

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 are seeing electricity price rises this year in part due to the costs of meeting our 100% renewable electricity target.
 - In this unusual case, the government is introducing new measures to address some of these impacts.
- But our current 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 in the hundreds of millions in lifetime energy bill savings.
 - Local investments arising from our renewable electricity auctions will bring over \$500 million of benefits to the ACT in knowledge-based renewable energy 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, and that is 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:

- In 2020-21, ACT emissions were 1,685 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent which is 45% lower than 1989-90 levels.
- Since 1989-90 the ACT's population grew by 54% from 279,000 to 432,000 whilst total emissions have fallen 45% over the same period. The key driver of this outcome was the emission reductions associated with 100% renewable electricity generation.
- Now that the ACT's electricity is 100% renewably sourced, emissions from the gas and transport sectors make up around 22% and 64% 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.

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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 around 64% and 22% 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 Government has since committed to new, ambitious actions detailed in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (the PAGA) 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.
- The Strategy, Plan and PAGA 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 latest climate science and the extreme weather-related events we have seen over the past few years.

Key Information:

- Key achievements to date have included:
 - A 100 per cent renewable electricity supply and meeting the legislated 40% emissions reduction target 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 has increased 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 and new estates are being developed without gas connections.
- 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.

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.

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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 (BEVs), 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.
- As at 1 March 2022 there were 1,760 ZEV registered in the ACT, 21 of which are Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEV). ZEVs make up 0.42% of total registered vehicles in the ACT. FCEVs make up 0.01% of total registered vehicles, and BEVs make up 0.55%. This information is displayed and regularly updated on the Climate Change website. In February 2022, 6.4% of all new light vehicle sales in the ACT were BEVs.
- The 2020 Parliamentary and Governing Agreement and the 2020-21 ACT Budget set out an ambitious agenda to increase 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;
 - Fund 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 electric vehicle (EV) ready, and investigate measures to support retrofitting of charging infrastructure in existing buildings.

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 accepted all recommendations and implementation is underway.
- The ACT has among Australia's most generous financial incentives for the purchase and registration of ZEVs:
 - A full stamp duty exemption the first time a ZEV is purchased.
 - Two years of free registration for new or used ZEVs purchased from 24 May 2021 and before 30 June 2024, subject to eligibility requirements.

- On 10 December 2021 Government published its ZEV Public Charging Outlook, which will provide information about future locations for public ZEV chargers. The Outlook will also inform the location of the 50 publicly accessible charging stations funded in 2022 and Expressions of Interest are now closed.
- The ACT Government has partnered with Neoen, Hyundai and ActewAGL on a hydrogen mobility demonstration project, based around the Fyshwick hydrogen refuelling station, and integrates 20 hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles into the ACT Government fleet.
- The ACT Government is a key partner in the ‘Realising Electric Vehicle-to-grid Services’ (REVS) project which is a trial to demonstrate that EVs can contribute energy stability to the live power system, by transferring power back and forth into the grid as required. This will pave the way for accelerated adoption of vehicle-to-grid (V2G) services in the National Energy Market. 50 Nissan LEAF electric vehicles in the ACT Government fleet will provide V2G services. The project commenced in June 2020 and will conclude in 2022.
- ZEVs are able to use ACT transit lanes from July 2019 until December 2023. “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.
- Road rules were amended in December 2019, to facilitate the safe use of new sustainable personal mobility options, such as electric scooters.
- Two dockless micromobility schemes (e-scooters) are operational in Canberra and expansions are being considered.
- The ACT Government is developing a business fleet advisory service. This will support provide practical information to businesses about transitioning vehicle fleets to zero emission. 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 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 578 vehicles includes 183 zero emissions vehicles, totalling 32% of the fleet. Of these, there are 78 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) totalling 13% of the fleet; 85 plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) totalling 15% of the fleet; and 20 Hyundai Nexo fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) totalling 3% of the fleet.

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- The ACT Government has over 125 fast charging (7-22kW) stations across the ACT, as well as four rapid chargers (25kW).

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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 action to reduce ACT emissions toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.
- 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 \$1.3 million of funding for the installation of 50 publicly accessible charging stations.
- Increasing the number of publicly accessible chargers in the ACT will make charging convenient and give confidence to ACT drivers.
- In line with the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, Government will conduct a two-step competitive funding process in 2021-22 to award funding for 50 public chargers. Expressions of Interest closed in early February 2022.
- On the 10th of December, Government published the Electric Vehicle (EV) Public Charging Outlook which will inform the locations of the 50 publicly accessible chargers, based on analysis of ZEV charging demand now and to 2030.

Key Information

- Range anxiety and charger availability is a key barrier to purchasing an EV.
- New charging infrastructure in visible and convenient locations will address range anxiety concerns.
- The total cost of this budget measure will be \$2.7 million to 2023-24 (including \$1.3 million for chargers). It has also funded the development of the fleet advisory service, Public Charging Outlook and market sounding and research projects to aid with the setting of 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 EV Public Charging Outlook, released in December 2021, included engagement with business and Evoenergy, noting the interaction with the ACT electricity network.
- The ACT currently has 42 charging stations that are accessible to the public, across 27 sites. A further 6 charging sites exist; however these are considered inaccessible to the general public.

