

- There were 288 *owner occupier first home buyer* housing finance commitments and a further 40 *investor first home buyer commitments* in August 2021⁹, an increase of 8.3% and 233.3%, respectively compared to the same period last year.
- Data from the ACT Revenue Office shows that between July 2020 to 30 June 2021, there were 963 *Stamp Duty Concession* applications, of which 771 were for purchase of vacant land.

Commonwealth Government HomeBuilder program :

⁶ <https://www.domain.com.au/research/rental-report/>.

⁷ <https://www.domain.com.au/research/rental-vacancy-rates-september-2021-1092103/>.

⁸ Source: Access Canberra Property settlements data, July 2021.

⁹ Source: ABS Lending Indicators, August 2021.

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Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- Between July 2020 and 30 June 2021 there were 2,993 applications received as part of HomeBuilder Program of which 2,321 applications were for construction of new home and 672 applications for renovations.¹⁰
- In June 2020, the Commonwealth Government announced a *HomeBuilder Program* as part of their stimulus package to provide economic support during the pandemic.
- A \$25,000 grant was available for eligible owner-occupiers (including first home buyers) to build a new home or substantially renovate an existing home where the contract was signed between 4 June 2020 and 31 December 2020.
- On 29 November 2020, a new and reduced \$15,000 grant was announced for contracts signed between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 inclusive.
- An extended deadline for all applications to be lodged by 14 April 2021 for both the \$25,000 grant and the new \$15,000 grant.
- An extension to the construction commencement timeframe from 3 months to 6 months for all applications signed on or after 4 June 2020.
- The initiative was targeted at assisting the residential construction market and assist affordability for existing home buyers who fall within the eligible household income thresholds of \$125,000 for an individual or \$200,000 for a couple.
- Announced in the 2021-22 Federal Budget was a 12-month extension of the HomeBuilder construction commencement period for existing applicants.

Major Housing measures in 2021-22 Federal Budget

The 2021-22 Federal Budget included the following additional housing related policies:

- **Family Home Guarantee** - Single parents will be given Federal Government assistance to purchase a property. The Federal Government will guarantee 18 per cent of a home loan for 10,000 eligible single parents, whether they are first home buyers or previous owner occupiers, enabling eligible single parents to purchase a property with 2 per cent deposit with no lenders mortgage insurance.
- **New Home Guarantee** – the Federal Government has rebranded the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, first introduced at the start of 2020 to 10,000 places, by an additional 10,000 places for new dwelling purchases.
- **First Home Super Saver Scheme** – first announced in 2017-18 Federal Budget, the scheme allows for voluntary contributions of up to \$30,000 to be released for first home buyers for purchase of owner occupied property. The 2021-22 Federal Budget has increased the cap to \$50,000.
- **Expansion of Downsizer Contribution** – first announced in 2017-18 Federal Budget, this measure allows older Australians to make a tax free contribution to their super of up to \$300,000 each from proceeds of selling their home without being counted towards contributions cap. From July 2022, Australians 60 years and over (as opposed to 65 years and over) will be able to access this scheme.

¹⁰ Data from ACT Revenue Office.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

ACT HOUSING STRATEGY

Talking points:

- The ACT Housing Strategy (the strategy) was launched in October 2018 and establishes an overarching policy framework to guide decisions about policy, planning and delivery of housing across the ACT over its ten-year lifespan.
- The strategy is structured around five goals with linked objectives and 74 priority actions. It is supported by a complementary Implementation Plan, which identifies timeframes for the delivery of actions and allocates delivery responsibility within government.
- While the strategy aims to improve access to safe, secure and affordable housing for all Canberrans, it includes a particular focus on low to moderate income households and those most vulnerable to homelessness.
- Through the strategy the ACT Government has introduced a range of reforms, programs and funding initiatives which span the full housing assistance continuum. This comprises initiatives that provide affordable home purchase and affordable rental opportunities, strengthen social housing assistance, respond to homeless and increase equity in the housing market.
- The ACT Government reports annually on progress against the Implementation Plan. The first ACT Housing Strategy Report Card report card was released in November 2019. The report card showed strong progress in the strategy's first year of implementation, with 15 of 16 targeted actions identified for delivery in 2018-19 either progressed or completed. A further 39 actions identified for delivery as part of ongoing or annual commitments were either underway or completed.
- The ACT Housing Strategy Year 2 Report Card was released in February 2021. The report card showed steady progress against the strategy's 67 short-term, medium-term and ongoing actions with 14 completed, 4 in development, 33 progressing and 16 continuing. There are now 14 completed actions, five were completed in 2018-19 and nine were completed in 2019-20.
 - The strategy also includes seven annual actions, of which four were completed and three progressed since the release of the first report card.
- Preparation of the ACT Housing Strategy Year 3 Report Card is underway and is anticipated for release in November 2021.

Key Information

- The continued implementation of the strategy aligns with a range of commitments in the 10th Legislative Assembly Parliamentary and Governing Agreement.
- The strategy is structured around the following five goals (which span the full housing assistance continuum):

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- providing an equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community,
 - reducing homelessness,
 - strengthening social housing assistance,
 - improving affordable rental options, and
 - increasing affordable home ownership.
- The strategy mandates a target of at least 15 per cent of residential land in the Indicative Land Release Program to be released for affordable, community and public housing.

Background Information

- The strategy replaces the previous Affordable Housing Action Plan, which was in place from 2007 to 2018.
- The strategy has a deliberate focus on strengthening existing supports for low income households in income quintile one (Q1), earning up to \$55,000 per annum, and providing greater support for households in income quintile two (Q2), earning up to \$100,000 per annum. As a cohort, Q2 households are at greatest risk of housing stress, especially when reliant on the private rental market.

Update on key actions underway

Innovation Fund

- The second round of funding was announced on 21 November 2019 after an expression of interest process with six successful applicants across four priority areas of innovation:
 - Summer Foundation Ltd to boost the supply of specialist disability accommodation (\$35,000);
 - Rights and Inclusion Australia to assist people with disability and families of people with disabilities identify suitable housing options in the ACT (\$90,000);
 - YWCA for YHomes, to deliver supportive housing for older women in Canberra (\$125,000);
 - CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn to investigate the use of church land for the development of an affordable housing model and projects in the ACT (\$50,000);
 - Build.rent Pty Ltd to support its affordable rental housing model (\$125,000); and
 - Community Connections Incorporated (Homeshare ACT) to develop a home share model (\$220,000).
- The projects in round two of the Innovation Fund concluded in September 2021.

2021-22 Housing Targets

- Targets for public, community and affordable housing have been agreed for government land releases across the Territory for the 2021-22 financial year. A target of 307 dwellings

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has been determined, consisting of 155 public housing dwellings, 30 community housing dwellings and 122 affordable housing dwellings.

Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption

- The land tax exemption for home owners who rent their properties at an affordable rate (defined as 75 per cent or less of market rent) to eligible households, via a registered Community Housing Provider (CHP), came into effect in July 2019 under a pilot program.
- The program includes a cap of 250 properties that can access an exemption under the scheme, and there is no time limit.
- Of the three CHPs eligible to participate (CHC, the YWCA and Havelock Housing), two have done so to date. Eligibility requires either registration as a licensed real estate agent, or exemption from this requirement under the *Agents Act 2003*.
- To date CHC and the YWCA have been active participants. Havelock Housing has also expressed interest in participating but has not done so to date.
- As at 1 July 2021, 74 properties had been registered collectively by the YWCA and CHC.

Community Housing Sector Engagement

- The following mechanisms are available to community housing providers (CHPs) to facilitate access to land for social and affordable housing:
 - Housing targets – allocation of 15 per cent of the Indicative Land Release Program each year to community, public and affordable housing.
 - Community housing tenders – for example, sites in Scullin, Giralang and other suburbs in 2020.
 - Purchase of land from the Suburban Land Agency – for example, over the counter, auctions, ballots.
 - Affordable Home Purchase Scheme – if the database of eligible applicants is exhausted, dwellings are then offered to CHPs at the affordable price thresholds.
 - Direct sale – CHPs can apply to the government for a direct sale of land at full market value. This involves submitting a business case and meeting legislated criteria.
 - Private sector – CHPs can purchase land and dwellings from the private sector.
- In addition to establishing a pipeline of land to grow the supply of community housing, the ACT Housing Strategy also includes a range of initiatives, policies and programs to support CHPs. These include:
 - Development of community housing on underutilised community facility land.
 - Affordable community housing land tax exemption scheme.
 - Development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island CHP.
 - Establishment of the affordable rental real estate management model (run by Community Housing Canberra).

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- Expansion of the land rent scheme to CHPs.
- Pilot a shared equity scheme in partnership with a CHP.
- Lease variation charge remission.
- Build to rent – co located with Common Ground in Gungahlin, plus a separate expression of interest process.
- Review of valuations policy to ensure that any restrictions such as the provision of community housing is factored into land valuation.
- Affordable Housing Innovation Fund projects.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development**PARKWOOD EGG FARM (PACE FARMS)****Talking points:**

- Parkwood Farm (Pace) is a barn egg production facility located in the future urban development area of the Government's joint venture development (Ginninderry) with Riverview Group in west Belconnen.
- Pace hold a 20-year rural lease over the land which will expire on 31 December 2035.
- In July 2016, the Ginninderry urban development area including the Pace land was rezoned to a range of urban zones and a site-specific structure plan and concept plan was introduced into the Territory Plan with the commencement of variation No. 351.
- Planning for Ginninderry includes an 800 metre Environmental Clearance Zone around the Pace facility where residential, community and other sensitive uses are not permitted to be developed. The Ginninderry staging plan is designed around this constraint and development in this area is not contemplated until the Pace exit the site and the lease expires in 2035.

Key Information

- Representatives for Pace have approached the Directorate (April 2019) to signal a potential interest in an early exit from the site prior to the expiry of the current lease term in 2035. A valuation report quantifying the potential benefit to government of an early lease surrender in 2025 was provided by Pace, estimated by Pace at \$20.4 million.
- The government has declined to pursue the early exit proposal from Pace.
- Pace applied to the planning and land authority for a further lease over the site to extend expiry beyond 2035. The application was refused on 25 August 2020.

Background Information

- In 2012, the ACT Government supported the conversion of Parkwood Farm from cage production to barn egg production with a grant of \$7.5million. All funded improvements under the Deed of Agreement with Pace Farm were considered completed in July 2018.
- The Deed of Agreement included provision for a portion of the lease to be surrendered to the Territory, which has not been triggered. This area of land is being considered as one of the options to relocate Canberra Sand and Gravel (CSG) green waste operations from the West Belconnen Land fill site. This operation is required to be moved to allow TCCS to progress with the West Belconnen Landfill closure and capping project.

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Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
Suburban Land Agency (SLA)

SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY QTBS	
1.	COVID 19 impacts
2.	Governance of the Suburban Land Agency
3.	Gungahlin Development Update
4.	Molonglo Development Update
5.	West Belconnen Ginninderry Development Update
6.	Purchasing land from the Suburban Land Agency
7.	Stakeholder/Community Engagement
8.	Land Pricing – Industry Comparison
9.	SLA Land Sales
10.	SLA Ballot Process
11.	Affordable, Public and Community Housing
12.	Gold Creek Homestead – 23/109 Ngunnawal
13.	Belconnen Town Centre Engagement
14.	Release of Block 2 Section 57 Turner
15.	SLA Delivery of ILRP - NEW
16.	Build to Rent initiative

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON HOUSING

Talking points:

- According to CoreLogic, the impacts of COVID-19 over the past 18 months have seen remarkable levels of adaption in the real estate sector, aided by record low interest rates and record rates of household savings coupled with government stimulus measures including the ACT Government's stamp duty concession.
- The extent of longer term impacts, such as the lasting effect of reduced migration due to the pandemic, continue to remain uncertain.
- Consistent with the Public Health Direction, the Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) has put on hold land settlements, however, 'essential or time critical' settlements can be completed. Exchanges can still continue to take place through non-contact measures.

Key Information:

- The Agency's focus during the ACT's COVID-19 lockdown is that of health, safety and compliance with official public health directives, with only essential work being undertaken and physical contact avoided.

General housing market impacts

- CoreLogic, in its latest Housing Market Update released on 1 October, reported that its national home value index rose another 1.5% in September, taking Australian housing values 17.6% higher over the first nine months of the year and 20.3% higher over the past 12 months. The annual growth rate is now tracking at the fastest pace since the year ending June 1989.
- The ACT housing market is broadly consistent with the national market performance, which saw ACT dwelling values increasing 2% in September and 24.4% for the last 12 months.

Suburban Land Agency Impacts

- The Agency will provide an extension of time to complete the applicable rebate processes equal to the lockdown length (i.e. if the lockdown lasts for 3 weeks there will be a 3-week extension of time to complete the front garden landscaping).
- The extent of the ongoing impact on future land releases within Agency estates remains uncertain, and is likely to depend on the scale, longevity and overall economic impact of the latest COVID-19 lockdown.
- The Agency will continue to closely monitor the market and the impacts of COVID-19 on future scheduled land releases, and has been proactive in discussions with its legal service providers and provided communication to buyers considering the most recent advice from the ACT Law Society and ACT Health. This is likely to have a flow on effect to settlements in the short term and possibly longer term dependent on the length of the current lockdown.

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Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

GOVERNANCE OF THE SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) actively promotes operational governance as a key priority.
- The Agency's Governance team provides strategic advice to the Chief Executive Officer, the Agency Executives, the Board and the Board's Committees. This supports the Agency to make informed decisions and to implement good governance practices.
- The Governance team also support the Suburban Land Agency and the Board to comply with obligations under relevant laws and regulations.
- The Governance and Corporate Services Branch is also responsible for procurement assurance, training, and planning.

Key Information

- The Agency's governance framework ensures adequate oversight of risk management and fosters relevant internal training programs including in relation to (i) records management, (ii) respect, equity and diversity, (iii) fraud, corruption and ethics, and (iv) work, health and safety.
- The Governance team coordinates the Agency's internal audit function with the Agency's internal auditors (an outsourced independent provider) and ensures that audit recommendations are duly addressed.
- The Agency's procurement framework provides guidance to staff on legislation, policy and best practise principles. The Agency has invested in staffing training (including probity) and education in procurement. The Agency undertakes assurance activities (including record keeping) as well as procurement planning to improve compliance and performance.

Background Information

- The Agency's Board Audit and Risk Committee (BARC) endorsed for Board approval the Agency's internal audit plan for 2020-21 (and the Board subsequently approved the plan). Internal audits on Requests for Information in Major Construction Projects and Social Sustainability deliverables (focussing on Affordable Housing) are being finalised.
- The Agency's BARC and Board approved the Agency's internal audit plan for 2021-22. Internal audits on the Contract and Supplier Management and High Performing Teams have commenced.
- The Agency's Executive team includes an Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services who is responsible for assisting to continually strengthen and improve the Agency's governance and procurement.

- The Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services is supported by a Senior Director, Governance. This role is also responsible for leading a team which is solely focussed on governance and risk.
- The Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services is supported by a Senior Director, Project Management Office. This role is responsible for leading a team focussed on procurement and project management.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

GUNGAGHLIN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Talking points:

- The Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) 2021-22 to 2025-26 was released 6 October 2021 accompanying the ACT 2021-22 Budget. The ILRP identifies release in Casey, Taylor, Jacka and the Gungahlin Town Centre.

Jacka – Gas free and Community Battery

- In line with the Territory Plan Amendment in June 2020 to remove the mandatory provision of a gas service to each new block in subdivision, the Agency has progressed planning and design in Jacka 2 without the provision of a gas reticulation network.
- In striving towards a zero-emission suburb for Jacka, the Agency has recently released a market sounding tender for the proposal to implement a Community-Scale Battery Project in Jacka. This is one initiative of the Agency's Sustainability Strategy.

Taylor

- The Agency will be undertaking its final release of single residential dwelling sites in Taylor this year in accordance with the ILRP.
- Taylor is proving to be a popular suburb with the Margaret Hendy School, extensive network of open space and pedestrian connectivity, along with some highly sought-after development sites with views across Gungahlin

Gungahlin Town Centre

- The Agency has met several times with members of the Gungahlin Community Council on their concerns around the development outcomes in the Town Centre.
- The Agency has committed to further consultation with the Gungahlin Community Council and wider Gungahlin Community about how future sites in the Town Centre are brought to market and are scheduled to meet with the Council in November 2021 to provide an update.

Key Information

- The SLA is currently undertaking several projects in Gungahlin as per the table below.

Estate	Planning	Civil Works	Landscape Works	Community Development (Mingle)
Moncrieff 2,000 dwellings(dw)	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete
Throsby	Complete	Complete	Complete	Ongoing

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/10/2021
 Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer Ext: 57346
 Contact Officer name: Andrew Griffith Ext: 78724
 Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

Estate	Planning	Civil Works	Landscape Works	Community Development (Mingle)
1,101 dw				
Gungahlin Town Centre	Complete	Complete	Pending – design commencing late 2021 CY	N/A
Taylor 2,892dw	Complete	Complete	Ongoing	Ongoing
Jacka 2	DA under assessment	Commencing Q4 2021-22	Commencing Q4 2021-22	Commencing Q4 2021-22
Kenny	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending

Background Information

Moncrieff Group Centre and Taylor Local Centre

- These sites were released via a two staged tender (EOI/RFT) in June 2021, the EOI process closed on Tuesday, 14 September 2021. The EOI is currently under assessment. The RFT documents will be informed by a community engagement exercise undertaken by the Agency in June and July 2021.

Jacka 2

- The Development Application for Jacka Stage 2 is currently under assessment with the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) with approval anticipated second quarter of 2021-22FY.

Kenny

- The transfer of the site to SLA for delivery was initiated early May 2021, with SLA to commence planning works shortly.

Casey

- Development sites in Casey are currently being considered by EPSDD in line with works they are progressing on community needs assessment.

Gungahlin Town Centre

- The Agency has committed to stakeholder engagement on how blocks are brought to market, the provision of open space and interface with the linear park and future public realm.
- The engagement approach will need to align with the timing and outcomes of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Standing Committee's inquiry into Draft Variation 364 (DV364).

MOLOGLO DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (INCLUDING WHITLAM)

Talking points:

- The Molonglo Valley is a major development front with an expected district population of around 60,000 residents, when completed in about 25 years.
- At November 2020, the population in the suburbs of Wright, Coombs and Denman Prospect is estimated to be around 8,500 residents. The population of Molonglo is expected to grow to around 30,000 over the next ten years as residents move into the existing suburbs of Wright, Coombs, Denman Prospect, the new suburbs of Whitlam, and in the future suburbs in Molonglo 3.
- Whitlam is the first suburb of Molonglo 3. Whitlam comprises approximately 2,100 single and medium density dwellings, a community facility site (school) and a local commercial centre. The first single residential settlement has occurred, and the first resident moved into the estate in September 2021. Construction has commenced on the Whitlam Display Village Collaboration Hub and the Display Village.

River Corridor Interface

- In developing the suburbs of Coombs, Wright and Whitlam, the Agency have placed a high importance on minimising impacts on the Reserve through the management of weeds, rubbish, erosion, and stormwater, consistent with the Agency's Sustainability Strategy.
- The Agency has undertaken several restorative projects in Coombs to improve water quality entering the reserve and has initiated the Whitlam Water Quality Project to demonstrate best practice in sediment and erosion control during and after estate construction.
- The Agency is working closely with the Natural Resource Management Team within EPSDD and Parks and Conservation to minimise development impacts on the Molonglo River Reserve.

Molonglo Commercial Centre

- The Centre and surrounds will consist of a main commercial core containing a wide range of retail and community uses, as well as a service trades area, a college, police station, emergency services facility, a large town park, and approximately 2,700 dwellings.
- The Centre will also be the Territory's first gas-free commercial and retail precinct in accordance with the current Parliamentary Agreement.
- Planning for the Centre is still being progressed by EPSDD with the first release of land in the Group Centre scheduled for 2023-24. The Suburban Land Agency is currently working on a high-level release strategy for the period 2023-24 onwards.

Wright and Coombs Village Precinct

- The Agency is committed to delivering great places where communities thrive and one way of delivering this vision is tailoring land releases with specific design controls on commercial and community land releases
- The Wright and Coombs Village Precinct is a result of extensive community engagement, (workshops, panels, and survey), developing sales and marketing material based on these community outcomes and then binding these outcomes through sales documentation and delivery deeds.
- The sites have been released via a two-staged tender, the EOI closed in September and is currently under assessment. This determines suitable developers to participate in the Request for Tender stage where detailed tender submission is required to respond to the design criteria and tender documents.

Key Information

- The Agency is currently undertaking a number of projects in the Molonglo Valley with the main activities including (subject to COVID lockdown restrictions):
 - sales activity for the Wright and Coombs Village Precinct land releases, with the first stage EOI currently under assessment (EOI closed 7 September 2021).
 - finalising landscaping works in North Coombs and North Wright.
 - land servicing in Whitlam Stage 2 due for completion end 2021 early 2022.
 - estate development planning for Whitlam Stage 3 and Stage 4.
 - construction of footpath connections around Coombs, adjacent to the Molonglo Valley River Corridor (scheduled to be completed early 2022 CY); and
 - landscape works for the Play Space near Holdens Creek Pond due for completion Spring 2022.

Background Information

The Molonglo Valley is divided into three stages:

Molonglo 1

- The final estate development in Coombs is a small area of approximately 6.7 hectares known as the Coombs Peninsula. The SLA is currently paused on all planning work following the release of the Parliamentary Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly which proposes keeping the Peninsula as open space.

Molonglo 2

- The final stage of Denman Prospect, Stage 3 is identified for release in the draft ILRP in 2021-22.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is undertaking Concept Planning for the Molonglo Commercial Centre and Denman Prospect Stage 3.

Molonglo 3

- Molonglo 3 will accommodate approximately 12,000 dwellings including local centres, group centres and community uses including government and non-government schools.

- The development of Whitlam requires the construction of three critical pieces of infrastructure. These are the Deep Creek water quality pond, relocation and undergrounding of the 132KV powerlines and the mitigation of odour from the Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer. These projects are being progressed by the SLA in conjunction with Evo Energy and Icon Water.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development**WEST BELCONNEN GINNINDERRY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE****Talking Points**

- The West Belconnen Joint Venture, known as Ginninderry, stretches from the north western suburbs of Canberra (Holt and Macgregor) across the ACT/ NSW border into part of the Yass Valley. It is bounded on two sides by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek. The first two suburbs of Ginninderry will be Strathnairn and Macnamara.
- The site is being developed by a Joint Venture between the Territory and Riverview Developments Pty Limited (Riverview).
- Based on the development potential of land being contributed to the joint venture, the respective interests of the parties are 60 percent for the Territory and 40 percent for Riverview. Project costs and risks will be shared in those proportions.
- The Ginninderry team immediately went into pre-planned lockdown arrangements as at Thursday 5pm 12 August 2021. The Link sales office is closed, events cancelled or postponed and the majority of staff are working from home. One staff member remains on-site to 'make safe' the site and ensure that contractors within the development area are abiding by ACT Government lockdown protocols.
- Construction
 - Stage 1 (356 blocks) is complete. First settlements occurred in June 2019.
 - Stage 2 (814 blocks) is largely complete. The sale results of the most recent release are detailed at the end of this brief.
- Recent initiatives of the project include:
 - The first Development Application for the suburb of Macnamara was submitted on 2 April 2021. EPSDD have indicated a reluctance to provide a conditional DA approval until there is more certainty regarding Environmental Clearance Zone reduction.
 - More than 600 residents have now moved into Strathnairn (250 dwellings).
 - A business case to recommend the most appropriate utility model to manage and operate a stormwater utility is under development.
 - Energy project pilot – the residential batteries program has been released to selected residents.
- Major project considerations currently being addressed are the removal of Environmental Clearance Zones surrounding the West Belconnen Landfill and the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre.
- The ILRP forecasts the release of 250 residential dwellings per year from 2021-22, however this is currently considered a high risk by the Joint Venture given that the

Environmental Clearance Zone surrounding the Landfill currently encumbers the next stage of the development.

- Sales releases for 2021-22 are as follows:
 - 45 Flexi Living product dwellings will be released for sale later in 2021. A date is yet to be confirmed. These will not count towards the 2021-22 FY ILRP target as they were counted as released during the 2020-21 FY when the builders tender was let.

Key Information

- The total area of land covered by the development proposal is over 1,600 hectares. Of this, around 800 hectares is protected in the open space network including approximately 600 hectares for the river corridor/conservation area.
- The new community will become home to up to 30,000 residents on completion.
- There will be approximately 11,500 dwellings of which 6,500 will be in the ACT and 5,000 in NSW (subject to rezoning approval).
- It will provide a diverse range of housing and lot sizes to suit a wide range of budgets, buyers and lifestyles.
- It will be the first cross-border development for the ACT and NSW, with three suburbs in the ACT and one adjacent border community in NSW (subject to rezoning approval). The project will cross the border in approximately 2034.
- It will take 30-40 years for the development to be complete.

Background Information

- In May 2013, the ACT Government entered into an agreement with the Riverview Group to develop land in West Belconnen and adjacent land in NSW. On 5 December 2015, the ACT Government agreed to the Territory entering into a land development joint venture with Riverview. The area to be developed is approximately 1,600 hectares: 670 in the ACT and 330 in NSW. The balance of approximately 600 hectares is to meet requirements of the National Capital Plan and protection for the ecology of the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek corridor.
- The project has been conceived and developed to date with high environmental and sustainability values. Project initiatives include:
 - a memorandum of understanding with the adjacent Strathnairn Community Arts facility to provide additional resources and facilities for Strathnairn and minimise the impacts of the development on the community;
 - formation of a Conservation Trust to actively manage the river corridor, to protect the environmental values of the corridor whilst allowing community access;

- a training and employment initiative, called SPARK, in partnership with stakeholders across community services, vocational training and industry to deliver engagement training and employment opportunities for the Ginninderry community; and
 - attainment of a six star 'Green Star' - Communities rating by the Green Building Council of Australia, the highest possible rating under the scheme. In order to attain this rating, the planning, design and construction of the Ginninderry community was assessed across six categories including: governance, design, economic prosperity, liveability, environment and innovation.
- Processes are currently underway to manage the following:
 - relocation of the powerlines that traverse the site;
 - appropriate buffer zones for the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre; and
 - reduce the environmental clearance zones around the West Belconnen Resource Recovery Centre as well as investigating future land uses on the site. The capping of the landfill has been delayed further due to environmental testing suggesting the migration of groundwater from the site. Transport Canberra and City Services have advised the capping of the Landfill won't be complete until February 2023. This impacts the GJV's ability to achieve their ILRP targets.
- The Variation to the Territory Plan No.351 allowing the development was approved in June 2016. Amendment 86 to the National Capital Plan was formalised on 23 November 2016.
- Approval under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* was received in September 2017.
- The Joint Venture commenced after the disallowance period for Amendment 86 to the National Capital Plan expired on 23 November 2016.
- Marketing of Stage 1 commenced in April 2017 with first resident occupation occurring in mid-February 2020.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

PURCHASING LAND FROM THE SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY

Talking points:

- Following the unprecedented demand of land over the last 12 months, the Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) currently has no single residential blocks available for purchase Over the Counter (OTC).
- The timing of when the Agency releases land to the market is set out in the Government's Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP).
- The Agency's website advertises all land available for sale OTC. Single residential blocks, multi-unit sites, commercial sites can be made available for sale OTC if they do not sell via other land sales methods such as the initial Ballot, Tender or Auction process.
- In accordance with the EPSDD Valuations Policy and SLA Valuations Procedure reserve prices are set for all land prior to the sales event.
- The Agency has limited land currently available for purchase through partner builders, under a Put and Call deed. There are approximately 180 blocks available in Whitlam, including around 90 affordable housing blocks.
- Pre-qualified builders can enter into a Put and Call Option Deeds, allowing them to begin designing and promoting house and land packages to buyers, providing more options. The deeds are used by Builders (as the grantee) to secure the right to purchase the land, enter into a house and land package, then nominate a new buyer to enter into the Contract for Sale.
- Put and Call Option Deeds allows a builder to secure a buyer with the stamp duty payable on Completion of a Contract for Sale. This allows the new buyer to pay the stamp duty instead of the builder.
- Complex sites may be released via a two-stage tender process, with a design and development proposal that addresses a Place Design Brief. This is developed with community input, demonstrating how planning, community and market requirements can be met in a feasible way.
- Land has been available for sale during the COVID-19 health emergency. Sales documents necessary to support purchaser decisions were accessible via the SLA website, and sales agents were contactable by phone or email if any further information was required. Additionally, interested buyers were also able to arrange a private appointment, which ensured that all parties adhered to social distancing requirements.

Key Information

- The Agency's Sales and Client Services team is primarily responsible for managing land sales, stakeholder relationships and procurement panels. The Agency is committed to ensuring that the team provides an exceptional customer experience and to improving customer satisfaction.
 - Independent Property Group has been appointed as the Sales Agent for Taylor. The Agency has not yet appointed agents for other planned releases in 2021-22.
- Land in Strathnairn can be purchased directly from the Ginninderry Joint Venture.
- Once purchasers have identified a block they are interested in, they contact the sales agent to complete the sales instructions and usually have 7 to 14 days to exchange contracts on a 5 percent deposit. However, during COVID-19, the Agency has worked with buyers to allow additional time where delays with approval processes by financial institutions have been experienced.
- Settlement on single residential blocks will generally take 30-60 working days.
- The extent of the ongoing impact on current and future land releases in the Agency's estates is currently uncertain, and is likely to depend on the scale, longevity and overall economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Details of any available land can be found on the SLA website:
www.suburbanland.act.gov.au.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) manages community engagement during development delivery, sale, demolition or construction of sites. This is based on the EPSDD Governance Framework for Land Release and Development.
- The Agency is committed to an engagement program in urban and greenfield projects including community and industry stakeholders.

Key Information

- **Throsby Community Garden** – The Agency has concluded engagement with residents regarding the inclusion of a community garden at the Mulligans Flat site in Throsby. A community survey was released in mid-2020 with workshops held in August. A listening report was published in November 2020. Further engagement took place in February 2021, including a workshop. The workshop listening report has been finalised and was reported back to the community in the second week of June 2021.
- **Greenfield engagement:**
 - **Moncrieff and Taylor commercial sites land release** – engagement took place over two months to the end of July to seek community feedback on three sites in Gungahlin. Workshops, pop-ups and a survey will provide platforms for community to have their say about the local centre and group centre sites. An engagement report is being finalised to report back to the community in October.
 - **Coombs Play Space** – the program of consultation for this area is complete. Final sketch plans were released to the public in the third quarter of 2020. Construction will soon commence and is expected to be completed in April 2022. More details are available in the [Molonglo Development Update QTB](#).
 - **Coombs Peninsula** – the The Agency is currently paused on all planning work following the release of the Parliamentary Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly which proposes keeping the Peninsula as open space. More details are available in the [Molonglo Development Update QTB](#).
- **Urban engagement:**
 - **Belconnen Town Centre Renewal Precincts** – The Agency held the first phase engagement in December 2020, with the Belconnen community and stakeholders for Lathlain Street, Belconnen (former fire and ambulance stations), Belconnen Water Police site and the Belconnen circus site. The second phase engagement workshops and surveys concluded in late March. A Place Design Brief was finalised and release took place in June 2021.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 14/10/2021

Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer

Ext: 75346

Contact Officer name: Mayumi Piper

Ext: 53146

Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

- Molonglo Valley (Wright and Coombs mixed sites) – The Agency has concluded community engagement related to four key Molonglo Valley sites prior to market release. A community panel was convened to gain valuable feedback. Engagement concluded in March with a report published in June. Panel members were also notified.
- The Gold Creek Homestead engagement project delivered a successful model of engagement which has resulted in valuable inclusions being added to the Request for Proposal documentation. The project received a Planning Institute of Australia engagement commendation in late 2020. The successful tenderer, Lendlease, was announced in August 2021.
- Other urban sites requiring community engagement by the Agency going forward (even though some sites have been released) include:
 - Kingston;
 - Giralang; and
 - Scullin.

Background Information

- The Agency has reviewed its Stakeholder Engagement Strategy earlier this year, which included a detailed scoping exercise to identify opportunities to deliver increased engagement with Community Councils, the property industry, and other targeted stakeholders.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

LAND PRICING – INDUSTRY COMPARISON

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) no longer has single residential blocks available for purchase Over the Counter (OTC). However, land is currently available for purchase through partner builders, under a Put and Call deed. There are approximately 180 blocks available in Whitlam, including around 90 affordable housing blocks.
- Similarly, no blocks are publicly available for sale OTC in private sector estates of Googong Township and South Jerrabomberra, both located in NSW, and Denman Prospect located within the ACT in the Molonglo Valley.

Key Information

Summary of SLA OTC blocks

- The Agency is currently in the process of finalising the last release in Taylor of 115 single residential blocks, being released via a ballot process.
- The Agency released 956 detached single residential blocks in 2020-21 across the estates of Taylor and Throsby in Gungahlin and Whitlam in the Molonglo Valley.
- The median price across all detached single residential blocks released by the Agency last financial year was \$406,000, with the median value rate per square metre of \$782.

Summary of Private Estate blocks

- The private estates of Googong Township and South Jerrabomberra in NSW no longer have any blocks publicly available for sale OTC.
- Googong Township released 18 detached single residential blocks via a ballot in early June 2021 (The Foothills 2, which will not be land ready until June-October 2022), followed by another ballot release of 52 blocks in early July 2021 (The Foothills 3, which are not expected to be land ready until September-December 2022).

Suburb	No. of Blocks	Median Price	Median Size	Median RPSM	Min Price	Max Price	Min Size	Max Size	Min RPSM	Max RPSM
Googong Township (Foothills 2 & 3)	70	\$418,500	540	\$751	\$338,000	\$564,000	332	1,057	\$519	\$1,018

- Denman Prospect has released 101 blocks since June 2021 which have sold at a median price of \$725,000, with a median rate of \$1,343 per square metre and a median block size of 540m².
- Six blocks released by auction on 12 October sold at a median price of \$910,000, with a median rate per square metre of \$1,845, and a median block size of 439m². A summary of recent releases is shown in the table below:

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/10/2021
 Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer Ext: 75346
 Contact Officer name: Kathy Torcasio Ext: 59547
 Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Suburb	No. of Blocks	Median Price	Median Size	Median RPSM	Min Price	Max Price	Min Size	Max Size	Min RPSM	Max RPSM
Denman Prospect (Sale via appt or via auction)	101	\$725,000	540 m2	\$1,343	\$485,000	\$995,000	375 m2	823 m2	\$1,179	\$1,453
Denman Prospect (Auction 12/10/21)	6	\$910,000	493 m2	\$1,845	\$855,000	\$940,000	439 m2	549 m2	\$1,688	\$1,959

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/10/2021
 Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer
 Contact Officer name: Kathy Torcasio
 Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

Ext: 75346
 Ext: 59547

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development**SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY LAND SALES****Talking points:**

- The market for detached single residential blocks in the ACT has seen unprecedented demand during 2020-21, with the Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) selling a record number of blocks to customers in the last financial year.
- The Agency has land currently available for purchase through partner builders, under a Put and Call deed. There are approximately 180 blocks available in Whitlam, including around 90 affordable housing blocks.
- The private sector estates within the ACT and surrounding NSW also have no detached single residential blocks available for sale over the counter.
- There are no blocks currently available in Strathnairn – a suburb in Ginninderry, the West Belconnen Joint Venture (JV).

Key Information

- Registrations for the final ballot in Taylor opened on 23 September 2021 and closed 30 September 2021. The ballot draw was conducted on 13 October 2021 with results published on the Agency website on 15 October 2021.

Background information

- The forecast timing of which financial year the Agency releases land to the market is set out in the Indicative Land Release Program.
- There are a number of sale methods used by the Agency, including:
 - Tender – Allows for more complex criteria to be applied to sale of the land to achieve better outcomes. Once land is released a development application will be required which will need to comply with the Territory Plan. The Territory Plan provides specific guidance in the form of Precinct Codes to guide design and assessment of development.
 - Ballot – An effective way to release housing lots to the general public where there is a high level of interest.
 - Auction – Typically used for larger commercial releases where the more experienced commercial sector of the market is expected to participate. An auction is generally used for land which does not require complex additional conditions beyond the requirements of the Territory Plan.
 - Put and Call option – Allows builders to secure blocks of land with an extended settlement, enabling them to offer house and land packages to customers. Put and call builders will offer the buyer expertise on house designs which make the most of the block's features.

- Direct sale – The applicant and their proposed use of land must meet requirements in the Planning and Development Act, including eligibility criteria under the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008*.
- Over the Counter sales – Buyers purchase property directly from the Agency. This typically occurs when land has been offered for sale via a Ballot or Auction and blocks have been unsold or returned to the market, and usually occurs in a market with lower consumer demand.
- Settlement on single residential blocks will generally take 30-60 working days.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

SLA BALLOT PROCESS

Talking points:

- A new land release in an ACT Government residential estate may be offered for sale through the ballot system. The ballot system is a fair and transparent way to sell residential blocks to the public, since it provides everyone interested in purchasing a property an equal opportunity to do so.
- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) has used the ballot process a number of times over the last 18 months, where COVID-19 restrictions have permitted it.
- Block prices are set at market value, based on advice from at least two independent valuers. As the block price is publicly available, buyers have knowledge of those prices throughout the process.

Key Information

- Under delegation from the ACT Planning and Land Authority (the Authority), the Suburban Land Agency is responsible for, amongst other things, granting leases by way of ballot under section 238(1) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Planning Act).
- Details of the ballot process are published on the website <https://suburbanland.act.gov.au/en/buying-methods>. All potential registrants are required to comply with the published Terms and Conditions.

Registering for a ballot

- To participate in a ballot, potential buyers must register their details using the online system during the advertised registration period. Details provided by registrants includes: the full name(s) of each buyer, residential address, solicitor details and the type of lease they wish to enter into.
 - Some ballots may be for Land Rent blocks in which case the buyer would nominate that the lease is a Land Rent lease.
 - A sample copy of the contract terms is made available online during the ballot registration period.
- Once the registration form has been submitted, the potential buyer's details are entered into the ballot and they are given a unique ballot number.
- Once the registration period closes, registrations are checked: for duplicates, related parties, registrants are individuals over 18 years of age and/or a corporation that is registered under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and has been issued an Australian Company Number (ACN).

