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THE CANBERRA PLAN

TOWARDS OUR SECOND CENTURY

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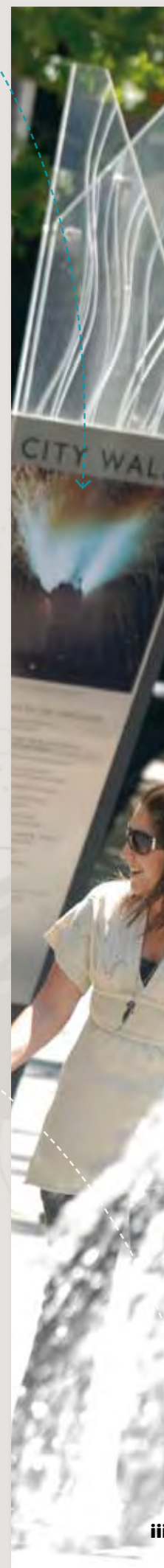
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Telephone: Canberra Connect 132 281

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# Chief Minister's Foreword

When the inaugural *Canberra Plan* was published in 2004, ours was a city enjoying, at last, the freedom that comes with maturity, and seeking as a society to articulate the kind of place we wanted it to be.

The *Canberra Plan* was that articulation. It set out our goals. It described a vision. And it put in place strategies for making that vision a reality.

In the four years since the *Canberra Plan* was embarked upon, we have achieved a great deal—as a community, and as a government dedicated to making this most beloved of cities the best of all places to live.

In the pages that follow, you will see some of the fruits of the financial and social investment made during the implementation of the *Canberra Plan*.

Four years have also brought new challenges, and heightened ones that were only on the periphery of our vision in 2004.

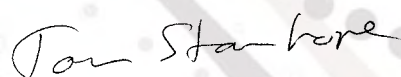
It is time to take stock of the *Canberra Plan*, to reflect on our shared achievements as Canberrans, and to look to the future.

This new document starts that process—but does not finish it. It is a starting point for a community conversation that will allow us to build on our great foundations, but aspire to something more and to meet, with unity, effectiveness, energy and imagination, our shared future.

It is time to set new goals and imagine greater things.

My hope is that this document will be a launching pad for serious and thorough community conversations about issues that go to the heart of who we are as a city—conversations about future urban form and sustainable transport, conversations about reducing our ecological footprint, and conversations about the implications of our shifting demographic.

The next leg of the journey is just beginning. The destination is our second century as a city. I want every Canberran to be a part of it.



Jon Stanhope  
Chief Minister









## Purpose

The *Canberra Plan* was launched in 2004 to guide the growth and development of Canberra for this generation and beyond. It set out a strategy that reflected the views and values of Canberrans and responded to the challenges facing our city.

Many of these elements remain unchanged. *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* builds on the original *Canberra Plan* by articulating key directions for the city's continued prosperity as we approach our second century. It also responds to new challenges since 2004. These include climate change, water security, housing affordability and skills shortages.

While the ACT Government has a strong commitment to tackling these challenges, we recognise that an equally strong focus must be kept on health, education and municipal services, and ensuring the continuing well-being, safety and equity of our community.

Canberra is a city for its people. *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* puts people at the heart of the ACT Government's planning and priorities for the coming cycle of growth and change.

## The Vision

The vision of the 2004 *Canberra Plan* was:

*Canberra will be recognised throughout the world—not only as the beautiful city, uniquely designed in harmony with the environment, the seat of Australia's government and the home of its pre-eminent national institutions—but also as a place that represents the best in Australian creativity, community living and sustainable development.*


This vision was complemented by other key plans, including *Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*, which envisaged that:

*We become a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community.*

Underpinning the Plan's vision was the concept of sustainability. This recognises that innovation and creativity must be encouraged in order to continue strong economic growth, that the causes of disadvantage and social exclusion must be addressed if all citizens are to share in the city's good fortune, and that our natural and built environment must be kept healthy so that all in the community can enjoy the recreational and spiritual benefits they offer.







The vision for *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* encompasses all these elements and embraces the concept of social inclusion and sustainability.

Canberra will be recognised throughout the world as a truly sustainable and creative city; as a community that is socially inclusive—acknowledging and supporting those who are vulnerable and in need and enabling all to reach their full potential; as a centre of economic growth and innovation; as the proud capital of the nation and home of its pre-eminent cultural institutions; and as a place of great natural beauty.

## Strategic Themes

*The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* articulates the vision through seven strategic themes that reflect the ACT Government's priorities. The themes are:

- quality health care
- a fair and safe community
- excellent education, quality teaching and skills development
- a strong, dynamic economy
- a vibrant city and great neighbourhoods
- a sustainable future
- high-quality services.

## The Canberra Plan and Related Plans

In 2004, the foundations of the *Canberra Plan* included the *Economic White Paper, Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan* and the *Canberra Spatial Plan*. *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* continues to embrace the social, spatial, economic and sustainability framework articulated in the original *Canberra Plan* and the associated strategic plans.

*The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* is underpinned by a wide range of more detailed plans and strategies. Importantly, these plans articulate the ACT Government's priorities and outline ways in which various sectors of the community can participate in and contribute to Canberra's future prosperity.

The discussion of each strategic theme lists related strategies, plans and policies.

## Consultation

### Developing the Plan

*The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* reflects ongoing consultation by the ACT Government with key stakeholders and the community on a wide range of issues. The ACT business community and the tertiary sectors were consulted about the main economic and regional issues facing the ACT.

The ACT Community Inclusion Board convened a forum to obtain input from the community sector on issues and areas of focus for *Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*.

Extensive consultation was undertaken to refine the *Territory Plan* and implement the reforms to the planning system introduced in March 2008.

In addition, the ACT Government convened the ACT 2020 Summit—a precursor to the national Australia 2020 Summit—at the National Convention Centre on 5 April 2008. The summit brought together more than 300 Canberrans with expertise in various sectors: health, education, environmental sciences, the arts, business, information technology, sport, tourism, community support, spirituality and economics. Despite their diverse backgrounds, all participants shared a passion for the national capital and its community, and a commitment to building an inspiring and sustainable future.

The outcomes of the ACT Summit were submitted to the Australia 2020 Summit.

Themes that emerged from the ACT 2020 Summit were:

- Canberra will be characterised by a culture of active citizenry that is enabled by social inclusiveness.
- Canberra will be recognised internationally as a place of 'hot science and cool design'.
- Building on the resources we have in our educational and other institutions, Canberra will be recognised as a city of excellence and innovation.
- Canberra will have strong links to other communities internationally, nationally and regionally, which will be enhanced by a modern transport system.
- Planning and design will be future-focused and based on principles of sustainability.

- It will be easy for all members of our community to participate and make informed choices.
- Through increased engagement and connectedness among residents, there will be fewer 'lost' or disconnected people.

Specific ideas and action items raised during the ACT 2020 Summit can be found under each strategic theme.

## Ongoing community involvement

Consultation to develop *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* continues the ACT Government's ongoing engagement with the community. The renewed Plan sets out the ACT Government's achievements since the original *Canberra Plan* was launched and identifies the many issues we face as we move into the next century. The Plan sets out actions and strategies to address these issues, but many also require the ongoing involvement of the community to reach agreement on the way ahead. These include our urban form, sustainable transport, the size of our ecological footprint, our changing demographic profile, addressing disadvantage and enhancing community safety.

The launch of the Plan will mark the beginning of this new phase of community engagement. A website has been established to allow feedback and notify the community about future forums, focus groups and discussion papers.

For further information, you can visit [www.canberraplan.act.gov.au](http://www.canberraplan.act.gov.au).

# Canberra Snapshot

	2004 <i>CANBERRA PLAN</i>	2008 <i>CANBERRA PLAN</i>	CHANGE
<b>Population</b>	322,900 (June 2003)	339,865 (June 2007)	+5.3%
<b>Economy (gross state product)</b>	\$17.9 billion (2001–02)	\$21.0 billion (2006–07)	+17.3%
<b>Gross household income per capita</b>	\$48,868 (national average \$33,267 in 2002–03)	\$64,316 (national average \$42,319 in 2006–07)	+31.6%
<b>Labour market</b>	71.9% (May 2004) and national average of 63.7%	73.1% (May 2008) and national average of 65.3%	+1.2 percentage points
<b>Education</b>	65.5% people aged 25–64 with post-school qualifications (national average 55.3%), 2003	71.0% people aged 25–64 with post-school qualifications (national average 59.4%), 2007	+5.47 percentage points
<b>International students</b>	6,051 in ACT educational institutions (2003)	7,007 in ACT educational institutions (year end 2007)	+15.8%
<b>Health</b>	65.3% people reporting excellent to very good health (national average 59.2%), 2002	62.6% people reporting excellent to very good health (national average 57.6%), 2006	–2.7 percentage points
<b>Housing</b>	114,842 occupied private dwellings (2001)	122,901 occupied private dwellings (2006)	+7%
<b>Median house price</b>	\$365,000 (March quarter 2004)	\$445,000 (March quarter 2008)	+21.9%
<b>Tourism</b>	67.1% room occupancy annual average (2004)	72.7% room occupancy annual average (2007)	+5.6 percentage points
<b>Private sector</b>	23,884 businesses (June 2003)	24,343 businesses (June 2007)	+1.9%
<b>Computer use</b>	78% of Canberrans use a computer at home (national average 61%), 2002	84% of Canberrans use a computer at home (national average 73%), 2007	+6 percentage points
<b>Sport and recreation</b>	76.1% of Canberrans undertake regular physical exercise (national average 62.4%), 2001	79.5% of Canberrans undertake regular physical exercise (national average 65.9%), 2006–07	+3.4 percentage points
<b>Rainfall</b>	630.2 mm average annual	618.4 mm average annual	–1.9%

Sources include Australian Bureau of Statistics, ACT Department of Education and Training, Australian Government Productivity Commission, Real Estate Institute of Australia, Bureau of Meteorology.









In the four years since the original *Canberra Plan* was launched, we have attained significant achievements in our quest to make the vision of the Plan a reality.

Canberra today is a thriving and dynamic city. On virtually all measures our standard of living has improved—we are earning more, learning more and gaining in health and well-being. Our economy is strong and getting stronger.

Our population has grown from 322,900 to 339,865 and is now growing at its fastest rate in more than a decade.

In 2004, average weekly earnings for full-time employed people in the ACT were \$1,084.43. This figure in 2007 was \$1,286.60, compared with \$1,094.45 nationally.

We still have the lowest unemployment levels in Australia. The trend rate in May 2008 was at a near record low of 2.7 per cent, compared with 4.2 per cent nationally. Over four years to May 2008, 16,200 new jobs have been created.

Our life expectancy continues to increase, rising from 83 to 84 years for women and from 79 to 80 years for men. This compares favourably with the national average of 83 years for women and 78 years for men.

We also continue to increase our level of education. The proportion of people with post-school qualifications rose from 65.5 to 71.0 per cent of the population aged between 25 and 64.

These improvements have been underpinned by significant increases in investments in health and education, by the adoption of new and expanded





services and models of care and learning, and by the development of a renewed curriculum framework and enhanced pastoral care.