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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 Sustainable Home Advice service 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 Concession is available for \$750 per year. The ACT Government is also providing an additional \$250 rebate to eligible households for 2021-22, taking the 2021-22 payment to \$1,000.
 - In 2020-21, the ACT Government provided Utilities Hardship funding for \$100 vouchers to eligible customers with participating retailers. This program has been extended to 2021-22.

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- The ACT Government will also be funding an energy literacy program to fund community groups to help citizens better navigate the complex web of energy pricing.
- The energy price increase in 2021 was 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 ACT 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 ACT 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.
- Gas price increases in recent years have been driven by rising wholesale gas costs due to increased exports from the east coast of Australia and by a lack of competition between suppliers and pipeline operators. The Energy National Cabinet Reform Committee has initiated 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 per cent, 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 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 \$358 per annum to the typical¹ annual electricity bill of an average household in the ACT in 2021-22 (\$6.88 per week) using 6,370kWh annually. These are the Feed-in-Tariff (FiT) Schemes at approximately \$6.50 per week and the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) at around 40 cents per week per household.
- Pass-through costs of the EEIS are offset by reduced energy demand, placing downward pressure on electricity prices.
- From the inception of the EEIS in 2013 to 30 June 2021, close to 78,500 households and businesses have benefited from the Scheme, including close to 20,400 priority households.
- Within the same timeframe, more than 40% of ACT households participated in the Scheme. For the close to 20,400 priority households, there are total lifetime bill savings of over \$100 million.
- Changes to wholesale electricity prices, in part in response to COVID-19, have seen 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.
- The energy price increase in 2021 was 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.

¹ Representative household consumption as defined by the AER's annual retailer markets report 2020-21 Jurisdictional snapshot. 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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Key Information

Cost breakdown

- The annual costs expected for an average Canberra household using 6,370 kWh/yr in 2021-22² are:
 - large FiT component: \$300.86;
 - small-medium FiT component: \$36.82; and
 - Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme: \$20.32.

Opportunities to mitigate costs

- ACT energy consumers can receive free advice through the 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 www.climatechoices.com.au.
- Analysis by the Australian Energy Market Commission indicates households can save hundreds of dollars through switching to different pricing plans. So, shopping around and asking retailers for better deals is important.
- For those in particular need, a government Utilities Concession 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 \$1,000.
- In 2020-21, the ACT Government provided Utilities Hardship funding for \$100 vouchers to eligible customers with participating retailers. This program has been extended to 2021-22.
- The ACT 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 reports 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*.

² Representative household consumption as defined by the AER's annual retailer markets report 2020-21 Jurisdictional snapshot. 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% 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 planning a careful transition from fossil fuel natural gas. This planning will also consider the potential applications of 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 finalising modelling to consider technical and economic impacts of possible transition options.
 - The Taskforce will provide recommendations to Cabinet in April 2022 regarding a possible pathway to transition the ACT away from fossil fuel natural gas use.
- 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 Ginninderry estate developers in West Belconnen to remove the requirement to install natural gas in support of 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.
 - 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
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.
- 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 was 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 available on the YourSay website.
- Three main options outlined below were 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.
- The option proposed for the standard is for rental homes with less than R2 insulation to be required to install or upgrade to a minimum of R5, where the R value is a measure of thermal performance and R5 is what is typically installed in new builds in Canberra. This was the option preferred from the RIS analysis.
- This standard will target only the worst performing properties. There will also be a phase in period of several years to allow rental providers that don’t meet the standard plenty of time to comply.

- 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 community consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken in November and December last year. It garnered views on the proposed minimum standard and on how it should be implemented. These views are now being considered and are informing the detailed design of the regulation to enact the standard and associated measures.
- A “Listening Report” summarising the feedback received was released in March.
- We expect the regulation to commence in mid-2022 with the minimum standard being phased-in over several years.

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 percent of the total rental market, and about 50 percent of the low-income rental market, in the ACT.
- 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. Government intervention through a regulation is necessary to overcome this barrier.
- Many rental properties are already energy efficient. Well-performing properties are unlikely to be affected by these minimum requirements. The standard will not apply to lower floor units in apartment blocks, and dwellings where installation of insulation is physically unfeasible will be exempt.
- The impact analysis in the RIS shows that this minimum standard, with a four-year phase-in, would provide around \$18 million in benefits for the ACT. The analysis also shows that for every dollar spent on the minimum standard, it returns \$1.30 to the community.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLD ENERGY SUPPORT SCHEME (VHESS)

Talking points:

- The ACT Government recognises the need for a ‘just transition’ as part of its climate change response, to ensure all households can receive the benefits of lower emission homes.
- A key element of this recognition is that poorly insulated and energy inefficient homes contribute to higher energy bills and poor thermal comfort.
- Upgrades to improve thermal efficiency or replace inefficient appliances are expensive and can be difficult to afford particularly for Canberra’s most vulnerable households.
- To address these issues, the ACT Government committed \$50 million to the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme will deliver a range of measures to reduce energy hardship for low-income homeowners, public, private, and social housing renters.
- Informed by the options presented in the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the Minimum Energy Standards for Rental Homes, the Scheme will primarily support insulation upgrades for public and community housing.
- Phase one funding from the 2021-22 Budget includes the commencement of ceiling insulation upgrades and rebates for low income homeowners to support energy efficient appliance and ceiling insulation upgrades.
- Phase two will commence in mid-2022 and will support ceiling insulation upgrades to priority rental homes to align with the expected introduction of the Minimum Energy Standards for Rental Homes, and a pilot to support low income home owners living with chronic conditions.
- Participating households will benefit from reduced energy costs and improved health and wellbeing outcomes realised through greater thermal comfort and adequate insulation.
- The Scheme complements the Solar for Low Income Program that offers rebates to low income households, and the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme which supports all ACT households invest in energy efficient appliance upgrades through zero-interest loans.

Key Information

- **The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement** action A1. iv seeks to *“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*

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rental properties; this includes upgrades to government housing, and financial incentives to implement minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.”

- The Scheme supports the following ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025 goals:
 - 2.A - Support low-income residents
 - 4.C - Climate-wise, zero emissions rental homes
 - 4.D - Climate-wise, zero emissions public housing
 - 4.E - Climate-wise, zero emissions low-income homes.
- The preferred option presented in the RIS for the Minimum Energy Standards for Rental Homes, proposed rental homes with less than R2 ceiling insulation be required to install or upgrade to a minimum of R5 ceiling insulation.
- The RIS impact analysis for the Minimum Energy Standards for Rental Homes shows, the preferred option with a four-year phase-in, would provide around \$18 million in benefits for the ACT. The analysis also shows that for every dollar spent on the Standard, it returns \$1.30 to the community.

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:

- In 2020-21, the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS) delivered energy and bill savings for close to 2,700 participating ACT households that received energy efficiency upgrades under the Scheme.
- The Energy Savings Target (EST) is set at 12.5% for the 2022 compliance period (calendar year).
- The EST represents the total energy savings to be achieved by retailers in each compliance period. It is expressed as a percentage of their total sales in the ACT.
 - Larger electricity retailers (Tier 1) must meet this target by undertaking eligible energy saving activities.
 - Smaller electricity retailers (Tier 2) can meet the target by undertaking eligible energy saving activities, but have the option to pay an Energy Savings Contribution (ESC) of 12.5% of their electricity sales.
- The EST has increased from 8.6% in 2021 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) has increased from 30% to 40% for the 2022 compliance period. This will help to expand opportunities for low-income priority households in the Territory to reduce their energy use and costs.

Key Information

- From the Scheme's commencement in 2013 up to 30 June 2021:
 - Close to 78,500 households and businesses have benefited from the Scheme, including close to 20,400 priority households.
 - The close to 20,400 priority households, which includes rental properties, have experienced lifetime bill savings of over \$100 million.
 - Over 4,300 small- and medium-sized businesses have received commercial LED lighting upgrades worth over \$200 million in lifetime energy bill savings. Average lifetime energy bill savings for businesses is approximately \$50,000. This equates to just under \$100 per week in bill savings.
 - More than 40% of ACT households have participated in the Scheme.

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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

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 approximately 40c per week to ACT household electricity bills (for an average household that uses 6,370kWh¹) in pass-through costs (*note: pass-through costs are calculated on standing offer contracts*).
- The EEIS is legislated to 2030 and is a key mechanism for delivering on the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025.
- On 1 January 2021, the EEIS transitioned from a greenhouse gas emissions to an energy metric in response to the Territory meeting the 100% renewable electricity target.
 - The 2020 compliance year (1 January - 31 December 2020) was therefore the final year to report abatement in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e).
 - Energy savings of the scheme measured are in megawatt-hours (MWh).

¹ Representative household consumption as defined by the AER's annual retailer markets report 2020-21 Jurisdictional snapshot. 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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Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

ZERO EMISSIONS GOVERNMENT

Talking points:

- ‘The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25’ (the Strategy) sets emissions reduction targets in Government operations of:
 - 33 percent reduction on 2020 levels by 2025; and
 - net zero by 2040.
- These targets demonstrate that Government is leading by example to showcase best practice sustainability in Government operations. 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 in the southern hemisphere
 - Agreeing that all future schools will be all-electric including our first two all-electric schools.
 - Opening the Dickson Office Block, Canberra’s first all-electric major office block.
 - 100% of new fit-for-purpose vehicle leases in 2020-21 were zero emissions.
 - Committing to the purchase of a hybrid electric fire truck, a first in Australia.
 - Releasing the Zero-Emission Transition Plan for Transport Canberra and starting the process of purchasing zero emissions buses.
- Government Directorates have now established five-year emissions reduction targets for 2025. These provide accountability and transparency of progress towards Government targets. The Canberra Health Services pathway is currently under development.
- Government has established a Social Cost of Carbon, a dollar value per tonne of emissions generated, based on the projected cost of climate change damages. It will be used to measure the costs and benefits of alternative emissions reduction options and to prioritise public investment.
- Government has implemented a Social Cost of Carbon at an interim price of \$20 per tonne of emissions to support projects to reduce Government emissions. This price will not be applied outside of Government, to business or community.
- In 2021-22 the Social Cost of Carbon funded the following projects:
 - Yarralumla nursery gas to electric boiler upgrade \$800,000.
 - 255 Canberra Avenue gas to electric heating upgrade, coupled with solar \$197,120.
 - Fadden Primary School gas to electric heating upgrade, coupled with energy efficiency upgrades \$400,000.