- Each eligible ballot number is entered into an electronic ballot draw system. Ballot numbers are randomly drawn and a ranking number is allocated to the ballot number. The sequence of drawn ballot numbers will determine the appointment time/date for the block selection.
- The ballot draw is witnessed and signed off by ACT Gambling and Racing Commission officials from Access Canberra.
- Ballot results are uploaded on to the Agency's website.

Block selection process

- Successful ballot registrants will be invited to a block selection appointment to select and purchase a block.
- Once a block is selected, the buyer must sign a First Grant Contract. They will be required to select either a Standard Lease Contract or a Land Rent Lease Contract (if available). A payment is required depending on the type of Contract as set out below:
 - For a Standard Lease Contract, generally the buyer must pay a 5% deposit.
 - For a Land Rent Lease Contract, the buyer must pay a \$2,000 security payment - eligibility requirements apply.
- Payments are preferably made using online, contactless methods such as credit card. Once paid, the buyer will be given a receipt.

Settlement

- Settlement of the contract depends on when the block is considered 'Land Ready'. The Agency may release land that is not ready to build on when the First Grant Contract is signed by the purchaser.
 - The front page of the Lease Contract will specify whether the Contract is 'Land Ready' or 'Land Not Ready'. The Contract includes information on the Estimated Date Range for Works. This date range is an indication of when completion of the civil construction will occur and all the appropriate certification and approvals are issued by relevant authorities to the Agency. This is known as Operational Acceptance, or when blocks are 'Land Ready'.
- After Operational Acceptance occurs the Agency's legal service provider will serve the Crown Lease to the purchaser, or their nominated solicitor. When the Crown Lease is received, the purchaser will also receive settlement instructions including the scheduled settlement date.
- To settle a Contract, the outstanding amount of the sale price must be paid on or before the completion date as stated in the Contract.
 - However, in the case of Land Rent Contracts a settlement payment is not required as the land remains in the ownership of the Territory.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

AFFORDABLE, PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HOUSING DELIVERY

Talking points:

- In 2020–21, the SLA continued to release land to support the ACT Government’s housing targets for affordable, public and community housing. Sites for a total of 345 dwellings were released against the target of 302 dwellings. Sites in Kenny and Casey with housing targets totaling 45 dwellings were not ready for release and will be carried over into future releases.
- The SLA has started preparing for the 2021-22 housing targets, based on drafts which have been circulated with the draft Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP). The ILRP and associated Housing Targets were published with the ACT Government’s Budget on 6 October 2021.
- Once the housing targets are approved, they will be published via Notifiable Instrument under the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017*.

Key Information

- Sites identified for Affordable Home Purchase are sold with contractual requirements in place to ensure the affordable housing dwellings meet specified design requirements and will be offered to eligible buyers as part of the ACT Government’s Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.
- Sites for public housing dwellings are released to Housing ACT for the development of public housing.
- Sites for community housing dwellings are typically released to registered Community Housing Providers or are released to Housing ACT to become community housing in the future.
- Releases against 2020-21 targets included multi-unit sites in Coombs, Gungahlin, Belconnen, Moncrieff and Wright with requirements for 214 affordable housing dwellings and 43 public housing dwellings.
- In addition to the housing targets, 82 single residential blocks in Taylor and Whitlam were released for Land Rent on 20 February 2021 and 6 single residential blocks were released for public housing in Bonner and Wright.

Background Information

- The SLA sets prices for the sale of sites based on independent market valuations. Affordable housing requirements are applied to both multi-unit sites and single residential blocks.

Affordable Home Purchase Scheme

- Since December 2019, more than 3000 people have registered their interest in the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme. Of these, over 580 applicants have applied to participate in the scheme (through submitting their paperwork) and more than 515 have been approved as eligible and 26 have been assessed as ineligible. The balance of applicants are either under assessment or have purchased a property.
- Following is a summary of Affordable Home Purchase Scheme properties offered to eligible buyers through ballot processes in 2020-21:

Suburb	No. of Dwellings	Dwelling Type	Ballot Release Date	Dwellings Purchased by Eligible Buyers
Taylor	11	Townhouses: 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom	July 2020	1
Coombs	20	Townhouses: 2 bedrooms + multipurpose, 2 bathrooms	Sept 2020	3
Taylor	15	Townhouses: 2 Bedroom	December 2020	0
Taylor	7	Townhouses: 2 Bedroom	January 2021	1
Phillip	74	Apartments: 2 Bedroom	February 2021	TBC*
Coombs	42	Apartments: 1, 1+study and 2 bedrooms	March 2021	9
Wright	32	Apartments: 1 and 2 bedrooms	March 2021	0
Taylor	6	Townhouses: 2 bedrooms	March 2021	6
Gungahlin	5	Apartments: 1 bedroom	May 2021	0
Whitlam	16	Terrace Houses: 2 and 3 bedrooms	May 2021	TBC*
Taylor	9	Apartments: 1 and 1+study bedrooms	June 2021	2
Whitlam	19	2 Bedroom House & Land Packages	July 2021	TBC*
Whitlam	5	3 Bedroom House & Land Packages	August 2021	TBC*

**Sales process has not concluded*

Community Housing

There are currently no Community Housing sites available for sale. Further sites will be released as part of the 2021-22 program.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development**GOLD CREEK HOMESTEAD – 23/109 NGUNNAWAL****Talking points:**

- The SLA has exchanged contracts for the sale of the land with the successful tenderer, Lendlease. Lendlease proposed an intergenerational community precinct, including residential aged-care, retirement living and a refurbished Gold Creek Homestead and gardens for the broader community to enjoy.
- Lendlease have established their web-page GoldCreekLiving.com.au and are continuing community and stakeholder engagement as per the Community Engagement Plan agreed with the SLA.
- The first (virtual) community engagement event was held on 2 September 2021 and a presentation to the Gungahlin Community Council on 8 September 2021.
- Community Engagement Notice for the first phase of the project (Tender Concepts) was endorsed by SLA on 5 October 2021. As part of their next design development stage (Concepts DA) Lendlease will be presenting their development proposal to the National Capital Design Review Panel on 24 November 2021.

Key Information

- Block 109 Section 23 Ngunnawal, which includes the Gold Creek Homestead, was identified to deliver 45 residential dwellings and community uses as part of the Indicative Land Release Program for 2019-20.
- Residential dwellings are limited to supportive housing, retirement village or residential care accommodation under the Territory Plan.
- A Community and Stakeholder Panel identified preferred objectives for the development that focus on a strong place identity, adaptive re-use for the Homestead and gardens, and sustainable design outcomes.
- The Gold Creek Homestead is not heritage-listed, however the Panel's Brief captures historic and place values through precinct development objectives and principles.
- The site in Ngunnawal was released through a one-stage tender process on 23 June 2020 and tenders closed on 15 October 2020.
- In the evaluation of tenders, the design response to the Panel's Brief was given the highest weighting (50%), followed by the financial response (30%).
- The tender also included development obligations in the form of minimum requirements for the redevelopment of the site. This includes a minimum five-star Green Star Communities Rating, a 30% tree canopy and 30% permeable surface target, and a public footpath and cycling path through the site to better connect surrounding residents and foster active travel.

Background Information

- On 1 June 2018, the SLA withdrew the Gold Creek Homestead land release from market to work towards a better balance of social and financial benefits after several community representatives raised their concerns.
- The Gold Creek Homestead Community and Stakeholder Panel (the Panel) was established by the SLA in October 2019 to inform the preferred development objectives for the sale of the land.
- The Panel consisted of 12 male and 8 female residents across age groups, fields of interest and ethnic background, including Ngunnawal representation.
- Key stakeholders on the Panel included the National Trust and the Gungahlin Community Council.
- In three Panel meetings and a site tour throughout October and November 2019, the Panel agreed on a Precinct Development Brief that outlines their site-specific objectives and principles for development of the site.
- The Panel has been briefed on the approach to the land sale on 26 June 2020 through a webinar with presentations and Q&As.
- All information related to the Panel outcomes and tender approach are documented on the SLA website.
- The site has been marketed to industry as 'Gold Creek Living – A Benchmark Community Precinct' with a unique place branding included in all marketing collateral. Further information is available on GoldCreekLiving.com.au.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development**BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE LAND RELEASES****Talking points:**

- The Belconnen Town Centre continues to grow as an urban renewal hub with several development projects nearing completion and ACT Government projects being implemented in the area.
- The ILRP identified mixed use sites for release at the northern end of the Belconnen Town Centre including:
 - Circus Sites Precinct (Blocks 38 and 39/Section 52 and Block 2/Section 151) in 2020-21; and
 - Lathlain Street Precinct (Block 24/Section 21, Block 2 and 3/Section 22 and Block 2/Section 23) in 2022-23, which incorporates delivery of the newly rezoned public open space.
- The Circus Sites Precinct together with the Former Belconnen Water Police site (Block 29, Section 149) at Emu Inlet Waterfront Precinct were packaged as the Belconnen Lakeshore market release. The release methodology is a two-stage tender process. The first stage, a Request for Proposal (RFP), was released to the market on 17 June 2021 and it closed on 7 October 2021.
- The RFP Evaluation Panel is currently assessing received submissions. Conclusion of the evaluation process is anticipated by mid-December 2021 at which stage SLA will make an announcement of which proponents are being invited to participate in the second, Request for Tender stage of the land sale process.
- Prior to RFP release to the market, SLA considered the proximity of these land releases as well as future Lathlain Steet Precinct. In the context of the Belconnen Town Centre masterplan, SLA recognised that the two precincts together with the Former Water Police site and the public spaces between them offered the opportunity for place-based consideration of their design and development to ensure connectivity, walkability and a diverse place offering across the sites are complimentary.
- Engagement was undertaken with the Belconnen community and stakeholders between December 2020 and March 2021. The engagement captured community objectives with regard to desired uses, character, movement and place experiences for each site within the precincts that will inform the sale of the sites.
- The information that the SLA received throughout the course of the engagement process has helped to shape a comprehensive *Place Design Brief* for the Belconnen Land Release Sites.
- The RFP seeks design and development proposals in response to the Place Design Brief, which will be given a high priority in the tender evaluation. A weighting of 50% as part of weighted assessment criteria.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/10/2021

Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer

Ext: 75346

Contact Officer name: Chris Webb

Ext: 76824

Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

Key Information

- The Place Design Brief has been prepared with input from the community and stakeholders and describes the community's aspirations for making great places that connect people.
- The SLA have engaged the services of an experienced place planning and engagement team to prepare the Place Design Brief. The consultant team is interdisciplinary and includes place planning, community engagement and urban design expertise.
- An initial 'discovery' phase of community and stakeholder engagement was completed in December 2020 with further engagement undertaken during an 'ideas and co-design' phase in February and March 2021.
- The impact of COVID-19 on plans for community engagement were considered and a balance of COVID-safe face-to-face and online engagement activities have been undertaken.
- Engagement activities during the 'ideas and co-design' stage in March 2021 included a series of online and face-to-face community and stakeholder workshops, younger people workshops, and an industry collaboration workshop in partnership with the Property Council.
- The SLA has introduced the project to the Belconnen Community Council (BCC) at their November 2020 meeting and presented outcomes of the first phase of engagement at their February 2021 meeting. A presentation of the second phase, Co-design, took place on 18 May 2021 and a further presentation on the final Place Design Brief will take place on 15 June 2021.
- Detailed information is available on the ACT Government's YourSay website.

Background Information

- The former Water Police site is located at the northern edge of Emu Inlet on Lake Ginninderra at the end of Evelyn Parker Place. The site is small, isolated and heavily constrained. Its viability as a release site relies greatly on its future use and context within which this future use can be supported.
- The former Water Police site within the Emu Inlet Precinct was scheduled for auction in June 2018, however, was withdrawn to allow the SLA to further reconsider the site constraints and community input.
- The place-based community engagement has assisted the SLA in identifying relevant uses for the former Water Police Site that are complimentary to the community's vision for the area and included that highly successful development will be development that integrates into the park's environment and substantially enhances the lake foreshore's recreational uses, activation and connections.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

RELEASE OF BLOCK 2 SECTION 57 TURNER

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is preparing the re-release of Block 2 Section 57 Turner (the site) in FY 2021-22. The site is the location of the former Turner Flats.
- The re-release will take into account new development objectives that have been considered by the City Renewal Authority (CRA) and SLA and may include a Build-to-Rent project.
- The SLA is preparing an Estate Development Plan to create new subdivision blocks. The land subdivision will support land release for 565 dwellings as per ILRP requirements as well as the Build-to-Rent initiative.
- The site is subject to Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No. 368 (DV368).
- On 15 October, SLA met with the North Canberra Community Council committee to commence engagement on both the Estate Development Plan for the site and Build-to-Rent project.

Key Information

- The sale of the site was identified in the Indicative Land Release Program for release in the 2018-19 financial year.
- The site was first released together with Block 10 Section 8 Braddon via a tender process in 2018. The tender process was terminated in May 2019.
- The site was formerly part of the National Partnership Agreement on Asset Recycling (known as the Asset Recycling Initiative – ARI).
- The demolition of the former Turner Flats was completed in 2019.
- The site is currently scheduled for re-release in the 2021-22 financial year.
- Development feasibility analysis identified a release approach for the site that best meets the financial and non-financial objectives of the SLA, including opportunities for sustainability objectives articulated in the latest Parliamentary Agreement.
- Updated market analysis and property advice considered the most suitable release method for the site to meet current market demand accounting for previous market release feedback and the requirements to deliver the Build-to-Rent initiative.

Background Information

- The site is subject to Draft Variation to the Territory Plan no. 368 (DV368).
- DV368 was released publicly for community consultation on 13 December 2019.
- DV368 seeks to enshrine the vision and planning controls proposed in the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy. DV368 is yet to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.
- The controls that are proposed to apply to this site which are included in the DV368 are:
 - Buildings Heights – no more than 27.5m high fronting Northbourne Avenue, 14.5m high on Forbes St residential street frontage.
 - Building Setback – minimum 10m setback on Northbourne frontage, 6m boundary setback on Forbes St frontage.
 - Maximum parking rates – 1 space per studio/1 bedroom, 1.3 space per 2 bedrooms, 1.5 spaces per 3 bedrooms+, 1 visitor space per 8 dwellings
 - Dwelling mix – no more than 40% of studios/1 bedrooms, no more than 40% of 2 bedrooms, at least 10% are 3 bedrooms or more
 - Midblock pedestrian link through site connecting Forbes St and Northbourne Avenue increasing the sites permeability.
- The proposed changes to DV368 have a significant impact on the development potential of the site. Until DV368 is finalised there is still significant planning uncertainty with this site.

Portfolio/s: Housing and Suburban Development

SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY DELIVERY OF THE INDICATIVE LAND RELEASE PROGRAM

Talking points:

- For the four years 2017-18 to 2020-21 the Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) identified land releases totalling 14,663 dwellings. The Government through its land agencies delivered 14,503 dwellings – a variance of just 160 dwellings or 1%.
- It is important to acknowledge that the ILRP is ‘indicative’ by definition. It is the Government’s forecast of expected land releases in a financial year and that refinement and adjustment of those release numbers may occur during the year.
- Annual land releases are complex processes. They can be impacted by a range of issues, including planning and environmental process outcomes, completing necessary due diligence processes, community engagement and consultation processes, legal issues, and commercial/market impacts.
- The ILRP is not the cause of house price increases. In fact the annual ILRP represents less than 2% of the ACT's total established housing market.
- Through economic modelling the ILRP is designed to deliver enough land to cater for population growth, household formation rates and housing choice. During the 2020-21 year when population growth has been estimated at 0.25% (approximately 1,000 people) the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) released land for 3,061 dwellings.
- CoreLogic data shows that house price increases over the last 18 months have been broad based, with every state and territory experiencing strong price growth.
 - The ACT has not been immune to this national housing trend.

Key Information

- It has been widely reported that record low interest rates, improved economic conditions through much of 2020-21, pent up demand following the 2018-19 credit ‘tightening’ and easing of restrictions following the first COVID-19 phase in 2020, coupled with stimulus initiatives has led to a nationally strong housing market.
 - Record-low interest rates (coupled with ready availability of credit) allow people to borrow more. The official cash rate has been at 0.1% since November 2020 (and was at 0.25% since March 2020). As a result, average home loan rates are reported to be around 2.3% - well below inflation which is currently 3.8%.
 - Also fuelling the housing market has been record household savings due to people working from home during the pandemic. It peaked at a 60-year high in the June 2020 quarter and has remained elevated as of the June 2021 quarter.

- The delivery of the annual land release program is a challenging and complex process. There are many elements that may not be in the direct control of land delivery agencies which can impact the timing and/or quantum of those land releases.
- The SLA works within these constraints and challenges to deliver its annual land release program. Sometimes this may mean that the specific releases are delayed or the yield from the release is adjusted. The SLA will do its best to bring forward other releases or identify opportunities to refine the mix of land offerings to offset those impacts.
- The private sector also releases land to the market which is not part of the ILRP and which the Government has little influence over, regarding timing or quantity.
- Unlike private sector land developers the Government has taken the approach over the last four years of maintaining land supply despite the impacts of economic cycles and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - When the private sector was reducing its inventories and limiting new releases the SLA continued to release new blocks to the market, even if they did not sell at the time.
 - As a result, a significant inventory of land was available OTC from the SLA at the beginning of 2020-21 which was taken up by customers as the pandemic conditions eased and market confidence returned.

Background Information

- The SLA was established on 1 July 2017. It delivers most of the land identified in the Government's annual ILRP. Some releases are also undertaken by the City Renewal Authority and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

Portfolio: Housing and Suburban Development

BUILD TO RENT INITIATIVE

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to improving housing availability, diversity and choice and is considering pilot Build-to-Rent projects with affordable rental.
- The 2021-22 budget includes \$720,000 over four years to investigate Build-to-Rent and seek feedback from the market on building and operating long-term Build-to-Rent developments with affordable rental housing in the ACT. Additionally, funding of \$640,000 has been allocated in this Budget for due diligence, site feasibility investigations and concept design of an affordable Build-to-Rent development on the existing Common Ground Gungahlin site.
- The Build-to-Rent model focusses on increasing the supply of long-term rental housing by the construction of multi-unit dwellings that are rented out rather than being sold. It adds to diversity of housing choice by providing additional opportunities that complement existing private rental and public and community housing options.
- The Suburban Land Agency will be running a market sounding process to understand appetite and interest from the market to build and operate long-term rental accommodation, with an affordable rental component, on land release sites.
- The 10th Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) includes a commitment to construct a Build-to-Rent and affordable rental model co-located with Common Ground Gungahlin and deliver 600 affordable rental houses by 2026. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate are responsible for delivery of the affordable Gungahlin Common Ground Build-to-Rent PaGA initiative and work has commenced on the design and operation of the asset.
- Build-to-Rent housing has the potential to provide long lasting community benefits, with greater housing choice for tenants who would have access to high-quality dwellings, in a stable rental environment. Increased rental security offers wider social and economic benefits, with tenants better able to establish themselves in a community.

Key Information

- Build-to-Rent is a relatively new asset class in Australia which is focused on providing additional housing choice for renters with greater security of tenure and amenity.
- Work is well underway on the feasibility of market-rate and affordable Build-to-Rent in Canberra, including the taxation, planning and financial implications of Build-to-Rent, as well as possible sites including Turner and Lawson.
- Build-to-Rent is well established overseas and while take-up has been slower in Australia, Governments in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have recently gone to the market seeking proposals that include the supply of affordable rental, and public housing.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 15/10/2021

Cleared for public release by: Chief Executive Officer

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Lead Directorate: Suburban Land Agency

- The ACT's market sounding process will provide a broad opportunity for the Build-to-Rent market to express their interest in developing Build-to-Rent projects in Canberra. It will enable the ACT Government to:
 - ascertain private sector and community housing provider appetite for developing and operating Build-to-Rent properties in Canberra
 - consider incentives or subsidies that may be required to include an affordable rental component in a proposal
 - identify any legislative changes or policy initiatives that would encourage development of Build-to-Rent in the ACT.
- Part of Block 2, Section 57 (Turner) and Lawson Stage 2 are identified as potential sites for Build-to-Rent as part of the market sounding process.

Background Information

- The ACT Government engaged a consultant to provide expert advice about Build-to-Rent and research of current policy challenges, financial entity appetite, feasibility analysis and considerations on market-rate and affordable Build-to-Rent. This was finalised in June 2021 and the findings used to inform Government on undertaking a Build-to-Rent pilot program and provide a framework for a market sounding and sales process.
- The Economic Recovery through Social Housing package included a commitment to design and pilot a Build-to-Rent project. Build-to-Rent aligns with goals in the *ACT Housing Strategy* to grow rental supply and encourage affordable rental, particularly for second income quintile households. If the pilot Build-to-Rent project does go ahead, it could contribute to the PaGA commitment for delivery of 600 additional affordable rental houses by 2025-26.
- 
- Separately, through round two of the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, Build.RENT Pty Ltd received a grant of \$125,000 (GST inclusive) to progress its Build-to-Rent development in Belconnen. The grant funding will assist Build.RENT Pty Ltd to establish the initial governance model, seek specialist advice and expertise on the project and form part of the deposit required to seek funding approval from a lender.
- Discussions with the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) and individual Community Housing Providers in May 2021 revealed strong sensitivities about the prospect of government support or subsidies for developers to deliver affordable rental accommodation via Build-to-Rent.

Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

BUDGET ITEMS		
A.	C04 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience	Climate Change and Energy
B.	C26 Vulnerable Household Energy Support	Climate Change and Energy
C.	R26 Zero Emissions Vehicles Registration Waiver	Climate Change and Energy
D.	C06 Social Cost of Carbon	Climate Change and Energy
E.	C07 Community Club Building Energy Efficiency Fund	Climate Change and Energy
F.	C08 Community Zero Emissions Grants	Climate Change and Energy
G.	C14 Expand Healthy Waterways	Environment, Heritage and Water
H.	E11 Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS)	Climate Change and Energy
I.	E26 Solar for Low Income	Climate Change and Energy

IMMEDIATE ISSUES		
1.	Campbell house fire – Battery storage	Climate Change and Energy
2.	Costs and benefits of Climate Action	Climate Change and Energy
3.	Climate Change Strategy	Climate Change and Energy
4.	Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan	Climate Change and Energy
5.	Public Electric vehicle charging stations	Climate Change and Energy
6.	Electricity and gas prices	Climate Change and Energy
7.	ACT Climate Change policy – costs to community and consumers	Climate Change and Energy
8.	Transition from natural gas	Climate Change and Energy
9.	Minimum Energy Requirements for rental properties	Climate Change and Energy
10.	Vulnerable Household Support Scheme	Climate Change and Energy
11.	Community Club Upgrades	Climate Change and Energy
12.	Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme	Climate Change and Energy
13.	Evoenergy electricity pricing	Climate Change and Energy

14.	Water Governance	Climate Change and Energy
15.	Zero Emissions Government (including social cost of carbon)	Climate Change and Energy
16.	Cessation of Solar Business Program – NEW (as requested by Minister in brief 21-74265)	Climate Change and Energy

WATER QTBS

17.	Water quality (Blue Green Algae)	Environment, Heritage and Water
18.	Water Security and Efficiency	Environment, Heritage and Water
19.	Healthy Waterways (Basin project)	Environment, Heritage and Water
20.	Sewage treatment plant	Environment, Heritage and Water
21.	Catchment Management Groups and Volunteering	Environment, Heritage and Water

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS REDUCTION QTBS

22.	COVID 19 Impacts	Climate Change and Energy
23.	Living Infrastructure Plan (including DV369)	Climate Change and Energy Planning and Urban Policy
24.	Community Zero Emissions Grants Program	Climate Change and Energy
25.	<u>Renewable energy programs</u> • Next Generation Energy Storage program • Industry development/Renewable Energy Innovation Fund	Climate Change and Energy
26.	Energy Emergency Management	Climate Change and Energy

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Climate Action



Climate action - Adaptation and resilience (EPSDD C04CB)	Environment and climate				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expense	849	857	466	475	2,647
Offset – Expense	-150	0	0	0	150
Net Expense	699	857	466	475	2,497

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue delivery of climate change adaptation commitments, including improved living infrastructure, climate data and risk-based assessments, and supporting community action and awareness.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the 2019-20 Budget initiative *Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025* and *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Environment and climate and Access and connectivity.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, A3(ii), C3 (ii) and (iv):

A3(ii): *“Driving sustainable building innovation by piloting land release to include at least one ‘showcase’ sustainable development each year, such as a 150% living infrastructure plot ratio or a ‘Scope 3’ zero-emissions development that produces no net greenhouse emissions during construction and operation, and reduced car parking.”*

C3 (ii): *“Commencing a 10 year pathway to shift to world’s best practice on climate-ready and environmentally-sustainable buildings, including expanding the ACT Appendix to the Building Code of Australia.”*

C3 (iv): *“Continuing work towards reaching a 30% urban tree canopy across Canberra by changing the Tree Protection Act and planning system to protect our safe mature trees and make room for trees during development.”*

This funding will support continued progress towards achieving the 30% living infrastructure targets and delivery of Canberra’s Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City as well continuing to deliver priority climate change adaptation initiatives.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Continued delivery of the Government's primary climate change adaptation commitments under the Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 (CCS) and Living Infrastructure Plan (LIP) through continuation of existing staff.	EPSDD	2021-25
SHORT-TERM			
2	Modelling for living infrastructure requirements including monitoring and evaluation framework for living infrastructure, spatial data visualisation tools and modelling of living infrastructure requirements for commercial and industrial zones. Response to climate risk assessment for the Territory already underway.	EPSDD	2021-23 Feb 2022
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Delivery of the ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change to monitor progress of the Canberra community against resilience indicators	EPSDD	2022-23

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

The 2017-18 budget initiative, *Better services in your community – Implementation of ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* provided \$1.928 million to deliver priority actions through the *ACT Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* including by improving overall resilience to extreme weather and climate-induced events. (2017-18 Budget Paper 3, page 95).



Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (EPSDD C26)	Housing and home				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital ¹	1,362	0	0	0	1,362
Offset – Capital	-12,337	-12,337	-12,337	-12,337	-49,348
Offset – Capital - Provision	0	14,916	14,916	14,916	44,748
Net Capital	-10,975	2,579	2,579	2,579	-3,238
Expenses – subsidies	1,250	0	0	0	1,250
Expenses – staff ²	475	658	671	684	2,488
Adjustments to existing provision	-125	-125	-125	-125	-500
Net cost of services	1,600	533	546	559	3,238

Notes:

1. Capital funding of \$1.362m is transferred to Housing ACT for the delivery of capital assets.
2. On going expense funding of one ASO 6 (\$0.134m in 2022-23; \$0.137m in 2023-24; and \$0.139m in 2024-25) is transferred to Housing ACT from 2022-23.

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will commence a five-year Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (VHESS) to provide support to address indoor living standards and energy hardship among vulnerable households. The program will apply to public and private rental properties, as well as eligible low-income homeowners.

This initiative builds on recent Government actions in this area including the funding of \$50 million provisioned as part of the 2020-21 Budget for this purpose, and the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme to support households with no interest loans to invest in energy efficient home upgrades.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, A 1(iv):

“Implement a five-year, \$50 million program to improve building efficiency and sustainability for social and public housing, low-income owner-occupiers, and the lowest performing rental properties; this includes upgrades to government housing, and financial incentives to implement minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.”

The VHESS will deliver a range of measures across the different cohorts and housing tenures to improve building efficiency and measures to support the introduction of minimum energy performance standards for rentals.

The VHESS will be delivered in phases. Phase one includes planning and design to align future delivery with the introduction of the standards, design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation processes and direct support for Housing ACT and low-income homeowners.

To deliver on the PAGA Commitment, the Government is continuing consideration of the appropriate provisioning of the remaining funds to support future phases of the Scheme.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Phase One - Planning, Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation	EPSDD	July 2021 - June 2022
SHORT-TERM			
2	Phase One - Public Rental Sector - Housing ACT –	EPSDD / Housing ACT	
	National Residential Scorecard Assessment for eligible Housing ACT properties		Dec 2021 - June 2022
	Heating/cooling and insulation upgrades to the worst-performing Housing ACT properties as identified through the Scorecard assessments		Jan 2022 - June 2022
3	Phase One - Low Income Homeowners – \$2,500 subsidies for low-income homeowners to assist with energy efficiency upgrades National Residential Scorecard Assessments to assist with upgrade decisions	EPSDD	Nov 2021- June 2022
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Phase Two – further consideration required by Government for the provisioning of the remaining funds	EPSDD / Housing ACT / CMTEDD	2022-2025

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

Previous funding was committed through the *2020/21 Business Case Vulnerable Household Energy Support Initiative EPSDD C14*, to support ongoing policy development, detailed program design and stakeholder consultation.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Climate Action



Climate action - Free registration for zero emissions vehicles (EPSDD R26)	Environment and climate				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue foregone	675	1,443	3,746	2,696	8,560

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will extend its commitment to provide free vehicle registration for two years to second-hand zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) newly registered in the ACT from 24 May 2021 to 30 June 2024.

This initiative builds on the \$5.154 million provided over four years in the 2020-21 Budget to provide free registration for two years for new ZEVs in the ACT.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, A2 (ii) and (iii):

A2 (ii): *“Provide financial incentives for the purchase of zero emission vehicles. This includes free vehicle registration for new zero emission vehicles for two years, introduced as soon as practical.”*

A2 (iii): *“Develop additional financial incentives to support greater ZEV uptake by businesses and the community sector.”*

This initiative extends the ZEV registration waiver scheme to newly registered second hand ZEVs. The initiative directly builds on PaGA commitment A2 (ii) with the inclusion of second hand vehicles.

A letter from the Chief Minister to the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction on 25 February 2021 confirmed that the registration waiver initiative would be expanded to included second hand ZEVs.

Specifically this initiative aims to:

- support the registration of ZEVs from a wider price range, expanding the accessibility of the financial incentive
- increase the proportion of ZEVs in the ACT (relative to internal combustion engine vehicles); and
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ACT passenger vehicle travel.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Legislation amendment The Road Transport (General) Concession Determination 2021 (No1) (DI2021-83) has already been amended to include a 100% registration concession for new and used ZEVs purchased or converted between 24 May 2021 and 30 June 2024	TCCS	Completed 24 May 2021
SHORT-TERM			
	N/A	N/A	N/A
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
2	Performance measurement and evaluation This initiative will be reviewed at the conclusion of the 2021-22 financial year. The review will assess whether this initiative has met its policy objectives. The review will also consider how it has interacted with other ZEV incentives such as the stamp duty concession for new ZEVs. The review will be provided to the Cabinet Subcommittee on Climate Change Action.	CMTEDD EPSDD	July 2022
3	Waiver scheme conclusion The waiver scheme will conclude on 30 June 2024.	CMTEDD EPSDD	30 June 2024

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2020-21 Budget initiative *Zero Emissions Vehicles – Two years free registration* provided a waiver on vehicle registration fees for up to two years for newly purchased new or second hand zero emission vehicles registered during May 2021 to 30 June 2024. The total cost of the initiative including revenue foregone is \$5.154 million over four years (2020-21 Budget Outlook, page 88). The 2021-22 initiative expands on last year's program.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Social cost of carbon (EPSDD C06CB)	Environment and climate				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Capital	1,340	1,230	1,120	1,010	4,700
Offset – Capital	-1,340	-1,230	-1,120	-1,010	-4,700
Net Capital	0	0	0	0	0

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will implement a Social Cost of Carbon at an interim price of \$20 per tonne of emissions to support the reduction of emissions from Government operations. The two largest sources of ACT Government emissions are transport fuel use (60% of Government emissions) and gas use (40% of Government emissions). The initiative will make funding available from the Better Infrastructure Fund to ACT Government agencies to undertake emissions reduction projects, such as the replacement of gas heating systems and a transition of the Government fleet to zero emission vehicles.

This will support the ACT Government meeting its interim emissions reduction target of Territory emissions being 50-60% below 1990 levels by 2025, and a greater than 33% reduction in emissions from Government operations from 2020 to 2025. This will position Government towards its target of net zero emissions from Government operations by 2040.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, A 1(ix):

“Ensure all new ACT Government buildings and facilities are fossil-fuel-gas free, including new leases. All retrofitting in Government buildings and facilities will have a goal of net-zero emissions post retrofit.”

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	EPSDD, the Office of Climate Action and Treasury are collaborating to develop governance and implementation arrangements for the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) Fund. The first cohort of emissions reducing projects will be commenced with SCC funding. EPSDD, Treasury, Procurement ACT and the Office for Climate Action will develop necessary procedures to ensure SCC is appropriately included in budget and procurement processes in time for the 2022-23 budget.	EPSDD, Treasury, Procurement ACT, Office for Climate Action	2021-22
SHORT-TERM			
2	Another audit of natural gas use in government facilities will be undertaken to identify any natural gas systems that are about to reach the end of their economic lives.	EPSDD	2022-23
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Monitoring and reporting activities will be undertaken. All other funding under this measure will be used to facilitate the upgrade of natural gas systems or invest in zero emissions vehicles. Funding will decline in line with decreasing emissions over time.	EPSDD	2023-2025

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

This initiative builds on the 2019 and 2021 audits undertaken to identify Government facilities requiring the replacement of large natural gas systems by 2025 and will complement the Zero Emissions Government no interest loan fund. This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of environment and climate and health.

This initiative will also be complemented by the public release of two reports that consider the Social Cost of Carbon in the ACT:

- A report by the ACT Climate Change Council, titled '*The Social Cost of Carbon and Implications for the ACT*', and
- A report procured by the ACT Government and developed by the consultant Nicki Hutley, titled '*Applying a Social Cost of Carbon for the ACT*'.

The reports will be released together shortly following Budget. EPSDD will separately engage your office on the details of the release.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Climate action - Community Clubs Building Energy Efficiency Fund - continuation (EPSDD C07CB)

Environment and climate

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Offset – Capital – Provision	-632	-632	-631	-631	-2,526
Expenses – rebates	2,417	583	580	578	4,157
Expenses – staff	263	134	137	139	673
Expenses – other	30	30	80	30	170
Expenses offset – existing expense Provision	-618	-618	-619	-619	-2,474
Net cost of services	2,092	129	178	128	2,526

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue its four-year Community Club Building Energy Efficiency Fund to provide rebates to clubs for equipment upgrades, building efficiency improvements, and the installation of rooftop solar and batteries to reduce electricity and gas bills.

This initiative allocates \$5 million provisioned in the 2020-21 Budget to establish a fund to support energy efficiency upgrades for community clubs.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, E9:

“Establish a five year \$5 million Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade Fund, to be accessed by community clubs.”

The project will also support the development of guidelines for Community Clubs to become extreme weather refuge sites. Participating clubs will be required to provide a extreme weather plan on application to the program. This information relates to PAGA commitment E10:

“Support clubs to become heat and smoke refuges for local communities. This will include ensuring appropriate air filtration systems, and financial payments for venues designated as official extreme weather refuge sites.”

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Research and development of Community Clubs Program in consultation with JACS and the community clubs sector. Open registration phase of program to capture energy use/cost from clubs to further define program guidelines.	EPSDD	Jul – Oct 21
SHORT-TERM			
2	EPSDD staff will carry out energy assessments of clubs and provide recommendation reports listing eligible products and upgrades available through the program. It is expected that a high number of clubs will access the fund in the first years of the program hence the large budget for 2021-22. Monitoring and reporting activities will be undertaken and captured in database ongoing.	EPSDD	2021-2023
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Clubs will have continued access to the fund (until their individual rebate limit is reached) for approved upgrades and installations. Monitoring and reporting activities will be undertaken and captured in database ongoing, and evaluation will take place.	EPSDD	2024-25

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2020-21 Budget initiative *Community Club Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade* Fund provisioned \$5 million of funding for community clubs to undertake energy and water efficiency upgrades (2020-21 Budget Paper 3, page 85). This funding has been released to EPSDD through the 2021-22 Budget initiative of the same name but a revised funding profile, as reflected in the table above.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Climate action - Community Zero Emissions Grants (EPSDD C08)					Environment and climate
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	150	150	150	150	600

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue to provide grants to eligible community groups and not-for-profit organisations to undertake projects that support the ACT's transition to net zero emissions by 2045. This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Environment and climate, and Social connection.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment)/Government priorities alignment

The PAGA agreement sets out the ACT Government's priority for a 'rapid transition to zero net emissions while protecting households'. The Community Zero Emissions Grants program aligns with this priority and is also an action in the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 (Action 1.1).

The Community Zero Emissions Grants program supports these priorities with funding to projects and activities that support the ACT's transition to net zero emissions by 2045 and increase resilience to climate change in the ACT.

Key deliverables and timetable

Note that this is an indicative timeline and that details of this timeline should not be made public at this time.

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Review and revise the Community Zero Emissions Grants program for closer alignment with program objectives to reduce emissions and increase community resilience.	EPSDD	September/ October 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Revised program parameters provided to the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction for consideration and decision.	EPSDD	October 2021
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Program set up	EPSDD	November / December 2021
4	Next grant round opens.	EPSDD	January 2022
5	Successful grant recipients announced.	EPSDD	April 2022

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2017-18 Budget initiatives *Better services in your community – Community participation in net zero emissions* provided \$550k over four years to support community groups, not-for-profit organisations and small enterprises to deliver projects and initiatives that support the ACT's target of zero net emissions.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Protecting Canberra's unique environment - Expanding Healthy Waterways (EPSDD C14CB)		Environment and climate			
	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	Total \$'000
Capital	1,590	0	0	0	1,590
Depreciation	0	16	16	16	48
Expenses	730	870	903	937	3,440
Net cost of services	730	886	919	953	3,488

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue to restore and improve the amenity, recreational, ecological, and commercial benefits provided by Canberra's waterways. The Government will work to improve water quality by reducing the incidence of algal blooms in urban lakes and enhance the condition of rivers and creeks. This initiative builds on the *Healthy Waterways Project (2014-2021)*, the 2019-20 Mid-year Budget initiative *Healthy Lake Tuggeranong* and the 2020-21 Budget initiative *Clean Catchments, Clean Waterways*.

This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Environment and climate and Economy.

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 4 ACT Greens Policy Platform for 10th Assembly, 17.9:

"Expand the Healthy Waterways program (\$30 M over 4 years)."

The project is fully aligned with PaGA commitment 17.9. It extends selected non-capital and capital elements of the 'Stage 1' Healthy Waterways program (\$94M over 7 years from 2014 to June 2021), with a focus on:

- the construction of a limited program of water quality infrastructure;
- investigations to support asset design and siting;
- a small behavioural change project; and
- initial cross-Directorate collaborations to improve water quality draining from public green spaces and both brownfield infill/construction and greenfield suburb development.