On the economic front, the ACT's triple-A credit rating has been retained, due in no small part to the tough decisions taken in the 2006–07 Budget.

The private sector has grown steadily over the last four years, highlighting the overall health of the economy and the ongoing strength in business confidence. The number of businesses in the ACT grew from 23,884 in June 2003 to 24,343 in June 2007—an overall increase of 1.9 per cent. The growth in 2006–07 was particularly strong, with a net increase of almost 250 businesses in that year alone.

The facts are compelling. These achievements have all been underpinned by the foundations laid in

2004 through the *Canberra Plan* and supported by the ACT Government's dual commitments to sound economic management and strong and compassionate social policy.

While the achievements are many, and weekly earnings have increased and well-being continues to improve, the government has not lost its focus on those who continue to suffer disadvantage, including the long-term unemployed, people reliant on government support, the homeless, and people with a disability or long-term illness. Both the former *Canberra Plan* and the renewed Plan focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in the community.

A more detailed description of the achievements over the four years of the 2004 *Canberra Plan* can be found under each strategic theme.







# *The Changing Environment*



When it released the *Canberra Plan* in 2004, the ACT Government stated that new challenges would arise as the Plan was implemented.

Many of the issues that now confront the ACT were anticipated in 2004 and considered in the development of the *Canberra Plan* and the Territory's other key planning documents. Some of these issues have taken on greater significance as various social, environmental and economic forces have come into play, while others have emerged and are addressed in this updated Plan as we move into Canberra's second century.

## The ACT Economy and Labour Market

The ACT economy has thrived in recent years, achieving exceptional outcomes in growth and employment. This performance is highlighted by the ACT's gross state product for 2006–07: it grew by 17.3 per cent.

The ACT has also maintained a consistently lower unemployment rate than the rest of Australia. In May 2008, the ACT trend/seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 2.7 per cent was the lowest of all the states and territories and well below the national average of 4.2 per cent. Labour force participation rates in the ACT are also the highest in the country.

While the strong performance of the local labour market has been highly beneficial for the economy and the community as a whole, it has also highlighted the local impact of the nationwide skills shortage. The constraints on the labour market have also accentuated the need to assist those groups outside the market, such as the long-term unemployed.

The ACT Government has been working to address both the skills shortage and the needs of people excluded from the labour market, and will work both locally and with the Federal Government to implement coordinated strategic responses.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Increased labour force participation	Continue to focus on strong local economic performance and promotion of the ACT as an attractive employment destination
Nationwide skills shortage	Implement <i>ACT Skills Future</i> , drawing on the 2007 report by the ACT Skills Commission
Small number of long-term unemployed	Work with the Federal Government to implement strategies to help people who have been unemployed for long periods to enter and remain in the labour market



## Sustainability, Environment and Water

Since 2004 there has been greater recognition of and commitment to addressing climate change, particularly at a national level with the Federal Government's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2008.

The drought that was evident in the ACT in 2004 has lasted longer and been more severe than initially predicted. In response the ACT Government has fast-tracked the development of long-term sustainable options.

In 2007 the ACT announced major new water security measures and released *Weathering the Change: The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025*. Over the term of *Weathering the Change* the ACT Government will implement these commitments, while also adopting strategies to manage the impacts of climate change—such as rising utility and food costs—on the most vulnerable in the community.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Increasing worldwide recognition of the impacts of climate change	Continue to implement <i>Weathering the Change: The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025</i>
Prolonged local drought	Continue to implement water security measures, including enlarging Cotter Dam from 4 to 78 gigalitres
Flow-on costs from higher energy prices, such as increasing prices of food, fuel and utilities	Adopt strategies to minimise impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community
Increased climate variability and instances of extreme weather conditions	Adopt sustainable practices to ensure security of water and energy supplies





# Education

Today, as in 2004, the ACT is the most educated community in the country, with positive results being achieved in both the private and public sectors. However, demographic shifts have seen a decline in the school-age population and there has been a nationwide trend away from choosing public schools. The skills shortage has highlighted the importance of a flexible vocational education system with pathways for students from secondary school and college to further study or work.

In 2006, in the interests of maintaining and strengthening its high-quality public education system, the ACT Government initiated a wide-ranging reform program. The program featured significant reinvestment in school infrastructure and information technology; curriculum reform; the commissioning of new schools in high-growth areas; and the development of new models of education delivery, including new early childhood schools for pre-school to Year 2. The reforms were accompanied by a number of school closures in areas with current and projected low enrolments.

The ACT is also providing additional resources to the vocational education and training system to give students a wider range of career and education options and to assist in dealing with the skills shortage.

The reforms at the local level will complement those being delivered through the productivity agenda of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Demographic changes leading to decreasing enrolments in a number of public schools and high demand in new areas	Continue to implement school renewal program, including infrastructure improvements, commissioning of new schools, information technology upgrades, new curriculum framework and new models
National focus on curriculum reform, information technology, teacher quality and vocational education	Implement COAG productivity reforms relating to skills and education
Nationwide skills shortage	Implement <i>ACT Skills Future</i> , drawing on the 2007 report by the ACT Skills Commission





## Disadvantage and Social Exclusion

As a whole, the ACT is a relatively affluent community in which disadvantage and social exclusion have been largely geographically dispersed.

While this is still the case, since the release of the 2004 *Canberra Plan* a growing body of evidence—including the work of the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling—suggests locational factors are at play in the ACT, highlighting a need for more targeted and integrated service responses to ensure all Canberrans are able to experience the benefits of full social inclusion. The ACT Government will ensure its strategies to address this need are holistic and in accord with the social inclusion framework being developed by the Federal Government.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Enhanced identification of disadvantage and its impact in the ACT through Community Inclusion Board and other research	Develop and implement strategies addressing disadvantage, including strategies targeting generational and locational disadvantage  Continue to implement strategies that promote inclusion, including those relating to disability, homelessness and families at risk
National focus on addressing exclusion and disadvantage	Work with the Federal Government to implement strategies arising from the national social inclusion agenda

## Population

The ACT has experienced increasing population growth in recent years, with the annual growth rate reaching 1.7 per cent in 2007. This growth has had a positive effect on the ACT's economy and share of Commonwealth Grants Commission funding, but it has also placed increased pressure on housing supply, health services and other infrastructure. The ACT Government is taking the recent population growth, and the rate of regional growth, into account as it updates its planning and population projections and is working to identify the elements of the regional economic catchment.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Increased population growth	Continue regular updates of planning projections  Improve demographic analysis  Work to ensure adequate Commonwealth Grants Commission funding  Improve identification and planning of services in the region

# Housing

Housing affordability, both in purchase and rental markets, has emerged since 2004 as a major force influencing the ACT economy and community, as it has across the nation. The ACT Government has been quick to respond to the need for more affordable housing and residential land and, in early 2007, released the *Affordable Housing Action Plan* to address pressures in the purchase, rental and supported accommodation markets. More recently, the ACT Government has actively worked with the Federal Government, through COAG, to introduce innovative strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing at all levels of the market.

The ACT Government has also continued its strong support for public housing, maintaining the public housing property portfolio at 9 per cent of total ACT housing stock.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Nationwide increase in house prices with ACT strongly impacted	Continue to implement the ACT's <i>Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan</i>  Continue to implement annual land release programs  Work with COAG to implement national affordable housing strategies



## Age Profile

The fact that the ACT's population is ageing faster than that of any other jurisdiction was known in 2004 when the *Canberra Plan* was first released. The significance of this trend has been further emphasised by the Commonwealth Treasury's second *Intergenerational Report*, released in April 2007. This analysis found that nationally there will be a marked decrease in the ratio of working to non-working individuals, and that the anticipated fiscal gap will be around 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product by 2046–47.

The ACT Government is making preparations for the impact of the ageing population on the economy and in all areas of service delivery, including health services, aged care and accommodation. The ACT Government is also examining and highlighting the many positive aspects of the population's ageing, taking into account factors such as wider employment opportunities for older people, more flexible work practices and the potential availability of a wider pool of volunteers able to participate in all areas of the community and economy.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Ageing population	Model and plan for impact on service delivery, including health and aged care  Model and plan for impact on economy and labour market  Further promote positive aspects of ageing and contributions of older people to the community and economy

## Human Rights

In 2004 the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce its own human rights legislation. Since then other jurisdictions have introduced, or begun to consider, similar legislation. There is also a growing movement for a national system of human rights law and the ACT is well positioned to influence this national debate. At the same time, the ACT is continuing to promote a human rights culture across the full spectrum of its policy development and program and service delivery, particularly as the five-year review of the *ACT Human Rights Act 2004* approaches. The future focus in particular will be on the examination of economic, social and cultural rights, and on further education and compliance measures.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
First stage of ACT human rights legislation implemented	Continue to promote human rights culture across the ACT  Examine potential second stage of human rights legislation in the ACT, including examining the protection of economic, social and cultural rights

## Planning

The planning landscape in the ACT has altered since 2004, with accelerated greenfields development, the expansion of the Canberra airport and the surrounding commercial space, and proposed residential land releases across the border in New South Wales. In addition, there have been major increases in commercial and residential building activity across Canberra.

Although the principles and goals set in the *Canberra Spatial Plan* remain current, the ACT Government is emphasising existing and future planning challenges such as the need for sustainable development, an integrated and



accessible public and private transport system, and housing and community facilities to meet changing community needs, in addition to releasing more residential and commercial land.

The ACT Government has legislated for a new planning system based on best practice, ranging from new provisions for planning strategies to environmental impact assessments and development assessments. These new procedures are clearer, faster and simpler.

The Federal Parliament's inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority may result in significant changes to the Territory's planning regime. The ACT Government has made a submission to the inquiry and will work with the Federal Government to develop a planning system that meets the needs of both the national capital and the Canberra community.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Review of the role of the National Capital Authority	Work with the Federal Government to streamline planning processes while preserving the values of the national capital and meeting the needs of the Canberra community
Increased demand for residential and commercial land	Continue to implement the <i>ACT's Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan</i>
Proposed increased development across the border in New South Wales	Enhance focus on regional planning
Increased development at Canberra International Airport	Through annual land release program, review commercial land releases in the ACT and work with the Federal Government to clarify planning regimes governing the Canberra International Airport (including through the review of the National Capital Authority)

## Fiscal Reforms

Prudent and responsible management of the Territory's finances is a key component of a successful economy, and the ACT Government's fiscal management has delivered benefits to the community over the last four years. Maintaining a triple-A credit rating not only results in lower borrowing costs for the ACT Government and reduced tax burden for the residents of the ACT, but also instils confidence in the ACT economy.

The budget reforms of 2006–07 exemplify the ACT Government's approach to fiscal management. Major reforms have been designed to adjust service and program delivery costs to levels comparable with national averages, while maintaining high levels of service and positive community outcomes. The reforms also focus on extending and securing the Territory's revenue base.

In fulfilling the new directions established in this renewed *Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*, the ACT Government will ensure that public sector efficiencies are maintained and that high-quality service delivery remains the highest top priority.

WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
Fiscal reforms included in 2006–07 Budget	Ensure public sector efficiencies maintained
	Maintain high-quality service delivery
	Continue work to diversify the ACT economy and reduce reliance on land sales

## New Federal Reform Agenda

Since the election of a new Federal Government in 2007, through COAG all jurisdictions are embarking on major reforms in the areas of health and ageing, productivity (education, skills training and early childhood development), climate change and water, business regulation and competition, infrastructure, housing and Indigenous policy reform.

The ACT Government is keen to realise the benefits that will flow from increased cooperation while ensuring that federal investment is sufficient to effect changes in service delivery. We are also committed to engaging the Federal Government in discussions on various issues, including the right of the Territory to legislate for its own citizens.

In addition, the federal budget will have an ongoing impact on all states and territories, including the ACT. The ACT Government is confident that the strength of the local economy and employment market will help absorb the effects. To this end, we are working with the Federal Government on strategies to leverage the potential changes to the composition of the Australian public service to help address the skills shortage in the ACT.

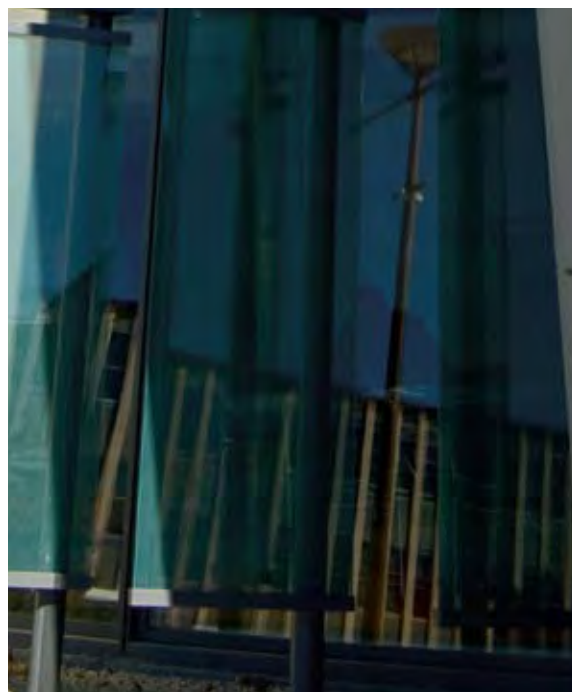
WHAT'S CHANGED	FUTURE FOCUS
New Federal Government	Continue to engage in cooperative federalism
Major new reform agenda through COAG	Implement COAG reforms
Federal budget	Manage impacts of federal budget on ACT Maximise positive impact of changes to Australian public service on ACT skills shortage

## New and Future Directions

The following sections cover the seven key strategic themes of *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*, outlining what has been achieved to date, the new and future direction, related plans and strategies, as well as ideas generated through the ACT 2020 Summit.

To enable us to measure our progress over time and monitor achievement of our Vision and New and Future Directions, the ACT Government will report annually on key indicators of strategic progress under each theme of *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*.

These indicators will be reviewed regularly, particularly to ensure consistency with local reform and with commitments through the COAG reform agenda. In addition, the 2008–09 Budget initiative on accountability in government will contribute to the further development of strategic government indicators.









Most people in the ACT enjoy the benefits of good health; as a community we are generally very healthy and active and avoid risky behaviour. The ACT Government aim to build upon these strengths in the future, and to ensure that all Canberrans have timely access to primary and acute health care.

The ACT has embarked upon an ambitious plan to reform health care, designed to meet our needs in the next decade and beyond. The ACT Government is also working with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions, through the Council of

Australian Governments, to make major improvements to the acute and primary care sectors for the benefit of all health care consumers.

The ACT is reviewing its current mental health legislation with

the aim of developing modern laws that comply with human rights legislation. In addition, the ACT Government is developing a new *Mental Health Services Plan* to provide the strategic direction for mental health services in the ACT to 2020. Both processes involve consultation with consumers, carers and mental health professionals.

The health care reforms will be underpinned by the principles of well-being, holistic care, early intervention and prevention, safe and respectful patient care, and the concept of the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The reforms will position the ACT to respond to the impacts of an ageing population and rising health care costs, together with the challenges presented by national and international workforce shortages.

## Objective

*To ensure all Canberrans have timely access to acute and primary health care and that health care focuses on early intervention and prevention and is grounded in the principles of well-being and safe and respectful patient care.*

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Increased funding to public hospitals to record levels to meet the growing demand for health services. Total health care expenditure has risen from \$554.5 million in 2003–04 to \$802.4 million in 2007–08—an increase of around 45 per cent in the four years since the *Canberra Plan* was launched.
- Provided funding for 147 new beds in the Territory's public hospitals, including an extra 60 acute care beds.
- Invested \$34.5 million to reduce the number of patients waiting for elective surgery and increase the number of elective procedures.
- Opened a new \$9.75 million specialised unit for elderly patients at Calvary Public Hospital in February 2007, including a 20-bed psycho-geriatric unit for older patients with acute mental illness and challenging behaviour.
- Redeveloped the paediatric area of the Emergency Department of the Canberra Hospital to make it more child-friendly.
- Extended our services for older people to increase the capacity of the Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service, which provides a full range of services from complex hospital care to community-based services.
- Established Child and Family Centres at Gungahlin and Tuggeranong, pioneering an innovative integrated delivery model of health and other services for children and families, with a focus on support and early intervention.
- Funded two new mental health Step-up Step-down facilities. In a partnership unique in the ACT, community service agencies provide day-to-day management and support, while Mental Health ACT provides an onsite clinician 40 hours per week to each facility.
- Released the *ACT Human Capital Action Plan* in April 2007, which aims to address the increasing prevalence of type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases.
- Released the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Well-being Plan 2006–2011*, which aims to close the gap between the health status of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with a particular focus on families, pregnant women, children, and people with chronic diseases.
- Established an outstanding record of achievement in supporting medical research and health workforce development, including:
  - funding and support for the Australian National University (ANU) Medical School, which opened in 2004
  - \$12.1 million for the ANU Medical School building at the Canberra Hospital, which opened in August 2006
  - \$1.75 million for the Calvary Hospital Campus of the ANU Medical School
  - \$10 million to build allied health teaching facilities at the University of Canberra, which opened in February 2007
- Introduced the *Go for 2&5* fruit and vegetable campaign to reinforce the idea of healthy eating and *Find thirty. It's not a big exercise®* to encourage physical activity.

## New and Future Directions

### Meeting future health care needs

The health care needs of the ACT community are changing as the population ages and grows. The ACT Government, through its *Building for the Future* infrastructure program and *Capital Asset Development Plan* and other strategies, is working to meet the community's future needs, with plans to increase the number of acute care beds, increase



the critical care capacity, redesign hospital facilities, invest in state-of-the-art technology to aid patient care and observations, and increase the efficiency of health care delivery.

There will be a greater focus on precincts within hospitals, including an integrated cancer centre, a rehabilitation area, a skills development centre and mental health precinct. In addition, over the long term, day surgery will be expanded, a one-stop ambulatory care centre will be established for outpatient clinics and a medi-hotel will be set up to facilitate recuperation outside the hospital and provide accommodation for the families of regional patients.

Reforms are also planned for community-based health services. Existing health centres will be redeveloped to offer more services, such as wellness clinics, walk-in centres and imaging and pathology.

## New health facilities to meet current and future needs

As part of the *Capital Asset Development Plan*, the ACT Government is meeting current and future needs through the construction of new health facilities. These include a women's and children's hospital, which will incorporate neonatal intensive care, paediatrics, maternity care and gynaecology; a neurosurgery operating theatre; a number of mental health facilities (see below); a surgical assessment and planning unit; a second cardiac catheter laboratory; and a new sleep studies laboratory. A new health centre will be constructed in Gungahlin, and at Calvary Hospital the intensive care/high dependency unit and the coronary care unit will be expanded.



## Implement *access health*

In 2007, the ACT Government launched *access health*—*healthcare for all in the ACT*. *Access health* sets the future for public health services for the next three years. It sets targets, outlines areas of strategic investment and details actions in relation to:

- timely access to care
- aged care
- mental health
- chronic disease management
- early childhood and vulnerable families
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

It covers the foundations of good health care, including the workforce, health promotion, primary care, information systems and facilities.

While planning and investing in future care, the ACT Government will continue to implement the actions in *access health*, as well as maintaining a high level of investment in the public health system.

## New era of cooperation on health care

The Federal Government has committed to adopting a cooperative approach with states and territories to address a range of national priorities, including health. Through the Council of Australian Governments, the Commonwealth, states and territories have agreed to work together to reduce elective surgery waiting times, invest in aged care, especially in transition care, invest in public dental programs, implement preventive health care and establish general practitioner super-clinics.

The forward work program will encompass:

- consideration of an agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories across the full range of health and well-being

issues, including outcomes, measures of progress and accountability arrangements


- a new Preventive Health Care Partnership, with emphasis on children and Indigenous Australians, including, for example, the main risk factors driving increasing rates of diabetes, cancer and poor mental health
- consideration of e-health, workforce planning and public hospital emergency departments
- key reform directions in relation to ageing, including the need for greater levels of community-based care, opportunities for more integrated delivery, and the need for more aged care places
- links with broader consideration of social inclusion and Indigenous reform, given the importance of health and well-being to reducing disadvantage.

The ACT Government is committed to working with the Federal Government to ensure a sustainable health system and better outcomes for health care consumers, particularly the most vulnerable. The new approach will involve investment by both governments, and regular reporting on outcomes.

## Health workforce strategy

The ACT Government has been working unilaterally and through the Council of Australian Governments to address the demands on the health workforce in the interest of improving the number of workers and the flexibility, distribution and responsiveness of the workforce. At a national level the focus has been on undergraduate and clinical training, national accreditation and registration.

The ACT Government will adapt its *ACT Health Workforce Plan 2005-2010* as appropriate. It will continue to look for alternative pathways for health professionals to participate in the workforce, to facilitate workforce innovations that are safe



and effective, and to ensure that education and training arrangements are responsive and that future workforce requirement projections are comprehensive and reliable. The *General Practice Work in Canberra Campaign* will be continued.

Funding has also been provided for the design of a new Health Skills Development Centre on the Canberra Hospital campus to provide specialised skills training for medical, nursing, midwifery, allied health and technical and clerical staff.

## Primary care, early intervention and prevention

The ACT Government recognises that strong primary care is central to a strong health care sector, and investment in primary care results in better integration across the health system. Primary health care is ideally placed to offer early intervention and preventive health messages to the community. The *ACT Primary Health Care Strategy 2006–2009* provides a framework for the delivery of primary health care services in the ACT. It focuses on health promotion, early intervention, disease prevention and better integration of care.

There is increasing recognition that health care for many conditions is better provided by the community than by the acute care sector. The recently endorsed *ACT Chronic Disease Strategy* acknowledges the importance of aligning the health system to respond better to the evolving needs of the population. The ACT community requires more primary care, better coordination of chronic care, more community-based care and more health promotion and disease prevention initiatives to emphasise self-sufficiency for personal health. Both the *ACT Primary Health Care Strategy* and the *ACT Chronic Disease Strategy* progress this agenda.