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Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

Key Information

- The two largest sources of ACT Government emissions are transport fuel use (60 percent of Government emissions) and gas use (40 percent of Government emissions). The Strategy sets out to achieve these targets by establishing actions including:
 - transitioning passenger fleet to zero emissions (where fit for purpose);
 - ensuring new government buildings and leases are all-electric and replacing gas systems with electric at the end of their economic lives (where fit for purpose);
 - a roadmap for transitioning Transport Canberra buses to zero emissions
 - a pathway to zero-emissions health sector by 2040.
- The ZEG Fund is a no interest loan fund for Government agencies to finance emissions reduction activities. Loans are repaid using operational savings generated by projects. The loan fund has implemented 36 projects to the value of \$17 million.
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate, 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.

Background Information

- The 2020 Parliamentary and Governing Agreement sets 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.
- In 2021, the Climate Change Council developed a report to support the Government to implement a Social Cost of Carbon in the ACT. The Council's report is publicly available on the ACT Government website. [The link to this work is here.](#)
- In 2021, the ACT also received a report from economist Nicki Hutley titled 'A Social Cost of Carbon for the ACT' that provided international examples of best practice use of the Social Cost of Carbon in governments globally. The Council's report is publicly available on the ACT Government website. [The link to this work is here.](#)

Portfolio/s: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

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 small businesses and community organisations received \$459,690 in rebates and installed 1402 kW of solar capacity.
 - These small businesses and community organisations saved a combined 1540 MWh in annual electricity consumption equating to around \$470,300 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 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 on 30 June 2021 which allowed time for businesses to complete installations.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

Talking points:

- In August 2020, the then Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability directed the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to conduct a special investigation into the ACT's Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Commissioner submitted the report 'Scope 3: Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the ACT – An Investigation of Current Scope 3 Emissions and Potential Future Reductions' on 28 September 2021. This report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 11 November 2021.
- The ACT Government is considering a response to the recommendations of the report and the response is due this month.
- Scope 1 emissions are emissions produced directly in the ACT. When we drive our petrol or diesel cars, when we burn gas to heat our offices or homes, and when organic waste in our landfills degrades, this releases greenhouse gas emissions for which we are clearly and directly responsible. The ACT Government continues to focus on reducing these emissions, especially through developing our gas transition plan and promoting the switch to zero emissions vehicles.
- Scope 2 emissions are those emissions produced in making the electricity we consume. We are the first jurisdiction in Australia to reach zero emissions in electricity.
- Scope 3 emissions are emissions that occur outside of the ACT as a result of activities undertaken within the ACT. For example, emissions resulting from the creation of steel used for housing in the ACT would be Scope 3 emissions.
- The Commissioner provided twelve recommendations for ACT Government to account for and reduce Scope 3 emissions.
- The recommendations focus on strengthening the ACT Government's leadership on climate action; changes for ACT Government operations; actions for households; and reducing emissions from the construction industry.
- The recommendations aim to effectively account for and reduce Scope 3 emissions in the Territory.
- These recommendations will be carefully considered by government and a response will be provided within six months of the submission's presentation.

Key Information

- In accordance with the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*, reports must be presented to the Legislative Assembly within six sitting days of the Minister receiving the Submission. If agreed to by Cabinet, the Submission will be

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tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Government must formally respond within 6 months of the Submission's presentation to the Legislative Assembly.

Background Information

- The Terms of Reference established by the then Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability were:
 - By September 2021, the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment will consider:
 - Methodologies for measuring scope 3 emissions;
 - Effective ways to reduce scope 3 emissions;
 - Appropriate targets for reduction; and
 - Recommendations for short and long-term action in this area.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT****Talking points:**

- The Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) has proposed construction of a new treatment plant to upgrade the Queanbeyan Sewage Treatment Plant (QSTP).
- 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 Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) provided comment on the EIS in March 2021. A revised EIS is being prepared by the proponent and is due by 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 range of issues associated with the new plant's impact on the receiving waters of Lake Burley Griffin (LBG). These include impacts on water quality, aquatic biodiversity and public amenity.
- Further information and analysis of impacts has been requested by 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.
- The ACT & Region Catchment Management Coordination Group wrote to Minister Rattenbury on 13 March 2022 describing some of their key considerations for QSTP.
 - Cross-border and regional strategic planning with QPRC and NSW government is required for water security and sewerage master planning of current and future STPs for the Canberra region.
 - If the EIS is granted the upgraded QSTP could be operational in March 2025.
 - QPRC intend to invest \$12m (or 12% of construction costs) to cover environmental costs above those that would have been incurred had the QSTP upgrades been assessed under NSW standards.