The capital investment is focused on expanding the 'water sensitive urban design' options available for Government to improve water quality.

The full delivery of *Expand the Healthy Waterways program* is subject to funding through future budget bids.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	PSP design of water quality assets to be built, ready for submission for approvals	EPSDD	Oct 2021
	Construction of bioretention swales to protect waterways from playing field runoff (Kambah)	EPSDD	Dec 2021
	Design and procurement of floating wetland for Yerrabi Pond * note that these three actions spend/commit all available expenditure on this project by Dec 2021.	EPSDD	Dec 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Planning Phase report that includes preliminary sketch plans/designs for five innovative water quality treatment trains, a cost report (budget), and a program (schedule).	EPSDD	Mar 2022
	Deployment of floating wetland into Yerrabi Pond	EPSDD	Apr 2022
	Report on the sources of pollution – for infrastructure design and siting	EPSDD	Jun 2022
	Water quality modelling, Lake Tuggeranong catchment - for infrastructure design and siting	EPSDD	Mar 2022
	Behavioural change program in several suburbs targeting householder's response to spring eucalypt leaf fall, and its evaluation	EPSDD	Jun 2022
	Develop 21/22 Mid Term budget initiative bid to fulfill PaGA commitments as mentioned above.	EPSDD	Jan 2021
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Work with TCCS and SLA to improve—with respect to water quality outcomes—the management of green spaces, the development of suburbs and water sensitive urban design infrastructure standards.	EPSDD in collaboration with TCCS & SLA	Jun 2022 and ongoing
	Develop Decision Support System to facilitate strategic city-wide catchment planning to guide the implementation of WSUD requirements under the planning codes.	EPSDD	2024/25

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2019-20 Mid-year Budget initiative *Healthy Lake Tuggeranong* provided \$1.0 million of capital and expense funding in 2019-20 for the Territory to build on the *ACT Healthy Waterways Project*.
 2020-21 Budget initiative *Clean Catchments, Clean Waterways* provided \$1.538 million of capital and expense funding in 2020-21 for the Territory to build on the *ACT Healthy Waterways Project* (2020-21 Budget Outlook, page 85).

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme - continuation (EPSDD E11)					Housing and home
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses	2,241	2,179	2,234	2,220	8,874
Revenue	2,241	2,179	2,234	2,220	8,874
Net cost of services	0	0	0	0	0

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue delivery of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS), to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and lower household and business energy use and costs. Funding also supports the delivery of support programs to Low Income Households to reduce household energy costs and improve comfort. Expenses are fully offset from funds paid into the Scheme by Tier 2 energy retailers.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

This proposal seeks funding to continue delivering functions of the EEIS and Low Income Household Energy Efficiency Program in response to legislated requirements of the Minister and the EEIS Administrator under the *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012* (the Act) and subordinate legislation.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Deliver EEIS Customer Phone Satisfaction survey	EPSDD	Sept – Nov 2021
	Undertake EEIS data management project	EPSDD	Aug – Dec 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Conduct EEIS Health Check (Minor Scheme Review)	EPSDD	Sept – Dec 2021
	Expand Priority Household definition under EEIS legislation	EPSDD	Sept – Dec 2021
	Deliver EEIS Energy Savings Result	EPSDD	Nov – Dec 2021
	Complete insulation training and accreditation – project supporting the uptake of eligible EEIS activities	EPSDD	Completion Jan 2022
	Deliver Low Income Household Energy Efficiency Program through contract with Saint Vincent de Paul Society	EPSDD	Ongoing till Mar 2022
	Review scope and service for Low Income Household Energy Efficiency Program, and preparation for next procurement process	EPSDD	Sept – Nov 2021
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Set EEIS Metrics	EPSDD	Annually and/or Periodically as required
	Undertake EEIS compliance and auditing activities	EPSDD	Ongoing
	Undertake EEIS project administration and management	EPSDD	Ongoing
	Review and update EEIS Legislation	EPSDD	Periodically as required
	Review and develop EEIS activities	EPSDD	Periodically as required
	Review and redevelop EEIS database	EPSDD	2021/22
	Prepare and deliver Annual Reports for the Minister	EPSDD	July, annually
	Consult with key EEIS stakeholders	EPSDD	Periodically as required
	Review and re-model EEIS	EPSDD	2023/24
	Review and update or develop communications materials – including all digital content, publications, stakeholder comms, forums and content review on external sources.	EPSDD	2021 and then Periodically as required

	Procure services for future delivery of Low Income Household Energy Efficiency Program, to complement Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme	EPSDD	Nov 2021 – March 2022

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

2016-17 Budget initiative *Leading Australia in responding to climate change – Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme* *Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme* agreed to funding of \$3.550 million over four years to continue administration of the scheme established under the *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012* (2016-17 Budget Paper 3, page 102). This initiative is a continuation of the same scheme.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction



Solar for Low Income scheme - continuation (EPSDD E26)					Living standards
	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	Total \$'000
Offset – Capital – CMTEDD – Sustainable Household Scheme	-771	-771	-771	-771	-3,084
Expenses – subsidies	771	771	771	771	3,084

Initiative description (as per budget papers)

The Government will continue the Solar for Low Income program to provide subsidies of up to \$2,500 for eligible low-income homeowners for the installation of rooftop solar systems.

This initiative complements recent Government initiatives including the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme to support households with no interest loans to invest in sustainable technologies, and the \$50 million Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme to support energy performance upgrades in eligible rental properties and for certain low income homeowners.

The Solar for Low Income program will be delivered in conjunction with the Sustainable Household Scheme.

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

Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PaGA) alignment

PaGA, Appendix 1 Policy issues of particular interest, A1 (i and iv):

“Implement a program of zero-interest loans of up to \$15,000 for households and not-for-profit community organisations to assist with the upfront costs of investing in: rooftop solar panels; household battery storage; zero emission vehicles and efficient electric appliances. The program will include an education and communications component about energy efficiency and the shift from gas to electric.”

“Implement a five-year, \$50 million program to improve building efficiency and sustainability for social and public housing, low income owner-occupiers, and the lowest performing rental properties; this includes upgrades to government housing, and financial incentives to implement minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.”

The program complements the above PaGA agreements by helping low income homeowners who may not qualify for a no-interest loan to have equitable and affordable access to install a roof-top solar system for those seeking to make energy improvements to their dwelling. With a \$2,500 subsidy, households could generally make a full return on their investment in under five years with systems expected to last 25 years. The program offers an opportunity for low income owner-

occupiers to have long-term energy cost savings, which can be used directly to reduce their cost of living.

Key deliverables and timetable

Task		Responsible	Timing
IMMEDIATE			
1	Design program elements including eligibility requirements and lending collateral	EPSDD	Oct 2021
	Negotiate contract with lending supplier	EPSDD	Oct/Nov 2021
SHORT-TERM			
2	Map stakeholders and establish relationships	EPSDD	Sept/Oct 2021
	Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan and associated tools	EPSDD	Oct 2021
	Establish system and process with lending supplier to deliver service	EPSDD	Nov 2021
	Develop communications plan associated promotional collateral	EPSDD	Oct 2021
	Commence service delivery	EPSDD	Dec 2021
MEDIUM and LONG-TERM			
3	Manage day-to-day delivery of program including correspondence, budget, reporting, record keeping	EPSDD	Ongoing
	Manage contract and communicate with lending supplier	EPSDD	Ongoing
	Implement evaluation and communications plans	EPSDD	From Nov 2021

Previous Funding Provided / Project development details

The Actsmart Solar for Low Income program has been previously funded through the 2016-17 Budget. The funding ceased in 2020-21.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Campbell house fire – Battery storage****Talking points:**

- The Next Generation Energy Storage Program was established to:
 - stimulate the rollout of distributed solar energy storage in the ACT;
 - assist the development of ACT-based energy storage industry, research and training; and
 - extend ACT's national leadership position in renewables.
- A house fire in Campbell ACT on 15 June 2021 was likely caused by a solar battery. The fire resulted in no damage to the home or injuries to people. There was no threat to the safety of residents in the area and no damage to the property.
- The Residential Energy Storage Unit (RESU) battery installed at the property received a Next Gen Energy Storage Program rebate.
- Access Canberra approved the inspection in February 2019. The incident was suspected to be a production fault and not related to the installation.
- The battery was installed under the house. Fortunately, the ACT is one of the few jurisdictions that require a smoke detector to be installed beside the battery when the battery is installed inside or under the house. The householder and a neighbour were alerted by the smoke detector.
- On 16 June 2021, EPSDD's Next Gen team contacted the manufacturer who indicated a recall for all RESU batteries manufactured between April 2017 and September 2018 may be instituted.
- On 23 June, LG expanded an existing recall which was the subject of an earlier announcement dated 24 February 2021.
- All Next Gen installers who have installed LG RESU batteries under Next Gen have been emailed with the information from the manufacturer and they have been requested to provide an update of their progress. This will continue to be monitored. As Powersaving Centre entered into administration in 2019, letters have been posted to impacted households with the instructions from the manufacturer. PV Administrators have been contacted and discussions are occurring on how to address the recall.
- ACT Fire and Rescue are the investigating authority.
- The Canberra Times reported 16 battery fires in an article in August 2021. Access Canberra have confirmed knowledge of only one fire related to a residential battery system that was part of the renewable energy system in the ACT. Access Canberra are aware of other fires related to batteries however these are from E-scooters, electric vehicles and rechargeable torches and drills. The source of the Canberra Times article is unknown.

Next Steps

- An initial assessment indicates 420 Next Gen installed batteries could be impacted.
- There are no replacement batteries in Australia and they are not expected to arrive until later this year.
- Access Canberra Regulations team have advised that Energy Safe Victoria are managing any recall.
- Previous battery recalls have included clear instructions on how to identify if a battery is impacted and what steps then need to be taken.

Background Information

- The \$25 million Next Generation Energy Storage program has supported the installation of over 1845 energy storage systems, or 8.6MW of sustained peak output, to date.
- The program is supporting the installation of up to 36 MW of distributed energy storage in the ACT.
 - 14 installers have been accepted as providers offering the ACT Community with a wide range of options.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CLIMATE ACTION

Talking points:

- The ACT's actions on climate change are designed to deliver a range of outcomes:
 - reduce greenhouse gas emissions in pursuit of ACT targets;
 - build resilience to climate change impacts;
 - ensure the ACT does not lock in future emissions; and
 - lay the foundations for achieving net zero emissions.
- We also recognise the need for a just transition that ensures all households and workers are helped to share in the benefits of our climate change response.
- The Government does not shy away from the fact that getting to zero emissions will have costs. We will unfortunately see electricity price rises next year in part due to the costs of meeting our 100% renewable electricity target.
 - In this unusual case, the government is introducing measures to address some of these impacts
- But our measures also bring a range of economic benefits, for example:
 - Households and businesses participating in the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) will see benefits of over \$546m in lifetime energy bill savings. Participating households have saved an average of \$7.80 per week since the inception of the scheme in 2013.
 - Local investments arising from our renewable electricity auctions will bring over \$500 million of benefits to the ACT in knowledge-based industries of the future.
 - Improving energy performance of rental properties will improve quality of life, reduce health impacts and costs, and improve educational outcomes.
 - Early stage investment in new and emerging industries will develop new economic and employment opportunities in the ACT. For example, the Government is investing nearly \$8m to support zero emissions vehicle industry development and infrastructure.
- The Climate Change Strategy recognises that achieving future targets “will require continual learning and improvement as well as the active participation of the whole community”.

- Climate change is a pervasive and complex problem, hence why the Government's response Strategy addresses the challenge on multiple fronts. Many actions are inter-linked and when implemented together, they will deliver a greater outcome.

- We are continuing to trial and assess new ideas, work with various partners to leverage government action, and find new ways to empower our community:
 - Investing in strong analysis on issues like our transition from fossil fuel gas, to ensure we make the best decisions for the future.
 - Supporting community engagement, participation and leadership, through community-led initiatives like the *Nature in the City* environment grants and the *Community Zero Emissions Grants*.
 - Demonstrating Government leadership by pursuing gas-free and net zero emissions buildings, and establishing a pathway towards a zero emissions bus fleet.

Key Information

- The greenhouse gas emissions reported in 2019-20 represented a 45% decrease from the 1990 baseline. Sourcing 100% renewable electricity was the most significant factor in the ACT meeting its emissions reduction target that year.
- Now that the ACT's electricity is 100% renewably sourced, emissions from the gas and transport sectors make up around 20% and 60% of the ACT's total greenhouse gas emissions, respectively. Any policy that is targeted at getting households, businesses, and industry off gas, or reducing emissions from transport therefore will have the largest emissions reduction potential.

Background Information

- The Government has set an emissions target of a 50-60% reduction on 1990 levels by 2025 and net zero emissions by 2045.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY****Talking points:**

- The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 (the Strategy) sets out actions to work towards achieving our 2025 greenhouse gas emission reduction target, build resilience to climate change impacts and progress towards achieving net zero emissions by 2045.
- The Strategy focuses on reducing emissions from transport and gas. Transport and gas account for over 60% and 20% of 2020 ACT emissions, respectively.
- The Strategy is complemented by Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan (the Plan), which sets directions for maintaining and enhancing trees, soils and waterways to keep our city cool and liveable in a changing climate.
- The Strategy and Plan bring together emission reduction and adaptation measures as part of a holistic response to climate change. The importance of building our resilience to climate change impacts was highlighted by the extreme weather events of summer 2019-20.
- Key achievements to date have included:
 - A 100 per cent renewable electricity supply and meeting the legislated 40% emissions reduction targets in 2020.
 - In 2019, the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* was amended to legislate an ongoing 100 per cent renewable electricity target post 2020.
 - In 2019, the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme was extended to 2030. In 2022, the Priority Household Target will increase from 30 per cent to 40 per cent.
 - From 20 December 2019, e-scooters and other similar devices can now legally be used in the ACT.
 - On 28 August 2020, a Territory Plan variation commenced that removes the mandatory requirement for gas connection to blocks in new suburbs.
- The Government has since committed to new, ambitious actions detailed in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement that will further support action on climate change, such as legislating to prevent new gas connections in greenfield suburbs, and expanding the number of zero emission vehicles in the ACT.
- Achieving the aims of the Strategy will require an active partnership between the Government and the community. We look forward to working with our citizens to ensure Canberra continues to be a sustainable and vibrant city.

Key Information

- The Strategy contains 83 actions that address key priority areas including community leadership and just transition, transport, energy, buildings and urban development, Government leadership waste avoidance and management, land use and biodiversity.

Background Information

- The *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25* and *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan* were released in September 2019.
- In May 2019, the ACT joined many other cities, states and territories around the world in declaring a state of climate emergency, acknowledging the need for urgent action across all levels of Government.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**TRANSITION TO ZERO EMISSIONS VEHICLES ACTION PLAN****Talking points:**

- In April 2018 the Government released 'The ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV) Action Plan 2018-2021' (the Action Plan).
- The Action Plan sets a clear direction for the ACT to accelerate and support the uptake of ZEVs, including battery electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles and electric bikes. Australia's first public hydrogen refuelling station opened in Fyshwick on 26 March 2021 and is operated by ActewAGL.
- The 2020 Parliamentary and Governing Agreement and the 2020-21 ACT Budget set out an ambitious agenda to expand the number of ZEVs in the ACT. Specifically Government has committed to:
 - Engage with the ZEV industry and adopt a target for new ZEV sales by 2030;
 - Provide financial incentives for the purchase of ZEVs;
 - Construct 50 public chargers in 2021-22;
 - Establish a fleet advisory service to support Canberra businesses and community organisations transitioning their fleets to ZEVs; and
 - Enact regulation in conjunction with the Territory Plan Review to ensure infrastructure for new multi-unit residential and commercial buildings are ZEV ready, and investigate measures to support retrofitting of charging infrastructure in existing buildings.
- On 14 October 2021 the ACT Government entered into a contract with Deloitte Access Economics to undertake an impact assessment of ZEV policies in the ACT. This assessment will consider the effect policies have on driving up ZEV uptake.

Key Information

- On 22 April 2021, the ACT Auditor General's performance report on ACT Government's vehicle emissions reduction activities was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Government response to this report was subsequently tabled in the Legislative Assembly and the Government accepted all recommendations.
- The ACT has among Australia's most generous financial incentives for the purchase and registration of ZEVs, providing a full stamp duty exemption the first time a ZEV is purchased, and a two-year annual vehicle registration waiver.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	20/10/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	A/g Executive Group Manager	Ext:
Contact Officer name:	Carolyn Goonrey	Ext: 76858
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- New or used zero emissions vehicles in the ACT purchased or acquired from 24 May 2021 and before 30 June 2024 will receive two years of free registration, subject to eligibility requirements.
- This initiative progresses the ACT Government's commitment to Climate Action through the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement of the 10th Legislative Assembly.
- The ACT Government has partnered with Neoen, Hyundai and ActewAGL on a hydrogen mobility demonstration project, which includes refuelling infrastructure and the integration of 20 hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles into the ACT Government fleet. The pilot is co-located with ActewAGL's compressed natural gas refuelling station in Fyshwick.
- The ACT Government is a key partner in the 'Realising Electric Vehicle-to-grid Services' (REVS) project which focuses on developing electric vehicles capable of feeding electricity back into the network. The project is co-funded by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and is led by ActewAGL Retail. 50 Nissan LEAF electric vehicles are to be deployed across the ACT Government fleet to test and provide vehicle-to-grid services. The project commenced in June 2020 and will run for two years.
- ZEVs are able to use ACT transit lanes from July 2019 until December 2023. New "Zero Emission Cars Permitted" signage has been installed on Adelaide Avenue.
- The NRMA has invested in public EV charging infrastructure in regions surrounding the ACT such as Batemans Bay and Bega. Braidwood is one of the next planned sites. Evie Networks, Jolt and Ampol have also announced east coast charging network expansion that will provide links to the ACT as part of an integrated east coast.
- Government is developing a ZEV Public Charging Masterplan for the rollout of charging infrastructure, which will inform the location of the 50 publicly accessible charging stations being delivered in 2022, as well as provide information about future locations for public ZEV chargers.
- Road rules were amended in December 2019, to facilitate the safe use of new sustainable personal mobility options, such as electric scooters.
- As of November 2020, two dockless micromobility schemes (e-scooters) are operational in Canberra.
- The ACT Government has started preparing a new business fleet advisory service. This will support businesses to transition their fleet to zero emission vehicles. It will be launched in 2021-22.

ACT Government fleet passenger vehicles

- The ACT Government is leading by example with one of the largest passenger ZEV fleets in Australia. In 2019-20, there were 70 new ZEV leases, making up 57% of the

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total new passenger vehicle leases. In 2020-21, there were 74 new ZEV leases, making up 100% of new passenger leases where a fit for purpose ZEV was available.

- The ACT Government passenger fleet of 593 vehicles includes 167 zero emissions vehicles: 71 battery electric vehicles (BEVs); 76 plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) and 20 Hyundai Nexo fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs).
- The ACT Government has over 125 fast charging (7-22kW) stations across the ACT, as well as three rapid chargers (25kW).

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations****Talking points:**

- Expanding the number of zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) in the ACT is an important part of Government's progress toward zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- Government has committed to Australia's most ambitious ZEV agenda to address transport emissions, which account for around 60% of total ACT emissions.
- In the 2020-21 ACT Budget, Government supported this commitment with funding for installation of 50 publicly accessible charging stations
- The estimated cost to deliver the 50 ZEV charging stations is \$1.3 million.
- This cost is for publicly accessible chargers to allow for convenient charging across the ACT.
- In line with the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, Government will conduct a procurement process for the construction of the chargers in 2021-22.
- Developing supporting infrastructure and providing effective information will encourage ZEV uptake and help establish a sustainable market for ZEV retailers.
- Government is finalising work on a ZEV Public Charging Masterplan for the rollout of charging infrastructure, which will inform the optimal locations of the 50 publicly accessible charging stations, based on analysis of ZEV charging demand now and through to 2030.

Key Information

- Range anxiety is a key barrier to the uptake of ZEVs in the ACT.
- New charging infrastructure in highly visible and accessible stations will reduce consumer range anxiety concerns. The embedding of charging infrastructure within the Canberra business and community sector fleets will help alleviate range anxiety.
- The total cost of this budget measure will be \$2.7 million to 2023-24 (including \$1.3 million for chargers). It will fund the development of an ACT vehicle charging Masterplan and market sounding projects to set a target for new ZEV sales in 2030.

Background Information

- On 9 June 2021, ActewAGL announced that it would be installing 20 public chargers in the ACT by 2027 in partnership with Evie networks.
- Development of the Masterplan has included engagement with business and Evoenergy, noting the interaction with the ACT electricity network.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions

Electricity and Gas Prices

Talking points:

- The Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's (ICRC) regulated retail electricity price decision for 2021-22 was a 11.95 per cent increase in ActewAGL Retail's regulated retail electricity tariffs.
- This translates to an annual electricity bill increase of \$195 for an average ACT residential household (\$3.76 per week). The annual impact for an average small business customer is \$751 (\$14.44 per week).
- A significant component of the price increase is due to increases in the cost of the Territory's large-scale feed-in tariff scheme. This is driven by a significant reduction in wholesale electricity prices, in part in response to COVID-19.
- Low wholesale electricity prices affect the costs of the Territory's large-scale feed-in tariff 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.
- We know this is a significant impact for households and businesses, but also note:
 - With this increase, ACT electricity prices will remain comparable with other jurisdictions, even while delivering 100% renewable electricity.
 - In recent years, the costs of meeting our 100% renewable electricity target have been lower than originally anticipated, due to higher wholesale electricity prices.
 - Households can save money through energy saving measures including insulation and draughtproofing that can also increase comfort. The Actsmart program offers free advice to households on energy savings.
 - 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.
 - The Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission has recently published a new Code that requires retailers to notify customers when a better tariff is available. The Code commenced on 1 October 2021, with retailers being required to provide clear and transparent advice regarding offers to customers.
 - For those in particular need, a government Utilities Concesssion is available for \$750 per year. The Government is also providing an additional \$250 rebate to eligible households for 2021-22, taking the 2021-22 payment to \$1000.

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- In 2020-21, the ACT Government provided Utilities Hardship funding for \$100 vouchers to eligible customers with participating retailers. This program will be extended to 2021-22.
- The government will also be funding an energy literacy program to fund community groups to help citizens better navigate the complex web of energy pricing.
- This year's energy price increase is in part due to historically low wholesale electricity prices.
 - It is impossible to predict future prices with certainty. However, we have already seen a return to more "normal" wholesale electricity prices.
 - If this trend continues, we could reasonably expect to see a reduction in electricity prices in future years.
 - When the reverse auction approach was first agreed in 2012, the government indicated costs could rise to around \$5.50 per household per week, which is very close to expected impacts in 2021-22.
 - At the time, the auctions were recognised as a key support for continued renewable energy investment.
 - The government's approach to renewable electricity allows ACT consumers to benefit from electricity prices comparable with the rest of Australia, while making a real difference to greenhouse gas emissions.

Gas prices

- On 30 April 2021 the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) released its final determination on Evoenergy's gas distribution network tariffs for 2021-2026.
- The new 5-year determination is expected to see an annual decrease in typical residential customer gas bills of \$10 in 2021-22, followed by an average increase of \$14 per year for the next 4 years.
- The ACT Government has supported the establishment of an Energy Consumer Advocacy Network, through the Energised Consumers Project, to ensure consumer impacts are considered in decisions such as the ICRC retail electricity price decision.

Key Information

- Unlike retail electricity prices, retail gas prices are not regulated in the ACT. From 1 July 2021, ActewAGL Retail decreased both its supply and consumption charges by around 3.5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

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- Gas price increases observed in recent years have been driven by rising wholesale gas costs due to increased exports from the east coast of Australia, as well as by a lack of competition between suppliers and pipeline operators. The Energy National Cabinet Reform Committee has initiated a range of reforms to ensure efficient prices for customers.
- St Vincent de Paul also found that a typical consumption household can save \$550 per year, or 23%, on electricity costs by switching from the highest priced market offer to the lowest priced offer in the market (including discounts).

Background Information

- ACT energy consumers can receive free advice through the Actsmart Sustainable Home Advice line. Call 1300 141 777 or email ActsmartAdvice@act.gov.au.
- A range of rebates are also available for households and businesses to save on energy bills. Information is available at <https://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/>.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**ACT CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY – COSTS TO COMMUNITY AND CONSUMERS****Talking points:**

- The ACT continues to have electricity prices that are comparable with other jurisdictions, while leading the world in climate change response.
- The ACT has reached its 100 per cent by 2020 renewable electricity target, one of the most ambitious targets globally. It has strong community support.
- ACT Government climate change mitigation policies are expected to contribute around \$365 to the typical annual electricity bill of an average household in the ACT in 2021-22 (\$7.03 per week) using 6,500kWh annually.
- Passthrough costs of the EEIS are offset by reduced energy demand, placing downward pressure on electricity prices.
- From the inception of the EEIS in 2013 up to 30 June 2021, over 78,500 households and businesses have benefited from the Scheme, including more than 20,400 priority households.
- Within the same timeframe, more than 45% of ACT households participated in the Scheme and were saving an average of \$7.80 per week. For the 20,400 priority households, there is a lifetime bill savings of over \$106 million.
- In 2020-21, the EEIS is estimated to have delivered average annual energy cost savings of more than \$1,130 for the 2,703 ACT households that have received an energy efficiency upgrade, and around \$1,290 for the 827 priority households.
- Changes to wholesale electricity prices, in part in response to COVID-19, will see the cost of the Territory's large-scale feed-in tariff scheme increase in 2021-22. In recent years, the costs of meeting our 100% renewable electricity target have been lower than originally anticipated, due to wholesale electricity prices.
- This year's energy price increase is in part due to historically low wholesale electricity prices.
 - It is impossible to predict future prices with certainty. However, we have already seen a return to more "normal" wholesale electricity prices.
- If this trend continues, we could reasonably expect to see a reduction in electricity prices in future years.
- These jurisdictional costs were less than 10% of retail electricity costs in 2020-21, in 2021-22 they will rise to approximately 20%.
- The ACT Government is helping households and businesses to manage their energy costs through a variety of programs and services.

Key Information:

Cost breakdown

- The annual costs expected for an average Canberra household using 7,151 kWh/yr in 2021-22¹ are:
 - large FiT component: \$337.74;
 - small-medium FiT component: \$41.33; and
 - Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme: \$22.81.

Opportunities to mitigate costs

- ACT energy consumers can receive free advice through Actsmart Sustainable Home Advice line (phone: 1300 141 777 or email: ActsmartAdvice@act.gov.au). A range of rebates are also available for households and businesses to save on energy bills. Information is available at actsmart.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.
- For those in particular need, government utility concessions are available for some households of \$750 per year, an increase of \$50. The Government is also providing an additional one-off \$50 increase to the utilities concession for 2021-22, taking the payment for next year to \$800.
- In 2020-21, the ACT Government provided Utilities Hardship funding for \$100 vouchers to eligible customers with participating retailers. This program will be extended to 2021-22.
- The government will also be funding an energy literacy program to fund community groups to help citizens better navigate the complex web of energy pricing.

Annual Reporting of Cost of Living Impacts from Climate Change Policies

- The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25 was released on 16 September 2019. Together with Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City, the Strategy sets out the next phase of the ACT Government's climate response.
- The Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction will report on the cost of living impacts of implementing the Strategy in the Minister's annual report under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*.

¹ Representative household consumption as defined by the Australian Energy Market Commission Residential electricity price trends report 2020. Anticipated cost of schemes as provided by ICRC Retail Electricity Price Recalibration 2021-22: standing offer prices for the supply of electricity to small customers. Report 11 of 2021, June 2021.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**TRANSITION FROM NATURAL GAS****Talking points:**

- Over 20 per cent of ACT greenhouse gas emissions come from natural gas use. By contrast, all electricity in the ACT now comes from renewable sources. So, reducing gas use is essential to meeting our emission reduction targets.
- Rising retail gas prices and dramatic advances in the efficiency of electrical equipment mean that gas is no longer the cheap, green alternative it was in the past.
- The government will finalise by 2024 a plan for achieving zero emissions from natural gas use by 2045.
 - This will allow for a careful transition and consider developments in zero emission alternatives to natural gas such as hydrogen and biogas.
 - A Gas Transition Taskforce has been established within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and is currently undertaking modelling to consider technical and economic impacts of possible transition options.
- Action 4.3 of the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019 - 2025* called for removing the mandatory requirement for natural gas infrastructure to be installed in new developments.
 - A draft variation to the Territory Plan to implement this measure took interim effect from 17 January 2020 and was finalised on 28 August 2020.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly includes a number of measures to reduce emissions from natural gas, including:
 - Legislating to prevent new natural gas network connections to future greenfield residential developments in 2020-21 (Measure A1.vii)
 - Advancing all-electric developments with a view to no new natural gas network connections from 2023 (Measure A1.viii)
 - Ensuring all new ACT Government buildings and facilities are fossil-fuel-gas free. (Measure A1.x)
- In 2018, the ACT Government agreed to a request from the developers of the Ginninderry estate in West Belconnen to remove the mandatory requirement to install natural gas in support of its plans for a range of low-carbon electricity measures for the development.
 - This pilot demonstration project of an all-electric area will cover Stages 1 and 2 of the Ginninderry precinct, a total of 1,150 residences.

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- The pilot project is jointly managed by Evoenergy, the ACT's electricity network operator, the Ginninderry Joint Venture, the ACT Government and Reposit Power.
- The results of the pilot will provide valuable information on energy cost savings for consumers and impacts on network connection charges, informing government consideration of future energy infrastructure and planning policies.

Portfolio/s: Sustainable Building and Construction
Sustainable Building and Construction
Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction
Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

MINIMUM ENERGY PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR RENTAL PROPERTIES

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that renters can enjoy the liveable homes that all Canberrans have a right to expect.
- Recent summers have shown the importance of homes being resilient to our changing climate. Poorly insulated and energy inefficient housing can contribute to high energy bills and poor thermal comfort, affecting health and liveability.
- Renters living in these properties are either unable to make significant changes to the property or less able to afford energy efficiency measures like curtains, shading devices and more efficient appliances, leaving them subject to either discomfort or high energy costs.
- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly includes a commitment (A1.iii) to enact minimum energy efficiency standards regulations for rental properties in 2021.
 - This reiterates Action 4.7 of the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025
- To support delivery of this action, a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) was undertaken which considered minimum standard options along with consideration of issues such as safety and potential consequences for rental prices and availability. ACIL-Allen were commissioned to deliver this RIS. A round of engagement of key stakeholders to inform the RIS was undertaken in April and May. This included a survey of renters and rental providers through the ACT YourSay website. The results of the survey are now available on the YourSay website.
- Three main options have been considered through the RIS:
 - a minimum ceiling insulation standard; or
 - a minimum energy efficient heating standard; or
 - a 'performance' based standard, such as a minimum star rating, that gives rental providers a choice of upgrades to make.
- In developing the minimum standard, the focus will be on requirements that are cost-effective and, whichever option is adopted, the regulation will seek to target only the worst performing properties. There will be a phase in period of a number of years to allow rental providers that don't meet the standard plenty of time to comply.

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- Recognising that a minimum energy performance requirement may potentially impose costs on rental providers, the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement also commits to a \$50 million program to improve efficiency of housing for vulnerable households, including “financial incentives to implement minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.”
- Another round of stakeholder engagement will be undertaken in the near future to garner views on the proposed minimum standard and on how it should be implemented. The RIS will be publicly released at that time.

Key Information

- The 2016 Census identified that there were approximately 45,000 residential rental properties in the ACT.
- Housing ACT has close to 12,000 dwellings, representing about 25% of the total rental market, and about 50% of the low income rental market, in the ACT.
- A study undertaken by Better Renting in 2019 analysed around 11,000 rental advertisements. The report found that of the 5,000 rental properties that disclosed their Energy Efficiency Ratings in the study, around only 29% met the minimum 6-star rating which has been required for new homes since 2010.
- The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* as amended in 2020, allows for a regulation to be made to require minimum standards for residential rental properties. The Act specifies that regulated minimum standards may relate to energy efficiency.
- There is a ‘split incentive’ barrier to landlords investing in energy performance improvements as tenants end up as the beneficiary through reduced energy costs and improved thermal comfort.
- Many rental properties are already energy efficient. Well-performing properties are unlikely to be affected by these minimum requirements.
- The survey of rental providers and renters was open for two weeks. It did not seek to assess approval of the overall policy to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards, but rather it was seeking information on preferences around the options being considered and other information to inform the RIS.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Vulnerable Household Support Scheme****Talking points:**

- The ACT Government recognises the need for a just transition as part of its climate change response, ensuring all households are able to share the benefits of a shift to lower emissions homes.
- A key part of this is recognising that poor quality and energy inefficient housing contributes to high energy bills and poor thermal comfort, particularly for Canberra's most vulnerable households.
- To address these issues the Government has committed to a five-year Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (VHESS) to deliver a range of measures to reduce energy hardship for low-income homeowners, public, private, and social housing renters.
- In the 2021-22 Budget, the government has commenced an initial stage of this initiative.
- This first stage will trial improvements to the thermal efficiency of public housing properties through insulation upgrades and/or draughtproofing, as well as access to energy efficient heating and cooling appliances.
- We will also be trialling energy efficient approaches for selected low-income homeowners.
- Households will benefit from reduced energy costs and increased thermal comfort, as homes will be easier to heat and cool.
- The initiative will also support improved health and well-being outcomes for vulnerable and low-income households.
- The further rollout of this initiative will be designed to support the introduction of minimum energy requirements for rental properties, another government commitment.
- This initiative also complements the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme to support households with no interest loans to invest in energy efficient home upgrades.

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Key Information

- The PAGA action A1.iii calls for enacting “minimum energy efficiency standards regulations for rental properties in 2021 with progressive implementation over the coming years.”
- This reiterates measure 4.7 of the Climate Change Strategy which called for standards to come into force in 2022-23.

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Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Gaming

Community Club upgrades

Talking points:

- The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PAGA) includes a commitment to a five year, \$5 million Building Energy Efficiency Upgrade Fund, to be accessible to community clubs.
- The Community Clubs Program will support eligible ACT clubs to undertake energy efficiency upgrades, building envelope improvements and install rooftop solar and energy storage systems to reduce their energy use and bills. It will also support clubs with their transition from gas.
- Rebates of up to \$75,000 per eligible club are available for approved upgrades and installations.
- Clubs will be given the opportunity to provide their plan to become an extreme weather refuge site as part of the program.
- Registrations for the program will open in October 2021.
- Continued consultation will ensure the program is fit for purpose, meets the needs of the community clubs and meets the Government's expectation of PAGA action.

Key Information

- This program was developed by EPSDD in cooperation with Justice and Community Safety (JaCS).
- This program is PAGA measure E.9.
- PAGA measure E.10 also includes commitment to financial payments for venues designated as official extreme weather and smoke refuges. This element is being developed by JACS.

Background Information

- This program builds on the experience of the Actsmart Business Energy and Water program which currently provides energy efficient upgrades, solar advice and rebates to small businesses. It also complements the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) which requires electricity retailers to achieve energy savings in small-to-medium businesses and households.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme**

**Note: Figures provided in this QTB incorporate reported 2020/21 data that is currently undergoing compliance verification; figures are expected to marginally change following final data validation **

Talking points:

- The Energy Savings Target (EST) is set at 8.6% for the 2021 compliance period (calendar year).
 - The EST requires larger electricity retailers (Tier 1) to provide lifetime energy savings of 8.6% of their annual electricity sales.
 - Smaller electricity retailers (Tier 2) have the option to pay an Energy Savings Contribution (ESC) of 8.6% of their electricity sales.
- The EST will increase to 12.5% for the 2022 compliance period.
 - This adjustment reflects the transition of the Scheme from a greenhouse gas emissions to an energy savings metric since the ACT achieved its 100% renewable electricity commitment. The increase in the EST is to maintain the intended ambition of the Scheme.
- The Priority Household Target (PHT) remains at 30% for 2021 and ensures assistance is provided to low-income households.
 - The PHT will increase to 40% for the 2022 compliance period. This will help to expand opportunities for priority households in the Territory to reduce their energy use and costs.

Key Information

- Since the Scheme commenced in 2013 up to 30 June 2021:
 - over 78,500 households and businesses have benefited from the Scheme, including more than 20,400 priority households.
 - 20,400 priority households, which includes rental properties, have experienced lifetime bill savings of over \$106 million.
 - over 4,358 small- and medium-sized businesses have received commercial LED lighting upgrades worth over \$220 million in lifetime energy bill savings. Average lifetime energy bill savings for businesses is around \$50,000. This equates to just under \$100 per week in bill savings.
- more than 45% of ACT households have participated in the Scheme and participating residents are saving an average of \$7.80 per week.

- In 2020-21, the EEIS is estimated to have delivered average annual energy cost savings of more than \$1,130 for the 2,703 ACT households that have received an energy efficiency upgrade, and around \$1,290 for the 827 priority households.

Background Information

- The EEIS was established under the *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act 2012*. The scheme aims to encourage the efficient use of energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use, reduce energy costs and assist priority households to reduce energy use and associated costs.
- The EEIS requires electricity retailers to make energy savings in households and small-to-medium businesses. Electricity retailers achieve this by either undertaking eligible activities that deliver energy efficient appliance upgrades (e.g. installation of efficient heating, insulation, lighting etc.), or by making a financial contribution to the scheme.
- The EEIS adds an average of 53c per week to ACT Households' electricity bills for an average two-person household that uses 7,151kwh¹ in pass-through costs to electricity retailer customers (note: pass-through costs are calculated based on customer standing offer).
- The EEIS will be in place until 2030 and is a key mechanism for delivering on the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025*.
- In light of the transition from a greenhouse gas emissions to an energy savings metric, the 2020 compliance year will be the final year to report in emissions reduction savings. Achievements of the scheme from 1 January 2021 will be measured in megawatt-hours (MWh).

¹ Representative household consumption as defined by the Australian Energy Market Commission Residential electricity price trends report 2020. Anticipated cost of schemes as provided by ICRC Retail Electricity Price Recalibration 2021-22: standing offer prices for the supply of electricity to small customers. Report 11 of 2021, June 2021.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Evoenergy network charges and retail electricity prices

Talking points:

- Low wholesale prices in some key markets, especially South Australia where some of our largest generators are, will increase the price of meeting our 100% renewable electricity target for the next year.
 - The increase will be from just under \$2 per week per household to up to around \$5.65 per week per household (\$100 per year increasing to just under \$300 per year).
- When initially announced in 2012, the ACT Government forecast that the cost of the 100 per cent renewables scheme would peak at around \$5.50 per household, per week – which is comparable to the predicted price of \$5.65 for the next year.
- Based on the difference between the \$5.50 per household, per week threshold and actual historic costs, it is estimated that ACT households saved between \$160 and \$200 per year between 2018 and 2020.
- Canberra households will still have electricity bills comparable with other States and Territories.