## Early childhood health and vulnerable families

The ACT Government has identified early childhood health and vulnerable families as priorities. Strategies include strengthening the ability to identify and respond effectively to the needs of young children and vulnerable families. There is a commitment to balance universal and targeted support services and prioritise first home visits to families with new infants, as well as explore and develop alternative service provision methods for maternal and child health nursing.

Reducing the burden of disease in childhood and improving the immunisation uptake is achieved through provision of immunisation under the *ACT Immunisation Strategy 2007–2010*. All kindergarten-age children in the ACT are offered health screening, and there is scope to develop the program to the pre-school year under new federal initiatives.

The IMPACT Program (Integrated Multi-agencies for Parents and Children Together) is an ACT Government initiative that aims to improve the system's response to vulnerable families, specifically pregnant women, their partners and their families who have been identified as having a significant mental health issue or are receiving opioid replacement therapy.

Under the umbrella of the *ACT Children's Plan 2004–14*, the ACT Government is committed to strengthening community supports for good parenting and developing and implementing a child health policy for the ACT.

## Chronic disease management

Chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, stroke, and heart and vascular disease place a severe burden on individuals, their families and carers and the health system as a whole. To



improve the management of chronic diseases and service planning and delivery, the ACT Government has developed a *Chronic Disease Strategy*. Prepared in consultation with stakeholders, the strategy complements the national framework and the directions of the Council of Australian Governments' health reforms.

## Mental health strategy

The ACT Government has prioritised mental health as a key area for investment and reform. The 2008–09 Budget provided \$8.5 million over four years in recurrent funding for expanded mental health services, and \$37.6 million in capital funding over four years for mental health facilities. These include an adult acute inpatient unit, a secure adult unit, a mental health assessment unit and the design of an inpatient mental health facility for young people.

The ACT Government is also committed to new and innovative models of care and recognises, for example, that correctional facilities are not optimal places for management of forensic mental health patients.

Work is under way to prepare for the mental health needs of the broader community in the future. Underpinning this new approach will be a new Mental Health Act. Current legislative provisions are the subject of a detailed review to be concluded in 2009.


## Health services for older people

The range of health services available to older people will be expanded with the provision of increased allied health support, enhanced rehabilitation technology and equipment support and the establishment of an Older Person's Dietetic Service.

## Anti-smoking reforms

The ACT was the first Australian jurisdiction to enact legislation to prohibit smoking in enclosed places and since that time has enacted various additional reforms. The ACT Government has also recently proposed legislation to reform the laws governing the sale and display of tobacco. This legislation would reinforce the ban on entitlements such as customer loyalty rewards when purchasing cigarettes, as well as the prohibition of fruit-flavoured cigarettes and split packets.





The ACT community is conscious of the dangers of tobacco smoke and supports further reforms. Accordingly, the ACT Government will be looking to ban smoking in outdoor dining and drinking areas where staff work and at under-age functions, and is examining other means of protecting children from the harms of tobacco.

## Drug strategy

The ACT Government's current *Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Strategy* will come to an end in 2008, but has already achieved significant change within the sector, in the funding of drug initiatives and through the trial of innovative projects. The ACT Government is developing a new strategy which will be informed by evaluation reports, the mid-term evaluation of the current strategy, and relevant national and Territory plans. The new strategy will, among other matters, respond to emerging trends in drug use.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility

The impact of addiction and substance overuse and abuse has been felt across the ACT community, and it is imperative that culturally appropriate rehabilitation services are available. The ACT Government has been working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the design of a rehabilitation program and facility. When finalised, the facility will provide accessible and culturally sensitive services and support for Indigenous people experiencing addiction or substance abuse.

## Pandemic planning

In December 2007 the ACT Government released the *ACT Pandemic Planning Framework*. The aim of the framework is to guide and support integrated contingency planning for an influenza pandemic to minimise the impact on the ACT community.

ACT Health proactively monitors, develops and revises current policy and strategic operational planning for an influenza pandemic.

Under the *ACT Pandemic Planning Framework*, ACT Health developed the *Australian Capital Territory Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza 2007*, which details the health sector's capacity to respond in the event of an influenza pandemic. ACT Health will continue its operational planning in line with national policy to prevent and manage an influenza pandemic and its consequences in the ACT.

## Recognition of recreation in addressing health and social issues

The ACT Government recognises the benefits of physical activity for good health. National guidelines specify that adults participate in 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days. Future action to support increased physical activity will include:

- development and implementation of *Be Active ACT*, a physical activity framework for ACT Health
- continued promotion of the *Find thirty. It's not a big exercise®* physical activity campaign
- establishment of a healthy lifestyle website to facilitate referral by linking general practitioners with appropriate support for lifestyle modification, including allied health professionals, community organisations and the fitness industry.



## Related Plans

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Family Well-being Plan 2006–2011

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1153889980>

*access health*: healthcare for all in the ACT 2007–2010

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1151543449>

ACT Action Plan for Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention 2006–2008

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1174883362>

ACT Chronic Disease Strategy

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1190165949>

ACT Health Workforce Plan 2005–2010

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1151117393>

ACT Human Capital Action Plan 2007

[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/1614/ACT\\_human\\_capital\\_plan2007.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1614/ACT_human_capital_plan2007.pdf)

ACT Immunisation Strategy 2007–2010

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1198036286>

ACT Pandemic Planning Framework

[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/2117/ACT\\_pandemic\\_framework.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2117/ACT_pandemic_framework.pdf)

ACT Primary Health Care Strategy 2006–2009

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1159322632>

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Strategy 2004–2008

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1150856381>

Public Health in the ACT 2004–2008

<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1151021463>

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Develop a National Statement for Health to underpin an ACT–NSW–Commonwealth approach to funding and regional delivery.
- Implement a framework for one-stop clinics, that is, multi-disciplinary, multi-professional clinics with new service delivery models that are evidence-based and accessible to all in the community.
- Support the health of children from before conception through early childhood by implementing a prevention agenda.
- Pioneer the e-health record system in Canberra to facilitate sharing of information between professionals, which will enhance patient outcomes.

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Reduce waiting times (elective surgery, dental and emergency department)
- Improve level of satisfaction with public health services
- Exceed Australian average in participation in sport and physical activity
- Reduce percentage of cigarette smokers
- Exceed Australian average life expectancy
- Reduce the proportion of low-birthweight babies.









Through *Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*, the ACT Government has a vision of Canberra becoming a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community. Ensuring our community is both fair and safe is crucial in achieving that vision and accordingly the ACT Government has developed and implemented strategies to promote respect for human rights, social cohesion, social inclusion, equity of opportunity, access to justice, and physical safety.

Since the launch of both the 2004 *Canberra Plan* and *Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*, there has been substantial progress in meeting the visions of both plans. The ACT Government remains committed to these visions and, through partnerships with the community and the business sector, will continue to work towards their fulfilment.

## Objective

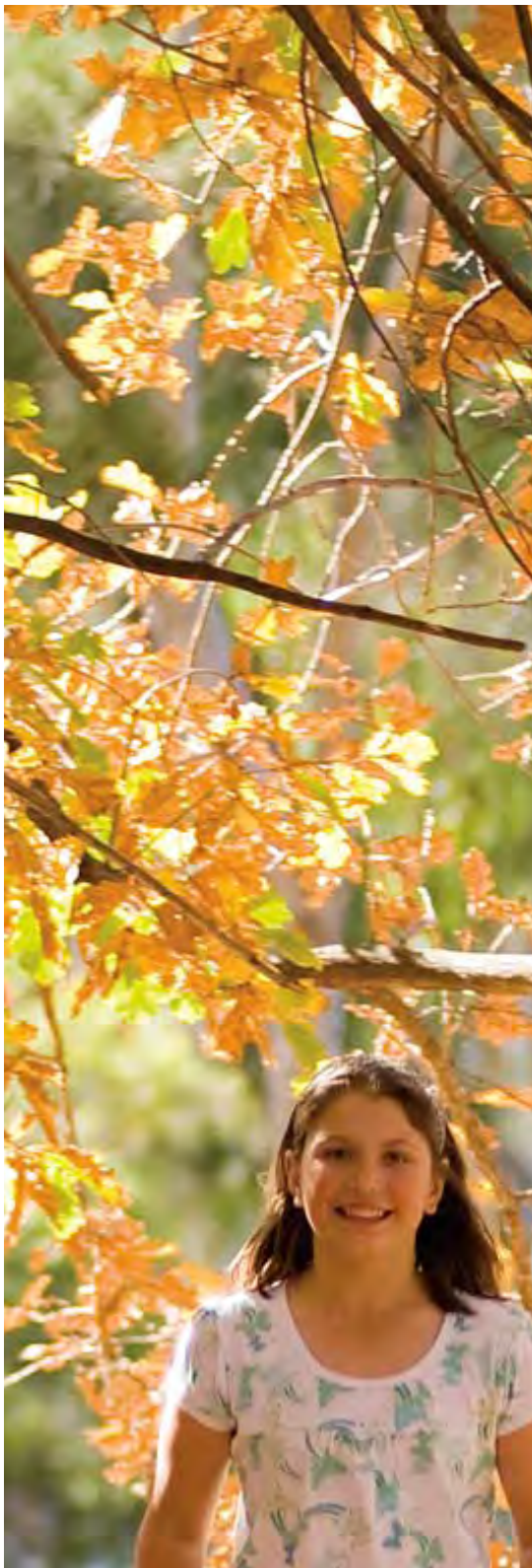
*To ensure that all Canberrans enjoy the benefits of living in a community that is safe, socially inclusive and respectful of human rights, that all Canberrans are able to fully participate in community life and that the most vulnerable in our community are respected and supported.*

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Introduced Australia's first Bill of Rights through the *Human Rights Act 2004*, which enshrines fundamental civil and political rights in our legal system. The Human Rights Commission, established in November 2006, is at the forefront of our endeavours to ensure those rights are acknowledged and respected. The commission works with the ACT Government to protect the rights of every member of our community.
- Strengthened the human rights culture in the ACT by legislating for a direct right of action flowing from a duty on public authorities to comply with human rights.
- In cooperation with Companion House and Centacare, introduced the Refugee Transitional Housing Program, which matches refugees with vacant public housing listed for redevelopment.
- Enacted the *Civil Partnership Act 2008*, which provides couples, including same-sex couples, with legal recognition of their relationship.
- Provided free services and programs for refugees and temporary visa holders, including child care for parents attending English-language classes at the Canberra Institute of Technology.
- Increased personal safety in our community, with funding for an additional 60 police officers included in the 2006–07 Budget and the implementation of the *ACT Property Crime Reduction Strategy*.
- Improved police rostering, placing more police and patrol cars on the streets at critical times.
- Safeguarded the needs of people with a disability, providing an extra \$15.8 million in the 2007–08 Budget for individual support packages, carer support and respite, and improvement to community access programs.