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.

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- 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).
- 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 timeframe for this report was recently extended to May 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.
- In times of drought and low water flows, wastewater discharged from QSTP provides important environmental baseflow to Lake Burley Griffin.

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: Sustainable Building and Construction

Planning and Land Management

Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (including DV369)

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.
- The ACT Government recognises 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 ACT 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 percent tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30 percent 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 percent canopy cover (or equivalent) target for Canberra's urban footprint.

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- 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 advanced street tree planting.
- Introducing changes to the Territory Plan requirements, notably to the draft Territory Plan Variation 369 – Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones which are outlined below -
 - These requirements don't go all the way to achieving the Plan's targets, but they significantly strengthen the contribution that residential developments make to tree canopy and green infrastructure.
 - Further amendments to planning processes in the future will be introduced to support the ACT reaching its targets by 2045.

DV369 – Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones

- This draft Variation proposes higher requirements for the minimum planting area, along with new requirements for planting of trees for blocks with a residential zoning.
- DV369 also introduces new site coverage requirements for different sized residential blocks, introduces a new definition for deep soil zone and strengthens the definitions for site coverage and planting areas.
- Changes to the recommended version respond to community feedback that living infrastructure should be embedded across private and public land. These included adjustments for small blocks to enable an appropriately sized home to be built while providing planting area on the site.
- The recommended version of DV369 and associated consultation report were made available to the public on Friday 29 October 2021 on the Legislation Register and EPSDD website.
- The Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services advised that an inquiry into DV369 will not be conducted at this time.
- Industry information sessions on the changes proposed with DV369 were held during the weeks of 21 and 28 February 2022.

2020 Tree Canopy Cover Estimate

- Updated Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) analysis has allowed us to more accurately estimate current tree canopy coverage and provides us with a better picture of our living infrastructure in Canberra.
- Canberra's Total Canopy Cover (TCC) in 2020 was estimated to be 22.5 percent of Canberra's urban footprint.

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- This provides a new baseline and helps identify areas where canopy cover is low so planting efforts can be prioritised.

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 degrees Celsius 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 percent TCC, 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.

2020 Tree Canopy Cover Estimate

- On 28 October 2021, the Minister for Transport and City Services, Mr Chris Steel MLA, released new estimates for tree canopy cover in Canberra.
- The estimates were prepared by staff in both EPSDD and TCCS using an updated methodology and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data collected in April 2020.
- The new estimate replaces the previous estimate using 2015 LiDAR data that was found to be unreliable due to inaccuracies in the data and the time of year the data was collected. Consequently, direct comparisons between the current 2020 estimate and the previous 2015 estimate should not be made.

Portfolio: Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

COMMUNITY ZERO EMISSIONS GRANTS PROGRAM

Talking points:

- The Government has committed \$600,000 over 4-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.
- Round five of the program opened on 1 February 2022 with \$150,000 of grant funding available. Applications for Round five of the program closed on 25 March 2022.
- Grant applications up to \$50,000 available per single application and \$75,000 for joint applications.
- The program priority areas for round five are reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and natural gas use as well as supporting the community to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change, including more extreme heat waves, bushfires, droughts and storms.

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 4-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 23 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.

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Background Information:

- In Round One, 19 grant applications were received and assessed, with six applicants successful, sharing \$117,910 in grant funding.
- In Round Two, 16 grant applications were received and assessed; with seven applicants successful, sharing \$167,528 in grant funding.
- In Round Three, 20 grant applications were received and assessed; with seven applicants successful, sharing \$160,117 in grant funding.
- In Round Four, 16 grant applications were received and assessed; with five applicants successful, sharing \$127,424 in funding.

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

- The ACT has reached 100 percent 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 (Next Gen) program has supported the installation of over 2,194 energy storage systems, or 10.6 megawatts (MW) of sustained peak output, to date.

Key Information:

- Around 26,000 Canberra households and businesses have installed rooftop solar, totalling around 125MW. 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 and Berrybank 2 wind farm are both in 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 Gen program is supporting the installation of up to 36 MW of distributed energy storage in the ACT.
 - Twenty retailers have been accepted to the program. The retailers are Mondiaux, Stored Solar, Reposit Power, Sunbank Solar, Stag Electrical Solar & Refrigeration, Select Electrical & Solar Solutions, Lighting and Energy Conservation Australia, Solar4Life, Solargain, ECG Electrical, Solarhub, Solahart Canberra, Ron Burrell Electrical and SunStak, Power Ideas, Innovate Energy, Sunbuilt Solar, Solarforever, GStar and Malwa.
 - 20 retailers provide the ACT Community with a wide range of options and helps support the Sustainable Households Scheme.
- The Australian National University's Battery Storage and Grid Integration Project 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. Two of the seven projects have been completed and the remaining projects continue to make progress.