Key Information

- On 6 April 2021, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) released Evoenergy's Network Pricing Proposal for 2021/22. On 7 May 2021, the AER accepted Evoenergy's proposal as submitted.
- On 7 June 2021, the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission released its annual pricing for ActewAGL Retail. Customers on a regulated standing offer will see a price increase of 11.95 per cent. For an average Canberra household this equates to \$195 per year, or \$3.76 per week.
- Analysis over recent years shows that many households can save hundreds of dollars each year by moving to better pricing plans.

Background Information

- ACT energy consumers can receive free advice through the [Actsmart Sustainable Home Advice](#) line. Call 1300 141 777 or email ActsmartAdvice@act.gov.au.
- A range of rebates are also available for households and businesses to save on energy bills. Information is available at <https://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/>.

- Approximately 37 per cent of Canberra residential customers are on the regulated 'standing offer'. Studies have shown that customers may save hundreds of dollars each year by moving to a lower priced market offer. Customers should shop around for a better deal or contact their electricity retailer to see if they are on the best available deal to meet their circumstances. Consumers can visit <https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/> for details of retailers and offers available in the ACT.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**WATER GOVERNANCE REVIEW****Talking points:**

- The ACT Government committed through the Parliamentary Agreement to consider the best administrative arrangements to manage new water programs and provide a holistic and coordinated approach to water programs and policy.
- Improvements to water governance in the ACT will aim to provide a more streamlined, collaborative, focused and accountable water management structure and, importantly, support effective engagement on critical issues such as planning the long-term water security, water quality and catchment conditions for the ACT.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has commenced an independent review of current governance arrangements for water management in the ACT. This review will provide the foundation for improvements to support the ACT Government's water and catchment management agenda.
 - The review is being conducted with the involvement of relevant agencies across government and with Icon Water.
 - A proposed package of improvements to water governance arrangements will be prepared by late December 2021, with subsequent detailed analysis, business planning and consultation to deliver the blueprint for ACT water governance by early March 2022.

Key Information

- The governance review project aims to:
 - review current water governance arrangements and assess strengths and weaknesses in the context of 'best practice'
 - identify alternate models and approaches that could be applicable to the ACT, including the preparation of a cost-benefit analyses to support these
 - prepare an implementation plan to deliver the preferred model.
- Options for enhanced ACT water governance will be considered in the context of supporting relevant commitments under the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative (2004).
- Implementing this project will:
 - establish a pathway to achieve good governance arrangements for providing efficient, effective water management within the ACT and surrounding region
 - strengthen the treatment of strategic risks associated with future water security and compliance with Murray-Darling Basin reform commitments
 - enhance long-term planning for water security, water quality and catchment condition for the ACT.

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- The Project is being conducted in three stages:

- **Stage 1** – Preparation of a Scoping Paper identifying issues, strengths and preliminary options for enhancing water governance arrangements.

A report has been received by the EPSDD with the findings used in scoping Stage 2.

- **Stage 2** – Development of a proposed governance framework and implementation plan which will:
 - provide detailed analysis of improvement options
 - include an improvement package framed by a preferred governance model as it would apply to ACT water resource management
 - seek government endorsement of a preferred model
 - outline a high-level implementation plan (blueprint) for instituting the preferred governance arrangements in the ACT

A service provider to facilitate Stage 2 has been contracted and commenced work.

- **Stage 3** – Full implementation of the preferred governance model and options.

The timeframe for this stage will be dependent on the preferred governance model that is selected.

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Zero Emissions Government****Talking points:**

- In September 2019, the Government released 'The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25' (the Strategy) which outlined the Government's commitment to reduce emissions, setting targets of 33% reduction in Government emissions against 2020 levels by 2025 and net zero by 2040.
 - These targets demonstrate leadership in reaching targets earlier than the community as a whole.
- The two largest sources of ACT Government emissions are transport fuel use (60% of Government emissions) and gas use (40% of Government emissions). The Strategy set out to achieve these targets by establishing actions including:
 - transitioning the leased passenger fleet to zero emissions (where fit for purpose).
 - Ensuring the social cost of carbon is integrated into government decision making
 - developing a roadmap for transitioning Transport Canberra buses to zero emissions and a pathway to a zero emissions health sector by 2040; and
 - ensuring new government buildings and leases are all-electric, and replacing space and water heating at the end of their economic lives with electric systems (where fit for purpose);
- The 2020 Parliamentary and Governing Agreement set out to reaffirm and expand on the commitments of the Strategy, including actions such as:
 - ensuring all new Government buildings (including leases) are fossil-fuel free;
 - all retrofits will have an aim of net-zero emissions post retrofit; and
 - implementing a pathway for the ACT to use only zero emissions public transport and garbage trucks by the mid-2030s, with no further purchase of non-zero emissions buses.
- Emissions reduction activities reporting as required in the Zero Emissions Government (ZEG) Framework provides annual reporting of each Directorate's emissions against a five-year target. This provides accountability and transparency of Government progress towards the set targets.
- The first year of emissions reduction activities against the 5-year targets from 2020-21 will be reported in November.
- To support progress toward the targets, the Government will implement a Social Cost of Carbon at an interim price of \$20 per tonne of emissions to apply to

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Government operations. This price will not be applied outside of Government, to business or to the community.

- Key successes to date include:
 - Agreement to the Canberra Hospital Expansion being all-electric, a first for a major hospital facility in a cold climate
 - Agreeing that all future schools will be all-electric including our first two all-electric schools
 - Opening the Dickson Offic Block, Canberra's first all-electric major office block.
 - 100% of new fit-for-purpose vehicle leases in 2020-21 were zero emissions. The ACT fleet now has more than 150 zero emissions vehicles and 100 electric vehicle charging points.
 - Committing to the purchase of a hybrid electric firetruck, a first in Australia
 - Releasing the Zero-Emission Transition Plan for Transport Canberra, and starting the process of purchasing zero emissions buses

Key Information

- The Zero Emissions Government Fund is a no interest loan fund for Government agencies to finance emissions reduction activities. Loans are repaid using operational savings generated by the project. The loan fund has implemented 36 projects to the value of \$17 million since its creation.
- JACS with support of the ZEG Fund is piloting a hybrid fire truck that will be based at an all electric depot. The truck will be operational from the second half of 2022.
- Key Directorates have developed pathways to reach the 2025 emissions reduction targets. The Canberra Health Services pathway is currently under development.

Background Information

- The Social Cost of Carbon measure will make funding available from the Better Infrastructure Fund to ACT Government agencies to undertake emissions reduction projects, such as the replacement of gas heating systems and a transition of the Government fleet to zero emission vehicles.
- The ACT Government saw a significant drop in emissions prior to the setting of the 2020 baseline with the successful implementation of 100% renewable electricity.
- Transport is now the largest source of emissions for the ACT Government and this is primarily from the Transport Canberra bus fleet which represents over 50% of all Government emissions.

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Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Choose a Portfolio

Cessation of the Solar for Business Trial

Talking points:

- The Solar for Business Trial Program was designed to assess barriers to business uptake of solar panels. Surveys had indicated that lack of information and up front financial costs were the main potential barriers.
- 93 small businesses and community organisations claimed a \$5,000 rebate to install rooftop solar systems under the trial. Most of these systems are under 15 kilowatts (kW) in size.
 - These 93 organisations received \$459,690 in rebates and installed 1396 kW of solar capacity.
 - These organisations saved a combined 1533 MWh in annual electricity consumption equating to around \$470,000 in annual electricity bill savings.
- A further 101 larger businesses received support with information and technical assistance only, often in relation to much larger solar systems. A number of these businesses have gone on to install solar systems, although we do not have detailed information on these outcomes.
- Evaluation of the program is currently being finalised and will assist with identifying potential ways to support solar uptake in future.
- Anecdotal feedback is that information and advice is extremely valuable; coupled with the rapid payback from solar panels, this provides strong support for business uptake.
- The experiences of businesses involved in the program provide the basis for case studies to encourage other businesses to take up solar. This experience is also integrated into advice provided to businesses under the Actsmart Business Energy and Water Program.

Background Information

- The Solar for Business Trial commenced in February 2019 and provided independent, tailored advice on the installation of rooftop solar to all businesses in the ACT.
- The Solar for Business Trial ended on 31 December 2020 with rebates ceasing 30 June 2021 to allow time for businesses to complete installations.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

WATER QUALITY

Talking points:

- Water quality of ACT lakes, ponds and waterways is dependent on the condition of the catchments and levels of nutrient or other chemical pollution in those catchments.
- The ACT Government is committed to continuing the Healthy Waterways program as a key part of its strategy for improving the health of the ACT's urban waterways and lakes.
- The Bushfire Response and Recovery Program was established by the ACT Government to assist in the natural recovery of the ACT's water storage catchment areas impacted by the devastating Ororua Valley bushfires in 2019-20.
 - The program has several priorities including safeguarding the ACT's water supply.
 - Implementation of this program is continuing but landscape recovery of this magnitude will take many years.
- The quality of drinking water is managed by Icon Water to Australian standards.

Key Information

LAKE CLOSURES

- As of 29 September:
 - All waterways monitored by the ACT Government were open for primary (swimming) and secondary (boating) contact.
 - Lake Burley Griffin is only monitored during the recreational season of mid-October to mid-April.
- Lake and river closure information can change rapidly. For up-to-date information on all waterways except Lake Burley Griffin see https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/news/water_quality_in_our_lakes_and_ponds
- For info on Lake Burley Griffin, visit [The Swim Guide](#), press **Go to Map** and zoom in to the lake. Also see the [NCA website for this waterway](#).
- Blue-green algae outbreaks occur due to a combination of high temperatures, high nutrient levels and calm weather conditions. These conditions commonly occur in a number of lakes across the ACT; in particular, in Lake Tuggeranong during the warmer months.
- Blue-green algae blooms are naturally occurring but urban run-off contributes excessive nutrients to the lake which increases the frequency and duration of algal blooms.

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MEASURES TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

Healthy Waterways Program

- The Federal and ACT Government's co-investment of \$94 million (\$85M and \$9M, respectively) to 'Stage 1' of the ACT Healthy Waterways Project for improving water quality concluded in June 2021.
- Stage 2 of Healthy Waterways has commenced. In December 2019, the ACT Government announced an additional \$1 million to help clean up waterways in Tuggeranong. This funding was used to upgrade a gross pollutant trap near Lake Tuggeranong (including installing the ACT's first large-scale floating wetland), investigate a swale to trap nutrients draining from a sports field, and extend research trials on management of blue-green algae.
- In February 2021, the ACT Government announced an additional \$1.6 million to plan Stage 2 of ACT Healthy Waterways. Planning activities are in full swing and are expected to be completed by March 2022.

Stormwater management

- The ACT has over 6000 km of stormwater pipes, as well as other stormwater infrastructure. Stormwater operations and maintenance have an important role in restricting flooding of public roads and private properties, protecting these and other assets from water damage. However, this can come at a cost of poorer water quality in receiving waters, which is the reason for stormwater improvement programs like Healthy Waterways.
- TCCS operates and maintains the stormwater network to assist in minimising the risk of blue-green algae blooms through activities such as cleaning gross pollutant traps, desilting sediment basins, unblocking and monitoring the stormwater network, and litter pickup around waterways.
- TCCS is rolling out a program to install Smart City sensors that will gather information on pipeline monitoring and real-time water quality testing. Future opportunities for smart sewer monitoring will also assist in improving water quality by monitoring and controlling sewer flows which can sometimes leak into the stormwater network.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**WATER SECURITY****Talking points:**

- Long-term water security is critical to the continued growth and prosperity of communities within the ACT region.
- The ACT Government has strengthened its resolve to future-proof our region. We are currently considering the best administrative governance arrangements to provide a holistic, coordinated approach to water programs and policy, and to reinforce future water security planning and management.
- Having full water storages such as at present is only one aspect of water security. It does not allow for complacency. Permanent Water Conservation Measures will remain in force and the Government is continuing to examine measures to improve water use efficiency.
- The Government works closely with Icon Water, as the ACT's supplier of water and sewerage services, in planning for water security under current and future climate scenarios.

Key Information**Water availability**

- Water storage levels in the ACT are at 100% (as at 14 October 2021). The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal forecast indicates a continuation of above median rainfall for November 2021 to January 2022.

Water security planning and management

- Icon Water regularly reviews the ACT's water supply, which is determined by storage levels and other factors including predicted demand, climate outlook, regional water availability and catchment conditions.
- Icon Water is conducting a series of community forums to seek views on future water supply options. This will inform a review of their Source Water Strategy (2018) and drought management planning. The Source Water Strategy sets out how Icon Water will meet service expectations for water supply.
- The government initiated "Water Security Workshops" in 2020 provided stakeholder insights into the major challenges and issues around long-term water security and water governance for the region. A management response to the outcomes of this workshop is being prepared.
- Under the ACT Water Strategy 2014–44, Icon Water is required to maintain water security such that the current water supply system should meet unrestricted demand for the ACT and Queanbeyan 95% of the time until at least 2030.
- Icon Water currently provides urban water for a combined Canberra and Queanbeyan population of approximately 450,000 residents.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

HEALTHY WATERWAYS (BASIN PROJECT)

Talking points:

- ACT Healthy Waterways aims to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution of ACT lakes and waterways, and the problems that the pollution causes like algal blooms.
- ‘Stage 1’ of ACT Healthy Waterways began in 2014 as a \$94 million joint initiative of the Australian and ACT Governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and the Murrumbidgee River system by reducing the level of sediment and nutrients entering ACT lakes and waterways. Stage 1 ended in June 2021.
- The ACT Government commenced ‘Stage 2’ of ACT Healthy Waterways in the 2019-20 mid-year budget with an investment to fix a malfunctioning gross pollutant trap at the bottom of Village Ck, where the stormwater enters Lake Tuggeranong and constructive a Canberra first floating wetland. This was delivered in March 2021 when the Minister for Water launched the wetland.
- This is the first large-scale deployment of a floating wetland in the ACT and is a two-year trial, after which the wetland will either be left in place or transferred to another waterbody in the ACT. It is hoped that the wetland will compete for nutrients and light with blue-green algae, preventing them from blooming in the bay and then spreading to the lake.
- In the February 2021, the ACT Government committed \$1.5 million to begin planning for a broader program of work in Stage 2 of ACT Healthy Waterways, aligned to the *Expanding Healthy Waterways (\$30M over 4 years)* commitment in the Parliamentary & Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly.
- The focus of *Expanding Healthy Waterways* is on preventing stormwater pollution from occurring in the first place, using street-scale water sensitive urban design infrastructure and new approaches to managing green space within suburbs.
- Six ‘treatment trains’ — series of assets in a drainage line that aim to reduce pollution below a target level — are being investigated in the following catchments:
 - Village Creek
 - Fadden Pond and downstream drainage
 - Tuggeranong Creek
 - Yerrabi Pond
 - Kippax Creek
 - Emu Creek, Belconnen
- Catchments were chosen on the basis of 1) feasibility to explore innovative options, 2) locations where there was strong community demand, while extending Healthy Waterways activities across Canberra.
- The actual construction of assets is subject to funding for their delivery.

- In October 2021 a further \$5M was committed to the *Expanding Healthy Waterways*, comprised of \$1.6M in capital works and \$3.4M in expenses.
- Two water quality assets are being designed and built in 2021-22 with the capital works funding:
 1. 1000m² of floating wetland will be deployed in Yerrabi Pond
 2. Several bioretention swales are being built to replace existing grass swales draining the Kambah Playing Fields, which have been detected leaking nutrients into stormwater.
- The remainder of the \$5M in funding is being used to:
 - Investigate the source of pollutants in the Lake Tuggeranong catchment, so that water quality infrastructure can be well targeted.
 - Run public education campaigns targeting householder's management of grass clippings and leaf fall in yards and bordering suburban streets. The aim is to minimize the amount of plant matter ending up in drains.
 - Prepare catchment plans for several urban lakes and ponds.
 - Enhance EPSDD's water quality modelling capability, to underpin the catchment planning process.
- A 2021-22 mid-year budget bid to secure the remaining funding for the \$30M *Expanding Healthy Waterways* program is being prepared, as per the commitment in the Parliamentary & Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly.
- The focus of water quality research and modelling in 2021-22 is on water quality in the Lake Burley Griffin catchment, pollution sources in the Lake Tuggeranong catchment, and the response of blue-green algae in both lakes.
- Modelling of Lake Burley Griffin and its catchment has underpinned EPSDD's response to the draft EIS for the proposed upgrade to the Queanbeyan sewage treatment plant.

Key Information:

WATER QUALITY INVESTMENTS

- The \$94 million investment in Stage 1 of Healthy Waterways was used to
 - Design and construct 19 large water quality assets—raingardens, ponds, wetlands and channel restorations—according to 'water sensitive urban design' principles.
 - Carry out a major riparian restoration
 - Conduct a public education/behavioral change program, known as *H2OK: Keeping our Waterways Healthy*
 - Perform research into pollution, blue-green algal blooms and the control methods.

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- Monitor and model ACT waterways to enable the ACT Government to better manage them.
- Stage 2 of Healthy Waterways commenced when the project was extended by the ACT Government in the 2019-20 mid-year budget, with \$1 million committed to continue research into ways to combat outbreaks of algal blooms in the lake, fix a malfunctioning gross pollutant trap, and trial new infrastructure to prevent nutrient pollution from entering stormwater during large storms.
- A \$30 million budget bid—*Expand Healthy Waterways*—was prepared to continue the Healthy Waterways program, as per a commitment in the Parliamentary & Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly.
 - In the February 2021 budget update, the ACT Government committed \$1.5 million for an initial investment to begin planning this program of work.
 - In October 2021 a further \$5M was committed to the *Expanding Healthy Waterways*, comprised of \$1.6M in capital works and \$3.4M in expenses.

DELIVERY

- All assets constructed in Stage 1 of Healthy Waterways—and the riparian restoration—have been handed over to their owners (PCS, TCCS and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council). This includes the design and construction of 19 water quality assets (raingardens, ponds, wetlands and channel restorations) according to ‘water sensitive urban design’ principles.
- Together, these are intercepting on average 1900 tons of sediment and nutrient pollution every year from across Canberra, and up to 20% of the pollution load that was entering Lake Tuggeranong.
- 465,000 water plants were planted within 17 of the assets serve as pollutant filters.
- Soft landscaping around the assets—incorporating 160,000 trees, shrubs and herbs as well as areas of lawn—provides locals with amenity and opportunities for recreation, and has been well received by the community.
- Members of the public are already taking some responsibility for the upkeep of soft landscaping around the assets, working with TCCS, and a number of additional trees and shrubs have been planted by them.
- A floating wetland was placed within the Village Ck embayment of Lake Tuggeranong to prevent algal blooms from forming in this area. This is the first asset delivered in Stage 2 of Healthy Waterways and the 21st hard asset created by the project. A gross pollutant trap just above the floating wetland was modified to allow it to drain better and to restore a low-flow bypass. Both modifications aim to reduce the effects of elevated nutrients on algal in the bay just downstream.
- Healthy Waterways research and monitoring programs have greatly improved our understanding of the problems of sediment and nutrient pollution, the impacts that this has on algal blooms in our urban lakes, and the performance of water quality

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assets. The research findings have influenced plans for the next phase of Healthy Waterways.

- The *H2OK: Keeping our Waterways Healthy* behavioral change program continued through contracts with the ACT's three Catchment Groups and Griffith University. ACT NRM staff are formulating new strategies for behavioral change based on the findings of the ongoing H2OK program and other research. A pilot program targeting *Eucalyptus* leaf fall in spring is out for tender. Planning is underway for future H2OK program activities as a part of the \$30M Healthy Waterways budget bid.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Queanbeyan Sewage Treatment Plant****Talking points:**

- The Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) is seeking approval for the upgrade of the Queanbeyan Sewage Treatment Plant (QSTP).
- The proposal involves the construction of a new treatment plant to replace the existing plant which is approaching the end of its asset life. It is estimated that the existing QSTP has about 3-5 years of effective service life remaining.
- The proposal is currently going through the environmental impact statement (EIS) process. The EPSDD provided comment on the EIS in March 2021. A revised EIS is being prepared by the proponent and is due in September 2022.
- There is no question that upgrades to the QSTP are required to service the current demand and a future population of up to 75,000.
- Concerns have been raised about whether the draft EIS adequately addressed the full range of issues associated with the new plant's impact on the receiving waters of Lake Burley Griffin (LBG).
 - Impacts relate specifically to water quality, aquatic biodiversity and public amenity.
- Further information and analysis of impacts has been requested by the EPSDD to ensure the best possible outcome for LBG water quality. These comments will need to be addressed by the proponent in the revised EIS.

Key Information

- The existing QSTP is estimated to have a design capacity for 34,500 Equivalent Persons (EP) but currently services about 52,000 EP.
- Although the plant is meeting the existing effluent licence conditions, there is a risk that it would be unable to meet more stringent discharge criteria that are required to protect the lake's values. It is also unlikely that the plant would continue to meet the existing criteria under the projected population growth in Queanbeyan.
- The catchment of LBG includes the headwaters of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan rivers. This means that LBG receives discharges from the QSTP, which (in addition to urban and rural runoff) contribute to regular blue-green algae outbreaks in LBG.
- Since construction in the 1960s, LBG has been afflicted with major blue-green algae blooms. Major blooms were common in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. However, the recent trend has been an increasing incidence of blue-green algae blooms, particularly over the last five years (NCA data).

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- Surveys have indicated that the majority of the community perceives that LBG has poor water quality and the full amenity value of the lake is not being realised. Regular closures of LBG to primary contact recreation is likely to support an ongoing perception in the community that the lake has poor water quality.
- In March 2021, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment was directed to undertake an investigation into the state of lakes and waterways in the ACT. The report is due in February 2022. This report will inform strategic direction to manage water quality of LBG.
- A 2012 report by the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment estimated that continued deterioration in the quality and reliability of LBG as a sporting venue creates an annual economic cost to the ACT and region of around \$25 million per annum.
- Nutrient discharge from the QSTP also can impact negatively on aquatic species because it contributes to poor water quality. While the nutrient load from the QSTP is high, the degree to which existing, or future, discharge is impacting on aquatic values is yet to be fully evaluated.

Background Information

- The existing QSTP was built in the mid-1930s and is located within the Jerrabomberra district of the ACT. The plant processes sewage from NSW and Oaks Estate (in the ACT) and discharges treated effluent into the Molonglo River.
- A study commissioned in 2011 recommended a major upgrade to the plant, but those upgrades were not carried out. Since 2011, the condition of the QSTP has continued to deteriorate while the local population has increased. This has resulted in exceedance of the design capacity of the plant.
- Section 123 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* identifies assessment of the proposal as Impact Track requiring an EIS. Specifically, the proposal includes activities identified in Schedule 4 of the Act which triggers an EIS: “*construction of a sewage treatment plant that will be less than one kilometre from the boundary of a residential block and will be able to treat each day more than 2500 EP*”.

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Portfolio/s: Environment

Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Talking points:

- The ACT Government strongly supports the Catchment Groups and our community volunteers and is delivering on its commitment to volunteering made in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement.
- The ACT Government oversees a range of volunteer programs including ParkCare and Waterwatch, that support successful environmental initiatives through significant community effort.
- Volunteers provide in excess of 50,000 volunteer hours a year to assist with the implementation of key environment and conservation objectives.
- The Ginninderra Catchment Group, Southern ACT Catchment Group, and Molonglo Conservation Group are peak community groups that play a key role in volunteer coordination and provide critical services to the ACT.
- The Catchment Groups have received significant funding for the 21/22 financial year:
 - \$395,000 for community engagement in relation to:
 - Strong community stewardship of urban waterways
 - Measurable improvement in community 'stormwater literacy'
 - Reducing stormwater pollution, especially nutrient pollution, coming from suburbs
 - A more resilient and nature-connected community
 - Ecological and social fire recovery
 - \$270,000 for coordination of community Waterwatch volunteers
 - \$87,000 for coordination of community Frogwatch volunteers
 - \$208,397 in successful 2021/22 ACT Environment Grants.
- In the 2021/22 budget, the ACT Government provided:
 - \$103,000 to ACT Wildlife to support the rescue and care of injured wildlife
 - A \$115,000 increase in the ACT Environment Grant funding to bring the total grant funding to \$315,000
 - An additional ParkCare Officer position to further support community volunteers.
- In the 2019/20 midyear budget review, the ACT Government provided additional ongoing support to community volunteers through funding Waterwatch and the ParkCare Ranger Assist Program.

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- The Waterwatch program is a successful citizen science program which has significant community support and provides vital water quality monitoring information. It was funded for \$539,000 per annum, of which a large portion of the funding goes directly to the Catchment Groups for volunteer coordination.
- The ParkCare Ranger Assist Program supports the new and rapidly growing Ranger Assist initiative, which is part of the ACT Government ParkCare program. This program allows volunteers to work directly with environmental staff on a range of activities beyond traditional ParkCare and was funded for \$185,000 per annum.

Background Information

- EPSDD is currently developing a new environment volunteering policy and supporting IT system that will significantly assist in managing and supporting environmental volunteers.

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Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**Covid-19 Impacts – Climate Change and Energy****Talking points:**

- Covid-19 creates new challenges for our community.
- The top priority for the government will always remain the health and safety of our citizens and guests.
- Following announcement of an ACT lockdown on 12 August 2021, due to Covid, the Program delivery to businesses, schools, households and community has switched to online delivery.
- But this does not mean that we will lose focus on addressing the challenges of climate change. The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly includes next steps on climate action as its first set of priorities.
- Due to social distancing requirements and other responses to the Covid-19 public health emergency, the Government is using new delivery methods where needed to continue to support the community. This includes delivery of virtual energy, solar, water and waste assessments for businesses, and virtual 'in-home' assessments for households.
- Contractors across the program delivery space are providing alternative and modified delivery to ensure the community continues to be supported.
- Work to install efficient heating and cooling infrastructure is on hold, recognising that many family budgets are likely to be particularly vulnerable this year.
- The Government has also announced a number of measures to reduce energy bill stress, including energy bill support for households and businesses, rate reductions and an enhanced utilities hardship fund.
- As at the 15 October many restrictions relating to in home installations can recommence, Covid rules still in place have been provided to contractors.
- The Government is also taking actions to make sure we are hearing the needs of the community during this time, ensuring we remain agile and helping to support viable solutions.
- As the city opens up the number of face to face interactions will resume in alignment with the ACT Health directions. Strong Covid-19 protocols are being adhered to by staff.

Key Information

- All program delivery will continue in a digital form, where suitable, to support those still in workplaces and planning with stakeholders for the return to normality is underway.

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- Connections to community groups including community partners will continue albeit via digital communication.
- While most events including EPSDD events and other public events have been postponed, work on how these can be supported when they return is underway.

Background Information

- The Climate Change and Sustainability Division supports the community through the delivery of programs to the Household, Schools, Business, Government and Community sectors.
- The Division designs and delivers policy on energy, climate change, adaptation and living infrastructure. This work continues to support Government objectives including the commitment to 100% renewable electricity.

Portfolio/s: Sustainable Building and Construction

Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE (including DV 369)

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to achieving sustainable development outcomes that meet the needs of the growing population, while retaining the values, features and landscape setting that make Canberra unique.
- We recognise that population growth, urban densification and climate change pose challenges for how we achieve this outcome.
 - Continued urban expansion puts pressure on the valued natural resources that surround the city such as our bushland and grasslands, landscape setting and connectivity of ecosystems.
- Urban densification introduces new challenges for which innovative and ecologically sustainable urban development solutions will need to be considered and adopted.
- The Government is committed to planning for connected open space networks and sufficient tree canopy cover for public spaces and to mitigate against the loss of tree canopy cover, permeable surfaces and planting area as a result of urban intensification.
- *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* outlines the ACT Government's commitment to addressing urban heat, primarily by protecting and improving living infrastructure within urban Canberra.
- Living Infrastructure helps to make our city 'climate-wise', enhancing its capacity to cope with the impacts of urban densification and climate change by reducing urban heat island effects, increasing access to shade, and safeguarding urban landscape function and health.
- The Living Infrastructure Plan has established targets of 30% tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30% permeable surfaces by 2045 within the built environment footprint. They are an important element of achieving the sustainability and resilience objectives for our city set out in the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*.
- Achieving the Plan will rely on collective and collaborative efforts across Government, community and the business sector.
- Current action being undertaken by the ACT Government includes:
 - Planting of 54,000 trees in Canberra between 2020-21 and 2023-24 to contribute to the 30% canopy cover (or equivalent) target for Canberra's urban footprint.

- The Development of an Urban Forest Strategy to support the long term strategic management and growth of the urban forest. The final Strategy was released on 30 March 2021.
- Demonstration projects such as the Whitlam Display Village which trials innovative living infrastructure solutions such as passive irrigation, permeable driveway surfaces and advances street tree planting.
- Introducing changes to the Territory Plan requirements, notably draft Territory Plan Variation 369 – Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones. This draft Variation proposes higher requirements for minimum planting area, along with new requirements for planting of trees.
 - These requirements don't go all the way to achieving the Plan's targets, but significantly improve on business as usual.
 - Further amendments to planning processes in the future will be introduced to support the ACT reaching its targets by 2045.
 - The recommended version of DV369 is currently being prepared, taking into consideration the submissions received during the public consultation process.

Key Information

- In 2017, the ACT Government commissioned CSIRO to study Canberra's urban heat island effect. The research found that Canberra's summer land surface temperatures can be up to 10°C hotter than surrounding rural areas.
- Common measures to reduce urban heat include trees, watered grass, shading structures, wetlands, green walls and appropriate building and surface materials.

Background Information

- The Plan was released in September 2019. Canberra currently has an estimated 22.5% tree canopy cover, although this is not evenly distributed across the city.
 - This latest estimate has been prepared using LiDAR data captured in 2020 and represents the most recent analysis of TCC in urban Canberra.
- The urban heat island effect occurs when urban areas are warmer than surrounding rural areas. This is often due to buildings, roads and pavements (built environment) absorbing heat, which is then slowly released, leading to higher temperatures at both day and night.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

COMMUNITY ZERO EMISSIONS GRANTS PROGRAM

Talking points:

- The Government has committed \$600,000 over four years in the 2021-22 Budget to continue the Community Zero Emissions Grants Program.
- This funding will continue to support community-led projects that help the ACT reach its target of net zero emissions by 2045 and increase our community's resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- The first round under this new phase of funding will open this financial year with further details to be released in due course.

Key Information:

Previous funding under the Community Zero Emissions Grants Program

- The Government's 2021-22 Budget commitment builds on previous funding of \$550,000 over four years (2017-18 to 2020-21).
- This funding delivered projects and activities that aimed to:
 - develop and implement innovative solutions and generate new knowledge and information to support a community transition to net zero emissions by 2045;
 - assist the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT; and
 - drive greater community awareness of and engagement in the transition to net zero emissions.
- Four rounds were delivered through the Government's previous funding commitment, with a total of 25 funded applications.
 - Under each round, a maximum of \$25,000 (excluding GST) was available to eligible individual applicants and up to \$50,000 (excluding GST) for joint applications.
- The most recent round (Round Four) provided a total of \$127,424 in funding to support five successful applications.

Background Information

- In Round One, 19 grant applications were received and assessed, with six applicants successful, sharing \$140,910 in grant funding.
- In Round Two, 16 grant applications were received and assessed; seven applicants were successful, sharing \$167,528 in grant funding.
- In Round Three, 20 applications were received and assessed; seven applicants were successful, sharing \$160,117 in grant funding.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	15/10/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 54752
Contact Officer name:	Ros Malouf	Ext: 75335
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- In Round Four, 16 applications were received and assessed; five applicants were successful, sharing \$127,424 in funding.

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 54752
Contact Officer name: Ros Malouf Ext: 75335
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**RENEWABLE ENERGY AND STORAGE PROGRAMS****Talking points:**

- The ACT has reached 100 per cent renewable electricity ‘on and from’ 2020, with eleven large feed-in tariff supported projects completed.
- The renewable auctions also leverage more than \$500 million over 20 years in local investment.
- The \$25 million Next Generation Energy Storage program has supported the installation of over 1871 energy storage systems, or 8.7 MW of sustained peak output, to date.

Key Information

- Around 26,000 Canberra households and businesses have installed rooftop solar, totalling around 125 megawatts (MW). With our large-scale solar farms, there is already over 165 MW of solar capacity in the ACT.
- The renewable energy auction held in November 2019 will deliver new supply to cope with forecast future demand growth as our city’s population increases. Two projects were secured through the auction to deliver 200MW of renewable electricity to the ACT – Global Power Generation’s Berrybank wind farm in Victoria and Neoen’s Goyder wind farm in South Australia. The Goyder wind farm is currently in the early planning and approval stage, and Berrybank is in the construction stage.
- The Government has published a methodology on how the renewable electricity target will be measured over time. Progress was reported in December 2020 and will be reported every year following.
- The \$25 million Next Generation Energy Storage (Next Gen) program is supporting the installation of up to 36 MW of distributed energy storage in the ACT.
 - Eight installers have been accepted as providers under Round 5 Submission Period 2. Deeds have been finalised with Mondiaux, Stored Solar, Reposit Power, Sunbank Solar, Stag Electrical Solar & Refrigeration, Select Electrical & Solar Solutions, Lighting and Energy Conservation Australia and Photonic Solar Solutions.
 - They join the seven installers (Solar4Life, Solargain, ECG Electrical, Solarhub, Solahart Canberra, Ron Burrell Electrical and SunStak) that were successful under Round 5 Submission Period 1.
 - Photonic’s deed has been terminated due to not meeting the terms in the deed. Discussions took place and the installer is understanding and comfortable with the steps taken.
 - The panel now comprises of 14 installers which provides the ACT Community with a wide range of options.

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- ANU's Battery Storage and Grid Integration Project (BSGIP) is supported by \$5 million from the ACT's Renewable Energy and Innovation Fund (REIF) and continues to deliver its milestones. The project has entered its 4th year.
- REIF Direct Grant Round 2 recipients who received in total \$1.1 million, continue to deliver upon their milestones. One of the seven projects has been completed and the remaining projects continue to make progress.

Background Information

- The Next Generation Energy Storage Program was established to:
 - stimulate the rollout of distributed solar energy storage in the ACT;
 - assist the development of ACT-based energy storage industry, research and training; and
 - extend ACT's national leadership position in renewables.
- The Next Generation Energy Storage program won the Cities Power Partnership Renewable Energy Achievement Award in August 2019.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**ENERGY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****Talking points:**

- The safe, secure and reliable provision of energy services is critical to the functioning of the ACT economy and to the safety of the community.
- The ACT Energy Emergency (Coordination) Plan (the Plan) is a supporting plan of the ACT Emergency Plan. It provides a framework for a coordinated approach to an actual or imminent event relating to the supply of electricity, gas and/or liquid fuel, locally and nationally. The Plan was reviewed during 2019 and 2020, and an updated plan was approved by the ESA Commissioner in July 2020.
- On 8 October 2021 the ACT Government participated in a national emergency exercise that tested the Plan in scenarios that included electricity and gas supply shortages.
- As the responsible Minister, a number of pieces of ACT legislation provide me with emergency powers to manage or ration the supply of energy in the event of an emergency.
- The ACT Energy Emergency Plan was activated three times in 2020, on 4 and 5 January, again on 22 and 23 January, and from 31 January to 3 February in response to the Australian Energy Market Operator advising a shortage of electricity supply reserves in the NSW region of the National Electricity Market.
- In all instances severe heat conditions led to increased electricity demand and the subsequent low reserve conditions. The incident on 4 and 5 January 2020 was further complicated by bushfires impacting electricity transmission infrastructure. ACT residents were requested to voluntarily reduce electricity consumption during these emergency events.
- Thankfully, on all three occasions there was no need for further action or use of emergency powers.
- The ACT Energy Emergency Plan has not been activated so far in 2021.
- The ACT Government is monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the energy industry and supporting coordinated industry responses through participation in national energy emergency management forums. To date, complications arising from Covid-19 have not threatened the reliability or safety of the energy system.

Key Information

- The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) operates the National Electricity Market and coordinates national gas network infrastructure.
- In the event of an energy emergency, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) seeks advice from AEMO and advises the ACT Government on an appropriate response to the situation.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	15/10/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 54752
Contact Officer name:	James Priestley	Ext: 72092
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

Conflict of Interest

Talking points:

- The Portfolio agencies, as with all ACT Government agencies, have zero-tolerance towards fraudulent activity or corrupt behaviour by staff, contractors, third party service providers, or clients.
- The Portfolio is strongly committed to preventing, identifying, and eliminating fraud and corruption and raising awareness of the risks presented within the Portfolio. To enable this, EPSDD promotes a culture of learning, disclosure, transparency and accountability.
- A central conflict of interests register is maintained by EPSDD People and Capability Branch. It holds relevant information on portfolio staff. Suburban Land Agency also maintains its own complimentary register for staff due to the sensitive nature of its business. EPSDD also review and include SLA interests in the centralised register.
- SLA and CRA maintain records of the COI declarations for their Board members. A whole of Government reporting process on conflicts of interest is expected to be put in place in the near future. EPSDD is collaborating with Community Services Directorate and Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate for the development of a whole of Government electronic register and the electronic form expected to be completed and implemented by late 2021.

The planning and land authority

- The planning and land authority (the Authority) implemented an Integrity Policy in May 2020 due to its unique function as the statutory decision maker for development applications (DAs)
- The Authority appointed an Integrity Manager to oversee the Integrity Policy and to investigate matters as necessary.
- To further enhance probity, integrity and confidence in the development assessment process, in 2018, the Authority introduced a staged assessment and decision-making model so no design and siting DA can be assessed and determined by a single officer.
- Procedures and decisions for development applications are also subject to regular and random review and auditing.
- The Division continues to work on improving processes to reduce the risk of conflicts of interest in statutory planning processes. A new policy is being developed for the Division to manage these risks.