- Substantially increased investments in care and protection services for children and young people.
- Commenced the implementation of Australia's most expansive and innovative action plan for housing affordability. This plan will, over the next few years, deliver benefits to everyone seeking to enter the housing market—whether they are seeking public or social housing support, private rental or the first purchase of a home.
- Launched the *Building for Our Ageing Community* strategy to identify and make available land for aged care facilities.
- Introduced concession fares for seniors travelling in peak periods on ACTION buses and supplementary community transport services for seniors unable to access regular bus routes. In addition, the Gold Card provides free travel for those over 75 years of age.
- Introduced the Nightlink taxi scheme to improve public transport and public safety in Civic at night through a reliable, low-cost service on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Expanded the supply of public housing and increased our efforts to ensure public housing services reach those most in need. We have provided more funding for refuges, outreach support, domestic violence services, emergency accommodation, and information and referral services.
- Created Victim Support ACT to support victims of crime and help them access their rights and entitlements. The new agency combines the counselling and related services of the Victims Services Scheme with the information, advocacy and criminal justice system assistance provided through the Victims of Crime Coordinator.
- Commenced implementing a broad program supporting sexual assault victims, funding remote facilities from which vulnerable witnesses can give evidence to courts, and engaging

additional police, prosecutors and personnel for victim support and crisis counselling.

- Responded to the needs of Canberra's rapidly ageing population by acquiring, as well as adapting, properties for older people. More than 10 per cent of public housing stock in the ACT is designated as suitable for older people.

- Recognised the achievements of older Canberrans through the annual Chief Minister's Lifetime Achievement Awards and the highly prized Canberra Gold Awards.
- Acted to further protect the interests of children and young people, by undertaking a major review of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*.
- Constructed the new Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Both centres will focus on rehabilitation of offenders, and they are the first of their kind designed to be operated applying human rights principles.
- Delivered a 3.7 per cent increase in community sector funding in 2006–07, which is indexed annually, to maintain the viability of the sector to ensure that high-quality services continue to be provided to the Canberra community.
- Provided opportunities for women to reach their full potential and to participate in leadership and representation opportunities through the ACT Women Directors' Scholarships and with the launch of the Audrey Fagan Scholarship.
  - Developed the *Caring for Carers* policy and action plan to acknowledge the Territory's 25,936 carers (2006 Census) and address their needs, including legislation to recognise their roles and rights, and financial support through the Carer Recognition Grants Program.
- Opened the Centacare Youth Step-up Step-down mental health facility in February 2008, ensuring young people with mental illness have access to early intervention and more options for support.
- Assisted the most disadvantaged members of our community through the Community Inclusion Fund, which provided \$4.4 million to 25 projects designed to improve social



outcomes for individuals, families and communities experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion.

- Refurbished the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre at Yarramundi Reach.
- Allocated \$4.118 million over four years in the 2008–09 Budget to develop a regulatory system to screen people who work with the vulnerable, such as children, young people and vulnerable adults. Employees, organisations and volunteers who work with vulnerable people will be required to obtain criminal record and background checks.

providing a direct right of action and imposing a duty to comply on public authorities. We have also changed the interpretive rules so that a human rights approach must prevail unless this would defeat the purpose of underlying legislation. The ACT Government has also established a unique opt-in clause for non-public bodies.

The ACT Government will further consider adopting the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as environment-related rights at the time of the five-year review of the *Human Rights Act 2004* in order to continue to enhance the human rights culture in the ACT.

## New and Future Directions

### Human rights

The ACT Government welcomes growing interest in adopting nationwide human rights laws and will continue to contribute to this debate. We are keen to ensure that the ACT's human rights legislation, the first in Australia, remains relevant and that the Territory is at the forefront of developments in this important area of law. Part of this commitment is the future review of the *Discrimination Act 1991*.

The Human Rights Commission provides an independent, fair and accessible process for dealing with complaints about discrimination, health services, disability services, community services, and services for older people, children and young people. The commission also promotes service improvement and works to develop awareness of human rights in government and the community.

The ACT Government has recently moved to extend a human rights culture in the ACT by

### Addressing disadvantage

Although a relatively affluent community, in 2006 the ACT had approximately 15,795 households (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling 2007) in the lowest quintile of Australian equivalised income. Much, but not all, of this disadvantage is concentrated within certain localities.

The ACT Government has adopted and implemented a policy of inclusion for all, with initiatives such as the Child and Family Centres designed to provide universal support to all families and children. The evidence indicates, however, that some families require intensive support in order to be able to enjoy the full benefits of our community.

The ACT Government will implement a range of initiatives, under a strategy aimed at reducing disadvantage, to ensure that all members of our community have the best chance in life. The initiatives include effective prenatal and postnatal care, access to the best early childhood development, education, health care, and preparation and support for ongoing employment. Service delivery will include outreach services and wrap-around care. Where appropriate, community-based services and delivery models will be adopted.



As an initial strategy, a range of centrally accessible supports and programs will be established in West Belconnen for vulnerable families and children, especially those experiencing multiple and complex issues. The service will be based on a community development intervention model.

### Early intervention for children at risk and families


The ACT Government is formulating its comprehensive approach to early childhood services that invest in the health, development, education and well-being of young children. This work recognises the effectiveness of early intervention programs that focus on young children and responsive support to their families. Part of this work is an evaluation of existing early intervention programs. This evaluation will inform the development of integrated service responses that focus on effective prevention and early intervention.

The ACT Government will seek to address the particular needs of children at risk of a lifetime of disadvantage and to improve health and development outcomes for all children growing up in the ACT.

### Greater protection of children and young people

The newly introduced *Children and Young People Act 2008* is a significant legal reform relating to children and young people. The best interests of children and young people is the paramount consideration underpinning a range of reforms in the areas of care and protection, youth justice, the regulation of child care services, and employment laws for children and young people in the Territory. Preparation for implementation is under way, with a focus on early intervention and prevention strategies and





integrated responses to meet the diverse needs of our children, young people and their families. The Act demonstrates the ACT Government's continued focus on the interests, rights and well-being of children and young people.

## Children in public housing

Housing ACT will assess the needs of children living in public housing to ensure that the housing meets their circumstances. The needs assessment will identify strategies to ensure that the allocation of properties to families takes account of children's requirements.

## Universal and targeted early childhood services

The ACT Child and Family Centres organise a number of playgroups, providing vital support networks where families with young children can access parenting information and professional advice and services.

'Paint and Play' playgroups, run in local parks, aim to build strong local communities where children enjoy a range of activities to enhance their socialisation and development, while their parents can meet other parents and find out about local support and services to meet their needs. The playgroups continue to grow in popularity and the model has been adopted by several local community organisations as an effective community-building activity.

The Child and Family Centres will also continue to provide a range of playgroups that focus on specific support to families with multiple and complex issues. These provide opportunities to connect with others, access to parenting information and examples of positive interactions with children, and they normalise access to services and facilitate connections with the broader service system.

The ACT Public Library Service will increase literacy programs and seek partnerships with other programs.

## Children's services workforce strategy

The ACT Children's Services Forum was established in 2007 to inform a sustainable, flexible and responsive ACT children's services sector. With representation from government and non-government stakeholders, the forum focuses on the delivery of quality children's services in the ACT. Currently it is developing a package of workforce strategies in response to staffing issues facing the sector. Proposed strategies focus on recruitment and retention, professional development and training, sector status and standing, and capacity-building and sector development.

## A better future for Indigenous members of our community

The ACT Government has a strong commitment to working with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure that each person has the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve optimal health and education.

To help guide the achievement of these goals, the ACT Government has convened a high-level Chief Executive's taskforce to provide strategic direction and monitor ACT public service delivery to the Indigenous community.

The ACT Government will also work with the Indigenous community to enhance employment opportunities in the government, private and non-government sectors.

In relation to families at risk, the ACT Government—through joint action by ACT Health, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community

Services—will provide targeted, intensive family support services to a number of at-risk Indigenous families through integrated service delivery. This initiative will divert at-risk children from the statutory care and protection system, increase access to services and improve family and child well-being.

The ACT Government is working with the Federal Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to deliver the commitments agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in relation to addressing Indigenous disadvantage, including initiatives to close the life expectancy gap and improve educational outcomes.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia were excluded from decision-making and political processes by the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. The ACT Government believes it is essential that Indigenous members of our community have a strong elected voice, delivered through a representative body which understands and can represent their specific interests and aspirations.


The ACT Government has established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to ensure that Indigenous people living in the ACT participate in developing and implementing government policies that affect them. Following extensive community consultations in 2006 and 2007, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* was passed in the ACT Assembly and came into effect on 15 May 2008. On 2 July 2008 the ACT Electoral Commissioner announced the successful candidates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, who will work with the ACT Government and its agencies to achieve positive outcomes for the ACT Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander community. Seven members including a chair and deputy chair are required to report to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on issues of concern for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT Government will consider, in consultation with the Aboriginal community, negotiating an Aboriginal Justice Agreement between the Indigenous community, the justice sector and other relevant agencies. It would encompass, but not be limited to, resources and policies to provide access to justice, to set up culturally appropriate ways of dealing with offenders and victims through the criminal justice process, and to adopt integrated approaches aimed at reducing rates of incarceration and recidivism.







## Gender balance on ACT Government boards and committees

To provide gender balance in representation, the ACT Government has committed to work towards a 50:50 ratio on ACT Government boards and committees.

## Community sector

The community sector is a key partner of the ACT Government and plays an essential role in delivering services. The ACT Government will build on the relationship forged through the *Social Compact*, in consultation with the sector, to improve its viability. In particular, portability of long-service leave was identified as a high priority, and the ACT Government has made a budget commitment to implement a statutory portable long-service leave scheme for the ACT community sector.

## Healthy and meaningful ageing

In the context of the demographic shift, the ACT Government will give attention to specific actions that will benefit older people. Building on the *2007–2009 Policy Framework for Ageing*, we will formulate a comprehensive strategy to support healthy and meaningful ageing, decrease social isolation and help people adapt to retirement. We will also increase our efforts to reduce elder abuse.

## Aged care accommodation strategy

The *Building for Our Ageing Community Strategy*, adopted in December 2003, has been very successful, resulting in significant development of aged care and accommodation.

An ongoing strategy of supplying land for aged care accommodation remains central in continuing

to provide for our ageing community. These sites will be released by competitive or direct sale where public benefit dictates. A wider range of building sites is being identified to encourage a variety of aged accommodation, including independent living and ageing in place.

In some cases, aged care providers have needed encouragement to move quickly once land has been secured. Conditions of sale and concessions policies will be used to accelerate development by the private sector.


Case management will continue to assist providers through the processes of land sales and development applications. The ACT and Commonwealth governments will continue to coordinate and cooperate in allocating beds and developing facilities.

The ACT Government will continue to modify properties to allow public housing tenants to remain in place as they age, and will partner with the private sector in joint venture redevelopments that include supported aged care accommodation, such as the Lyons Joint Venture.

## Access to justice

The ACT Government believes that tribunals should be not only independent, open, fair and impartial, but also accessible to users and responsive to the needs of all sectors of the community.