Background Information:

- The Next Gen 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 Gen 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 ACT Emergency Services Agency 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 not activated in 2021 and has not been activated so far in 2022.
- The ACT Energy Emergency Plan was activated three times in 2020, in response to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) 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.

Key Information

- The 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.

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Portfolio: Environment

Western Edge- Environmental Values and Conservator inputs

Talking points:

- A Preliminary Ecological Review and Assessment of the Western Edge investigation area was undertaken in 2020-21. This identified known environmental values for the area and recommended additional flora and fauna surveys to appropriately identify and describe the significant ecological values that occur in the Western Edge investigation area.
- This Review and Assessment further recommended engaging experts to conduct additional reviews and analysis, particularly with respect to aquatic ecology and habitat connectivity.
- Consultants are currently being procured to undertake a Land Use Capability and Suitability Assessment, as well as an Aquatic and Riparian Literature Review. Further studies anticipated for this financial year include:
 - Environmental surveys (targeted) consistent with best practice methodologies and EPBC criteria.
 - Cultural Values Assessment.
 - Aquatic and Riparian Benchmarking Study.
- There is currently relatively limited information available on the ecological values present, particularly in relation to aquatic values. These studies may need to continue into future years to ensure that there is sufficient knowledge of the values to support future Commonwealth and ACT statutory environment approvals
- The Western Edge Investigations Project is being run jointly between Strategic Planning and the Environment, Heritage and Water Division (EHW) within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, including significant involvement of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and EHW ecologists.

Key Information

- Known significant ecological values identified in the Preliminary Ecological Review and Assessment include:
 - Natural Temperate Grassland, a critically endangered ecological community
 - Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland, a critically endangered ecological community
 - Vegetation maintaining local and regional habitat connectivity
 - Five threatened flora species
 - 47 rare and uncommon flora species
 - 12 threatened bird species including 513ha of confirmed Superb Parrot breeding habitat, and an additional 423ha of potential breeding habitat
 - 16 rare or conservation dependent bird species

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 59027

Contact Officer name: Eliza Larson Ext: 77009

Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, including 617ha of confirmed habitat, and an additional 73ha of potential habitat.
- Golden Sun Moth, including 105ha of confirmed habitat, and additional potential habitat
- Small Ant-blue Butterfly
- Three threatened fish species

- Consultants are currently being procured to undertake a:
 - Land Use Capability and Suitability Assessment, in broad terms:
 - Undertaking a land capability assessment;
 - Establishing land use areas and boundaries;
 - Undertaking a land suitability assessment;
 - Developing land use scenarios and analysis; and
 - Recommendations for next steps and further work.
 - Aquatic and Riparian Literature Review (desktop study), in broad terms:
 - Reviewing and identifying aquatic and riparian values and impacts;
 - Identifying and mapping environmental and ecological values; and
 - Recommending future aquatic and riparian surveys.

- The following investigations have been completed:
 - Preliminary Air Quality Assessment Report;
 - Preliminary Contamination Assessment;
 - Preliminary Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Assessment;
 - Water Values and Environmental Hydrology Assessment;
 - Preliminary Cultural Heritage Assessment;
 - Landscape Character Values and Visual Assessment;
 - Preliminary Bushfire Risk Assessment;
 - Preliminary Ecological Review and Assessment; and
 - Preliminary Assessment of Engineering Infrastructure Opportunities and Constraints.

Background Information

- The *ACT Planning Strategy 2018* (Planning Strategy) included a commitment to investigate the opportunities to provide future greenfield development in the Western Edge, once Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley are developed.
- The 2019-20 ACT Budget (EPSDD E22) allocated \$1.15 million over two years for scoping and preliminary studies to assist in determining the long-term use of land to the west of Canberra – referred to as Western Edge investigations.
- The Western Edge investigation area is approximately 9,800 hectares and is bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the existing urban areas of Weston Creek, Molonglo Valley and Belconnen.

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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.
- 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.

Key Information

Plan Variations

- Two Territory Plan variations are currently being prepared as part of the implementation:
 - DV280 Deakin Office Park and open space expansions 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
 - DV384 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 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).
- The Garran Residents Association and Hughes Residents Association have also published a petition flyer that states *Keep Federal for Birdies and Birds*.

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Potential Environmental Impacts

- During the engagement process for the draft Plan in 2019-2020, concerns were raised relating to potential impacts of development of a retirement village at the golf course on ecological values, amenity to surrounding residents and traffic on Kitchener Street.
- The ecological features identified by ACT Government ecologists during a rapid site assessment include approximately 12 hectares of native vegetation, foraging habitat for superb parrots and foraging and breeding habitat for gang-gang cockatoos.
- 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 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 while minimising potential impacts on amenity of surrounding residential areas.
- 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.
- An EPBC referral for the proposed retirement village is being prepared by the Federal Golf Course and is anticipated to be submitted shortly. EPSDD will provide comment on this referral.