Enforcement, Implementation and Complaints

- We have a position which Members may be familiar with, known as The Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk, which we abbreviate to 'SERBIR.' This important role is responsible for ensuring staff adhere to integrity requirements and are available to receive and action complaints.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	22/10/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	Ext: 76322
Contact Officer name:	Chantel Potter	Ext: 74780
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- The SERBIR provides a quarterly report to our independent Audit and Risk Committee on any complaints or investigations into fraud, corruption or integrity matters and their outcomes.
- [If asked]: Two allegations of fraud or corruption were reported to the Integrity Commissioner during the 2020–21 reporting period, although neither allegation concerned directorate employees. Neither allegation of fraud or corruption was substantiated.

Key Information

- Portfolio agencies rely on the Whole of Government legislative framework to underpin the approach on matters of integrity, including conflict of interest. Importantly, these are consistent across the ACT Government.
- The ACT Government released a whole of Government *Conflict of Interest Policy* in June 2021. Three Policy tools were also released to assist staff and managers. These cover: Definitions and Examples; Information Sheet; and Supervisor/Manager Checklists.
- To support engagement with Conflict of Interest within EPSDD, the Directorate has its own policies and processes to declare, manage, and eliminate, potential, real, and perceived conflicts of interest which are communicated to staff. The Fraud and Corruption Plan 2019-2021 is one such document which covers these issues.
- An EPSDD Conflict of Interest Factsheet was developed and released on the Portfolio Policy Register. The Factsheet is accessible to all portfolio staff. It provides information on identifying, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest.
- As with many agencies, EPSDD has an online training module for 'Fraud, Corruption and Ethics' to promote integrity awareness at EPSDD and this has been an especially important way to train staff in the past two years due to the COVID remote working situation.
- Building on our success with the online training format, EPSDD has developed a short online training module to raise conflict of interest awareness as its own topic. This module is being tested at present, and will be released in the near future.

Background Information

- EPSDD engaged auditors to review COI management early this year. The report, finalised in April 2021, made several recommendations to improve EPSDD COI processes. This was in anticipation of the whole of Government COI Policy released in June 2021. Work to address the recommendations is underway and needs to occur inline with other work occurring across Government, notably with CSD.

Portfolio/s: Planning and Land Management**Since 1 October 2018, how many mature trees have been removed from public land as part of the planning approval process?****Talking points**

- Transport Canberra and City Services has jurisdiction over trees on public land.
- In its assessment of development applications, the planning and land authority gives due consideration to the removal of trees in each unique situation. This includes the requirement to seek advice from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
- Should the Conservator not support the removal of a protected tree (under the *Tree Protection Act 2005*), the planning and land authority are only able to approve the removal if satisfied that any realistic alternatives – such as design alternatives – have been thoroughly considered.
- The planning and land authority does not currently have a collective data base for trees supported for removal through the development application process. This information is kept separately for each individual development application.

Background InformationTrees on leased land

- Many of Canberra's trees are protected by the ACT *Tree Protection Act 2005*. Tree protection legislation exists to protect individual trees of exceptional value, and to ensure that the urban forest cover of the city is protected. The legislation has two types of Protected Tree - A Regulated Tree and a Registered Tree.
- The Conservator of Flora and Fauna may approve removal of trees on leased land if it meets certain criteria.

Development Applications

- The planning and land authority may support removal of trees through the development application process usually as part of a design and siting application or estate development plan.

How is the government operationalising tree survey reports (in line with the action plan) as part of the planning approval process?**Talking points:**

- A Tree Management Plan is required for all development applications that propose removing a protected tree or propose works within the tree protection zone of a

protected tree, regardless of whether that tree is within the block boundaries of the proposed works.

- A Tree Survey is required for all development applications that have a protected tree on the development site. A Tree Survey is required to be prepared by a qualified arborist.
- Tree survey reports, tree assessments and other similar documentation, when submitted with a development application, are treated as a supporting document. This means they form part of the application and are available for public comment during the notification period and for review by relevant agencies, including the Conservator.

What considerations are given to wildlife when planning around roads in new suburbs/areas?

Talking points:

- The principles of biodiversity conservation are enshrined in the ACT Planning Strategy 2018, just as they were in its predecessors. The Planning Strategy guides how Canberra will grow and change into the future. It sets a clear and compelling vision for Canberra:
‘to be a sustainable, competitive and equitable city that respects Canberra as a city in the landscape and the national capital, while being responsive to the future and resilient to change’.
- Consistent with this vision, one of the strategic directions of the ACT Planning Strategy is to:
‘Protect biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity to improve landscape resilience’.
- This is an overarching imperative that is a core tenant of the ACT Government strategic planning directions, for the Territory. Biodiversity and protection of threatened species are an important element of our planning process.
- The provisions of the Commonwealth’s *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the ACT’s *Planning and Development Act 2007* make sure there is thorough consideration of potential adverse impacts to threatened species that may be caused by future development and measures to avoid, mitigate or offset these impacts.
- There have been three strategic assessments undertaken in the ACT under the Commonwealth’s EPBC Act. These are Gungahlin, the Molonglo Valley and for West Belconnen. Each was undertaken at predominately district level rather than at the suburb level. In this way, strategic assessment ensure long-term environmental protection by looking at impacts on the environment over the whole landscape at the district level before development begins.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 28/10/2021

Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 76842

Contact Officer name: Steven Gianakis Ext: 71741

Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- A further strategic assessment is underway for the eastern broadacre area, located to the east of Canberra including parts of the Majura and Jerrabomberra Valleys, and around Fyshwick and the airport. This area has been identified through the ACT Planning Strategy for employment related uses noting the presence of critically endangered flora and fauna.
- Since 2011, some 22 offset sites have been funded across the ACT. This has assisted in the conservation of threatened species across 2,326 hectares. Of these sites, 14 have been included in nature reserves. This has resulted in the protection, in perpetuity, of threatened species and communities including the Superb Parrot, Golden Sun Moth, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Grassland Earless Dragon, Button Wrinklewort, Natural Temperate Grassland and Box-Gum Grassy Woodland.
- This year, Territory Plan Variation 379 proposes to establish a 160 hectare nature reserve “Nadjung Mada” at Kenny.
- Last year, over 200 hectares of land at the Franklin Grasslands; Budjan Galindji has now undergone significant on-ground work to protect the threatened Button Wrinklewort population and the Natural Temperate Grassland.
- In 2019, an area that spans 23 kilometres from Scrivener Dam to the confluence with the Murrumbidgee River with an area of 1280 hectares, and home to the endangered Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Superb Parrot and Box-gum Grassy Woodland habitat was placed into the Molonglo River Reserve.

Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment

- Public consultation under the Commonwealth’s EPBC Act was on hold during 2020 due to the Covid-19 public health emergency. The draft strategic assessment documents and the proposed commitments to protect matters of national environmental significance are being reviewed for currency, together with consideration of the recommendations of the Commonwealth’s Independent Review of the EPBC Act, and further discussions with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Following this, public consultation is expected to commence in the first half of 2022.

What is the average waiting/processing time for DA approvals?

Talking points:

- 876 merit track development applications were determined in 2020-21 financial year.
- The average processing time was 61 days. The median processing time was 42 days. This includes single dwellings, commercial, multi-unit, mixed use development, and lease variations.
- The average processing time decreased by 4 weeks (20 working days) compared to the previous financial year which was 81 days.

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Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- The planning and land authority also determined 1183 minor single dwelling applications (known as exemption declarations) at an average of 6 days, in the 2020-21 financial year.

Key Information

- Development applications lodged have remained steady over the past couple of years. 919 DA's were lodged in 2020-21 compared to 910 in 2019-20.
- Development applications lodged for the first quarter of the current financial year was 255 which was similar to previous years.

Background Information

- An exemption declaration is a type of single dwelling application that the planning and land authority can approve when the development is compliant with all the rules of the single dwelling code apart from minor departures in relation to setbacks, building envelopes and private open spaces requirements.

EPSDD STAFF PROFILE – SEPTEMBER 2021
Talking points:

- As at 15 September 2021, EPSDD's headcount was 728, slightly down from 30 June 2021 headcount of 738 (1.4% decrease).
- As at 15 September 2021, EPSDD's FTE was 691.66, slightly down from 30 June 2021 FTE of 693.3 (0.2% decrease).
- Female representation amongst the executive cohort has increased slightly to a total of nine, equating to 50% representation within the cohort.
- The number of female staff occupying Senior Officer roles is 161 (55% representation).
- Female representation overall in EPSDD is 54% of all employees.
- In September 2021, 3.2% of EPSDD staff identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (23 employees), higher than the ACTPS overall target (2%, State of the Service Report 2019-20).
- In September 2021, 4.8% of EPSDD staff identify as having a disability (35 employees), higher than the ACTPS target of 2.8%.
- Our age profile is diverse with an age range from 19 to 78, with four staff aged over 70 years old. Our median age is 42.6 years.
- 53.2% of our employees have at least five years or more experience working with EPSDD (or our predecessors). The current average tenure of our workforce is 8.5 years.

Key Information (as at 15 September 2021)

Division by FTE	Perm.	Temp.	Casual	Total
CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY	73.46	8		81.46
CORPORATE SERVICES & OPERATIONS	74.48	15.24	1.55	91.27
DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION	37.5	6		43.50
COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT	4.2	2		6.2
ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE & WATER (includes PCS)	244.16	62.54	0.67	307.37
OFF DDG ENVIRONMENT, WATER & EMISSIONS REDUCTION	1	1		2.00
OFF DDG PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	2	1		3.00
OFF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL	16.19	3		19.19
PLANNING & URBAN POLICY	41.95	3		44.95
STATUTORY PLANNING	82	10.71		92.71
Total FTE	576.94	112.49	2.23	691.66

Age Profile	<20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
	0.1%	4.8%	11.4%	13.5%	16.2%	14.3%	13.3%	11.4%	8.9%	3.3%	2.2%	0.5%

Cleared as complete and accurate: 20/10/2021

Cleared for public release by:

Contact Officer name:

Lead Directorate:

Executive Group Manager

Myfanwy Greenwood

Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

Ext: 76322

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AR/ESTIMATES COMMITTEE HEARING BRIEF

Division by Headcount	Perm.	Temp.	Casual	Total
CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY	77	8		85
CORPORATE SERVICES & OPERATIONS	77	16	3.00	96
DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION	38	6		44
COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT	5	2		
ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE & WATER (includes PCS)	255	65	3.00	323
OFF DDG ENVIRONMENT, WATER & EMISSIONS REDUCTION	1	1		2
OFF DDG PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	2	1		3
OFF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL	18	3		21
PLANNING & URBAN POLICY	45	3		48
STATUTORY PLANNING	86	13		99
Total Headcount	604	118	6.00	728

Division by Gender	F	F %	M	M %	X	X %
CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY	54	63.5%	31	36.5%		
CORPORATE SERVICES & OPERATIONS	64	67.4%	31	32.6%		
DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION	23	52.3%	21	47.7%		
COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT	6	85.7%	1	14.3%		
ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE & WATER (includes PCS)	145	45%	177	55%		
OFF DDG ENVIRONMENT, WATER & EMISSIONS REDUCTION	1	50%	1	50%		
OFF DDG PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	3	100%				
OFF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL	14	66.7%	7	33.3%		
PLANNING & URBAN POLICY	37	77.1%	11	22.9%		
STATUTORY PLANNING	47	47.5%	52	52.5%		
Grand Total	394	54.1%	332	45.6%	2	0.3%

Classification Group by Gender	F	F %	M	M %	X	X %
Administrative Officers	155	69.5%	68	30.5%		
Executive Officers	9	50%	9	50%		
General Service Officers & Equivalent	11	17.7%	51	82.3%		
Professional Officers	13	56.5%	10	43.5%		
Rangers	16	37.2%	27	62.8%		
Senior Officers	161	54.8%	133	45.2%		
Statutory Office Holders	1	100%		0%		
Technical Officers	28	41%	34	59%		
Grand Total	394	54.1%	332	45.6%	2	0.3%

Tenure Years	<1	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-20	>20
% Staff	13.5%	21.3%	12%	24%	20.3%	8.9%

	Diversity Profile	WhoG Target
ATSI	23 (3.2%)	15 (2%)
NESB	99 (16%)	N/A
Disability	35 (4.8%)	21 (2.8%)

Cleared as complete and accurate: 20/10/2021

Cleared for public release by:

Contact Officer name:

Lead Directorate:

Executive Group Manager

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SUBJECT: Media themes arising 2020-21

KEY MESSAGES:

- Housing affordability and rental supply shortages
 - Land supply
 - Land release
 - Gungahlin Town Centre – remaining blocks
 - Molonglo Commercial Centre
 - Suburban Land Agency funding
-

Housing affordability and rental supply shortages

- In 2020-21, the Suburban Land Agency (Agency) continued to release land to support the ACT Government's housing targets for affordable, public and community housing. A total of 345 dwellings were released which exceeded the target of 302 dwellings, with a further 45 dwellings in the suburbs of Kenny and Casey to be released at a later date.
- The ACT Government is committed to improving housing availability, diversity and choice and is considering a pilot Build-to-Rent project which will provide a more affordable option to rent.
- The Agency plans to invite proposals from the market to build and operate long-term rental accommodation, with an affordable rental component, on land release sites. Part of Block 2, Section 57 (Turner) and Lawson Stage 2 have been identified as potential sites to be included in the market sounding process.
- Build-to-Rent housing has the potential to provide long lasting community benefits, with greater housing choice for tenants who would have access to high-quality dwellings, in a stable rental environment. Increased rental security offers wider social and economic benefits, with tenants better able to establish themselves in a community.

Land supply

- The market for detached single residential blocks in the ACT has seen unprecedented demand during 2020-21, with the Agency selling a record number of blocks to customers in the last financial year.
- The Agency has land currently available for purchase through partner builders, under a Put and Call deed. There are approximately 180 blocks available in Whitlam, including 90 affordable housing blocks.
- Upcoming releases of single residential blocks in 2021-22 will include a ballot in Taylor, which will be the final release of blocks in this suburb. This is scheduled to be held in November 2021, subject to COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions.

Gungahlin Town Centre – remaining blocks

- The Gungahlin Community Council had called for the sale of land within the Gungahlin Town Centre to be suspended until planning outcomes are agreed.
- In February and June 2021, the Legislative Assembly (LA) agreed to two separate resolutions concerning future development of the town centre. On 3 August 2021, a petition also relating to the town centre was lodged with the Legislative Assembly. The Government is proposing to formally respond to both resolutions and the petition in late 2021.
- A Draft Variation to the Territory Plan relating to the town centre is also subject to an inquiry by the Standing Committee of Planning, Transport and City Services.
- The Agency auctioned four CZ5 zoned sites on 12 May 2021, with all sites selling. Three of the sites were on the ILRP, comprising indicative yields of 408 dwellings and 22,168 square metres of mixed-use land, with a combined housing target of 71 affordable dwellings and 8 public housing dwellings. The fourth site was a re-release of a site originally released/sold in February 2019.
- The Agency met with the Gungahlin Community Council Executive 4 May 2021 in response to a request to halt all land sales in the Gungahlin Town Centre. The Agency offered to engage with the Council and other stakeholders via a placemaking approach for the remaining town centre land releases.

Molonglo Commercial Centre

- With the ACT Budget release on Wednesday 6 October, the Indicative Land Release Program was announced for 2021-22 and the forward years. The Molonglo Commercial Centre will be progressively released from 2023-24.
- The Molonglo Valley Community Forum has raised concerns with the change in expected release timing.
- The Suburban Land Agency has yet to receive the site as it is still subject to planning work being undertaken by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Once the site is transferred to the Agency we will consider the planning outcomes, community engagement strategies and related works necessary to deliver future land releases.

Land release

- Each year the ACT Government publishes an Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) to supply the residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial and community sectors. The program is reviewed annually and is subject to change by the Minister for Planning and Land Management to deliver the Government's strategic priorities or as market conditions change. The annual review of the program presents the opportunity to reconfirm the ACT Government's policies for the sustainable growth of the city and housing affordability.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is responsible for publishing the program in consultation with other ACT Government directorates and agencies.
- It is important to acknowledge that the ILRP is 'indicative' by definition. It is the Government's forecast of expected land releases in a financial year and that refinement and adjustment of those release numbers may occur during the year.

- Annual land releases are complex processes. They can be impacted by a range of issues, including planning and environmental process outcomes, completing necessary due diligence processes, community engagement and consultation processes, legal issues, and commercial/market impacts.
- The 2020-21 ILRP indicated that 3,043 dwellings were forecast to be released during the financial year.
- The Agency (including the Ginninderry joint venture) exceeded the forecast and released 3,061 dwellings, comprising 1,113 single residential blocks, 229 compact/attached dwellings and 1,719 multi-unit dwellings.

SLA funding

- Based on assumptions developed at the peak of uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, the Agency estimated that they would require an additional \$50 million in funding and subsequently put through a request for the additional funding.
- When Government approved the request, restrictions had eased and market conditions had started to improve, with \$30 million of funding approved, should it be required.
- The Agency has not needed to access the additional funding to date and there is not a perceived need given the improvement in market conditions.
- However, the funding remains available until 30 June 2022 should the need arise to access it. It is considered prudent to keep the funding in place given the possibility of market volatility and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding impacts of COVID-19.

ISSUE: KINGSTON ARTS PRECINCT

Talking points:

- Kingston Arts Precinct will be a leading destination for visitors and locals to explore contemporary visual arts and culture in the ACT. It will attract new audiences to enjoy arts practices, activities and content from Canberra's local artists, the region and beyond.
- The arts precinct will transform the historic area into a hive of creativity, making it a major drawcard for those choosing to live, work, visit, create and collaborate in the ACT.
- All heritage registered assets and trees in the Kingston Powerhouse Historic Precinct will be retained, including the 1948 Switch Room ("Chapel") and the newly designed Kingston Arts Precinct will offer locals and visitors new ways of enjoying the heritage assets and places.
- Arts organisations moving into the precinct include Craft ACT, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Megalo Print Studio, Canberra Glassworks, M16 Art Space and Photo Access.
- Once completed, ACT Government assets will include the arts facilities, artists accommodation, public car park and outdoor events space. artsACT will be the precinct manager for a period of 5 years in the first instance.
- Initial community and stakeholder engagement took place during 2019, with multiple meetings held with the Community Panel, National Capital Design Review Panel and the ACT Heritage Council during second half of 2020.
- The project design has not progressed as far as originally anticipated and is delayed. SLA and artsACT are working closely with arts organisations impacted by this delay to address their concerns and offer support.

Key Information:

- In 2019, an agreement was signed with Geocon to deliver the highly anticipated project on behalf of ACT Government. Since then, the project has not progressed as anticipated.
- A number of circumstances arose during 2020 causing project delays, including site specific planning, heritage and infrastructure requirements increasing complexity in responding to impact assessment processes.

- The preparation of the design in response to engagement and consultation activities was delayed and revised drawings were submitted to SLA in late 2020. The delay in submission significantly impacted agreed timelines to achieve development approvals by mid 2021.
- The Suburban Land Agency has undertaken a project review and will continue the design development of the current proposal and will undertake community consultation in the coming months. The Agency will re-convene community panel meetings to re-establish engagement and inform interested community groups of the review progress.
- SLA is currently reviewing the project milestones to establish a realistic project delivery program. The Development Application for the Estate Development Plan lodgment is anticipated in the second half of 2022.

Background Information

- The ACT Government has approved a budget of up to \$77.9m for the Kingston Arts Precinct development works as part of the urban renewal delivery of the Kingston Foreshore by the Suburban Land Agency.
- The budget includes around \$50m for the purpose built arts facilities for resident organisations and other Territory Assets, including public carpark and public domain.
- The total investment in the project by the ACT Government will be confirmed once all development approvals have been received and prior to project construction commencement.
- The statutory approvals for the project will take approximately two years from late 2021. This will include an Estate Development Plan and Development Applications for the built form.
- Considering the heritage assets and contamination of the site and potential electrical infrastructure relocation, an Environmental Impact Assessment is very likely to be required. After all DAs are approved, construction of the Arts Precinct and the carpark is expected to take another two years.
- An updated Conservation Management Plan for the Kingston Powerhouse Historic Precinct is being developed, giving appropriate protection for this important site.
- artsACT and SLA are currently working with Heritage ACT on the drafting of the Conservation Management Plan for the Powerhouse Heritage Precinct. New built form design will progress once heritage policies are in place and there is certainty in electrical infrastructure relocation requirements.

ISSUE: SINGLE RESIDENTIAL SALES ACTIVITY 2020-21

Talking points:

- Amidst COVID-19 and a time of economic uncertainty, 2020-21 was a record-breaking year for Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) land sales.
- This positive outcome can be attributed to a number of factors including; pent-up market demand following the initial wave of COVID-19 in the first half of 2020, a range of blocks across multiple estates, record low interest rates, ACT Government stamp duty concessions, the Commonwealth's HomeBuilder program, as well as other Agency-led incentives including a limited time landscape rebate promotion across build-ready land and an energy rebate in the suburb of Whitlam.
- Strong marketing and customer nurturing strategies also contributed to a high level of sales enquiries and conversions. To manage the volume of customer interest and ensure an equitable and transparent approach to land sales, the ballot method of sale was implemented across new single residential land releases in both Taylor and Whitlam.
- Put and Call Option Deeds allow the builder to access a block of land in order to secure a buyer (by entering into a house and land package). Stamp duty is payable on completion of a contract for sale by the buyer.
 - Under the terms and conditions of the Deed a builder must not require the Nominee to pay a fee for securing the block or require more than the purchase price specified by the Agency or obtain a monetary benefit from the Nominee other than constructing a dwelling on the block.

Key Information

Sales and releases of single residential land

- During 2020-21 the Agency exchanged **1,525** single residential and compact blocks across its estates in Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley, including the new estate of Whitlam.
- The Agency released **1,101** new single residential and compact blocks during 2020-21 in Taylor and Throsby in Gungahlin, and Whitlam in the Molonglo Valley.
- Over the last two years, the proportion of blocks being taken up by purchasers other than builders has been around 85-90%.

Background Information

- The Agency's website advertises all land available.
- In accordance with the EPSDD Valuations Policy and SLA Valuations Procedure reserve prices are set for all land prior to the sales event, based on at least two independent valuations.

ISSUE: COMPOSITION OF MARKET – WHO IS BUYING LAND

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) sells detached single residential blocks to both the general public and builders.
- The market for detached single residential blocks in the ACT has seen unprecedented demand during 2020-21, with the Agency selling a record number of blocks to customers.
- In the 2020-21 financial year, 1,400 single residential blocks were exchanged by the Agency. Builders secured around 14% of those blocks, mainly through Put and Call options, which included those builders who are part of the Whitlam Display Village.
- The majority of blocks released by the Agency have gone to individuals, couples and families.
- There was an increase in interest from builders during 2020-21 reflecting improved economic conditions and market confidence. Builders have been attracted to Put and Call options which allows them to secure a block and work with customers on a house and land package.

Key Information

- The Agency has had high demand on all land releases. The majority of registrations were made up of individuals, couples and families, not builders.
- Builders are required to purchase land in the same manner as the general public, through a ballot, book to buy, auction or Over the Counter. However, occasionally the Agency may offer blocks exclusively to partner builders of the Whitlam Display Village.
 - In 2020-21 there were 41 blocks released to Whitlam Display Village builders.

Background Information

- Pre-qualified builders can enter into a Put and Call Option Deeds, allowing them to begin designing and promoting house and land packages to buyers, providing more options. The deeds are used by Builders (as the grantee) to secure the right to purchase the land, enter into a house and land package, then nominate a new buyer to enter into the Contract for Sale of the land.
 - Builders are not able to charge a fee for the block nor increase the price of the block that has been determined by the Suburban Land Agency.

ISSUE: SALES STRATEGIES DURING COVID-19

Talking points:

- In support of the ACT Government's policies and procedures to limit the spread of COVID-19, the Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) has been proactive in adhering to applicable restrictions.
- The Agency's focus has been on the its staff and customer's health and safety. This has included a strong focus on compliance with official public health directives.
- The Agency used a range of sales processes to release land to various markets during 2020-21 in response to changing restrictions and market conditions. These included:
 - Book to Buy
 - Auctions
 - Tenders
 - Over the Counter
- All sales documents were available via the Agency website and in some cases the Tenders ACT website. For events where there were restrictions in place, couriers were used to deliver and pick up documentation and electronic banking was required for deposits on exchanged blocks. Sales agents were contactable by phone or email for further information. Subject to lockdown restrictions and social distancing requirements, customers could also arrange a private appointment either at the agent's office or onsite.

Key Information

- Book to Buy – Single residential releases were undertaken through an amended sales mechanism called 'Book to Buy'. The process comprised a number of steps, including: customers registering online for the event; allocation of an appointment time through a registration process or by a random ballot draw; and contact by an appointed sales agent over telephone to potentially select a block. The revised process avoided clients attending a physical event and limited contact between parties. The Book to Buy sales method was used for two releases in Whitlam (November 2020, March 2021) and the final release of blocks in Throsby (September 2020.)
- Auction – Auctions can be used for the sale of packaged compact or attached lots, commercial, multi-unit and industrial sites. During 2020-21 there were a number of auctions (largely late in the financial year) for sites in Hume, Taylor, Whitlam and Gungahlin Town Centre.
- Tenders – Due to restrictions on public gatherings or other COVID-19 related issues, traditional auctions were not possible or considered appropriate at some stages in 2020-21. As a result some sites originally scheduled for auction were released by tender (eg Hume industrial sites, and various multi-unit sites in Taylor, Whitlam, Coombs and Greenway). Tenders were also used for certain sites where there were significant place-making or design outcomes required, or potentially if the site was a final release in an estate.

- Over the Counter – The available inventory of single residential blocks across a number of estates was sold using the Over the Counter (OTC) method during 2020-21. A release of new blocks in Taylor was also undertaken in November 2020 using the OTC method based on market feedback and activity. Customers were advised through email distribution and advertising of blocks available, and were required to contact the appointed agent to arrange an appointment to discuss the purchase of a block and attend a physical, social distanced appointment at the office of the agent.

Background Information

- The Agency will continue to closely monitor the market and the impacts of COVID-19 on future land releases.

ISSUE: SALES AGENTS

Talking points:

- The Territory maintains a panel of Commercial and Residential Agents (the Panel) which is utilised to provide professional services to the Suburban Land Agency (Agency), consistent with Procurement guidelines.
- The Panel is used to ensure that appropriately qualified and experienced property professionals facilitate land sales on behalf of the Territory. This includes promotion, distribution and discussion of sales information, provision of market advice both for the Territory and potential buyers, and facilitation of questions and responses to ensure all parties receive the same information.
- To ensure the Territory receives best value for money, requests for proposals are sought from appropriately qualified firms on the Panel through a competitive process. The process is managed by Agency staff to ensure compliance with legislative and Agency requirements.

Key Information

- The firms on the Panel and their areas of speciality are detailed in the table below:

Areas of speciality	Firm(s)
Small residential sales	Laurie Scheele Real Estate
All residential sales	Luton Properties
Commercial sales	JLL, Knight Frank
All sales types	Civium, Colliers, Independent Property Group

- The total value of the Panel for the term of up to five years (initial three-year term plus two possible one-year extensions) is \$25 million. The Panel will expire at the end of June 2022.
- Proposals are assessed by a committee consisting of at least one member external to the Agency in order to determine the best value for money, with a recommendation provided to the Delegate for endorsement.
- As a result of the competitive nature of the market, a range of value-adds may be provided by the agents, including:
 - Marketing exposure to the firm's marketing portals (websites and data bases);
 - Auctioneering services,
 - Listing on online sites such as allhomes.com.au, realcommercial.com.au and realestate.com.au;
 - National roadshows;
 - Market reports and supporting data showcasing the site's opportunities; and
 - Venue and equipment hire.

Background information

- Sales agents act on behalf of the Agency in the same manner they would when selling a private home. The agents may provide the following services:

- Respond to enquiries received via email, direct call, direct contact face to face (agent will book in an appointment), open sales suites, and the Agency website;
- Follow up all enquiries and communicating with potential buyers;
- Attend sales suite(s) as required;
- Attend Agency or Mingle events to talk to any potential buyers;
- Book appointments for site inspections (if site is still under construction will contact Agency to arrange access to the blocks, if appropriate);
- Support and manage sales events i.e. auctions, ballots;
- Complete sales instructions/holding notices and book appointments for exchange;
- Follow up and monitoring that exchanges occurs and reschedule appointments as required;
- Provide regular reports;
- Provide market feedback and provide advice to Agency regarding market conditions, methods of sale, and development of sales strategies reflecting current market conditions;
- Send out regular EDMs to the agent's data base; and
- Negotiate after an auction if a property is passed in.

ISSUE: **MARKETING**

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) marketing team supports the Development Delivery groups across a number of areas. These are:
 - **Residential:** increasing consideration of our existing estates as the preferred choice for living and investing in order to drive sales, and creating awareness of new estates to build interest in buying.
 - **Commercial, Industrial and Urban Renewal:** creating awareness of new commercial land for sale, and increasing perceptions of Agency as a trusted seller of high value properties.
 - **Corporate brand:** increasing recognition of the Agency brand as a trusted partner in place delivery, and increasing public and stakeholder awareness of our roles and responsibilities as an ACT Government agency.
- The marketing team's key performance indicators are:
 - Lead generation and intent to purchase, such as emails, contact information of prospective customers, and visits to events and the sales office.
 - Awareness, which includes brand familiarity, media reach, advertising impressions, visits to website, and content views.
 - Engagement, such as the number of social media interactions (comments, shares), and the eDM open rate.
- On top of delivering marketing campaigns and relevant collateral, the team also manages the Agency's digital platforms (website, social media and advertising) and provides design, publishing, mapping services and videography capacity across the agency.

Key Information:

- The marketing team works with a number of external creative and media partners, including:
 - Crea8ive
 - Tilt
 - Ogilvy
 - Tank
 - Signlime Signage

Background Information:

- The Agency was advised by the Independent Reviewer in September 2020 that it is satisfied that all Agency land for sale marketing campaigns are part of routine advertising and therefore are exempt from the process.

ISSUE: LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Talking points:

Legal Service Panel

- The ACT Government Solicitor (ACTGS) has established a new legal services panel under which outsourcing arrangements for the Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) are conducted.
- Consistent with the *Law Officers (General) Legal Services Directions 2012* (Legal Services Directions), the Agency either utilises the ACT Government Solicitor (ACTGS) for its legal work, or the ACTGS engages external legal service providers for the Agency as part of the Territory wide legal panel.
- The panel of legal service providers is managed by ACTGS.

Key Information

- The legal services for single residential block conveyancing and a number of major site sales the subject of engagement during the 2020-21 financial year were provided by the following firms:
 - Griffin Legal, Meyer Vandenberg, Clayton Utz, King & Wood Mallesons and the ACT Government Solicitor's Office.

Background Information

- The following services may be provided by legal service providers:
 - Provision of the Sales Documentation for Conveyance including Contracts, Special Conditions, Project Delivery Deeds, Requests for Tender, Ballot Conditions, etc.;
 - Legal advice regarding aspects of the sales documentation, amendments to documents, issuing addendums and notices as required;
 - Responses to question about matters raised during a sale process;
 - Verification of the legal status of each registering entity, including through company searches;
 - Execution of the sales documents;
 - Attendance and witnessing of the Ballot Draw as an independent observer;
 - If the sale is via Ballot, attendance at Block Selection Day(s), including:
 - Provision of legal advice to the Agency relating to eligibility disputes and other Ballot issues;
 - Assistance to the Agency regarding Ballot conditions, the contract for sale and conveyance processes as contracts are exchanged; and
 - Witnessing of statutory declarations as required;
 - If the Sale is over the counter, accepting appointments and facilitating exchange;
 - Preparation of Final Crown Lease and Issue of Crown Lease for settlement; and
 - Management of Settlement of Contract for Sale including any disputes or requests for extension or rescission.

ISSUE: SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY WEBSITE DATA

Talking Points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) website had 208,263 users visit the website in the 2020-21 financial year. This outcome exceeded the Statement of Intent (SOI) target by 104%. The following factors contributed to the increase in visits:
 - Quarter 1: Government incentives such as the stamp duty concession and the Agency landscape rebate drove significant interest in build-ready land sales. Market confidence was also apparent following the initial impacts of Covid-19 in the first half of 2020.
 - Quarter 2: The spring release of Whitlam and Taylor single residential blocks and promotion of Taylor and Whitlam land rent releases resulted in a strong increase in user engagement on the website.
 - Quarter 3: The highest web traffic for the year occurred in February 2021 due to the 3rd Whitlam land release, on-going land rent ballot and the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme mini site going live. During this period 29,580 users visited the website.
 - Quarter 4: Traffic levels were driven by the industry as commercial releases were dominant in this quarter e.g. Belconnen Lakeshore, Hume, Whitlam and Taylor packaged lots.
- The Agency has over 77,135 total email subscribers to our mailing lists. This exceeded the SOI target by 33,808 or 78%.
- Q3 generated the highest number of subscribers acquired across the year with 15,395. This is consistent with the level of interest and visits to the website.

ISSUE: MINGLE PROGRAM IN 2020-21

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) continues to implement its community development program Mingle, which is designed to build vibrant local communities by connecting residents within new greenfield estates.
- The program was active in the suburbs of Taylor and Throsby and launched in Whitlam in early 2021. Programs in Moncrieff and Molonglo Valley formally concluded in June 2021.
- The program aims to achieve a number of social objectives based around the concept of encouraging new residents to feel part of the community and become involved in community life and activities.
- Mingle ultimately assists residents to create networks, groups and programs that will become self-sustaining. With a particular emphasis on creating more resident-led initiatives and providing mentoring to residents.
- A summary of the Molonglo Valley and Moncrieff programs highlighted the success of those programs:

Molonglo Valley

- Since 2013, Molonglo Valley Mingle welcomed over 25,000 residents to community events and activities.
- Community connections were kickstarted through more than 545 events over seven years.
- Molonglo Valley Mingle's biggest year was 2019 with over 6,000 residents meeting other community members.

Moncrieff

- Since 2016, Moncrieff Mingle welcomed almost 7,000 residents at community events and activities.
- Community connections were kickstarted with around 100 events over five years.
- Moncrieff Mingle's biggest year was 2018 with around 1,400 residents meeting other community members.

Key information:

- Throughout 2020-21, preparation and planning for Mingle events and activities was consistently monitored to ensure that they adhered to applicable COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines.
- Whitlam Mingle held its first event in early May 2021 to welcome future residents to the Molonglo Valley suburb. The event followed the program launch in April 2021 whereby an online presence on Facebook and the Agency website was launched. Whitlam Mingle will undertake regular communication until community members become suburb residents.

- Throsby and Taylor Mingle are continuing successfully in Gungahlin. Whilst Throsby will look to wind down in 2022, Taylor is gaining momentum as the suburb matures and land sales are finalised in the suburb.
- The Mingle program for Molonglo Valley and Moncrieff both formally concluded at the end of June 2021. However, Mingle staff continue to support the community by ensuring residents are directed to other parts of government for assistance, given the program no longer has an active presence. Working with non-government organisations, including Northside Community Services, Capital Region Community Services and Woden Community Service will achieve this, as well as support the community through fostering ongoing relationships.
- Mingle partners with the local community service organisations including, Capital Region Community Services and Woden Community Service to provide support and enhance the program and community engagements.
- Mingle collaborates with a large number of stakeholders to engage and mentor residents as well as deliver an informed program to enhance connected communities.
- The program encourages support from local volunteers which assists with information transfer, skills building and community engagement.

Background information:

- During 2020-21, Mingle continued to support various ACT Government messages, as well as community messages, sharing them through Mingle online and traditional communication channels. Some examples include email, Facebook, e-newsletters and letterbox drops about education, recycling, library services, transport and environment.
- Events and activities included community coffee crawls, engagement barbecues, park naming events, music performances, resident mentoring opportunities, cultural celebrations, Floriade Reimagined and the 'Spring in your suburb' campaign that was rolled out across all Mingle suburbs.
- Mingle costs are funded from the project budget for each suburb. These costs are usually allocated over three to six years depending on the size and timing of the estate development.
- Mingle supported various initiatives within its community development and assistance program. Total funds of almost \$29,000 were provided to resident groups and for resident-led activities in the Molonglo Valley, Moncrieff, Taylor and Throsby.

ISSUE: **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (Agency) manages stakeholder and community engagement during development delivery, sale, demolition or construction of sites.
- This is based on the *EPSDD Governance Framework for Land Release and Development*.
- Stakeholder and community engagement helps to inform community preferences for particular sites and places for development proposals and can assist in establishing the non-financial objectives of a land release.
- The key engagement projects that took place in the 2020-21 financial year were:
 - Belconnen Town Centre land release sites;
 - Coombs and Wright land release sites;
 - Moncrieff and Taylor commercial sites; and
 - Molonglo Stage 3 – Lower Deep Creek infrastructure works.

Key Information

Indigenous engagement

- The Agency continued to work on developing relationships with the Aboriginal community, including stakeholders from the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB).
- In November 2020, the first stage of the suburb of Whitlam was officially opened. The event featured a welcome to country and interpretation of the local area's Aboriginal history, a cultural exchange also took place whereby the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Yvette Berry, was presented with a coolamon (traditional Aboriginal vessel) of Whitlam soil to signify handing the land back.
- Specific engagement with Ngunnawal Traditional Owners and stakeholders was also undertaken with the assistance of a specialist consultant resulting in a Statement of Cultural Significance and input to the Belconnen Town Centre Place Design Brief.
 - The two-phased engagement program took place from November 2020 to March 2021.

Greenfield engagement

- Community feedback helped shape the process for releasing four key sites in Coombs and Wright. Feedback was sought via an online survey from February 2021 and the establishment of a community panel in March 2021. The engagement provided valuable input which resulted in the development of site release intentions and a *Village Design & Place Framework* announced in June 2021. The Framework will guide the successful purchasers of the sites.
- In June 2021, engagement activities were launched to inform guidelines and assessment criteria associated with the sale of three key sites released for commercial development in Moncrieff and Taylor.

Urban engagement

- A key community engagement project for 2020-21 was three sites in the Belconnen Town Centre comprising of Emu Inlet Waterfront, the 'Circus Site' and Lathlain Street. The goal was to develop a Place Design Brief to establish the non-financial objectives of the land release. Future design and development proposals for each site will be assessed against the design brief it as part of the land sale process.