In 2007 the ACT Government reviewed the structure of its tribunals, with a view to increasing their efficiency and cost-effectiveness and improving the access of citizens to the justice system. Following public consultations, the ACT Government has decided to consolidate most of its tribunals—including those for administrative appeals, residential tenancies, mental health



and guardianship—in the interests of improved efficiency, but will maintain separate divisions so it can offer many of the benefits of a small tribunal and continuity of service to clients.

In relation to the courts, the ACT Government will consult with the community on the balance to be struck between trials by jury and by judge alone, an issue that clearly engages the fundamental human right to fair trial. For the first time in many years, we will also increase payments to citizens attending the Supreme Court for jury service.

From 2008–09 we will move towards contemporary technology in the courts. This will not only increase flexibility for people doing business with the court by developing an online communication channel, but also prepare the courts to conduct proceedings electronically. Both these measures are expected to lead to better utilisation of the time of courts, parties to proceedings, professional and other witnesses, the police and the legal profession.

At the same time the ACT Government will be exploring options for an appropriate new location for our premier judicial body, the Supreme Court, which has outgrown the heritage-listed facility that has been its home for over 40 years.

## Civil partnerships

The ACT Government believes that every individual is entitled to participate fully in society and receive the support and protection of the law, whatever their status, sexual orientation or gender.

In its first term of office the ACT Government reformed a number of ACT laws to eliminate entrenched discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender and intersex members of our community. However, our subsequent attempts to introduce laws for the formal and legal recognition of same-sex relationships have been hampered

by the Federal Government's provisions that allow it to overturn the laws passed by the elected government of the Territory.

In May 2008 the *Civil Partnerships Act 2008* was enacted, which provides for the legal recognition and registration of a civil partnership. The legislation presents a major step towards equal rights for same-sex couples.

## Homelessness

*Breaking the Cycle—The ACT Homelessness Strategy* was launched in April 2004. Underpinning the strategy was a funding commitment of \$3 million per year over and above the matching requirements under the National Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) Agreement. The funding provided supported accommodation for an additional 30 families and 20 single men, as well as new outreach services targeted at young people, single men, single women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at risk of, or transitioning from, homelessness.

One of the most significant achievements of the strategy is the evolution of services for the homeless in the ACT from a series of separate services to a coordinated system that includes public and community housing. The immediate benefits for people who are homeless or at risk include more equitable access to services, more targeted responses, support from the moment of contact, and better support for children and young people.

Building on these successes, the future direction of the ACT Government's homelessness services will include streamlining processes across the system, fostering a better understanding of client needs and ensuring better matching to appropriate housing, as well as the provision of flexible support options.

## Supporting people with disabilities

Each of the approximately 45,000 people in the ACT who report having a disability has a right to self-determination, respect, dignity and participation at all levels of the community. Many significant achievements have been made through the ACT Government's *Disability ACT: New and Future Directions 2004–2008* framework in promoting an inclusive society and strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities, their families and their carers to maximise control over their lives. We have provided additional funding of \$19.4 million since 2002 to support people with disabilities and to strengthen the sustainability and responsiveness of disability services. The ACT Government is committed to developing and implementing the next stage priorities in realising the vision and values for people with disabilities and the aspirations articulated in *Challenge 2014*.

Additional professional staff will also be provided for the Office of the Public Advocate ACT to allow it to meet its increasing statutory responsibilities—both as guardian of last resort and as emergency guardian—for vulnerable members of our community.

## Access to cultural programs for disadvantaged people and those with special needs

This initiative will introduce a four-part strategy to help disadvantaged groups and individuals, and those with special needs, to access the programs of the Cultural Facilities Corporation. This includes extending various measures: the Canberra Theatre Centre Community Ticket Scheme, support services to assist people with disabilities or special needs to experience live theatre, and a range of programs to develop theatre audiences. In addition, a scheme will be introduced to support disadvantaged children in attending education programs.





## Equipment loan

The specialised Children's Equipment Loan Service assists children with disabilities to access equipment that enhances their independence, mobility and communication. Appropriate equipment also enables families to provide care with greater ease and without injury, and therefore to maintain their caring role. The loan service will make available a greater range of equipment for trial to ensure it meets a child's needs, until families are able to arrange funding and obtain their own equipment.

## Long-term unemployment

The negative physical, mental, social and economic effects of long-term unemployment are well known.

As a means of achieving our goal of reducing long-term unemployment, the ACT Government will examine ways in which the Territory's health and community support services can be better integrated with the Federal Government's labour market programs to encourage sustainable employment for the long-term unemployed.

## Concessions

The ACT Government is seeking to promote equity in the standard of living and access to essential services for all members of the ACT community through its concessions program. Concessions assist Canberrans on low incomes to meet charges for energy, water and sewerage, public transport, motor vehicle registration and other costs. They are consistent with other states, as they are applied fairly and support access to essential services.

In 2008–09, it is expected that assistance will amount to more than \$32 million for the ACT

Concessions Program. In addition, Housing ACT will provide rental rebates in excess of \$96 million. The ACT Government will continue to explore ways to extend support and assistance to the ACT community through concessions.

In the area of energy costs, the ACT Government will provide additional resources to support the increased workload of the Essential Services Consumer Council. At the same time, we are preparing to change the funding model for the council, as part of national energy regulation reforms, from direct funding by licence fees to a levy that feeds directly into consolidated revenue.

From 1 July 2008 the rebate on the water supply charge was extended to health care cardholders in the ACT, as well as those asylum seekers not eligible for Centrelink benefits. It is estimated there are more than 20,000 health care cardholders in the ACT. The rebate will amount to nearly \$50 off the standard water supply charge per eligible household in the first year of operation.

The ACT Government has provided a one-off complete exemption from stamp duty for pensioners who wish to downsize and move to accommodation that is better suited to their needs. It also provides concession fares for seniors travelling at peak hours on ACTION buses and Gold Cards for those over 75 enabling them access to free public transport as well as maintaining the supplementary community transport services.

## Volunteers

In 2006, around 22 per cent of the ACT population aged 15 years and over had undertaken voluntary work in the 12 months prior to the 2006 census night, which was the highest in Australia and well above the Australian average of 18 per cent. The



ACT Government recognises the importance of people working together to provide community support to help others.

## Problem-gambling strategy

While many people in the community gamble without experiencing financial or other difficulties, for some gambling is a major problem with harmful social, medical and financial consequences. The ACT Government has provided extended financial counselling and education to assist middle- and low-income earners.

The ACT Government will develop a problem-gambling strategy drawing on international and national research and experience. The strategy will be developed in consultation with the community, the community sector and the industry and will focus on education and initiatives to assist those at risk of, or experiencing, problems with gambling.

The proposed ACT strategy will align with the *National Framework on Problem Gambling*. The ACT currently funds one community agency, Lifeline Canberra, to provide direct gambling support services across the ACT community.

## Helping households minimise debt

With increases in interest rates, fuel prices and utility prices, more people are finding themselves in financial stress. The difficulties can be exacerbated by poor lending practices by financial institutions, with low-documentation loans extended to people with little capacity to meet the debt incurred.

The ACT Government will continue to fund financial counselling services to assist people, particularly those on low incomes, to manage

their finances and reduce debt. In addition, we will examine options to extend financial education and counselling services to assist middle- and low-income earners to budget and plan for the future.

The lessons of the household debt project, initiated by the Community Inclusion Board, will be applied to future initiatives to reduce household debt.

## Multicultural grants

The ACT Government is committed to providing opportunities for Canberrans of diverse cultural backgrounds to retain and showcase their culture and language and to enable those skills to be passed down to subsequent generations.

There has been an annual increase over four years in funds available under the three existing multicultural grants programs. This provides additional resources to encourage participation in the Multicultural Grants Program, the Multicultural Radio Grants Program and the Community Languages Program.

The ACT Government congratulates the community groups concerned for their substantial financial and in-kind contributions to these projects.

## Community safety

The ACT is a very safe place in which to live, but like all communities it

experiences theft and anti-social behaviour. The ACT Government has worked hard to reduce crime through a range of measures, including the *ACT Property Crime Reduction Strategy*. We have also funded an increase in police numbers, and are working with ACT Policing to engage with the community to assist in deterring crime and provide rapid responses where required.

The ACT Government's ongoing commitment to community safety will:

- continue and extend the investment in crime prevention, including sustaining the gains made under the *ACT Property Crime Reduction Strategy* and diversionary initiatives aimed at reducing juvenile offending
- review liquor licensing regulations and enforcement to help reduce anti-social behaviour in and close to licensed premises, and appointing additional liquor inspectors
- review the ACT's alcohol and drug driving laws, and introducing a random roadside drug testing program to improve road safety
- expand the current closed-circuit TV program in key locations, especially of mass gatherings
  - improve the physical safety of bus interchanges and examine urban design in places where people gather
  - sustain the integrated approaches to reduce harm and crimes associated with illicit drug use
  - continue proactive engagement by ACT Policing within the community and maintenance of a physical policing presence in areas where people gather





- build community confidence in the handling of matters related to sexual assault and sex offenders
- implement effective rehabilitation programs within the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and the Alexander Maconochie Centre to reduce the recidivism rates of their client populations.

Road safety will be enhanced through new awareness campaigns on road, cycling and pedestrian safety, complementing the existing *ACT Road Safety Action Plan*.

In addition, a new police precinct will be established at Belconnen, with construction of a new police station on vacant land at the Winchester Police Centre site.

## Personal protection

The ACT Government will continue to review the operation of laws relating to domestic violence, protection orders, offences against the person, and victims of crime.

As part of the strong message that domestic violence is not tolerated in our society, legislation will extend the scope of relevant laws. The extension of domestic violence provisions to relationships where people do not reside together, and to psychological abuse of children or young people, will strengthen protections for all, especially women and children. Further measures, such as classifying trespass as a domestic violence offence, will underscore the Territory's pro-prosecution approach to domestic violence by increasing the likelihood of remands in custody at the same time as fostering greater dignity and respect in the treatment of victims. In parallel, the evidence-based investigation and prosecution policy will continue to uphold the right of accused persons to a fair trial.

The ACT Government will continue to evaluate whether the combination of rights protection and statutory oversight functions now in place remains

the best way to serve the community in the area of personal protection. For example, the governing principles established in the early 1990s for treatment of victims of crime and public advocacy need to harmonise with new and updated laws on human rights and child protection.

## Emergency services

The ACT Government will ensure fire brigade, ambulance, SES and rural fire services are maintained at optimal capacity and preparedness.

Since the firestorm of January 2003, the ACT Government has undertaken significant reform and substantial investment to protect our city from bushfires. Most of the recommendations made by the coronial inquiry into the January 2003 bushfires have been implemented, and the *Sub-Regional Fire Plan* is to be finalised in 2008.

The ACT Government is committed to the continued improvement of emergency services in the ACT, including provision of the latest bushfire-fighting equipment and technology. In addition, we will continue to enhance bushfire prevention and mitigation through early identification and response systems, reduction of ignitions, provision of education and awareness programs, early planning for new development, expanded practical help to residents in bushfire-prone areas, support for volunteers and regional cooperative arrangements.