Portfolio: Environment

MULTIPLE 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 a 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 2014* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (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 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 planning applications will be sent to DAWE and NCA in January 2022, however these have not been recorded on the DAWE EPBC Public Referrals database.
- The land is likely to remain National Land as the website states that applications will be lodged with DAWE and the NCA.
- The referral to 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 an approximately 416 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS MONITORING REPORTS

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to the collection of ecological information for monitoring and reporting requirements for species and ecological communities that are Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). This is a requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- In December 2021, the ACT Government published two Environmental Offsets Monitoring Reports covering the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 monitoring seasons across a number of sites managed or monitored by the ACT Government. Publication of these reports supports compliance requirements under the EPBC Act.
 - These reports were published together at a delayed date due to the extensive nature of the offsets monitoring and data evaluation program and resourcing issues from the beginning of COVID-19 in 2020.
- Further monitoring reports will be completed as required to support meeting compliance requirements under the EPBC Act and guide decisions under the Environmental Offsets Adaptive Management Strategy. The report will be published once data has been suitably analysed in relation to meeting commitments and conservation targets.
- The monitoring reports detail declines in ecological conditions and populations for some MNES at some sites, primarily attributed to the impacts of weather and extended dry conditions:
 - Reduction in grass height and below average rainfall during the 2018 and 2019 monitoring years are the likely reasons for the recorded declines in MNES at some sites in 2018 to 2020.
 - Declines in grass height have been attributed to the prolonged drought conditions combined with high numbers of herbivores, including stock and kangaroos, on these sites.
- Results from 2018-19 and 2019-20 for MNES were positive in a number of other areas, for example:
 - All EPBC grassland sites recorded values above Commonwealth requirements for EPBC listing, with some suggestion that EPBC grassland extent has expanded since previous mapping occurred.
 - Golden Sun Moth were recorded in increased numbers across many sites.
 - Declines in grass height also enabled improved effectiveness of weed management across the estate.

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- Offset sites are being managed by strategic grazing from stock and kangaroos, woodland enhancement, relocations or breeding of significant species, and intensive invasive plant management programs.
- Preliminary results from data collected in the 2020-2021 monitoring seasons indicate some improvements in some areas, likely due to the increase in rainfall and associated increase in grass heights, as well as changes in management to some sites.
 - Preliminary data from Spring 2020 shows improvement in vegetation condition at grassland and woodland sites across Canberra, bringing condition of plant community types to ideal conditions and above. This increase includes a need for increased management of weed incursions across the estate.
 - Following favourable Spring conditions and increases in grassland vegetation conditions in 2020, preliminary data indicates an increase in the number of striped legless lizard recorded across most monitoring sites.

Key Information

- Significant MNES that are protected and monitored across the offset estate include: Striped Legless Lizard, Grassland Earless Dragon, Golden Sun Moth, Superb Parrot, Scarlet Robin, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Ginninderra Peppercross, Button Wrinklewort, Perunga Grasshopper, and the Box-gum Grassy Woodland and Natural Temperate Grassland ecological communities.

Background Information

- The ACT Government has made commitments to the Australian Government under the EPBC Act to establish and manage environmental offset areas associated with land development approvals. These land development approvals sit with the ACT Government as primary proponent.
- The approval conditions under the EPBC Act commit the ACT Government to the protection and ongoing management of MNES.
- Monitoring across current and proposed offset sites will continue in line with the Offsets Monitoring and Research Plan (an internal document), which supports the ACT Government in achieving its offset commitment. Monitoring informs adaptive management practices which allows offset management to be altered to achieve improved results over time.
- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service officially manages 23 Environmental Offset areas with commitments to protect these areas in perpetuity. At least 16 offset areas are currently zoned as Nature Reserves giving them full protection in perpetuity.
- The ACT Government provides ongoing funding for actions across all current offset sites, including approximately \$590,000 to the annual monitoring program (this amount excludes funding for the Molonglo Strategic Assessment).
- In the 2021-22 budget, \$6.2 million was allocated to supporting new and ongoing offset projects.

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Portfolio: Environment

2022-2023 ACT Environmental Grants Program

Talking points:

- The ACT Environmental Grants Program supports and empowers the community to play an important role as stewards helping to conserve, promote and protect the environmental values of the ACT. The program achieves this by providing additional opportunities for the community to:
 - a) build capacity of the volunteer groups in the ACT;
 - b) address environmental issues that they are concerned about;
 - c) restore and conserve natural places that are special to them; and
 - d) engage other community members to do the same.
- The ACT Environmental Grants Program is an “umbrella” program and has three streams of investment:
 - a) Environment Grants Stream;
 - b) Nature in the City Grants Stream; and
 - c) Environmental Volunteer Group Assistance Grants Stream (new for the 2022-2023 round).
- In 2021 a review was undertaken of the ACT Environmental Grants program to ensure the administration burden for applicants are simplified, while ensuring probity and accountability requirements.
- There is \$478,000 available under this years umbrella program across the three streams.
- The 2021 ACT Government budget provided an additional \$128K funding for the grants program.
- This years program was officially opened on the 28th of February and was due to close on the 1st of April.
- After a request from community, the decision was made to extend the closing date for the grants by two weeks due to an increased interest from volunteer groups.
- The new closing date for applications is the 18th of April.
- Successful applicants are due to be announced in June 2022.