Background Information

- The Agency also undertook community and stakeholder information and engagement with regard to land releases or infrastructure projects, including:
 - Coombs pathway upgrades;
 - Calwell;
 - Giralang;
 - Scullin;
 - Phillip;
 - Lane Poole Place in Yarralumla;
 - Ginninderry (West Belconnen); and
 - Whitlam – draft design for the Kama Nature Reserve Buffer.

ISSUE: SUSTAINABILITY

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (Agency) is focused on delivering environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes.
- Some of the practical ways in which the Agency has delivered sustainability outcomes in 2020-21 include:
 - Developing a *Climate Wise Garden Designs* booklet, which includes landscape plans, gardening information and useful resources designed to inspire and support residents of new suburbs in creating climate-wise gardens;
 - Offering landscape rebates in Coombs, Throsby, Taylor and Wright to encourage purchasers of new blocks to landscape their front gardens and plant appropriate species to support biodiversity;
 - Completing a pilot of living infrastructure measures to support tree health in Whitlam, including permeable paving, kerb inlets, rain gardens, larger tree pits, native turf and soil moisture probes;
 - Continuing to provide a Home Energy Rebate Package for eligible buyers in Whitlam, which makes \$10,000 available for households who comply with a number of requirements to build a solar-powered, highly efficient, all-electric home;
 - Investigating options for the next stage of Jacka (Jacka 2) to be an all-electric and zero emissions suburb, including partnering with the ANU and Evoenergy to assess the feasibility as well as engage with industry stakeholders on the design of a community-scale battery;
 - Undertaking research regarding potential implications and opportunities for the future commercial centre site in the Molonglo Valley to be all-electric;
 - Partnering with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to establish a project to optimise erosion and sediment control measure to improve water quality in Whitlam;
 - Encouraging reuse of materials in the Agency's estates by reducing the amount of cut and fill in bulk earth works;
 - Planting additional trees and retaining mature trees wherever possible; and
 - Incorporating the principles of water sensitive urban design in new estates to reduce reliance on potable water, and to reduce the amount of pollutants entering local ecosystems.

Key Information:

- The Agency has been working with other agencies, including the City Renewal Authority, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and Transport Canberra City Services, to ensure alignment with Whole of Government policies.

- The Agency recognises it will play a key role helping the Territory achieve a city of net zero emissions by 2045. The Agency continues to develop its strategic approach to delivery of environmental and social sustainability.

Background Information

- The Agency has adopted a revised Sustainability Strategy for the period 2021-25, which responds to the latest ACT Government policies and priorities, while setting ambitious objectives around the built and natural environment. The Strategy consists of four key themes that incorporate elements of social and environmental sustainability, including:
 - Resilient Communities;
 - Zero Emissions Suburbs;
 - Responsible Consumption & Production; and
 - Healthy, Prosperous & Inclusive Places.

ISSUE: ROLE AND FUNCTION OF BUILT FORM AND DIVESTMENT GROUP

Talking points:

- The Built Form and Divestment Group, under the direction of the Executive Director, Built Form and Divestment, is responsible for delivering Place Management, Housing Choice and Built Form programs with a series of projects and initiatives, from conception to completion, that align with the strategic goals of the Suburban Land Agency.
- Together the Built Form and Divestment Group delivers:
 - innovative, high-quality built form programs and demonstration precincts
 - housing choice initiatives
 - land management and custodianship
 - land development including place visioning, place creation, place development, and place management
 - divestment of surplus ACT Government properties.
- Throughout the activities of the Built Form and Divestment Group, there is a focus on the importance of place through demonstrating the Agency's vision and emphasising innovation and sustainability, in partnership with others.

Key Information

- The Built Form team's work includes:
 - undertaking strategic and operational analysis of development options, triple-bottom-line feasibility testing and innovative delivery models to realise best-practice built form projects
 - integrating social and environmental sustainability objectives into the design development and delivery method in line with the Agency's Statement of Intent and managing its delivery through to project completion
 - delivering complex land sale tenders and design competitions to foster industry innovation to deliver on the ACT Government's ambitious urban, social and environmental policies
 - assisting the Agency's delivery teams to improve non-financial development outcomes within the timeframes of the Indicative Land Release program.
- The Housing Choice team's work includes:
 - supporting the Agency's delivery of key priorities relating to housing choice, consistent with the non-financial objectives in the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017*
 - developing a strategic approach to affordability for the Agency, and for identifying and implementing innovative housing solutions, such as Build-to-Rent, Shared Equity and Rent to Buy – including developing and implementing the Agency's Housing Affordability Strategic Action Plan

- engaging across the Agency and with other parts of the ACT Government to develop and implement housing options in a collaborative way
- monitoring and coordinating the delivery of affordable, public and community housing targets and administering the ACT Government's Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.
- The Place Management teams's work includes:
 - creating and maintaining a high quality, clean, safe and positive experience on Agency projects to support the customer and community experience including:
 - stakeholder consultation and liaison to manage positive relationships with other key government agencies regarding landscaping and other key initiatives and assets
 - site security, surveillance and maintenance of land being sold by the Agency, including measures such as perimeter and internal security fencing, CCTV cameras, third party security patrols, horticultural and general maintenance and Estate Officer On-Call* functions;
 - liaising with third party builders working in Agency estates, and raising and resolving issues that may arise concerning containment of litter and encroachment on Agency land (parks and open space)
 - identifying any WHS issues on Agency estates, and reporting to the relevant government agency
 - managing the Agency's rural properties, in compliance with their lease or grazing conditions, and implementing Land Management Agreements created by The Conservator of Flora and Fauna
 - preparing and monitoring the Agency's Bushfire Operations Plan, including seeking endorsement from the ACTESA Commissioner
 - supporting Agency events related to land sales and community creation, including coordination of open space presentation maintenance and specialist advice at community events
 - providing technical specialist advice to the Agency including landscape architecture, arboriculture and horticulture
 - custodianship transfer including licence and other relevant documentation.

* Place Management provides an On-Call function for the agency, Mon-Fri, from 5pm to 8am and Fri-Mon, from 5pm to 8am.

This role and service provides a critical after-hours service to the agency in the protection and management of land custodian sites, where there is the potential for un-authorised access to sites and public safety issues on estates.

ISSUE: AFFORDABLE, PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HOUSING

Talking points:

- In 2020–21, the SLA continued to release land to support the ACT Government's housing targets for affordable, public and community housing. Sites for a total of 345 dwellings were released against the target of 302 dwellings. Sites in Kenny and Casey with housing targets totaling 45 dwellings were not ready for release and will be carried over into future releases.
- The SLA has started preparing for the 2021-22 housing targets, based on drafts which have been circulated against the draft Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP). The ILRP and associated housing targets are awaiting final approval by Government, anticipated to occur late October 2021.
- Once the housing targets are approved, they will be published via a Notifiable Instrument under the City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017.
- The SLA is progressing measures to improve outcomes for the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme, with an initial emphasis on increasing registration, eligibility and purchase rates. Preliminary changes have been focused on an enhanced marketing and communications strategy, improving access to information for prospective buyers and strategically aligning buyer preferences with product offerings.

Key Information:

2020-21 Housing Targets

- The below table outlines results for the 2020-21 housing targets. Land for 345 dwellings was released against the target of land for 302 dwellings:

Suburb	Block/ Section or Location Description	Target: Affordable Housing	Actual: Affordable Housing	Target: Public Housing	Actual: Public Housing	Target: Community Housing	Actual: Community Housing
Casey*	Blocks 12 and 13, Section 132	10	0	-	-	-	-
Gungahlin	Block 3 Section 249	14	14	-	-	-	-
Gungahlin	Block 5 Section 249	37	37	3	3	-	-

Suburb	Block/ Section or Location Description	Target: Affordable Housing	Actual: Affordable Housing	Target: Public Housing	Actual: Public Housing	Target: Community Housing	Actual: Community Housing
Gungahlin	Block 6 Section 249	20	20	5	5	-	-
Belconnen	Blocks 26 & 30 Section 52 & Block 1 Section 151	50	50	25	25	-	-
Moncrieff	Block 2 Section 22	16	16	-	-	-	-
Coombs	Block 1 Section 60	17	17	-	-	-	-
Coombs	Block 2 Section 36	3	3	-	-	-	-
Coombs	Block 1 Section 21	30	30	-	-	-	-
Kenny**		15	0	10	0	10	0
Wright	Block 1 Section 39	27	27	10	10	-	-
Totals:		239	214	53	43	10	0
Land Rent Releases^	Taylor and Whitlam	0	82	-	-	-	-
Other Releases^^	Wright and Bonner	-	-	0	6	-	-
Total outcome		239	296	53	49	10	0

Notes:

* The release of these sites have been delayed. The target will continue to apply to the site until it is released.

** The release of this site was not achieved as the site is not in the Agency's control and therefore the release was delayed. The assigned target will carry over against Kenny until the associated release takes place.

^44 single residential blocks in Taylor and 38 in Whitlam were released as part of Land Rent ballots.

^^there was no target for public housing assigned to these sites, however an additional 6 single residential blocks across Wright and Bonner were released to Housing ACT.

Affordable Home Purchase Scheme

- In 2018-2019 and 2019-20, land was released to builders for Affordable House & Land Packages in Whitlam and Taylor. The tender for 105 sites in Whitlam concluded in December 2020, with the first Affordable House & Land Packages offered to eligible buyers (as off the plan purchases) in May 2021. The second stage of the Taylor tender for 78 sites is anticipated to be finalised in September 2021 with the release of Affordable House & Land Packages to eligible buyers commencing towards the end of 2021.

- Following is a summary of Affordable Home Purchase Scheme properties offered to eligible buyers through ballot processes in 2020-21:

Suburb	No. of Dwellings	Dwelling Type	Ballot Release Date	Dwellings Purchased by Eligible Buyers
Taylor	11	Townhouses: 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom	July 2020	1
Coombs	20	Townhouses: 2 bedrooms + multipurpose, 2 bathrooms	Sept 2020	3
Taylor	15	Townhouses: 2 Bedroom	December 2020	0
Taylor	7	Townhouses: 2 Bedroom	January 2021	1
Phillip	74	Apartments: 2 Bedroom	February 2021	TBC*
Coombs	42	Apartments: 1, 1+study and 2 bedrooms	March 2021	9
Wright	32	Apartments: 1 and 2 bedrooms	March 2021	0
Taylor	6	Townhouses: 2 bedrooms	March 2021	2 *
Gungahlin	5	Apartments: 1 bedroom	May 2021	0
Whitlam	16	Terrace Houses: 2 and 3 bedrooms	May 2021	TBC*
Taylor	9	Apartments: 1 and 1+study bedrooms	June 2021	TBC*

**sale process is ongoing*

Background Information:

- The SLA is committed to continuing to support the implementation of the *ACT Housing Strategy* including by delivering affordable, public and community housing through the release of land. This commitment is included in the SLA's internal Housing Affordability Strategic Action Plan, which was endorsed by the SLA Board in December 2020.
- Sites identified for Affordable Home Purchase are sold with contractual requirements in place to ensure the affordable housing dwellings meet specified design requirements and will be offered to eligible buyers as part of the ACT Government's Affordable Home Purchase Scheme.
- Sites for public housing dwellings are released to Housing ACT for the development of public housing. Sites for community housing dwellings are typically released to registered Community Housing Providers or are released to Housing ACT to become community housing in the future.
- Since the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme was transferred to the SLA in December 2019, the SLA has worked to increase the number of registrations and improve the user experience. More than 2800 people have sought to learn more about the scheme through registering their interest on the database. Of these, over 570 applicants have applied to participate in the scheme (through submitting their paperwork) and more than 515 have been approved as eligible. 19 have been assessed as ineligible. The balance of applicants (who have not already purchased) are either under assessment or pending assessment due to outstanding paperwork.

ISSUE: BUILD TO RENT

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to improving housing availability, diversity and choice and is considering pilot Build-to-Rent projects with affordable rental.
- The Build-to-Rent model focusses on increasing the supply of long-term rental housing by the construction of multi-unit dwellings that are rented out rather than being sold. It adds to diversity of housing choice by providing additional opportunities that complement existing private rental and public and community housing options.
- The Suburban Land Agency plans to invite proposals from the market to build and operate long-term rental accommodation, with an affordable rental component, on land release sites.
- Part of Block 2, Section 57 (Turner) and Lawson Stage 2 have been identified as potential sites to include in the market sounding process.
- The market sounding process will provide a broad opportunity for the Build-to-Rent market to express their interest in developing Build-to-Rent projects in Canberra. It will enable the ACT Government to:
 - ascertain private sector and community housing provider appetite for developing and operating Build-to-Rent properties in Canberra
 - consider incentives or subsidies that may be required to include an affordable rental component in a proposal
 - identify any legislative changes that would encourage development of Build-to-Rent in the ACT.
- The ACT Government will use the market sounding process to inform its decision-making, assist in the assessment of risks and issues relating to the project and develop project requirements, sale options and approaches.
- Build-to-Rent housing has the potential to provide long lasting community benefits, with greater housing choice for tenants who would have access to high-quality dwellings, in a stable rental environment. Increased rental security offers wider social and economic benefits, with tenants better able to establish themselves in a community.

Key Information:

- The *ACT Housing Strategy 2018* has put in place a suite of measures to meet the Territory's diverse and changing housing needs.
- The Economic Recovery through Social Housing package included a commitment to design and pilot a Build-to-Rent project. Build-to-Rent aligns with goals in the *ACT Housing Strategy* to grow rental supply and encourage affordable rental, particularly for second income quintile households.
- In addition, the 10th Parliamentary and Governing Agreement includes a commitment to boost the supply of affordable rental dwellings. If it were to go ahead, a pilot Build-to-Rent project could contribute to the delivery of 600 additional affordable rental houses by 2025-26.

- Build-to-Rent is well established overseas and while take-up has been slower in Australia, Governments in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have recently gone to the market seeking proposals that include the supply of affordable rental, and in the case of New South Wales, public housing.
- To aid future decision making and to progress with further consideration of Build-to-Rent in the ACT, a consultant was engaged to provide expert advice and to undertake research of current policy challenges, financial entity appetite, feasibility analysis and considerations on market-rate and affordable Build-to-Rent and advise on a process for the release of land for Build-to-Rent. This was finalised in June 2021 and the findings will be used to inform Government on undertaking a Build-to-Rent pilot program and provide a framework for a market sounding and sales process.

ISSUE: RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is responsible for the management of 15 parcels of land.
- These include 7 rural leases, 7 unleased land, and 1 property in NSW.
- Nine properties purchased between 2014 and 2017 were subject to an ACT Auditor-General Performance Audit which was completed in 2018.
- During September and October 2019, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held public hearings for their inquiry into the findings of the Auditor-General's Report. The main areas of focus included the subdivision and purchase of Fairvale, the current tenancy arrangements at Milapuru and the purchase and leasing arrangements at Round Hill (also known as Wintergarden).

Key Information:

- In accordance with the Auditor-General's Report No. 8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra, and as reported in the Suburban Land Agency Annual Report 2019-20 the SLA has;
 - Finalised Land Management Agreements (LMA) for all rural land with Crown leases purchased by the former Land Development Agency.
 - Has an approved Bushfire Operations Plan, from the ESA Commissioner, guiding land management obligations on the Agency's land.
 - Undertaken strategic analysis of options for the daily management of purchased rural properties including considering use and ongoing management at a larger scale with a long term view. The preferred option is implemented on a case by case basis as new arrangements are required.
 - Collaborated with EPSDD Leasing and PCS for requirements for the Management of Rural Subleases, Licences and Procurement, while executing contracts for the management of all rural land.

Background Information

- Table below provides details of each property.

Property	Leased/ Unleased	LMA Status	Management	BOP	Income	Purchase Date	Purchase amount
Glenloch	Unleased	N/A	Licence	Current	No Fee	21/01/2013	\$10,000,273.29 inc gst
Lands End	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$10,110 p/a inc gst	30/06/2015	\$3,000,000
Milapuru	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$15,000 p/a inc gst	31/07/2015	\$7,000,000
Fairvale	Unleased	N/A	Licence	Current	No Fee	24/11/2015	\$3,100,000

Huntly	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$76,619.57 per quarter (\$1,090,995.52owing)	08/04/2016	\$10,000,000
Round Hill Station	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$1-dollar p/a if asked for.	30/08/2016	\$4,000,000
Winslade	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$1-dollar p/a if asked for.	30/06/2017	\$7,500,000
Pine Ridge	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$1-dollar p/a if asked for.	31/07/2017	\$4,600,000
Horse Park Homestead	Leased	Current	Sublease	Current	\$1-dollar p/a if asked for.	22/06/2011	\$1,450,000
Burrabaroo, Williamsdale	Leased	Current	Letter of agreement	Current	No Fee	17/04/2015 Transfer from Icon to Territory	\$3,000,000
Wallaroo Road (NSW)	Freehold	N/A	Licence	Current	No Fee	05/11/2015 Transfer from Commonwealth DOF	\$950,000
The Vines	Unleased	N/A	Managed by SLA	Current	N/A	30/06/2018	\$2,200,000

- The following properties are no longer under the management of SLA.

Wagtail Park (Block 1635)	Leased	N/A	Leased by Transgrid	N/A	N/A	June 2018	\$942,933.75
Wagtail Park (Block 1636)	Unleased	N/A	Managed by Lessee of Wagtail Park	N/A	N/A	June 2018	\$66,825
Bonshaw	Transferred back to PCS	N/A	PCS	N/A	N/A	17 Sept 2017	\$1

ISSUE: LITIGATION – HUNTLY

Talking points:

HUNTLY

- On 4 January 2017 the LDA entered a 10-year sublease with Yass Plains for the management of the 1605-hectare Huntly rural property located either side of Uriarra Road 20km west of Canberra's CBD.
- Correspondence received from Yass Plains in September 2018 and February 2019 sought compensation from the SLA for present and future income losses, relating to issues with the properties water infrastructure, the reported carrying capacity of the land (Dry Sheep Equivalent), weed burden and condition of the main homestead.
- Yass Plains have not paid rent since April 2018, but continue to occupy and graze the land.
- Yass Plains and SLA have agreed to undertake a mediation process to resolve the outstanding issues.

Key Information:

Huntly

- [REDACTED]
- The SLA have endeavoured to work with Yass Plains to understand in detail their concerns around the property's infrastructure, since the issue was first raised in mid-2018.
- The SLA has completed a substantial remedial works program on the property, since 2018. This relates to water security for stock, including installing new river pumps, tanks, main lines, and concrete troughs throughout all grazing land on the property.
- [REDACTED]

ISSUE: NORTHBOURNE AVENUE CORRIDOR – FORMER ARI SITES

Talking points:

- On 30 June 2019 when the Commonwealth Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI) concluded there were two sites that remain unsold. These sites were:
 - **Former public housing Northbourne Flats Braddon and Turner**– Block 10 Section 8 Braddon and Block 2 Section 57 Turner.
 - **Former Macarthur House** – Block 28 Section 50 Lyneham

Block 10 Section 8 Braddon (Braddon Place)

- The Block 10 Section 8 Braddon site sold after auction for \$28 million with contracts exchanged on 10 July 2020. Settlement is expected on 30 April 2021.
- The purchaser of the site was JW Land.

Block 12 Section 115 Lyneham (Macarthur House)

- After not selling through a tender process the site was sold to Art Projects 9 Pty Ltd for \$19 million with contracts exchanged on 14 January 2021.

Key Information:

Block 10 Section 8 Braddon (Braddon Place)

- Block 10 Section 8 Braddon site was taken to market via auction on 30 June 2020.
- The site did not sell at auction but was sold after auction for \$28 million. Contracts exchanged on 10 July 2020. Settlement is expected on 30 April 2021.
- The purchaser of the site was JW Land who are developing several significant projects in Canberra including the award winning Campbell 5, Founders Lane Braddon and the former Northbourne Flats Lyneham public housing site.

Block 12 Section 115 Lyneham (Macarthur House)

- The former Macarthur House site was released to the market via tender with disclosed reserve of \$19m on 29 April 2020 and closed 13 August 2020 with no tenders received.
- Given ongoing interest in the site the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) Board in October 2020 agreed to place the block for sale over the counter.
- Art Projects 9 Pty Ltd is part of the Art Group which is developing the Soho project on Northbourne Avenue at Dickson.

Block 2 Section 57 Turner

- The release of Turner has been deferred to the 21/22 FY subject to a masterplanning process which will include a potential “Build to Rent” project.

Background Information

- The Territory received \$67.14 million in incentive payments from the Commonwealth, which is the full capped amount of funding that was allocated to the ACT under the Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI). The ARI Program was finalised on

30 June 2019 and two sites remained unsold, Northbourne Flats Braddon and Turner and Macarthur House.

- The Braddon (Block 10 Section 8) and Turner (Block 2 Section 57) sites were marketed as 'Braddon and Turner on Northbourne' in the 2018-19 financial year.
- The sites were released to the market through a tender process with a sale proposition for both sites to be purchased by a preferred tenderer. The sales process was terminated as the preferred tenderer failed to meet the reserve price.
- In consideration of broader Agency objectives, the agency identified an opportunity to release the Braddon site in the 19/20 FY through an auction process.

ISSUE: LAND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is responsible for the management of 15 parcels of land.
- These include 7 rural leases, 7 unleased land, and 1 property in NSW.
- Nine properties purchased between 2014 and 2017 were subject to an ACT Auditor-General Performance Audit which was completed in 2018.
- ‘Recommendation 6, Land Management Agreements’ of the Auditor-General’s Report No. 8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra required the SLA to work with The Conservator of Flora and Fauna to finalise and execute Land Management Agreements for all properties purchased in the Western Edge.
- ‘Recommendation 8, Planning and Contracting Land Management’ of the Auditor-General’s Report No. 8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra required the SLA to undertake a strategic analysis of its land management options and execute contracts for its management.

Key Information

- In accordance with the Auditor-General’s Report No. 8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra, and as reported in the Suburban Land Agency Annual Report 202-21 the SLA has;
 - Finalised Land Management Agreements (LMA) for all rural land with Crown leases purchased by the former Land Development Agency listed in the Audit.
 - Undertaken strategic analysis of options for the daily management of purchased rural properties including considering use and ongoing management at a larger scale with a long-term view. The preferred option is implemented on a case by case basis as new arrangements are required.
 - Collaborated with the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, following the recent Auditor-General’s Report Report No.1/2021 into Land Management Agreements, to review existing SLA LMA’s, and plan for updates/reviews.
 - Has an approved Bushfire Operations Plan, from the ESA Commissioner, guiding land management obligations (regarding fire fuel loads) on SLA land. The Bushfire Operations Plan is an integral component of the Land Management Agreement and is monitored closely by the Agency during bushfire season.
 - Established quarterly meetings with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) (Parks Conservation Service) to collaborate on the Directorate’s shared interest in rural and urban edge land.

Background Information

- Table below provides details of each property under the SLA's custodianship with Land Management Agreements in force.

Table of Properties owned by SLA with LMA's

Property	District	Land Management Agreement (LMA) in force	Term of LMA	LMA Due for Review**	Management	Bushfire Operations Plan (2019/20/21)
Lands End (Blocks 1591,1592,1593,1594,1595,1596,1597)	Belconnen	Yes	5 years (executed 30 November 2020)	2022/23	Sublease*	Current
Milapuru (Block 19)	Stromlo	Yes	5 years (executed 30 November 2020)	2022/23	Sublease*	Current
Huntly (Blocks 412,413,426,487,489)	Stromlo	Yes	5 years (executed 30 April 2020)	2025/26	Sublease	Current
Round Hill Station (Blocks 1492,1492,1587)	Belconnen	Yes	5 years (executed 19 September 2018)	2022/23	Sublease	Current
Winslade (Blocks 435,439,440,441,456,476)	Stromlo	Yes	No date of execution on LMA	2022/23	Sublease	Current
Pine Ridge (Block 1600)	Belconnen	Yes	No date of execution on LMA	2022/23	Sublease	Current
Horse Park Homestead (Block 766)	Gungahlin	Yes	5 years (executed January 2012)	2021/22	LicenceSublease	Current
Burrabaroo (Williamsdale) (Block 1470,1471)	Tuggeranong	Yes	5 years (executed 29 April 2016)	2021/22	Letter	Current

*Subleases for Lands End and Milapuru have 6 monthly condition reports in place, between the Sub lessee and the Agency.

** review dates provided by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna: February and August 2021 (email correspondence from Warren Schofield/Kirsten Tasker)

ISSUE: REVENUE

Talking points:

- 2020/21 revenue (\$819m) was in line with budget of (\$823m). Key highlights for the Agency included:
 - Strong interest in single residential products, with all available stock being sold in Wright and Coombs, and high demand in Throsby, Taylor and Whitlam;

Key Information:

- Total revenue for the 2020/21 Financial Year was \$819.3 million. \$812.6 million (99.2%) was derived from Sales from Contracts with Customers, with the remaining \$6.7 million (0.8%) from Grants and Contributions, Investment Revenue, Other Revenue and Gains.
- Land revenue for the 2020/21 Financial Year was \$806.4 million. 94% of land revenue was derived from residential land sales (\$754.5 million) and 6% from other land sales (\$51.9 million) including community, commercial, industrial, and other land sales.

Background Information

Comparison to 2020/21 budget

- Actual income of \$819.3 million is \$3.6 million (0.4%) lower than the budgeted amount of \$822.9 million.
- Actual Revenue from Contracts with Customers of \$812.7 million is \$0.5 million (0.1%) higher than the budgeted amount of \$812.2 million.
- Other income of \$6.7 million is \$3.9 million (37.1%) lower than the budgeted amount of \$10.6 million.
- The below budget Other Income is predominantly due to lower Resources Received Free of Charge from EPSDD.

Comparison to 2019/20 actual

- Actual income of \$819.3 million is \$605.4 million (283.1%) higher than the 2019–20 actual result of \$213.9 million.
- Actual Revenue from Contracts with Customers of \$812.7 million is \$607.9 million (296.7%) higher than the 2019–20 actual result of \$204.8 million.
- Other income of \$6.7 million is \$2.3 million (25.6%) lower than the 2019–20 actual result of \$9.0 million.

Comparison to 2021/22 budget

- 2021/22 budgeted total revenue amount of \$405.2 million is \$414.1 million (51%) lower than the 2020/21 actual result of \$819.3 million.

- 2021/22 budgeted land sales amount of \$397.1 million is \$409.3 million (50%) lower than the 2020/21 actual result of \$806.4 million, primarily due to a constraint on settlement ready land inventory.

ISSUE: DIVIDEND PAYMENTS - CASHFLOW - GOING CONCERN

Talking points:

- We are a commercial business that spends upwards of \$200m per year on land development activities. We also operate within a 100% dividend policy to Government so there are times when cash flow pressures occur.
- We manage this through careful monitoring of our cash flows and using the mechanisms available to us when it looks like cash flow pressures will arise, the primary of these being the ability to request a reduction or deferral of dividends.
- During 2020-21, we experienced unprecedented sales conditions which allowed us to make \$455.6m of dividend payments to the Territory for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 outstanding dividend payables and for 80% of the 2020-21 estimated net profit.
- The dividend declared for 2020-21 was \$294.9m. The forecast dividend for 2021-22 is \$111.7m. The decrease compared to 2020-21 reflects the lower than budgeted operating result.

Key Information:

Dividend Payable

	\$M
As at 30 June 2020:	219.7
Add: Dividend declared during 2020-21:	294.9
Less: Dividend paid during 2020-21 for previous year:	(219.8)
Less: Dividend paid during 2020-21 for current year:	(235.8)
Dividend payable as at 30 June 2021:	59.0
Add: forecasted dividend declared during 2021-22	111.7
Less: forecasted dividend payment during 2021-22	(126.7)
Forecast dividend payable as at 30 June 2022	44.0

Dividend Payments

- Dividend payments of \$219.8 million were made during 2020-21 for outstanding dividends payable relating to the 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years.
- The Agency made an interim dividend payment of \$235.8 million for the 2020-21 financial year in June 2021.
- The Agency's 2021-22 Statement of Intent and latest cashflow forecasts show that the Agency will have sufficient cash to make its final \$59 million dividend payment for 2020-21 in October 2021.

Cash

	SLA \$M	SLA & WBJV \$M
As at 30 June 2020:	69.3	80.7
As at 30 June 2021:	178.5	189.2
Net Cash Movement	109.2	108.5
Forecast at 30 June 2022:	50.0	68.3
Forecast Cash Movement	-128.5	-120.9

Current Ratio

As at 30 June 2020:	1.4
As at 30 June 2021:	1.1
Forecast at 30 June 2022	1.2

Background Information

- The Agency operates in line with the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Payment of Funds to Territory) Direction NI2018-224*, which outlines a requirement for the Agency to pay 100 per cent of its net profits after tax as dividends to the Territory. This direction affects the capacity to retain earnings, and timing differences may arise between cash inflows from land sales and cash outflows for land development activities.
- The Agency seeks to maintain a minimum level of working capital of \$50 million and a current ratio of 1.0. This approach has been endorsed by the Board.
- In addition to the preparation of the four year cash balance forecast, the Agency undertakes a full assessment of the going concern assumption as part of preparing the Financial Statements, above and beyond the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards.
- The Agency's current projections indicate appropriate working capital is maintained into the future; however, these projections could be impacted by volatility in market conditions and the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Any risks to liquidity are considered to be appropriately mitigated by the following:
 - The legislation that established the Agency requires that the Treasurer, in giving a direction for the Agency to pay funds to the Territory, have regard for the Agency's assets, liabilities, income and expenditure.
 - The *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency (Suburban Land Agency Payment of Funds to Territory) Direction NI2018-224* allows sufficient flexibility to defer dividend payments as required.
 - The Agency has the financial backing of the Territory.
 - The Agency has access to financial resources through the Territory.

ISSUE: INVENTORY LEVELS

Talking points:

- A significant increase in land sales in the 2020-21 financial year has resulted from an unprecedented level of demand for new land. Inventory has decreased significantly and new releases have largely been purchased on market.
- Land releases scheduled for the Taylor and Whitlam in 2021-22 are expected to be well received because of strong property market demand, expected easing of COVID-19 restrictions, record low interest rates, and a strengthening labour market in the ACT.

Key Information:

- The table below summarises inventory levels over the next four years for single residential blocks (excludes compact and townhouse blocks) that are available for sale and not yet exchanged based on actuals to June 30 2021 and forecast sales from the 2021-22 SOI sales in the out years.

Key Date	Blocks^
30 June 2021*	79 blocks
30 June 2022**	211 blocks
30 June 2023**	192 blocks
30 June 2024**	694 blocks
30 June 2025**	715 blocks

*Actual inventory level

**SOI budgeted inventory level

^Excludes WBJV, compact and townhouse blocks, that are available for sale and not yet exchanged, and SOI sales in the out years

- Inventory is expected to increase in and after 2023/24 as Whitlam, Molonglo 3, Jacka 2 and Kenny are developed and become available for sale (noting that settlement will occur later).
- The number of blocks^ exchanged in 2020/21 was 1,416. The actual average exchange rates for 2020/21 was 118 per month.
- Actual settled blocks^ totalled 1,153 for the 2020/21 financial year and 1,084 blocks^ are budgeted to settle 537 blocks^ in 2021/22 (45 per month).
- The Agency will have 211 blocks^ at the end of the financial year with an estimated 351 blocks^ to be released in FY 2021-22.
- The SOI forward estimates have assumed an average exchange rate for the out years of approximately 40 per month.

ISSUE: PROFIT MARGINS

Talking points:

- The Gross Profit Margin on Land Sales for 2020-21 was 58.3%. This is in line with the budgeted figure of 61.4%, with a small decrease reflecting the recognition of costs associated with the Molonglo Critical Infrastructure Initiatives as part of the cost of land sold in Whitlam and Denman Prospect.
- The 2021-22 budgeted Profit Margin (55.8%) is slightly below previous financial years reflecting the allocation of costs related to the Molonglo Critical Infrastructure Initiatives.

Key Information:

- Gross Profit Margin on Land Sales analysis:

	2019-20 Actual (\$m)	2020-21 Budget (\$m)	2020-21 Actual (\$m)	2021-22 Estimate (\$m)
Land Sales Revenue	200	807	806	397
Less: Cost of Land Sold	67	311	336	175
Gross Profit	133	496	470	222
Gross Profit Margin on Land Sales (%)	66.7%	61.4%	58.3%	55.8%

Background Information

- The profit margins for the Suburban Land Agency are used for internal purposes to provide comparatives across projects and time periods. These margins are not comparable with private industry, noting that the Government, through the Suburban Land Agency, enters into the land development process at an earlier stage than a private developer.
- It is important to note that the Government delivers significant infrastructure investments in new suburbs for the ACT community. This includes major road infrastructure, schools, public realm, sporting facilities and community assets. These costs are generally not accounted for in the calculations by the Suburban Land Agency of gross profit margins (other than as noted above in relation to the Molonglo Infrastructure Initiatives).
- In other jurisdictions land developers would likely have to fund elements of this infrastructure and therefore this would impact (i.e. lower) its profit margins.

ISSUE: LOAN FACILITY FROM THE TERRITORY

Talking points:

- On 11 June 2020 Government agreed to defer the 2019-20 SLA interim and final dividend payments to Government and to make temporary funding available to ensure that the SLA could retain a minimum cash flow balance during a period of possible lower than planned land sales. At that point in time land sales had seen a significant decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there was significant uncertainty surrounding future market conditions.
- To this end, Government agreed to provide supplementary funding of \$30m to the SLA.
- Since then, the land and property market has seen a marked improvement with land sales increasing significantly allowing us to make payment for the outstanding dividend.
- The unprecedented sales conditions in 2020-21 allowed us not to draw on the finance facility. We do not have forecasted cashflow issues at this stage and do not anticipate the need for supplementary funding.

Background Information

- The Agency took a proactive and pragmatic approach of forecasting the potential implications of the pandemic on its financial position, including impacts on the Agency's land development/capital program.
- By securing the dividend deferral and access to the repayable capital injection of \$30 million, the Agency was able to continue its development program, and provide ongoing work for staff, suppliers and contractors.

ISSUE: BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

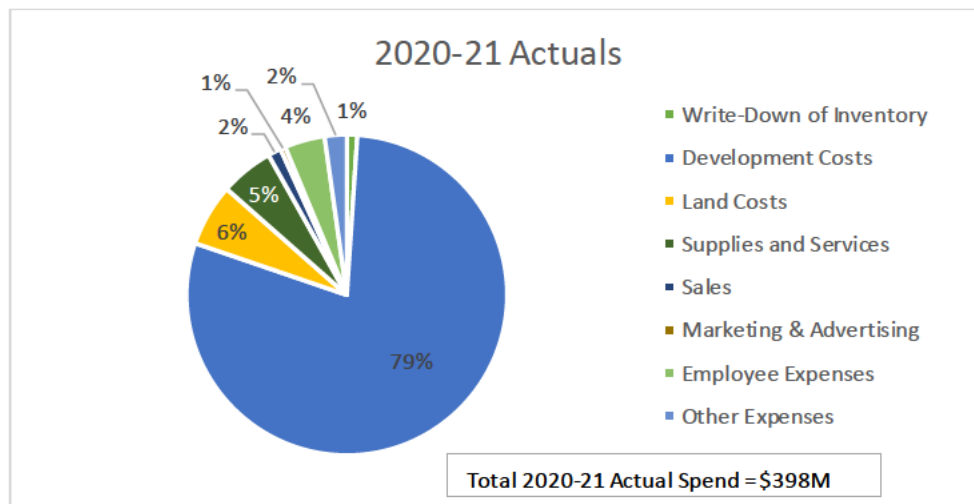
Talking points:

- Total actual costs in 2020-21 were \$398 million.
- Total budgeted costs for 2021-22 are \$246 million.
- The majority of the Agency's costs relate to development costs. Development costs made up 79% (\$315 million) of total expenses in 2020-21 and are budgeted to make up 67% (\$165 million) of total expenses in 2021-22.
- Land costs are the next largest cost in 2020-21 (6%). The next largest budgeted cost for 2021-22 is Supplies and Services (excluding sales and marketing costs) at 9%, followed closely by Employee Expenses (8%) and Land Costs (7%).
- Other costs (write down of inventory, sales, marketing, staffing, supplies and services, other) make up the remaining 15% of costs in 2020-21. Sales, Marketing & Advertising and Other Expenses make up the remaining 9% of costs for 2021-22.

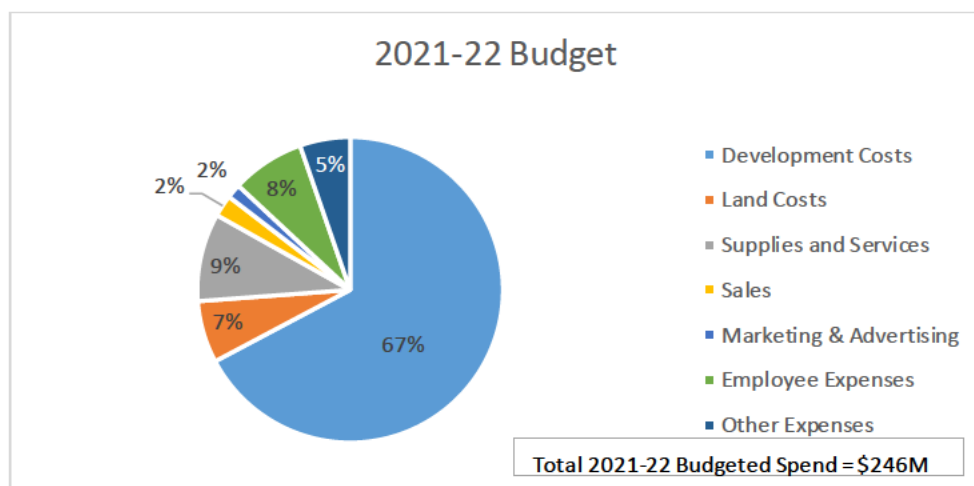
Key Information:

- The Agency's breakdown of spend by category for the 2020-21 (actual spend) and 2021-22 (budgeted spend) financial years is summarised in the following graphs.

Graph 1



Graph 2



- The Agency's breakdown of spend by category for the 2020-21 (actual spend) and 2021-22 (budgeted spend) financial years is also summarised in the following table (spend in dollars and as a percentage of total spend).
- Development costs and land costs are lower in 2021-22, corresponding with a significant decrease in budgeted lands sales.