## Alexander Maconochie Centre: rehabilitation and throughcare

Service planning for the ACT's new prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, continues the emphasis on rehabilitation. As Australia's first prison designed and operating on human rights principles, the centre has developed a throughcare model of case management. This will provide

offender management encompassing training, education, rehabilitation and access to high-quality health services. It will also provide work experience within custodial and community environments, and establish post-release community support networks for offenders and their families through a comprehensive reintegration plan.

## Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

Bimberi will replace the current Youth Detention Centre at Symonston. It will be Australia's first human-rights-compliant youth justice centre. As well as being designed to meet human rights standards, Bimberi will have the latest in technology for all security levels from low to maximum. It will have state-of-the-art facilities for recreation, education, training and health.

Bimberi will promote the rights, interests and well-being of all children and young people in custody, while maintaining the safety, security and good order of the centre. This balanced approach will be achieved through a design that creates a normalised and non-institutionalised environment, and includes separate residential, civic and public spaces. As part of the new approach, the operational philosophy will highlight an integrated response to youth offending, and provide opportunities for rehabilitation, personal development training and reintegration into the community.

## New work safety legislation

The ACT Government will implement new work safety laws to replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989*. The legislation will address recommendations from the Occupational Health and Safety Council Review undertaken in 2005 and incorporate national work to date on standardising principles. The ACT Government will undertake an

awareness-raising campaign to ensure employers and workers are fully informed of the new legislation and their rights and obligations.

## Related Plans

ACT Children's Plan 2004–2014  
<http://www.children.act.gov.au/pdf/childrensplan.pdf>

ACT Emergency Services Agency Statement of Strategic Intent  
[http://www.esa.act.gov.au/ESAWebsite/content\\_esa/about\\_us/statement/statement.html](http://www.esa.act.gov.au/ESAWebsite/content_esa/about_us/statement/statement.html)

ACT Legal Aid Commission's Strategic Plan 2008–2012: New Directions for Legal Aid  
<http://www.legalaid.canberra.net.au>

ACT Multicultural Strategy 2006–2009  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/community/mau/pubs/multicultural%20strategy%20\(26.4\).pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/community/mau/pubs/multicultural%20strategy%20(26.4).pdf)

ACT Policing Arrangement  
[http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/act\\_community\\_policing/Arrangement%20%20final%20June2006.pdf](http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/act_community_policing/Arrangement%20%20final%20June2006.pdf)

ACT Property Crime Reduction Strategy 2004–2007  
[http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/ACT\\_Property\\_Crime\\_Reduction\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/ACT_Property_Crime_Reduction_Strategy.pdf)

ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2003 - 2004  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/14029/actionplan03-04.pdf](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/14029/actionplan03-04.pdf)

ACT Women's Plan  
<http://www.women.act.gov.au/functions/actwomensplan.pdf>

ACT Young People's Plan 2004–2008  
<http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpol&policy=1150872211>

ACT Legal Aid Commission's Strategic Plan 2008–2012: New Directions for Legal Aid  
<http://www.legalaid.canberra.net.au>

Breaking the Cycle: The ACT Homelessness Strategy  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/pubs/documents/BreakingCycleHomelessness.pdf>

Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan  
[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/1236/Social\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1236/Social_Plan.pdf)

Caring For Carers  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/policy\\_and\\_engagement/carers](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/policy_and_engagement/carers)

Challenge 2014  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0016/5335/Final\\_Challenge\\_2014\\_Document.doc](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0016/5335/Final_Challenge_2014_Document.doc)

Community Sector Funding Policy  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/engagement/pubs/Community%20Sector%20Funding%20Policy.pdf>

Disability ACT: New and Future Directions 2004–2008  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Future/Future\\_Directions.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Future/Future_Directions.pdf)

The Social Compact  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/engagement/pubs/SocialCompactFINAL.pdf>

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Develop a human rights framework to underpin policy and eliminate barriers imposed by inflexible structures, including the use of inclusive, non-labelling language.
- Increase access to support and develop links to the community for isolated and disadvantaged groups. Broaden the view on what constitutes disadvantage, acknowledging that some families, individuals and men (including single fathers), are often isolated.
- Strengthen active citizenship so that, regardless of perspective (business, government, local neighbourhood, workplace, schools, etc.), people will act on their sense of social responsibility and connection to others in the community. Create an expectation that everyone will participate, support and 'be there' for those who need it most.

- Build community leadership and a sense of shared responsibility by creating a sound, collaborative relationship between government and community that is underpinned by trust.
- Improve information flow among sectors and to individuals, using a range of modes and methods to ensure groups and individuals are not excluded. Increase community inclusion by providing access to IT for disadvantaged individuals and groups.
- Invest in public infrastructure and support the development of interpersonal skills and resilience to enhance the health of the community.
- Provide support for individual choices and recognise individual strengths, and integrate them into policy, service delivery and the everyday treatment of people.
- Implement a nationally consistent approach to safety regulation, including road safety (quality of roads, cars and drivers), workplace safety and the impact of new technology.
- Increase the community's role in crime management.
- Actively build respect for and inclusion of vulnerable groups to increase connections among citizens and increase community pride.
- Manage the perception of what constitutes real 'danger' in the community by influencing the impact of media coverage of incidents and events.

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Decrease crime levels and reduce recidivism
- Reduce poverty
- Work towards a 50:50 gender balance on ACT Government boards and committees
- Reduce the number of homeless people.





Excellent Education,  
Quality Teaching and  
Skills Development



The future of the ACT depends on a well-educated and highly skilled population, capable of delivering quality services and meeting the needs and aspirations of the community across all spheres. The ACT Government's goal is to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to reach their potential and contribute to the community. To achieve this goal, we have substantially reformed the education system and made significant investments in curriculum renewal, infrastructure upgrades and information technology. We have built new schools in suburbs with young populations and introduced new models of education, including a strong emphasis on high-quality early childhood education.

The ACT Government will continue these reforms and implement further measures to improve the quality of public education in the ACT. We will also continue to work with the private education sector to support educational choice in the ACT.

The ACT Government is responding to the skills shortage by developing and implementing a skills strategy based on the advice of the ACT Skills Commission. Important initiatives include enhanced opportunities for vocational education and training, and strategies to train, attract and retain staff.

The ACT Government has forged strong relationships with the tertiary education sector and will continue to build on these, helping to secure our knowledge future.



## Objective

*To ensure that all Canberrans are able to reap the benefits of a high-quality education supported by a culture of excellence in teaching, that lifelong learning opportunities are available to all, and that the economy benefits from a skilled workforce adaptable to change and able to meet the diverse needs of the community.*

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Maintained the best school system in the country. ACT schools produce a high level of academic performance as measured against national and international benchmarks. At a national level, ACT students continue to achieve high scores in reading, writing and numeracy, while at the international level, ACT performance is strong, as demonstrated in the latest available results in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study and the Program for International Student Assessment. The 2008–09 Budget included an additional \$3.776 million over four years to enhance quality teaching, enhance school leadership development and fund targeted professional



development for literacy and numeracy coordinators in all public schools to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes.

- Commenced implementation of the school renewal program, with a funding injection of \$90 million for school upgrades, \$20 million for state-of-the-art information technology services and equipment, \$45 million for an advanced primary–Year 10 school in West Belconnen and \$54 million for a new pre-school–Year 10 school in Tuggeranong. Funding of \$65.7 million has also been provided for a new well-being precinct in Gungahlin, which will include a new senior secondary school. Through the 2008–09 Budget \$5 million of this funding will extend the public library to serve a range of community needs, including spaces to meet and access information.
- Continued to improve the educational outcomes for our students, including maintaining the highest Year 12 retention rate in Australia, the largest population with post-school qualifications and the greatest percentage of young people attending university. In addition, more children in the ACT are attending early childhood education and care programs prior to commencing school.
- Maintained excellence in our college system. With its model of continuous assessment, the system serves our students well as they move beyond school into further education or the workforce. The framework set out in the *ACT College Business Plan 2007–2009* will ensure that our college system continues to lead the nation into the future.
- Launched a new curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn: Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools*, to meet the learning needs of students in the 21st century from pre-school to Year 10.
- Placed renewed emphasis on physical education, the arts and languages in schools through specific funding linked to new initiatives.
- Partnered with the Australian National University to open the ANU Secondary College, an innovative college that enables



academically gifted students to enrol in courses that will contribute towards their future university qualifications. The program was launched in May 2006 and offered mathematics, physics and chemistry courses in its first two years. Japanese and conservation biology were added in 2008.

- Increased the focus on early childhood education through the amalgamation of pre-schools and primary schools, enabling a continuation of curriculum and smoother transition for students into primary school.
- Responded to the demand for apprenticeships and traineeships in the ACT by providing an additional \$6.2 million over four years in the 2007–08 Budget for vocational education and training grants. Additionally, the Budget provided \$4.169 million over four years to support demand for vocational training for Australian Apprenticeships through the program User Choice in the ACT.
- Increased total student numbers in vocational education and training by 22 per cent over the last decade, and 17 per cent since 2002.
- Increased by 51 per cent the number of apprentices and trainees since 2002.
- Launched the Canberra Institute of Technology Vocational College in 2007, which offers essential skills and job training for around 3,000 people each year, including young people, mature-age people and migrants.
- Assisted women who are returning to work after full-time parenting to further their education and skills with Return to Work Grants of \$1,000. The grants are targeted at women on low incomes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with a disability and young women.


## New and Future Directions

### Schools for the 21st century

A comprehensive package of education reforms and significant investment is providing the largest investment in education since self-government began and will position the ACT to meet the teaching and learning needs of the 21st century. Through the reform program, more than \$90 million is being spent on renewing education infrastructure to ensure quality teaching and learning environments.

More than \$150 million has also been invested to build new schools in northern Tuggeranong and West Belconnen, and a new senior secondary





school in Gungahlin as part of a well-being precinct. These facilities will provide state-of-the-art learning environments based on best-practice design and the latest sustainability principles.

A commitment of \$20 million to information technology in schools will ensure the ACT continues to lead the nation in the use of IT in teaching and learning.

A focus on investing in the early years and innovative models of program delivery underpin the development of four new early childhood schools, due to open in 2009. They will focus on quality education and early intervention, providing a solid foundation for learning for the future.

In addition, the ACT Government has invested in a new curriculum framework and in improving teacher quality, details of which are outlined below.

## Quality teaching for better outcomes

Teachers in ACT public schools will be supported to improve student learning. Officers trained in the NSW Quality Teaching Model will work with a cluster approach to improve the quality of teaching.

Targeted professional development will be provided to literacy and numeracy coordinators in all public schools to build their knowledge and skills about best practice, assisting to implement a whole-school approach to improve the literacy and numeracy of all students.

To address the important issue of succession planning, educational leaders at all levels of the Department of Education and Training will be supported with the School Leadership Strategy. This will enable the department to find and offer professional learning opportunities linked to school leaders' needs.