Key Information

- Notable changes to the 2022-2023 ACT Environmental Grants program include:
 - a) A reduction in the administrative requirements with a focus on simplification in language to improve readability.
 - b) Additional transparency of the merit criteria involved in assessing projects with the aim of assisting applicants to submit more competitive applications.
 - c) Updating of the branding and design of the guidelines to align it with other directorate programs.
 - d) Redesigned project acquittals. Previously the program has required proof of expenditure (invoices and receipts) to assist with the grant acquittal process. The process has been redesigned to allow proof of outcomes (photos, reports etc.) as

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proof of expenditure.

- The indicative funding of \$478,000 is being allocated across the three streams as follows:
 - a) Environment Grants - \$278,000
 - b) Nature in the City Grants - \$150,000
 - c) Environment Volunteer Group Assistance Grants - \$50,000
- To ensure probity and minimise potential risks, grants will be determined by the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate with advice from an independent assessment panel.
- Funding priorities across the 3 streams are:
 - Environment Grants:
 - a) **Connecting people with nature** through innovative initiatives like
 - i. Nature based health
 - ii. Nature based education
 - iii. Improving universal access
 - iv. Citizen science
 - b) **Enhancing ecological condition and connectivity** of woodlands, grasslands and/or aquatic ecosystems by
 - i. Reducing threats to biodiversity, such as invasive species, erosion etc
 - ii. Protecting and conserving native plants and animals
 - c) **Rewilding Canberra** to enhance biodiversity across urban areas through innovative approaches such as
 - i. Establishing biodiverse plantings on road reserves and nature verges
 - ii. Controlling invasive species
 - d) **Care for Country** by providing opportunities for Traditional Custodians and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to share knowledge and deliver work to conserve and enhance Country
 - e) **Food and Fibre initiatives** – by trialling innovative approaches to food and fibre production in urban areas
 - f) **Nature In the Cities Grants:**
 - I. Reducing urban heat and increasing access to shade;
 - II. Retaining and or reusing rainwater including improving water penetration for vegetation growth and recharge of ground water;
 - III. Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services in the city's landscape.
 - Funding priority for **Environment Volunteer Group Assistance Grants** is to build capacity within volunteer stewardship groups.
- Funding priorities are set by the directorate to align with current Government priorities.

Background Information

- The ACT Environment Grants commenced in 1996 and funds community projects that support environmental activities consistent with the ACT Government's policies

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and priorities. Over this period, 288 projects have shared in almost \$4.5 million of funding.

- Prior to the current budget initiative, the ACT Environmental Grants program has not received additional funding since its inception in 1996.

Portfolio/s: Planning and Land Management
Environment

Black Summer Commonwealth Grant

Talking points:

- In February 2022 the ACT Government was advised it would receive \$6.58m over 2.5 years through the Australian Government's Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Program to support the Government's ongoing Bushfire Recovery Program.
- Black Summer funds will be used to augment existing projects identified under the Recovery Program's 'build back better' initiative and engage Canberra's Ngunnawal community in projects designed to improve the ways in which we work together to promote and manage country and culture.
- The region's recent weather events are a strong indication the climate is changing and a catalyst for the Government to reconsider how we plan and build infrastructure well into the future. The additional funding now available through the Bushfire Recovery Program will ensure that assets destroyed during the fires and subsequent floods are built to withstand more frequent wildfire and intense storm and flood events.
- Specifically, funds will be used to improve our capacity to protect life and property through improved fire fuel and wildfire management within the landscape. A suite of projects focused on upgrading critical stream crossings throughout Namadgi will improve and safeguard access to strategic firefighting and fuel management areas and greatly improve general park operations including search and rescue operations.
- Visitors will also enjoy improvements to many more walking tracks throughout the park similar to the recent modifications to the Mt Tennent summit track. Substantial funding has been allocated to improving opportunities for people with disabilities including improving accessibility of an existing interpretive trail around the Namadgi Park Visitor Information Centre.
- Visitor numbers to Namadgi have increased since COVID 19. With increasing pressures on the Park, the Black Summer grant funding will be used to develop a framework to help promote and regulate major events and commercial opportunities.

Key Information

- The \$6.58 million awarded through the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery program will build on the ACT Government's Bushfire Recovery Program.
- Funding through the Program is restricted to physical infrastructure damaged through the fire and community development projects.
- The Program is due for completion by March 2024 and will focus on engaging the Ngunnawal community in Park management and fixing damaged tracks and trails.

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Background Information

- On 12 Feb 2022 the Australian Government announced the outcomes of the competitive Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants program. The Government further announced that contributions to date have been boosted to \$390 million to further support communities to recover from the bushfires.
- The ACT Government was awarded \$6.58 million through the program.
- The Grants will build on the existing ACT Bushfire Recovery Program – refer to *Fire recovery* QTB for further information.