Table 1

	2020-21 Estimated Outcome		2021-22 Budget	
	\$M	% of Expense	\$M	% of Expense
Write-Down of Inventory	4	1%	-	0%
Development Costs	315	79%	165	67%
Land Costs	25	6%	16	7%
Supplies and Services	22	5%	23	9%
Sales	5	2%	6	2%
Marketing & Advertising	2	1%	4	2%
Employee Expenses	16	4%	19	8%
Other Expenses	9	2%	13	5%
Total	398	100%	246	100%

- The Agency's breakdown of Project whole of life budget expenditure (as at June 2021) is summarised in the following table (spend in dollars, and as a percentage of total spend).

Table 2

Table 2 PROJECT WHOLE OF LIFE BUDGET EXPENDITURE AS AT JUNE 2021								
Cost	Measure	Coombs	Wright	Jacka 2	Taylor	Throsby	Whitlam	Ginninderry Land JV
Total Costs (\$m)		125.5	82.7	118.2	284.8	75.1	291.6	1,371.8
Development	% of Expense	89.4%	84.0%	91.1%	91.7%	84.8%	91.7%	86.8%
Rebates	% of Expense	1.5%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Built Form	% of Expense	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Land Management	% of Expense	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.8%	0.8%	0.0%
Mingle	% of Expense	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%
Miscellaneous	% of Expense	0.0%	1.6%	0.3%	0.5%	1.8%	0.3%	9.83%*
Valuations	% of Expense	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%	0.0%
Total Revenue (\$m)		337.5	239.0	212.5	727.2	373.1	651.9	1,956.2
Marketing	% of Revenue	0.4%	0.4%	0.9%	1.0%	0.5%	0.9%	1.6%
Sales	% of Revenue	2.3%	2.9%	3.0%	1.4%	1.4%	1.9%	2.3%

*The miscellaneous cost percentage for the West Belconnen Land Joint Venture (WBJV) varies due to the WBJV overhead costs being recorded in this item. Agency development percentages do not incorporate any corporate overhead expenditure.

Background Information

- Spend is based on cash outflows and differs from expenses in the Profit and Loss statement. The major expenditure items in the Profit and Loss statement are Cost of Land Sold (which is expensed when land is sold rather than when costs are incurred) and Write-down of Inventory (which is a non-cash expense).

ISSUE: GOVERNANCE OF THE SUBURBAN LAND AGENCY

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) actively promotes operational governance as a key priority.
- The Agency's Governance team provides strategic advice to the Chief Executive Officer, the Agency Executives, the Board and the Board's Committees. This supports the Agency to make informed decisions and to implement good governance practices.
- The Governance team also support the Suburban Land Agency and the Board to comply with obligations under relevant laws and regulations.
- The Governance and Corporate Services Team is also responsible for procurement assurance, training, and planning.

Key Information:

- The Agency's governance framework ensures adequate oversight of risk management and fosters relevant internal training programs including in relation to (i) records management, (ii) respect, equity and diversity, (iii) fraud, corruption and ethics, and (iv) work, health and safety.
- The Governance team coordinates the Agency's internal audit function with the Agency's internal auditors (an outsourced independent provider) and ensures that audit recommendations are duly addressed.
- The Agency's procurement framework provides guidance to staff on legislation, policy and best practise principles. The Agency has invested in staffing training (including probity) and education in procurement. The Agency undertakes assurance activities as well as procurement planning to continually improve compliance and performance.

Background Information

- The 2020-21 Internal audit program consisted of audits on Agency's Fraud Control plan, Cyber Security, Requests for Information in Major Construction Projects (RFI's) and Social Sustainability deliverables (focussing on Affordable Housing).
- The Audits on Cyber Security and Fraud has been completed, the RFI and the Social Sustainability Audits are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022.
- The Agency's Board Audit and Risk Committee (BARC) approved the Agency's internal audit plan for 2021-22 at their meeting on 21 September 2021..
- The Agency's Executive team includes an Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services who is responsible for assisting to continually strengthen and improve the Agency's governance and procurement.

- The Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services is supported by a Senior Director, Governance. This role is also responsible for leading a team which is solely focussed on governance and risk.
- The Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services is supported by the Senior Director, Project Management Office. This role is responsible for leading a team focussed on procurement and project management.
- For the 2020–21 period 0.19 per cent of the Agency's addressable spend was spent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises. The policy target for 2019-20 was 1.5 per cent.
- Unlike most of ACT Government, the majority of Agency Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy Addressable Spend is in Capital Works & related professional services, not Operational Expenditure. At this time, there are comparatively fewer Registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enterprises for Capital Works. As a consequence the Agency performance is below target. The Agency is committed to engaging Indigenous providers and improving its performance for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy reportable measures. .
- Where possible the Agency procures services and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. The Agency is looking at opportunities to increase the opportunity to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers going forward.

ISSUE: REFERRALS TO PSSC & ACTIC

Talking points:

- The Agency complies with ACT Government requirements in relation to complaints and issues raised in relation to the Agency's behaviour or processes including that of its staff and contractors.
- These include reporting:
 - misconduct to the PSS Commissioner (PSSC);
 - Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) to the PSSC prior to 4 March 2021, or the Integrity Commissioner (IC) post 4 March 2021;
 - and suspicions of serious or systemic corruption to the IC.
- In the 2020-21 reporting period the Agency referred;
 - three matters to the PSSC; and
 - six (including two of the matters referred to the PSSC) to the IC for further investigation.
- Staff training, including presentations by the CEO on Conflicts of Interest, and training on Fraud, Corruption and Ethics Awareness, Probity and the Reportable Conduct Scheme have been held to support the ongoing messaging within the Agency on acceptable behaviours.

Key Information:

- The Agency has taken a proactive approach to reporting to the IC, and this has seen an increase in referrals this reporting period. This also reflects the changes to the PID Act in March 2021, requiring allegations be referred to the IC for initial assessment rather than this being undertaken within the Agency.
- In an abundance of caution the Agency applies the principle contained in the PID Guidelines of; *If in doubt, err on the side of caution. If there are reasonable grounds to believe the alleged matter involves disclosable conduct, then treat the matter as a PID* to all allegations.
- A similar principle is applied in reporting to the Integrity Commission, with the Agency reporting any issue they suspect to be *serious or systemic corrupt conduct*.

Background Information

- 2020-21 saw an increase in the number of misconduct referrals across Government. This increase may be attributable to a number of factors including increased awareness by managers in identifying and acting on inappropriate behaviour, the increasing number of sales, and elevated stress levels due to COVID-19 restrictions and associated impacts.

- The 2020-21 Annual report contained the following detail;
 - *During the period, eight matters pertaining to allegations of fraud or corruption were reported, with:*
 - *three referred to the Public Sector Standard Commissioner (PSSC)*
 - *six (including two of the matters referred to the PSSC) referred to the Integrity Commission (IC) for further investigation.*
 - *One allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated, one matter has been closed with no findings, and one closed with the staff member making an admissions statement and a formal sanction issued. The remaining five are still being assessed by the PSSC or IC.*
 - *The Agency has taken a proactive approach to reporting to the IC, and this has seen an increase in referrals this reporting period. This also reflects the changes to the PID Act in March 2021, requiring allegations be referred to the IC for initial assessment rather than this being undertaken within the Agency.*

ISSUE: BOARD COSTS

Talking points:

- In total the Agency spent \$433,443.03 on Board related expenses in 2020/21.
- The majority of this (\$395,507.20) was incurred in remuneration expenses as dictated under the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995,
- Other expenses consisted of a Board Evaluation \$24,400, travel and accommodation \$10,753.75 and catering \$2,633.29 and training \$148.79.

Key Information:

- At 30 June 2021, there were five members on the Agency Board, with two members terms expiring on 22 June 2021.
- The two members whose term expired were reappointed for a 6-month term on 7 July 2021 bringing the Board membership back to seven.
- The Board Audit and Risk Committee (BARC) also consists of an independent member.
- Due to COVID-19 during 2020-21 many Board and Committee meetings were held on-line resulting in lower than budgeted travel and accommodation costs.
- 11 Board meetings were held during 2020–21; of these three were extraordinary meetings.
- Six BARC meetings were also held during 2020–21; of these one was an extraordinary meeting.
- The People and Transition Committee (PTC) held two meetings in 2020-21 before it was replaced by the Significant Programs and Culture Committee (SPCC) which also held two meetings in 2020-21.
- The SPCC assists the Board to fulfil its oversight responsibilities in relation to strategically significant programs of work, including initiatives and projects and organisational culture and capability.

Background Information

- An independent Board governs the Agency's operations. The Board was established, with members appointed, under section 45 of the CRASLA Act,
- In accordance with section 50 of the CRASLA Act, the Board appointed a Board Audit and Risk Committee, and a People and Transition Committee.
- The Remuneration Tribunal, in line with the Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995, determines the remuneration for Board members.
- The independent BARC member is remunerated in accordance with a contract for services

ISSUE: OPEN ACCESS

Talking points:

- The Agency is committed to the principles of open government and operations that align with objects of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act).
- The Agency website contains key information such as summaries of Board meeting minutes, policies, information on data collection and how to access information from the Agency.

Key Information:

- EPSDD manages FOI Act applications on the Agency's behalf under a service agreement.

Background Information

Details of FOI information requests from 2020-21 Annual report

Open Access Information for 2020-21

Number of decisions to publish Open Access Information **41**

Number of decisions not to publish Open Access Information **1**

Number of decisions not to publish a description of Open Access Information withheld **1**

FOI Applications received and decision type

No. of open access applications received in 2020/21	7
No. of open access applications carried over from 2019/20	2
Total no. of open access applications considered in 2020/21	9
No. of applications where access to all information requested was given	1
No. of applications where access to all information requested was given (partial release)	4
No. of applications where access to the information was refused	0
No. of applications withdrawn (processed informally)	1
No. of applications transferred	1
No. of applications finalised by not being dealt with after more than 3 months suspended during the reporting period	1*
No. of applications in progress	1
Total No. of open access applications considered in 2020/21	9

*This related to a request for information about Affordable Housing and the applicant did not respond to requests for clarity of clarification.

- In accordance with open access requirements the Agency's website provides policies such as, the Fraud and Corruption Control Plan, Risk Management Framework and Policy Statement, Sponsorship Policy and Valuations procedure

ISSUE: LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS

Talking points:

- From time to time the Agency is involved in litigation, both as a complainant, and as the subject of claims.
- In accordance with the *Law Officers (General) Legal Services Directions 2012*, the Agency works with our legal service providers to ensure claims by, or against, the Agency are conducted in accordance with the model litigants' guidelines.
- The Agency has no litigation currently on foot.

Key Information:

- The types of claims made against the Agency are consistent with the industry it works in, and include damages to property and disputes about contractual terms.
- The Agency may make claims in relation to the delivery of good or services or damages by a third party to the Agency's property.
- The details of specific claims may be subject to Legal Professional privilege.

Background Information

- The Requirements of the *Law Officers (General) Legal Services Directions 2012* in relation to claims and litigation by or against the Territory are:
 - Agencies must comply with any instructions from the Attorney General about the handling of claims or the conduct of litigation. In particular, agencies must comply with any instruction to provide information about a particular claim or litigation, or to provide copies of, or access to, material relating to the claim or litigation.
 - Claims are to be handled and litigation is to be conducted by agencies in accordance with the Model Litigant Guidelines.
 - Agencies are not to start legal proceedings unless satisfied that litigation is the most suitable method of dispute resolution, and only if they have considered other methods of dispute resolution including mediation or settlement negotiations.

Claims must be handled and litigation conducted by agencies in accordance with legal principle and practice, taking into account the legal rights of parties and the financial risk to the Territory of pursuing or defending its rights.

ISSUE: WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR THE SLA

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (the Agency) actively promotes work health and safety (WHS) as a key priority
- The Agency provides strategic and operational advice to the Chief Executive Officer, Agency Executives, workers, the Board and the Board's Committees
- The Agency is supported by a dedicated Work Health and Safety team who support the Suburban Land Agency and the Board to comply with obligations under relevant WHS laws and regulations
- The Agency is committed to Work Health and Safety training and aligns programs to the Agency's Statement of Intent 2020-2021
- The Agency continues to refine the development of the Work Health and Safety system to reflect changes in legislation and ACTPS policies. The system is designed to provide guidance to staff on legislation, policy and best practice principles
- The Agency's Work Health and Safety system is undergoing consultation with workers, key committees and stakeholders within the Agency and ACTPS
- The Agency continually reviews Work Health and Safety practices, training and processes to support the organisational requirements and the safety and wellbeing of Agency workers.

Key Information:

- The Agency recently updated the WHS Management System Framework which improves the management of WHS and fosters relevant internal training programs in relation to all aspects of WHS.
- The Agency's WHS Management System has been the subject of an Agency internal audit program
- The Agency's Work Health and Safety framework provides guidance to staff on legislation, policy and best practise principles. The Agency has invested in staff training and education in WHS. The Agency undertakes assurance activities to ensure that WHS is being implemented and monitored and complied with.
- The Agency has actively responded to the COVID risk by implementing a number of processes to manage the risk to staff. During the recent lock down this has included COVID risk assessments for all essential work that cannot be completed at home, the development of a COVID Transition Plan and the revision of Business Impact Statements.

- To ensure that the Agency maintained site security and safety workers undertook surveillance activities that were governed by COVID risk assessment and within the ACT Health restrictions for essential work.

Background Information

- The Agency's Work Health and Safety team sits within the Governance and Corporate Services team under an Executive Branch Manager who is responsible for assisting to continually strengthen and improve the Agency's governance and WHS.
- The Executive Branch Manager, Governance and Corporate Services is supported by a Senior Director, Corporate Services/HR and a Director, Work Health and Safety who is responsible for leading a team which is solely focussed on Agency WHS matters.
- The 2020/21 Internal audit program consisted of an audit on compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. The Agency continues to progress the close out of the audit with the majority of the finding completed.
- The Work Health and Safety team are consulting with all areas of the Agency and working closely with the Project Management Office on the further alignment of WHS and procurement practices.

ISSUE: FTE NUMBERS

Talking points:

- 2020-21 FTE budget set at 121 with an outcome of 117.7 FTE and 120 headcount for the financial year
- The Agency's Statement of Intent estimated employment level for 20-21 is 121 FTE and this estimation was accurate
- At 30 June 2021 the workforce was made up of 52.5% women and 47.5% men
- Significant consultation occurred across the Agency with each business area to understand current and future workforce requirements and operational needs. This consultation was to inform the FTE budget request for 2021-22
- The Board approved an additional 13 positions, taking the total FTE for 2021-22 to 134
- The 13 new positions have commenced recruitment activity.
- In response to the Agency's Statement of Intent 2020-2021 the Workforce Capability & People Framework (the Framework) and Action Plan have been developed and are being implemented to address current and future staffing requirements.

Key Information:

FTE by month 1 July 2020 to June 2021

Employment Category	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21
Permanent	92.09	91.15	92.09	94.09	91.09	92.22	92.22	96.64	100.53	100.77	100.52	103.68	104.17
Temporary	15.70	14.70	16.50	14.70	14.70	14.70	12.84	12.56	12.01	14.00	14.00	13.00	13.54
Total	107.79	105.85	108.59	108.79	105.79	106.92	105.06	109.20	112.54	114.77	114.52	116.68	117.71

Background Information

- FTE budget was increased from 92 in 18-19 to 121 in 19-20
- FTE budget was increased from 121 to 134 in 21-22
- FTE budget is managed by SLA Finance, and People & Capability in conjunction with Branch Executives

ISSUE: Status of External Audit Recommendations

Talking points:

- Six recommendations from four Auditor-General's reports are included in the 2020-21 Annual Report. Four were closed in the 2020-21 year and two were in-progress as at 30 June 2021
- The two open recommendations have been closed since 1 July 2021.

Key Information:

- The open recommendation in relation to internal guidance materials and operating procedures for the purchase of land is now closed.
- The open recommendation in relation to the evaluation of the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme (AHPS) is now closed. The Agency has also committed to contribute to EPSDD's review of the AHPS, which will occur in 2021-22.

Background Information

- The four AG's audits reported in in the 2020-21 AR are:
 - Auditor-General's Report No. 3 of 2018: Tender for the Sale of Block 30 (Formerly Block 20) Section 34 Dickson*
 - Auditor-General's Report No. 8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra*
 - Auditor-General's Report: Final Audit Management Report for year ended 30 June 2019
 - Auditor-General's Report no. 4 of 2020: Residential Land Supply and Release

* While the Agency was not the subject of this audit, since 1 July 2017 the Agency has had responsibility for activities considered in this audit that were previously those of the former Land Development Agency. Recommendations are therefore made to the Agency.

- Recommendations in relation to strengthening probity, strategic analysis of Rural land, going concern assessment, and measuring and reporting on all accountability indicators were closed in 2020-21 .
- The recommendation in relation to Affordable Housing is closed. Considerable work was undertaken to review the type of affordable housing dwellings offered to the market through the AHPS. EPSDD will also undertake a review of the AHPS and will be supported by the Agency in that process.

ISSUE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST MANAGEMENT

Talking points:

- The Agency takes the potential for Conflicts of Interest seriously and conducted an education campaign in late 2020 for all staff.
- This included presentations from the CEO followed up by correspondence to each staff member reminding them of their obligations and requiring them to update their conflict declarations.
- This has also been incorporated into the New Starter induction process.
- A separate declaration is required in relation to the intent to purchase land to ensure any potential conflicts are appropriately managed.

Key Information:

- Declared staff potential, perceived and/or actual conflicts within the Agency can be grouped into five themes:
 - Relationships,
 - Purchase of land,
 - Previous employment,
 - 2nd jobs,
 - Others such as volunteer roles and shareholdings
- Declarations are to be renewed at annual Performance Development conversations (and if circumstances change) so management strategies can be discussed and agreed with managers.
- If the Agency becomes aware of a potential Conflict of Interest that may not been appropriately managed it is assessed in accordance with the requirements of the PSMA and referred for assessment if appropriate.
- The Agency's Board and Committees manage Conflicts in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1996*.
- All potential Board conflicts are recorded on a register and any material conflicts of interest reported to the Minister in accordance with s 89 of the FMA.

Background Information

- The Agency regularly reviews and incorporates guidance from the PSSC and Integrity Commissioner on best practice Col management and education.
- The CEO's presentation on conflicts included information and real-world examples of the types of potential conflicts of interest and how they should be managed, requirements to keep information confidential and acceptable behaviours in relation to Gifts and Hospitality.

- The conflicts presentation is run on a monthly basis and the CEO's letter has been incorporated into the Staff Induction package to highlight the importance the Agency places on early identification and management of conflicts.
- In addition to regular reminders at All-staff meetings on conflicts and the importance of actively managing them, mandatory training on Probity and Fraud and Ethics has been conducted.
- When a material conflict of interest is identified for a Board member the Board Charter requires that the conflict be recorded in the minutes, and that the member not be present when the Board considers the issue and/or not take part in the discussion of the issue.

ISSUE: SLA RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Talking points:

- The Agency activated the Business Continuity Plan in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it remains in place.
- The Agency response was rapid and responsive to emerging risks. Technological support continues to be deployed to support staff to continue to work at home.
- Staff transitioned successfully into the office on a roster system in a hybrid working arrangement prior to the commencement of the lockdown on 12 August 2021.
- Staff responses from consultation in late 2020 confirmed they felt supported and requested blended work arrangements to include working at office and home during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future
- The ongoing consultation with staff outlined the desire to maintain blended working at home and the office arrangements, where public health directions and ACT Government permits.
- The Agency continues to plan and implement actions to support workers to transition back into the workplace post lockdown with a focus on essential work and staff wellbeing in response to public health directions.
- Pending the public health directions and advice from whole of Government, the Agency will transition back into the Dickson Office Building reflecting the requirements of the COVID Transition Plan.
- The Agency notes that staff productivity and engagement remain high
- The Agency actively promotes work–life balance and flexible working arrangements.
- The Agency continues to monitor staff wellbeing and engagement including supportive mechanisms to encourage staff to take leave and breaks to mitigate fatigue as the pandemic continues

Key Information:

- Head of Service Direction to work at home, where possible, was enacted under the Health Emergency in March 2020 and remains in place today.

- The Agency responded and continues to adhere to the health directions for the safety of our people and community
- A lockdown occurred on 12 August 2021 for the initial period of one week which was subsequently extended by eight weeks. The Agency implemented Business Continuity Response to allow workers to continue to work at home and provide support to workers.
- The Agency has supported the Government response with redeployment of staff to support key areas including the PICC, Treasury and other essential services.
- The Agency continues to work with Directorates homed within the Dickson Office Building to ensure safety is paramount for all community members in the building
- The Agency maintains solid communication and staff engagement work to support the wellbeing of our people

Background Information

- Agency Executive and key stakeholders represent the Business Continuity Team

ISSUE: DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

Talking points:

- The Agency's Workforce Capability and People Framework (the Framework) and Action Plan were endorsed in December 2020 and have commenced implementation
- The Agency's Diversity Action Plan aligns to the EPSDD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Agency is participating in Inclusion Networks
- There's a continued focus on the health and wellbeing of our people

Key Information:

- The Framework demonstrates the Agency's commitment to creating an organisation that attracts, engages and retains the right people, in the right jobs, at the right time.
- The Agency's Workforce Capability and People Framework and Action Plan have commenced implementation.
- The health, safety and diversity of our people remains a core commitment of Agency initiatives.
- The Agency's Diversity Action Plan has been developed in line with the EPSDD Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Agency has representation at Inclusion Networks.
- People & Capability have procured a training provider to deliver Unconscious Bias training to all Agency staff in 2021-22.

Background Information

- The Agency's People & Capability team developed the Workforce Capability and People Framework (the Framework) prior to it being tabled and endorsed by PTC in December 2020. The Framework is supported by an Action Plan.

Development Works 2019-20

Project	Contractor (Superintendent) Letter of Acceptance	Contract Value \$M	Est. Final Contract Value \$M	Exp. To Date \$M	Contract Comp'n @ Award Date	Approved EoTs Days	Current Contract Comp'n Date*	Est. Completion Date^	Financial Status	Works Status#
Taylor 2 Stage 2	Canberra Contractors (SLA/AECOM) 13 February 2018	\$23.9	\$23.9	\$23.9	26 March 2019	69	10 July 2019	August 2019	100%	100%
193 SR +1MU= 196 dwelling Stages 2A was completed March 19 and 2B was completed in September 19										
Taylor 2 Stage 3	Group One (SLA/Indesco) 9 April 2018	\$24.5	\$24.5	\$24.5	8 April 2019	55	11 July 2019	August 2019	100%	100%
202SR+4MU=367 dwelling Stages 3A and 3B were completed April 19 and August 19 respectively										
Project	Contractor (Superintendent) Letter of Acceptance	Contract Value \$M	Est. Final Contract Value \$M	Exp. To Date \$M	Contract Comp'n @ Award Date	Approved EoTs Days	Current Contract Comp'n Date*	Est. Completion Date^	Financial Status	Works Status#

Taylor 2 Stage 4A	Group One (SLA/AECOM) 6 July 2018	\$13.7	\$13.7	\$13.7	15 March 2019	39	20 May 2019	June 2019	100%	100%
70 SR + 4MU = 84 dwelling Completed August 19 (Delay due to Jacka Watermain Connecion)										
Taylor 2 Stage 4B	Woden Contractors (SLA/AECOM) 26 October 2018	\$22.2	\$22.2	\$24	2 September 2019	44	28 October 2019	January 2020	100%	100%
56 SR + 8 MU = 346 dwelling Completed March 20										
Taylor 3 Stage 1B	Group One (SLA/Indesco) 13 June 2019	\$8.8	\$8.8	\$8.8	5 March 2020	0	5 March 2020	April 2020	100%	100%
69SR +2MU Completed June 20										

[illegible]

2021 – 2026 – 5 Year - ESTIMATED PROJECT DELIVERY TIMEFRAME (updated 13/09/21)								
Project	No of Blocks (Potential Revenue based on Unit rates)	DA Approval	Call Tender	Commence Construction	Civil Construction Completion	TCCS OA & DP Registration (3 Months)	Settlement Ready	Commence Settlement
Notice of Decision Received by 01 /10/ 21 – No Appeal – No ACAT – If ACAT – Program will shift at least by 6 months								
Jacka 2								
Stage 1A- \$22M	85 SR + 10 MU(\$55.1M)*	1 October 21	02/11/21	February 22				
Stage 1A1	41 SR + 3 MU (\$20M)				February 23	March 23	April 23	May 23
Stage 1A2	44 SR +4 MU (\$35.1M)				September 23	October 23	November 23	December 23
Stage 1B \$22M	108 SR (\$48.6M)	1 October 21	16/11/21	February 22				
Stage 1B1	36 SR (\$16.2M)				February 23	March 23	March 23	April 23
Stage 1B2	72 SR (\$32.4M)				August 23	September 23	October 23	November 23
Stage 1C \$15M	126 SR + 1 MU(\$57.8M)	1 October 21	11/01/22	April 22				
Stage 1C1	47 SR (\$21.2M)				February 23	March 23	March 23	April 23
Stage 1C2	79 SR +1MU (\$36.6M)				July 23	August 23	September 23	October 23
Unconditional DA received by June 22 – Stamped drawings								
Stage 2	209SR	June 22	July 22	October 22				
Stage 2A	105 SR					March 24	May 24	July 24
Stage 2B	104 SR					September 24	November 24	January 25

Project		DA Approval	Call Tender	Commence Construction	Civil Construction Completion	TCCS OA & DP Registration (3 Months)	Settlement Ready	Commence Settlement
Whitlam 2								
Whitlam 2A1	104SR/1MU (22dwellings) (\$51M)	July 20	December 19	July 20	October 21	November 21	November 21	December 21
Whitlam 2A2	47SR/3MU (92 dwellings) (\$30.35M)	July 20	December 19	July 20	October 21	November 21	January 22	February 22
Whitlam 2B	129SR/3M (41 dwellings) (\$62.15M)	July 20	February 20	July 20	October 21	November 21	November 21	December 21
Whitlam 2C	59SR/1MU (23 dwellings) (28.85M)	July 20	June 20	September 20	September 21	October 21	November 22	December 21
Whitlam 3	Unconditional DA received by August 21 – Stamped drawings							
Whitlam 3A - \$15M	83SR/5MU(174) (\$54.8M)	October 21	November 2021	February 22	August 23	September 23	October 23	November 23
	Subject to High Voltage Powerline Relocation – Assumed completion time December 2022							
Whitlam 3C	170SR (\$76.5M)	October 21	November 21	February 22	November 23	December 23	January 24	March 24
Whitlam 3B	119SR/4MU(115) (\$65.05M)	October 21	January 22	April 2022	November 23	January 2024	February 24	April 2024
Whitlam 4								
	Whitlam 4A - Subject to Unconditional DA by June 2022							
Whitlam 4A-\$20M	139SR/2MU	March 22	April 2022	July 2022				
Stage 4A1	92SR/2MU (\$43.5M)				December 2023	January 24	February 2024	April 2024
Stage 4A2	47SR (\$21.15M)				June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024

Project		DA Approval	Call Tender	Commence Construction	Civil Construction Completion	TCCS OA & DP Registration (3 Months)	Settlement Ready	Commence Settlement
Whitlam 4B - Subject to High Voltage Powerline Relocation – Assumed completion time September 2022 Stage 4B will be influenced by Deep Creek Dam program of works. 4B cannot commence till Dam completed, Current estimate is Dam Start – November 22 and completion – April 24. Current estimate may change. (Commence Construction of 4B – April 24)								
Whitlam 4B \$24M	138SR/2MU	March 22	January 24	April 2024				
Stage 4B1	61SR/1MU-59d (\$33.35M)				April 2025	May 2025	May 2025	June 2025
Stage 4B2	77SR/1MU-72-d (\$41.85M)				October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026

ISSUE: LAWSON STAGE 2

Talking points:

1. The original release for the whole of Lawson Stage 2 was by a two-stage tender process to firstly shortlist the potential purchasers and then provide a detailed tender package for the sale. The first stage was an Expression of Interest process released to the market in June 2018. Subsequent to this a short list of tenderers was selected, who were invited to submit a more detailed proposal in in September 2019.
 - As part of the request for tenders it was a requirement for the tenderers to include the underground relocation of the transmission lines as part of their bid.
 - The initial tender process resulted in no complying tenders. No complying tenderers were received.
2. In August 2020 Lawson Stage 2 was retendered to the short listed tender participants with non-maturing of the condition regarding the undergrounding relocation of the transmission lines.
 - Tender submissions closed on 17 December 2020. No complying tenders were received.
3. The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is developing a business case for the SLA Board to consider the most appropriate methodology for the re-release of this site. The business case, which will be presented to the SLA Board in September 2021, considers the following options:
 - Option 1. Existing Estate Development Plan – Undergrounding HV Powerlines
 - a. Englobo full market tender
 - b.SLA develop site
 - Option 2. New Estate Development Plan – HV Powerlines remain in Situ
 - a.Englobo full market tender
 - b.SLA develop site

Background Information

- The suburb of Lawson is located in the north east of Belconnen ([Attachment A](#)). It is bounded by the former Belconnen Naval Transmission Station to the north, the arterial roads of Baldwin Drive and Ginninderra Drive to the east and south and Lake Ginninderra to the west. It comprises a developable area of 100 hectares and is being developed in two stages.
- Lawson Stage 1 was developed by the former Land Development Agency from 2011 to 2015 and delivered 1,460 residential blocks. All available blocks have sold and settled. Lawson Stage 2 was released as part of the 2017-18 Indicative Land Release Program by the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) as an englobo release.
- The Estate Development Plan (EDP) for Lawson Stage 2 allows for up to 940 dwellings to be developed on the site, 1.9 hectares of CZ5 mixed use and 1.0 hectares of community use land. The Territory has also committed to 80 sites for affordable housing, 24 to public housing and 20 to community housing. The EDP was developed by the SLA, and approved by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) prior to its inclusion in the tender documents.
- Stage 2 is constrained by the Belconnen Zone Substation located in the middle of the site and overhead 132kV high voltage transmission lines traversing the site in an east-west alignment. It was originally contemplated, that the electrical infrastructure would be undergrounded, and this was included in the approved EDP.

ISSUE: FUTURE INDUSTRIAL LAND RELEASES

Talking points:

- The Territory's last two remaining unencumbered blocks of industrial land have both been identified for release under the Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) for the 2021-22FY.
- The Territory has identified several future industrial land releases in Symonston, Fyshwick and Pialligo however these are all encumbered by the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment (EBSA).
- The public consultation regarding the EBSA has been delayed several times and will now likely take place in 2022.
- The Territory has no available industrial land for release until the EBSA has been completed. The release of industrial land within Symonston, under the ILRP, scheduled for the 2022-23FY is high risk.

Background Information

- Under the 2018 ACT Planning Strategy the Territory has committed to '*Plan for adequate employment land in the right location that supports a diverse range of uses including commercial and industrial land linked to supportive infrastructure, transport options and investment opportunities*'.
- There are several industrial land development areas within Canberra that Territory has developed including Hume, Fyshwick, Mitchell and Majura. Beard is an industrial precinct that has been developed privately.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate have identified several areas of future industrial land including Symonston, Fyshwick and Pialligo. All these areas are encumbered by the EBSA.
- The Eastern Broadacre area of the ACT encompasses the eastern edge of the ACT, from Majura Valley in the north to Hume in the south. It commenced on 26 September 2014 and was revised and updated on 12 June 2015. The EBSA will undertake a strategic assessment of proposed urban development, subdivision and associated infrastructure in the Eastern Broadacre area of the ACT in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- The Territory's interest in the EBSA is being managed by EPSDD.
- The 2021-22FY industrial land releases in Hume and Fyshwick represent the last two remaining industrial land blocks available for release until such time as the EBSA has been completed.
- There is high demand for industrial land within the ACT as represented by strong auction results from the four Hume industrial blocks auction in June 2021.
- Any future delays in resolving the EBSA and strategic planning issues surrounding the release of industrial land in the ACT will cause significant pressure on such land. This

will not only impact pricing and availability, but may also potentially impact the ACT's economic growth and diversification in this sector of the market.

ISSUE: BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE

Talking points:

- The Belconnen Town Centre continues to grow as an urban renewal hub with several development projects nearing completion and ACT Government projects being implemented in the area.
- The ILRP identified mixed use sites for release at the northern end of the Belconnen Town Centre including:
 - Circus Sites Precinct (Blocks 38 and 39/Section 52 and Block 2/Section 151) in 2020-21; and
 - Lathlain Street Precinct (Block 24/Section 21, Block 2 and 3/Section 22 and Block 2/Section 23) in 2022-23, which incorporates delivery of the newly rezoned public open space.
- The Circus Sites Precinct together with the Former Belconnen Water Police site (Block 29, Section 149) at Emu Inlet Waterfront Precinct were packaged as Belconnen Lakeshore market release. The release methodology is a two-stage tender process. The first stage, a Request for Proposal (RFP), was released to the market on 17 June 2021 and it closed on 7 October 2021.
- The RFP Evaluation Panel is currently assessing received submissions. Conclusion of the evaluation process is anticipated by mid December 2021 at which stage SLA will make an announcement of which proponents are being invited to participate in the second, Request for Tender stage of the land sale process.
- Prior to RFP release to the market, SLA considered the proximity of these land releases as well as future Lathlain Street Precinct. In the context of the Belconnen Town Centre masterplan, SLA recognised that the two precincts together with the Former Water Police site and the public spaces between them offered the opportunity for place-based consideration of their design and development to ensure connectivity, walkability and a diverse place offering across the sites are complimentary.
- Engagement was undertaken with the Belconnen community and stakeholders between December 2020 and March 2021. The engagement captured community objectives with regard to desired uses, character, movement and place experiences for each site within the precincts that will inform the sale of the sites.
- The information that the SLA received throughout the course of the engagement process has helped to shape a comprehensive *Place Design Brief* for the Belconnen Land Release Sites.
- The RFP seeks design and development proposals in response to the Place Design Brief, which will be given a high priority in the tender evaluation. A weighting of 50% as part of weighted assessment criteria.

Key Information:

- The Place Design Brief has been prepared with input from the community and stakeholders and describes the community's aspirations for making great places that connect people.
- The SLA have engaged the services of an experienced place planning and engagement team to prepare the Place Design Brief. The consultant team is interdisciplinary and includes place planning, community engagement and urban design expertise.
- An initial 'discovery' phase of community and stakeholder engagement was completed in December 2020 with further engagement undertaken during an 'ideas and co-design' phase in February and March 2021.
- The impact of COVID-19 on plans for community engagement were considered and a balance of COVID-safe face-to-face and online engagement activities have been undertaken.
- Engagement activities during the 'ideas and co-design' stage in March 2021 included a series of online and face-to-face community and stakeholder workshops, younger people workshops, and an industry collaboration workshop in partnership with the Property Council.
- The SLA has introduced the project to the Belconnen Community Council (BCC) at their November 2020 meeting and presented outcomes of the first phase of engagement at their February 2021 meeting. A presentation of the second phase, Co-design, took place on 18 May 2021 and a further presentation on the final Place Design Brief will take place on 15 June 2021.
- Detailed information is available on the ACT Government's YourSay website.

Background Information

- The former Water Police site is located at the northern edge of Emu Inlet on Lake Ginninderra at the end of Evelyn Parker Place. The site is small, isolated and heavily constrained. Its viability as a release site relies greatly on its future use and context within which this future use can be supported.
- The former Water Police site within the Emu Inlet Precinct was scheduled for auction in June 2018, however, was withdrawn to allow the SLA to further reconsider the site constraints and community input.
- The place-based community engagement has assisted the SLA in identifying relevant uses for the former Water Police Site that are complimentary to the community's vision for the area and included that highly successful development will be development that integrates into the park's environment and substantially enhances the lake foreshore's recreational uses, activation and connections.

ISSUE: GOLD CREEK HOMESTEAD

Talking points:

- The SLA has exchanged contracts for the sale of the land with the successful tenderer, Lendlease. Lendlease proposed an intergenerational community precinct, including residential aged-care, retirement living and a refurbished Gold Creek Homestead and gardens for the broader community to enjoy.
- Lendlease have established their web-page GoldCreekLiving.com.au and are continuing community and stakeholder engagement as per Community Engagement Plan agreed with the SLA.
- The first (virtual) community engagement event was held on 2 September 2021 and a presentation to the Gungahlin Community Council on 8 September 2021.
- Community Engagement Notice for the first phase of the project (Tender Concepts) was endorsed by SLA on 5 October 2021. As part of their next design development stage (Concepts DA) Lendlease will be presenting their development proposal to the National Capital Design Review Panel on 24 November 2021.

Key Information:

- Block 109 Section 23 Ngunnawal, which includes the Gold Creek Homestead, was identified to deliver 45 residential dwellings and community uses as part of the Indicative Land Release Program for 2019-20.
- Residential dwellings are limited to supportive housing, retirement village or residential care accommodation under the Territory Plan.
- A Community and Stakeholder Panel identified preferred objectives for the development that focus on a strong place identity, adaptive re-use for the Homestead and gardens, and sustainable design outcomes.
- The Gold Creek Homestead is not heritage-listed, however the Panel's Brief captures historic and place values through precinct development objectives and principles.
- The site in Ngunnawal was released through a one-stage tender process on 23 June 2020 and tenders closed on 15 October 2020.
- In the evaluation of tenders, the design response to the Panel's Brief was given the highest weighting (50%), followed by the financial response (30%).
- The tender also included development obligations in the form of minimum requirements for the redevelopment of the site. This includes a minimum five-star Green Star Communities Rating, a 30% tree canopy and 30% permeable surface target, and a public footpath and cycling path through the site to better connect surrounding residents and foster active travel.

Background Information

- On 1 June 2018, the SLA withdrew the Gold Creek Homestead land release from market to work towards a better balance of social and financial benefits after several community representatives raised their concerns.

- The Gold Creek Homestead Community and Stakeholder Panel (the Panel) was established by the SLA in October 2019 to inform the preferred development objectives for the sale of the land.
- The Panel consisted of 12 male and 8 female residents across age groups, fields of interest and ethnic background, including Ngunnawal representation.
- Key stakeholders on the Panel included the National Trust and the Gungahlin Community Council.
- In three Panel meetings and a site tour throughout October and November 2019, the Panel agreed on a Precinct Development Brief that outlines their site-specific objectives and principles for development of the site.
- The Panel has been briefed on the approach to the land sale on 26 June 2020 through a webinar with presentations and Q&As.
- All information related to the Panel outcomes and tender approach are documented on the SLA website.
- The site has been marketed to industry as 'Gold Creek Living – A Benchmark Community Precinct' with a unique place branding included in all marketing collateral. Further information is available on GoldCreekLiving.com.au.

ISSUE: PLACEMAKING

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) vision is to *create great places where communities thrive*. SLA is maturing as a 'place delivery agency', continually looking for opportunities to engage with new and existing communities in understanding localised place history, its qualities and desired future use.
- SLA has developed its Placemaking Framework for more broader implementation and as its new project delivery culture.
- SLA have historically recognised the benefits of early engagement with communities particularly where future development is being proposed in existing suburbs or large number of stakeholders and community groups are showing interest in the site(s).
- Land releases in such circumstances require higher level of sensitivity and appreciation for local context, allowing the community to be part of a process commencing with the land release through to construction completion.
- Typically this early engagement results in a proactive, involved and supportive community offering balanced views on the future development which benefits SLA's or Developer's design development, the statutory approval process and ongoing engagement activities.
- Allowing stakeholders and communities to define their objectives, design principles or themes for a future development prior to any development design concepts being prepared, fosters meaningful and long term relationships with SLA and assists with SLA achieving good relationships and high community satisfaction as its non-financial objective.
- In 2020, SLA initiated place led engagement for the Gold Creek Homestead development.
- In 2021, the place led engagement evolved and was applied to larger projects such as:
 - Wright and Coombs Village Concept (Coombs/Wright mixed use sites); and
 - Belconnen Town Centre (Circus Site Precinct and former Water Police site, now marketed as Belconnen Lakeshore).
 - Taylor Local Centre and Moncrieff Group Centre

- In 2022, SLA will continue to apply its Placemaking Framework for land releases in Woden and Gungahlin Town Centres.

Key Information:

- The SLA has developed collaborative contracting methods to bring together government, industry, and the community through a land sale process. This is particularly relevant to Expression of Interest (EOI), Request for Proposal (RFP) and Request for Tender (RFT) land sale methodologies.
- To achieve success in collaborative contracting, the land sale documents contain information from government, stakeholders, and the community about their aspirations for the development, whilst the industry is asked to address these aspirations in their design submissions and financial offer as part of the sales process.
- Gold Creek Homestead Engagement
 - The SLA worked with the local community and stakeholders implementing comprehensive community engagement process, establishing the Gold Creek Homestead Community and Stakeholder Panel.
 - The outcomes of this Community and Stakeholder Panel process are reflected in the Precinct Development Brief which formed a central part of the tender evaluation.
- Belconnen Town Centre Engagement
 - Undertaken in late 2020 and throughout early 2021, the engagement process aimed to reach out to diverse community groups including youth. A variety of engagement methods were used which included surveys, public stands, meetings, workshops, site walks and impromptu discussions at the skate park.
 - Information collected was developed into a Place Design Brief which identifies 'undesirable', 'successful' and 'highly desired' outcomes for each site.
- Wright and Coombs Commercial sites
 - Prior to the release of four key prominent commercial and community sites in Wright and Coombs the SLA undertook comprehensive community engagement through online surveys and a community panel process.
 - Community feedback has helped to frame the process for selling these blocks of land and informed community preferences for the four sites for development proposals.
 - The outcomes from this process are reflected in the Coombs and Wright Village Design and Place Framework. The Framework will guide developers in creating a vibrant commercial hub for the Molonglo Valley.
- Taylor Local Centre and Moncrieff Group Centre
 - Prior to the release of these sites in Taylor and Moncrieff the SLA undertook comprehensive community engagement through online surveys and a workshop activity.
 - Community feedback has helped to frame the process for selling these blocks of land and informed community preferences for the development proposals.

Background Information

- The Agency developed the SLA Placemaking Framework in 2021. The Framework sets out a roadmap for the SLA to implement place-led engagement for small, medium and larger/complex projects.
- SLA has recruited a place expert who will work across ACT Government Directorates, creating learning opportunities, undertaking research, and leading the delivery of place-based projects.

ISSUE: **Molonglo Critical Infrastructure Projects**

Talking points:

- The Molonglo Critical Infrastructure projects are required to enable the full development of Whitlam and facilitate further development within the Molonglo Valley. The projects will be funded and delivered by the Suburban Land Agency and include:
 - The Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer Odour Mitigation Project;
 - The Molonglo High Voltage Relocation Project; and
 - The Deep Creek Water Quality Control Pond Project;

Key Information:

- The **Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer (MVIS) Odour Mitigation Project** involves the installation of four odour control units along the MVIS and removal of existing vent stacks. The units will extract and treat sewer gases prior to discharge to the atmosphere. The odour control units will replace existing ventilation stacks that currently discharge untreated sewer gases to the atmosphere. The odour control units will be gifted to Icon Water to own and operate upon completion.
- Completion of the project is required to support development of Whitlam and future Molonglo 3 suburbs, and to resolve a contractual obligation for the sale of Denman Prospect Stage 2.
- The total project budget, including internal costs, planning, design, contract management, site supervision and contingency is currently estimated at \$19.7 million (excluding GST). The SLA recently awarded the design and construction contractor to Guideline ACT, a local civil engineering construction contractor. Construction is estimated to commence in early 2022, following completion of the design phase.
- The **Molonglo High Voltage Relocation** project involves the underground relocation of two existing overhead 132kV high voltage electrical transmission lines.
- Removal of overhead high voltage power lines alone, will increase the developable land by approximately 500 dwellings and improve the aesthetic of adjacent developments.
- The work is planned to occur over two stages.
 - Stage One involves:
 - Install and commission underground high voltage cables to replace the existing overhead Canberra-Woden line.
 - Decommission and remove existing overhead Canberra-

Woden line.

- Install underground conduits for the future Civic-Woden line.
 - Stage 2 involves the installation of high voltage cables to the Civic-Woden conduits constructed in Stage 1 and removal the overhead lines. This stage is unfunded.
- The total project cost, including project management, planning, design and construction costs, is estimated at \$65.7 million (excluding GST). The high voltage power lines will be gifted to Evoenergy to own and operate upon completion.
 - The project will be delivered in partnership between the SLA and Evoenergy. SLA will be responsible for the design and construction of the civil works and Evoenergy will be responsible for the supply and installation of the electrical cables and removal of the overhead towers.
 - SLA recently executed a major contract with Evoenergy for the electrical works package and is currently finalising the procurement of a contractor for the civil works package.
 - Construction is expected to commence in late-2021.
 - The **Deep Creek Water Quality Control Pond** will provide treatment of urban stormwater from Whitlam and surrounds to ensure that urban runoff entering the Molonglo River is treated. The pond embankment will also form a transport and utility services link between Whitlam Stage 4 and the remainder of the suburb and will be a significant design and recreational feature.
 - The total project costs are estimated at \$55.7 million (excluding GST).
 - A draft environmental impact statement was submitted in July 2021. The detailed design is also underway. Construction is expected to commence in 2022. Following completion, the pond will be owned and operated by Transport Canberra and City Services.

Background Information

- The suburb of Whitlam is located approximately 10 kilometres west of the Canberra Central Business District within the Molonglo Valley. The suburb is bounded by William Hovell Drive to the north, the new John Gorton Drive to the east, Kama Reserve to the west and the Molonglo River to the south.
- Whitlam includes approximately 2100 dwellings resulting in an estimated revenue of over \$630m.
- Through the 2019-20 Budget process the ACT Government requested the SLA to take responsibility for funding and delivery of three critical infrastructure projects in support of the current ACT Government's Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP).
- Following the request by Government and review of the 2019-20 Budget Business Cases prepared by relevant Government agencies, the SLA Board agreed to undertake the projects to facilitate the ongoing release of land in the Molonglo Valley.
- The three projects play a critical role and influence the timing and future development options for many of the remaining suburbs to be developed in Molonglo. In the current ILRP the projects are likely to affect the release and settlement of up to 1000 single dwellings, 10,000m² of commercial land (local centre) and a 50,000m² Community Site (school) within Whitlam.
- A cross-directorate Critical Projects Steering Committee, consisting of the SLA's Chief Executive Officer and Directors-General from Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate has been established to provide strategic oversight of the project.

ISSUE: Gungahlin Town Centre

Talking points:

- SLA has committed to place-making engagement to inform future releases.
- This engagement needs to align with the outcomes of the DV364 Inquiry and District Community and Recreational Facilities Assessment (EPSDD).
- Planning for a precinct level place-making engagement is underway and anticipated to commence early 2022 (Covid) with this engagement to incorporate built form and public domain (including the linear park and Community Facility zoned land).

Key Information:

- Gungahlin Town Centre (GTC) East is the final section of the GTC to be developed.
- Approximately 15 unrelease blocks remain which permit a range of uses including office, commercial, mixed use, residential and community facilities.
- Development of the GTC is a matter of note to the residents of Gungahlin, with community concern having been raised regarding the planning framework and associated development outcomes not meeting expectations.
- This culminated in the 2020-21 FY with a call to suspend land sales by the Gungahlin Community Council (GCC), a subsequent petition tabled by the ACT Legislative Assembly, and two Resolutions by the Legislative Assembly, Orr Feb 2021 and Braddock June 2021.

Background Information

Proposed Engagement

- The proposed forward engagement strategy to inform future releases is detailed below. Noting the Standing Committees report on the Inquiry into DV364 has only recently been released this approach may need to be reviewed to align with a whole of Government Response to the Inquiry.
- Intention is to undertake place-led engagement for the GTC east precinct incorporating the lions share of unreleased land and the linear park.
- Engagement is expected to commence early 2022, with a number of actions to support the engagement currently underway including collectiong place insights and inventory and understanding the community needs assessment and relevant desired outcomes.

DV364

- DV364 was Introduced to implement the outcomes of the of the GTC Planning Refresh commenced in 2017, progressing to an Inquiry by the Standing Committee with a report released September 2021.
- Principle elements DV364 seeks to amend include:
 - Combining the current precinct '2a – Office Core', with the eastern elements of precincts 4a and 4b (Southern/Northern transitions) to form the new precinct '2a – Mixed Use East'

- Removing the prohibited residential use from precinct 2a which is an important requirement in delivering the 1500 residential dwelling identified within the 5yr ILRP.
- Amending building height from envelope to numeric floor numbers (this does not significantly change most areas).
- Formalising the precinct map and code to match the development outcomes in precinct 4b – Office Park (Geocon Towers).
- Appears to reduce mandated commercial space (though no GFA reduction).
- Key recommendations from the Inquiry into DV364 include:
 - Consider selling remaining land as a precinct(s) rather than individual blocks.
 - If single blocks are sold a max residential yield and minimum commercial GFA are specified to ensure appropriate density.
 - A blanket building height increase of 2 stories for the Town Centre.

Legislative Assembly Motions and Petition

- In the 2020-21 FY the Gungahlin Community Council called to suspend land sales in the GTC. A subsequent petition was tabled by the ACT Legislative Assembly, and two Motions were resolutions by the Legislative Assembly, Orr Feb 2021 and Braddock June 2021.
- The motions and petition are all similar in nature calling for further consultation and better commercial and community outcomes.
- SLA provided input into the pending Government Response (October) to these Resolutions which noted a commitment to place-making engagement to inform future releases and exploring what tools can be used to achieve better outcomes.

ISSUE: Molonglo Group Centre

Talking points:

- The Molonglo Group Centre will be the main commercial and retail precinct in the Molonglo Valley servicing an estimated 60,000 future residents.
- The Centre and surrounds will consist of a main commercial core containing a wide range of retail and community uses, as well as a service trades area, a college, police station, emergency services facility, a large town park, and approximately 2,700 dwellings.
- The Centre will also be the Territory's first gas-free commercial and retail precinct in accordance with the current Parliamentary Agreement.
- Planning for the Centre is still being progressed by EPSDD with the first release of land in the Group Centre scheduled for 2023-24. The Suburban Land Agency is currently working on a high level release strategy for the period 2023-24 onwards.

Key Information:

A draft concept plan has been prepared by EPSDD to guide a number of development outcomes across the precinct.

The formal approval of this plan and it taking effect as part of the Territory Plan is pending and will progress through either a 2 year Territory Plan Variation process, or through a shorter 6 month Technical Amendment.

The plan splits the Centre into number of separate specific zones.

The commercial core is proposed to cater for:

- full line supermarkets
- a discount department store
- a discount supermarket
- mini majors
- retail specialists
- non-retail uses (e.g. bank and office)
- urban open space that includes a town square and gathering spaces
- residential
- community use (including education), and
- a core tower

Additionally, within the Centre and surrounds, there is proposed to be:

- an Australian Federal Police station
- a bus interchange
- an Emergency Services station
- a bus layover, and
- a park and ride facility

The Suburban Land Agency has commenced some high level analysis on a land release strategy from 2023-24 onwards, pending the finalisation of EPSDD's planning work.

The Agency has undertaken a detailed study into the delivery of a gas-free Group Centre which has confirmed that with current and emerging electrical technologies, the future energy needs of the Centre can be met.

Background Information

- The first body of work for the "Molonglo Commercial Centre" was completed in 2014 and was titled 'Molonglo Commercial Centre and Environs Draft concept plan.
- Since that time the ACT Government has adopted new policies that affect this work which includes the ACT Planning Strategy 2018, the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan 2018 and policy initiatives that promotes transport and movement, climate change initiatives and living infrastructure.
- EPSDD have undertaken a review of due diligence, infrastructure, and planning and commissioned additional work including commercial market analysis, residential delivery methods, infrastructure updates and growth servicing plans, approvals, and staging.
- It is proposed that a Concept Plan/Precinct Code will be put into effect with the required timing for a Territory Plan variation/amendment as indicated in this brief with land release by the SLA expected in 2023-2024.
- The indicative timing for a Territory Plan Variation is for it to commence in January 2022 and be complete by November 2023. This would require SLA to progress due diligence, a business case, and undertake Estate Development Planning concurrently with a Territory Plan Variation.

- The alternative indicative timing for a Technical Amendment is for it to commence in January 2022 and be complete in June 2022.

ISSUE: Molonglo Development and River Corridor Interface

Talking points:

- The current and future urban development of the Molonglo Valley is occurring adjacent to an 11 kilometre stretch of the Molonglo River Reserve.
- The Reserve is an important feature of the Valley and is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, in addition to providing recreational opportunities for the Molonglo community and minimising the risk of bushfire.
- In developing the suburbs of Coombs, Wright and Whitlam, the Suburban Land Agency have placed a high importance on minimising impacts on the Reserve through the management of weeds, rubbish, erosion, and stormwater, consistent with the Agency's Sustainability Strategy.
- The Agency has undertaken several restorative projects in Coombs to improve water quality entering the reserve and has initiated the Whitlam Water Quality Project to demonstrate best practice in sediment and erosion control during and after estate construction.
- The Agency are working closely with the Natural Resource Management Team within EPSDD and Parks and Conservation in order to minimise development impacts on the Molonglo River Reserve.

Key Information:

All Suburban Land Agency Estates incorporate water sensitive urban design measures to improve water quality leaving each estate. These measures include rain gardens, sediment control ponds, rock armouring, and macrophytes in waterways

The Agency has continued to monitor the effectiveness of these measures post occupancy and has been involved in a number of restorative projects including repairs to stormwater outlets and rain gardens in Coombs as well as the construction of an additional water quality control pond in North Coombs

The Agency's Whitlam Water Quality Project is a joint initiative with EPSDD and the EPA. The project has coverage across all 4 stages of the estate and incorporates measures during design, estate construction and the home building phase to minimise erosion and sediment entering the Molonglo River.

Additional measures have been introduced into stage 2 including the use of spray polymers to cover bare earth, additional water control ponds and multiple rows of sediment fences near waterways. The project has also appointed an independent water quality auditor to provide advice on improving water quality all stages.

The Agency has also funded the continuation of water monitoring devices in Deep Creek to assist EPSDD in their monitoring of water quality entering the Molonglo River.

Reviews and audits of these Agency measures across all estates has seen a significant improvement in the quality of water leaving SLA Estates, flowing through the River Reserve.

Background Information

- A number of significant rain events in late 2019 and into 2020 resulted in significant erosion and sediment issues in Coombs and Whitlam.
- A number of these events occurred post bulk earthworks and prior to the commissioning of two large water controls ponds in Whitlam.
- There has been some criticism in the media about the impact of urban development on the ecology of the river through sediment run off. This has been of particular concern as it relates to Platypus Habitat.
- The Agency has been proactive in working with the Natural Resource Management Team to both understand the impacts and investigate all measures to mitigate impacts to the River Reserve.

ISSUE: Significant Commercial and Community Land Releases

Talking points:

- The Suburban Land Agency is committed to delivering great places where communities thrive and one way of delivering this vision is tailoring land releases with specific design controls on significant commercial and community land releases.
- This process involves, site identification, extensive community engagement, (workshops, panels and survey), developing sales and marketing material based on these community outcomes and then binding these outcomes through sales documentation and delivery deeds.
- The Agency has used this process in several recent land releases including, Goldcreek Homestead, Coombs and Wright Village Concept, Belconnen Town Centre Sites, Molonglo Group Centre and the Taylor Local Centre land releases.
- The releases are typically a two-staged tender (Expression of Interest and Request for Tender) and assessed on a number of site specific criteria and not price alone.
- A key requirement of the delivery deed is a requirement that the Agency endorse the Development Application prior to submission, with the submission to be substantially the same as the sales proposal. The Agency settles on the land upon development approval of the built form being received.

Key Information:

- The Agency has a *Procedure, Assurance Package and Release Methodology* that informs how the Agency assesses sites for release and proposed release methods for sites identified in the ACT Government's Indicative Land Release Program
- Largely speaking, themes from community that inform delivery deeds include positive comments around convenient access to facilities, access to open space and play spaces, community facility and retail options, integration into the existing environment and the avoidance of dead spaces.
- The Agency from this information, develops design concepts that respond to community feedback and in some cases present these concepts to the National Capital Design Review Panel (Wright and Coombs Village Concept), before offering the sites for sales.
- Typically the sales is via a two-staged tender with an Expression of Interest stage to determine suitable Developers to participate in the Request for Tender stage where detailed tender submissions are required to respond to the design criteria and tender documents.

Background Information

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ESTIMATES TALKING POINTS

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Sydney and Melbourne Buildings Revitalisation

Stormwater and Laneways

- In August 2021, the Chief Minister and Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services announced a package of stormwater improvement works including replacement of the stormwater system in the laneways of the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings.
- As part of the stormwater replacement project the City Renewal Authority will renew the laneways through improved surface treatments, lighting and landscaping.
- The input of owners and businesses into the design will be sought by the Authority in October 2021. Contributions, where affordable and appropriate, will be integrated into the design.
- Works are expected to commence in April/May 2022 with completion in October/November 2022 to allow the laneways to fully open to the public and businesses for use.

Revitalisation Legislation

- The Revitalisation Legislation came into effect in March 2021.
- The legislation is restricted to the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings and specifically the buildings' public facing parts such as the façade, colonnade, paving and shop fronts.
- The amendment to the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act* requires the minister responsible to request the preparation of the Revitalisation Plan and consultation with owners and heritage bodies.
- The government has been working with owners over the last 18 months to establish the contents of the Revitalisation Plan to support a smooth transition to new arrangements for owners.
- Implementation will commence once the Revitalisation Plan is consulted and any amendments made.
- The government will assist owners in the first stage of works to repair and repaint the facades in a consistent colour scheme.
- \$4 million will be contributed to the coordinated delivery of façade restoration.
- Government funding has been committed to the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings due to:
 - their high community value
 - heritage significance
 - these are the only buildings that are subject to special legislative provisions
- Works are expected to commence with a prototype in July/August 2022 but only once the Revitalisation Plan is consulted and approved.

Acton Waterfront Project

Acton Waterfront Park

- The transformation of the Acton Waterfront is forging ahead with the ACT Government announcing \$2.8 million over two years to design a new 30,000 square metre public park in the 2021/22 ACT Budget.
- The new waterfront park will be adjacent to the boardwalk, on land reclaimed from Lake Burley Griffin. It is likely to include event lawns, a new play space for all abilities and ages, barbecue areas, and terraces overlooking the lake. Key features of the park will be the subject of consultation with the community as part of design development.
- Design of the new park will be developed in close consultation with the community and stakeholders, building on the extensive community input already received.
- The park is one of several initiatives to connect with and revitalise the lakefront closest to our city centre, together with the creation of Henry Rolland Park in 2018, the current boardwalk extension that is set to be completed in mid-2022, as well as the nearby Light Rail Stage 2A from Civic to Commonwealth Park.

Acton Waterfront stage 2A Boardwalk

- Current works are programmed to complete mid-2022.
- COVID impact is around a month's delay to date.
- Chincivil are delivering the works, and this is managed through Major Projects Canberra under a GC21 contractual delivery arrangement.
- Australian Government funding was secured to enhance the former beach at the northern end of the boardwalk. Works Approval has been secured from the National Capital Authority for the beach, with planning/design approval currently being sought from Transport Canberra and City Services.
- Commissioning of the beach is planned for late 2021 prior to completion of the boardwalk.
- Budget remains on track (but very tight), with variations being managed through Major Projects Canberra as the project management body. Any COVID time delay costs are still to be considered.
- No environmental issues have been identified through the project.

Precinct Revitalisation

Braddon - Lonsdale Streetscape Upgrade

- The Lonsdale Streetscape Upgrade project budget is pending final design and costing.

- The Authority is currently finalising the project design following community consultation undertaken earlier this year.
- Key features include:
 - Intersection upgrades at Girrawheen and Cooyong Streets
 - Widened verges and new paving
 - Two landscaped mid-block crossings
 - Improved lighting
 - Street furniture using recycled materials, bike racks and litter bins
 - New canopy trees and low garden beds
 - new urban art at each location.
- Sustainability features include:
 - Permeable surfaces
 - Utilising recycled materials in street furniture
 - Traffic reduction
 - Reducing speed zones
 - Water sensitive urban design
- Key feedback from community and how it was addressed:
 - Active Travel – The Authority is currently work with Transport Canberra and City Services to understand how active travel looks for the precinct
 - Develop a stakeholder relationship – The Authority continues to work with community associations and directly with local traders and residents to minimise impacts of construction
 - Tighten the turning radii at Girrawheen and Cooyong St – this will be incorporated in the Girrawheen entry however there are no plans to change the traffic light crossing at Cooyong St
 - Increase maintenance and cleaning – the Authority will work with our place management team and Transport Canberra and City Services to ensure these upgrades are maintained.
- Construction is scheduled to commence in mid-2022 with an expected construction period of nine months.

Braddon – Mort Streetscape Upgrades

- The Authority is currently undertaking site investigations to understand value for money and the best community outcome. This stage includes working with other agencies and community.

Dickson – Woolley Streetscape Upgrade

- The Woolley Streetscape Upgrade project budget is pending final design and costing.
- The Authority is preparing this project for tender and construction, following consultation with the community.
- Key features include:

- Renewed public space at the elbow of Woolley Street, which will allow for pop-up markets, live music, greater use of outdoor dining and activities by surrounding businesses
- Improved pedestrian crossings at Cape and Badham Street intersections
- New furniture using recycled materials, urban art and landscaping
- New and improved street lighting
- Safer spaces for the community to enjoy
- Water sensitive urban design through rain gardens and permeable paving allowing passive irrigation.
- Key feedback from the community and how it was addressed:
 - Active transport – the community requested we maintain the local cycling access along the northern side of Woolley Street. This access is retained in the design with increased pedestrian access.
 - Consultation - The Authority continues to work with community associations and directly with local traders and residents to minimise the impacts of construction.
 - Art to be playful and celebrate the street’s Asian heritage – The designs reflect a range of Asian cultures such as moon gates and careful use of exotic flowering plants.
 - Provide power for busking and live music – Planned
 - Fix paving along Woolley Street – the project will improve a large area of Woolley Street’s pavement and we will continue to work with Transport Canberra and City Services on improvements and maintenance to the rest of the street.
 - Resolve issues where private Lessees are responsible for public spaces at the Woolley Street elbow – the Authority will continue to work with relevant lessees to address these issues and discuss opportunities for maintaining these thoroughfares.
- Construction is scheduled to commence in early 2022 with an expected construction period of six months.

Canberra Civic and Culture District

- The Civic and Culture vision is well underway to create a new and contemporary district in the heart of the city centre.
- The Authority’s plan sets an urban design framework, actions and recommendations for the long-term development of the area that includes the Canberra Theatre, Canberra Museum and Gallery, developable land, Civic Square and the ACT Legislative Assembly.
- The Authority has a bold vision for the precinct as a national and international drawcard for Canberra and a place embraced by all Canberrans.

- The precinct plan focuses on improving connectivity and increasing the precinct's overall cultural offering, including public realm improvements, early interventions, pop-up opportunities, and flexible and adaptable spaces that can serve a wide variety of community needs throughout the year.
- The government is considering the project in conjunction with the design of a new Canberra Theatre to ensure the experience of locals and visitors is seamless.
- The second stage of the urban design framework has commenced. An intergovernmental working group has underpinned the early drafting of the Civic and Cultural Vision. A focus on engagement with First Nations People, artists and users is a priority for the Authority in the coming six months.
- Land sales for the district are in various stages of due diligence, planning or release with an overall plan that considers people, place and design as well as expected revenues.

Land Sales

Westlund House (Blocks 2 and 3 Section 20 City)

- The site is currently on the Indicative Land Release Program for release in financial year 2021-22.
- The site contains an obsolete asset which has hazardous material. Due diligence is being undertaken to demolish this asset.
- Part of the site has been identified as a Light Rail compound until 2026. This will be factored into the release planning.

Block 40 Section 100 City

- This process is currently an active commercial sale. The Territory has released a 11,380sqm site to the market to allow interested parties to tender for the purchase of the land and provision of a new building that can meet the Australian Government's accommodation requirements for the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. The Department is seeking approximately 50,000- 70,000m² of office space in Civic.
- The subject land is Block 40 Section 100 City and is currently a surface public carpark located opposite the Melbourne Building.
- As part of the sale requirements, and as a requirement of the National Capital Authority, the successful buyer will be required to provide 280 public car spaces. This will replace the existing public parking.

Section 63 City

- The site is currently on the Indicative Land Release Program for release in financial year 2022-23.
- The Authority is progressing estate planning to establish blocks.
- The site is subject to environmental constraints and an Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation referral (EPBC 2019/8449) was approved with conditions on 9 September 2021. The conditions relate to the impact on the Commonwealth Heritage Listed Parliament House Vista.

Block 38 Section 19, City (Behind new Government office building)

- The site is part of the Canberra Civic and Culture District and fronts Vernon Circle and Constitution Avenue.
- Approximately 2,750m² and held under National Capital Plan
- Permits 25 metres in height. Yield of 10,000 – 12,000m² is expected.
- The Authority is looking at when to release the block given the city is experiencing high demand for commercial office space.

COVID 19 Response

- Due to the construction sector recently restarting in the ACT, there has been a focus by the Authority to ensure all existing projects have a sufficient COVID Safe Plan (mandatory) in place and it is compliant with the ACT Government COVID-19 Requirements Document (for construction sites and worksites).
- Major Projects Canberra project manages major undertakings on the Authority's behalf including ensuring compliance with safety requirements.
- A City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy (CCMIL) assistance reduction was agreed to in 2020-21 during the beginning of the pandemic in the ACT. When the CCMIL and other charges were set for 2021-22, the ACT was not being directly impacted by COVID-19 and as such, at the time charges were set for the new financial year, there was no case to support a further waiver.
- Despite being in lockdown, the ACT Government is continuing to deliver cleaning, maintenance and beautification initiatives to our city so that when lockdown ends Canberrans can continue to enjoy the benefits of a city centre that is attractive, vibrant and a desirable place to visit.
- The Authority is planning activations and promotional initiatives to support the city and CCMIL payers when it's safe and permitted. This includes Christmas, and regular programming like music, evening performances and free fitness classes.
- The ACT Government recognises the impact the pandemic has upon ACT businesses and is working closely with the business community.

City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy

- The City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy (CCMIL) is applied to all rateable ACT commercial properties in the City and some selected areas of benefit in Braddon.
- The levy was developed to support actions and activations which contribute to the long-term sustainable growth, economic prosperity, culture, creativity and vibrancy of the Levy Collection Zone.
- A CCMIL assistance levy reduction was agreed to in 2020-21 during the beginning of the pandemic in the ACT. When the CCMIL and other charges were set for 2021-22, the ACT was not directly impacted by COVID-19 and as such, at the time charges were set for the new financial year, there was no case to support a further waiver.
- Despite being in lockdown, the ACT Government is continuing to deliver cleaning, maintenance and beautification initiatives to our city so that when lockdown ends Canberrans can continue to enjoy the benefits of a City Centre that is attractive, vibrant and a desirable place to visit.
- The Authority is planning activations and promotional initiatives to support the city and CCMIL payers when it's safe and permitted. This includes Christmas, and regular programming like music, evening performances and free fitness classes.
- The ACT Government recognises the impact the pandemic has upon ACT businesses and is working closely with the business community.
- In 2020-21 the CCMIL made the following initiatives possible:
 - Place management
 - Place Managers in the city and Braddon
 - Approx. 15,000 hours of cleaning, maintenance and planting delivered by the Place Team (including more than 1000 hours of street scrubbing on the leased scrubber)
 - Installed hand sanitising stations in high-traffic public spaces such as food and retail precincts, transport stops and parks throughout the City and Braddon.
 - Place activation
 - Curated and delivered a program of daytime events and installations in public spaces to increase city visitation including Lunchbox Acoustic and reNewYou fitness classes.
 - Playful Endeavour in Haig Park during the spring school holidays, a free program of kids' activities.
 - Sponsored and supported the delivery of Design Canberra in Civic Square.

- Events
 - Floriade – planted 25,000 bulbs and 20,000 annuals in the collection zone, 1400 planted wheelbarrows and encouraged businesses to promote their aligned offerings on the Floriade website.
 - Christmas – illuminated tree and decorations in City Walk, window decals for businesses and flags and banners.
 - Enlighten – illuminated the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings and programmed local performers.
- Grants
 - Awarded about \$240,000 in grants across 11 initiatives including the Street Theatre mural, a community composter in Braddon and performances in Glebe Park.
- Promotion
 - Launched and delivered *Heart + Soul: Rediscover your City* to promote the city after the first COVID-19 lockdown to drive people to the city to support local retailers.
 - Launched and delivered *Heart + Soul: Celebrate a City Christmas*.
 - Launched and delivered an extension to the VisitCanberra *More Than* campaign to encourage tourists to discover Braddon when they visit Canberra.
 - Conducted consumer segmentation research and shared it with CCMIL payers.

The 2021-22 Place Experience and Marketing Action Plan was released on the Authority website in September 2021. This provides detail of the planned priority areas for activity in the coming year.

City Activation and Place Management Program

- The Authority paused activations in Q1 due to lockdown restrictions and has planned activities in Q2 to generate economic and wellbeing outcomes. Activations include:
 - Supporting the Outdoor dining initiative
 - Lunchbox acoustic
 - ReNewYou fitness classed
 - Outdoor evening performances
 - Outdoor co-working spaces
 - Wellbeing outcomes for the city
 - Christmas activation
 - Cleaning, horticulture planting and increasing place amenity

- The Authority is planning activity delivery to align with the ACT Government's Pathway Forward and can adjust this plan if the pathway is amended for public health safety reasons.
- The scheduled activities include cancellation options so funding can be re-prioritised where possible if restrictions change.

Haig Park

Haig Park - Lights and Paths

- A new path and lighting upgrade to improve connectivity, safety and accessibility in the park is underway and is expected to be complete by the end of November.
- The improvement works will focus on the central east end of the park between Torrens Street and Northbourne Avenue, aiding circulation of people through the park and creating new, well-lit paths through to Braddon and Civic, Northbourne Avenue and Torrens Street.
- Construction includes a new 220-metre concrete path along the east-west axis through the centre of the park, as well as approximately 600 metres of interconnecting permeable paths made from crushed, recycled red bricks.
- New path lighting will be placed along the east-west axis path to improve visibility at night. Five new power bollards will also provide improved power access for events and activations.
- The community will experience some impacts when travelling through the park during construction. Access to key north-south axis pathways including the Lonsdale and Mort Street connections will be maintained throughout the works. Directional signage will also be in place to guide park users.
- This work builds off extensive community engagement to revitalise the park, including the Haig Park Place Plan and Haig Park Experiments project, which recently received a national Planning Institute of Australia award for public engagement and community planning.
- This upgrade is the next step in the transformation of the park and will lay the groundwork for future revitalisation efforts, including the construction of a new Haig Park community centre on the site of the current depot facility, which is expected to commence later this year.
- Key statistics:
 - 50 per cent complete - expected to be complete by end of November 2021.
 - The budget for the lights and paths is \$1.1 million
 - 600 linear metres of old tracks now formalised in permeable crushed brick polymer paths
 - 220 linear metres x 3 metres wide concrete paths with new path lights east west across park
 - Five new power bollards in key areas for activation, events and markets

Haig Park - Community Centre

- Centre will be on the existing site of Haig Park depot at end of Mort St and Henty St.
- The development application has been approved.
- Phillip Leeson Architects designed a group of two buildings on the park edge.
- One adaptively reuses the depot building as a creative workshop space and the other new building has meeting rooms and a larger multipurpose room.
- The centre will also have a kitchen with a servery to the courtyard, compliant toilets, storage rooms and level access to the garden spaces for gatherings, play and events.
- The tender has closed for design and construction and we have a preferred tenderer.
- Construction is expected to start in the new year and be complete in mid-2022.
- An expression of interest will be advertised for the future ongoing management of the centre this year.

CRA Dividend

- The Authority operates under a policy of returning 100% of operating surplus after tax from commercial land development activities as a dividend to the ACT Government.
- The Authority had nil land sales in 2020-21 and made an operating deficit. No dividends were declared.

Budget

\$m	Budget 2020-21	Interim Outcome 2020-21	Budget 2021-22
Controlled Recurrent Payments	12.330	11.768	12.487
Capital Appropriations	22.310	22.167	17.823
Operating Deficit before tax	9.213	1.926	9.623

- The Authority recorded an operating deficit of \$1.926 million (\$1.252 million after tax), which is \$7.287 million lower than the original budget deficit of \$9.213 million.
- The lower than budgeted deficit is due predominantly to the \$6.9 million deferral of transfer of completed Mort Street and Akuna Street assets to Transport Canberra and City Services from 2020-21 to 2021-22.
- The operating deficit is largely attributable to costs not funded by Controlled Recurrent Payments, such as depreciation \$1.234 million and self-funded land development operating costs \$1.070 million.

- The Authority drew down \$11.768 million of controlled recurrent payments in 2020-21, deferring \$565,000 to 2021-22 for operating expenditure projects committed but not yet incurred.
- The Authority drew down \$22.167 million of capital appropriations, deferring \$143,000 to 2021-22.
- The Authority made cash payments to the ACT Government to the value of \$13.3 million, consisting of dividends and national tax equivalents related to prior year land sales.

Capital

Renewing Canberra's city heart program (City Renewal Program) was announced in 2019-20, with a capital program of \$21.16m.

Staffing profile

- On 30 June 2021, the Authority had a staff headcount of 30 people, and a total FTE of 29. The FTE data includes one staff member on maternity/study leave and two staff funded as part of the Jobs for Canberrans (JFC) program employed directly by the Authority. The total also includes a graduate within the Communications and Engagement team. Taking this into account the effective operating FTE was 26.4.
- This staffing level is consistent with 30 June 2020 - headcount of 31 people, total FTE of 28.4, effective FTE 26.4 (after taking into account one staff member on maternity leave, one role filled on a job share basis by two people and one FTE funded as part of the Jobs for Canberrans program).
- The budgeted staffing level for 2021-22 is 27 FTE.
- All figures exclude staff engaged under the Jobs for Canberrans program in partnership with and employed by Transport Canberra and City Services to assist with place management services. At present there are approximately 2.5 FTE, JFC funded roles (4 x part-time and 1 x full-time) in the Place Team.

Procurement

- The Authority notified 16 contracts to the value of \$2.4 million in 2020-21.
 - Major Project Canberra notifies contracts it executes on behalf of the Authority.
- The Authority spent approximately \$2 million or approximately 11% of its addressable spend (against target of 1.5%) under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy (ATSIPP) in 2020-21. This expenditure was directed towards:
 - Rork Projects for the delivery of the City Walk public realm upgrades, which opened in November 2020.
 - Yurbay to deliver Ngunnawal plant use workshops (\$1,320)
 - Arrow Facilities Management for electrical maintenance works (\$319).

- Many other local indigenous artists, performers and enterprises were contracted on behalf of the Authority through Dionysus, the Authority's contracted place manager.

Consultants, Marketing and Communication Costs

- Total expenditure for Contractors and Consultants was \$4.032 million for 2020-21, including:
 - \$1.012 million as part of CCMIL funded activities, including \$465,000 for events and \$410,000 in contracted services. The Authority contracts expert place management providers to make the city more beautiful—which is a key requirement for levy payers—through cleaning, greening and maintenance and deliver events and activations. This includes:
 - Dionysus – place management services
 - City Wide Services – refreshing planter boxes
 - Green Hat – Playful Endeavour
 - Rojo – signage
 - \$879,000 of contract services for activities including place management for Dickson, Braddon Place and Haig Park.
 - \$652,000 in development of City Section 100 Block 40, including site investigation and assessment reports, legal fees, independent probity advice, valuations and sales agents.
 - \$292,000 for Sydney and Melbourne building precinct planning (including engineering and heritage advice, project management).
 - \$146,000 for safety system advice and implementation.
 - \$168,000 business case development for Waterfront Acton Parkland
 - \$95,000 audit fees
- Total expenditure for Advertising and Marketing was \$568,000 for 2020/21, including:
 - \$271,000 for Special Events, including \$50,000 for City Neighbourhood guide with VisitCanberra and \$87,000 for development of content for the *More Than* Campaign for Braddon.
 - The Neighbourhood Guide is a publication that will be distributed in hotels and tourist destinations in the ACT to encourage tourists to spend more time in the city. The guide has been produced and will be distributed at the end of lockdown.
 - The *More Than* campaign was delivered on digital, social, outdoor and radio channels to the 3-hour drive market and aimed to encourage tourists to discover Braddon when they visit Canberra. Overall, this campaign performed well delivering above benchmark results and great bonus value.
- \$102,000 for sponsorship of Design Canberra.

- This year, the sponsorship will fund Craft ACT initiative, 'Nurture: Discover'. Craft ACT will commission several artists to develop concepts during lockdown and artworks during 2022 for small ephemeral public art interventions to activate City West to be launched in 2022. These works will be installed to form a trail of discovery throughout the city and change our communities' experience of place.