Underpinning quality teaching, the ACT's new curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn*,

has been designed to provide all students from pre-school to Year 10 with a comprehensive and balanced curriculum. This contemporary curriculum, the result of extensive review, development, consultation and external validation, sets a clear direction for teaching and learning in all ACT schools. Schools are currently working with their communities to implement the new framework with support from online resources, professional learning opportunities and other school-based supports.

## Pastoral care for all students

Pastoral care is important in ensuring the personal development of each student. Over two years at college, teachers work actively to support students' academic, vocational and personal growth, contributing to individual pathways to success.


From 2008 every ACT government high school will have a dedicated pastoral care coordinator. These teachers will coordinate whole-school programs that take a personalised approach to supporting student well-being. They will also have a role in supporting staff to promote and increase students' attendance and engagement with learning, and ultimately their connection to school.

There will also be additional support from non-teacher professionals such as social workers and community nurses. These professionals will assist families of high school students with complex needs to support their children in engaging with learning.

## Early childhood development, education and care

The ACT Government invests in high-quality early childhood education and, through the school reform process, has taken steps to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life.





Reforms include the opening of Child and Family Centres, the expansion of the Maternal and Child Health visiting program and the introduction of the *Pre-school to Year 2 Framework* for early education. The framework, released in April 2008, provides a leading-edge approach to the development and delivery of programs to support academic, social and personal development.

The key outcome from the *Pre-school to Year 2 Framework* will be the establishment of four new schools at Southern Cross, Lyons, Isabella Plains and Narrabundah. These purpose-built schools will provide a coherent approach to early childhood learning and well-being. They will encourage and draw on family and community participation to provide the best possible comprehensive care and education.

An Early Childhood School Coordinator will be employed in each of the four new schools to cater for children from birth to eight years. These new staff members will coordinate the delivery of integrated child and family support services and ensure a successful start to these schools. To improve equity, vulnerable families will be eligible for a small number of funded places in the child-care facility of these new schools.

## Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

A package entitled *Making a Difference for Indigenous Students* is the ACT Government's initiative to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in public schools.

A funding commitment of an additional \$3.8 million over four years will provide increased literacy and numeracy support for students in kindergarten to Year 4, support to high-performing Indigenous students in Years 6 and

9 to complete school and continue to further education, and support professional learning to all school principals to ensure better outcomes for Indigenous students.

## Support for transitions through the education system

Our education system recognises the importance of each student's unique pathway as they move into adult life and make choices about their future training, study and employment options.

The ACT Government will incorporate a Canberra Institute of Technology Flexible Learning Centre in the new Gungahlin College, scheduled to open in 2010. The centre will offer increased training and provide learning options for Gungahlin College students and the broader community, as well as providing seamless transitions from school to further study.

Four new early childhood schools will improve transitions for children and families between home, early childhood settings and the early school years.

In addition, all pre-schools will be amalgamated with a primary school in 2008, thus strengthening school excellence across the ACT by ensuring every student has the skills and knowledge for their ongoing engagement in education.

The pre-school–Year 10 model adopted by the ACT Government offers middle-school programs that focus on the specific developmental and learning needs of adolescent students. The model also enables individual teachers to spend more time and establish close relationships with groups of students, enabling personalised learning and pastoral care.

A Career and Transition Framework will be developed for programs in schools and colleges. The framework will support teachers to facilitate



positive transitions through school and on to further education and training or employment. Australian School-Based Apprenticeships (ASBAs) will be promoted, with particular emphasis on opportunities for students to commence Certificate III qualifications while at school. The ACT Government will also encourage its agencies to provide employment opportunities for ASBAs. Opportunities to broaden and strengthen schools' links to business and industry will also be identified.

Additional staff in each ACT secondary college will support students as they enter and move through the college sector, with enhanced access to careers programs and vocational learning. These teachers will work between the college and high schools in their region to embed transition activities and pathways planning in the college sector.

The Beyond Articulation project between the Canberra Institute of Technology and the University of Canberra provides 170 flexible pathways between the two institutions, along with improved information resources for students and enhanced resource sharing. The project provides a nationally recognised model of choice and opportunity for transition from vocational education to university.

## Support for vulnerable students

To ensure that students have the best chance to complete their education, additional money will be provided to the School Equity Funds to support students in schools serving communities of low socio-economic status. The additional resources will enable these schools to address the effects of disadvantage on student learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Additional funds will also be provided to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students and young children with disabilities in ACT public schools, including the growing number of students with complex needs.

Through further support, Volunteering ACT will continue to deliver the program Students Participating in Community Enterprises (SPICE), which will be available to all students between the ages of 12 to 15 years at high school in the ACT who are at risk of leaving school before completing their Year 10 certificate.

## Implement the Australian Early Development Index

As part of the ACT Government's commitment to responsive early intervention and prevention strategies, we have committed funding to extend the implementation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI).


The AEDI is a community-based population measure of the health and development of children undertaken at the beginning of the first school year. The AEDI will compile developmental information, allowing us to allocate resources to targeted programs and strategies that improve outcomes for children. This is a further demonstration of the integrated work being undertaken by the Department of Education and Training with the Child and Family Centres.

## Lifelong learning

As part of its infrastructure investment in skills development, the ACT Government will expand flexible learning options throughout Canberra. A greater array of online and blended courses will be offered by the Canberra Institute of Technology. The current Flexible Learning Centre at Tuggeranong will be expanded, to allow students to enrol at any time and study at their own pace—at home or at work. This client-driven approach to skills training is a key element in addressing skills shortages and meeting the ACT's workforce needs over the coming decades.







Lifelong, life-wide learning outside the formal education sector is important, especially for disengaged citizens. The ACT Government will explore learning opportunities outside the formal education sector, increasing the use of public libraries as learning venues.

### Development of a new ACT Public Library Plan

The ACT Government will develop a new Library Plan to ensure that the community has access to 21st century library, information and learning services.

### National reform in education, skills and early childhood development

New investment in vocational education and training, including the establishment and development of the Canberra Institute of Technology Vocational College, positions the ACT to take full advantage of the additional 630,000 training places being provided by the Federal Government. About one-third of the places are allocated to people currently outside or marginally attached to the workforce, and the flexibility and tailored training options offered by the Vocational College are designed specifically to meet such needs. The remainder of the places will be allocated to skills upgrades for people already in the workforce.

The ACT is funding state-of-the-art equipment and flexible options such as e-learning that support the skills development needs of employed people. With the ACT ageing faster than any other jurisdiction, the ACT Government's strategic infrastructure investments are designed to maximise workforce participation.

### Addressing the skills shortage

The ACT Skills Commission was established in November 2006 to provide high-level strategic advice to the ACT Government on skills issues and the strategies required to meet the Territory's needs now and into the future. The commission released its final report in April 2008.

In cooperation with business, industry and the education sector, the ACT Government is responding strategically to the skills challenge and has formulated a comprehensive package of initiatives based upon the commission's principal recommendations. The recommendations provide an immediate response to some pressing challenges and set a path toward long-term change.

The *ACT Skills Future* strategy includes:

- addressing the need for people and the workforce in light of the demographic challenge
- increasing the productivity of those already in the workforce
- lifting the participation of people currently out of the workforce
- ensuring that the education and training needs of today's and tomorrow's workforces are met.

Through *ACT Skills Future* the ACT Government will create an attractive and accessible location for skilled workers, endeavouring to attract those most likely to contribute as well as stay in the ACT. The ACT Government will also ensure an understanding of future workforce needs. People will be supported through their working lives to increase their productivity, and those who have traditionally been outside the workforce will be encouraged to participate.

The strategy recognises that the ACT Government and tertiary education sector must ensure that the ACT's education and training system is responsive to

the needs of participants, industry and the economy and that education and training provide the best possible match of available skills to demand.

The ACT will establish a new skills outreach service to liaise with government agencies, businesses, training providers, group training organisations, unions and the community sector. The service will identify and use available resources and funding to achieve the best possible skills development.

## Skills development through vocational education and training

Strategic infrastructure investment will ensure that industry-relevant training is underpinned by the latest equipment and technology. Upgrading of vocational education and training facilities will build on the ACT Government's major investment in school education, and provide the basis for the growth in post-school education and training that is necessary to maintain the ACT's sound economy. The relocation of the Canberra Institute of Technology's horticultural facilities from Weston to the Bruce Campus will create synergies with emerging industries, demonstrated through purpose-built horticultural facilities. These will incorporate environmental features and provide for the latest in water-efficient plantings, allowing efficient water management and recycling on a site that is potentially carbon-neutral. Further enhancements to CIT's Fyshwick Trade Skills Centre and an examination of the funding options for the implementation of CIT's Reid Campus Masterplan are being undertaken, along with significant investment in IT projects and equipment upgrades.

## Related Plans

ACT College Business Plan 2007 - 2009  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/17504/CollegeBusinessPlan.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/17504/CollegeBusinessPlan.pdf)

ACT Skills Future: Key Initiatives in a Long Term Strategy to Address the Skills Challenge  
[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/2254/ACTskills\\_future.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/2254/ACTskills_future.pdf)

Smart Schools: Smart Students  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/18626/SmartSchools.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/18626/SmartSchools.pdf)

Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools  
[http://www.det.act.gov.au/school\\_education/schools\\_renewal](http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/schools_renewal)

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Develop and position Canberra as a global city for education, culture and languages.
- Provide the infrastructure to attract and retain students and teachers to Canberra.
- Implement a 'lifelong learning philosophy' by creating learning opportunities throughout the lifespan.
- Redesign the notion of 'school' by developing new teaching and organisational models that create pathways and options for students and enable education in the ACT to be delivered in a range of settings.
- Strengthen the teaching profession to ensure teachers are valued and rewarded and education and learning are valued.

- Provide the opportunity for every student to achieve a post-school qualification by 2020.
- Close the gaps between industry and education providers, and use the knowledge and skills of industry professionals to teach students and build capability in teachers.
- Develop a single, national transparent -based approach to government funding and schools.

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Exceed national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy
- Increase the proportion of young people who reach Year 12 or educational equivalent
- Improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students
- Maintain public education share
- Increase use of ACT public libraries.







*A Strong, Dynamic Economy*

The ACT economy has been growing strongly over the past four years and, as part of its commitment to prudent fiscal management, the ACT Government has taken steps to increase its resilience and to secure the economic future of Canberrans in the years to come.

Maintaining the ACT's triple-A credit rating will remain a key goal for the ACT Government, allowing it to fund the services and facilities the community demands while creating conditions for maximising sustainable economic growth. Other priorities are to broaden the revenue base, attract business and investment, support innovation and facilitate major projects.

The ACT Government will continue to focus on providing an environment in which individuals and businesses are able to prosper. However, we are determined to ensure that no-one is left behind as we pursue economic prosperity—reducing poverty will continue to be at the forefront of social and economic policy development.

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Supported the internationalisation of our business community with a range of services, including successful trade missions to India and China in 2007, mentoring support through the Exporters Network, and offshore representation services in the United States, China and India. The Territory's export sales are now close to \$1 billion annually.
- Launched an innovative new service to the business community, Canberra BusinessPoint—a \$4 million business advice and mentoring service that provides access to expert professional advice, free of charge.
- Continued to successfully market the Territory as a place to live and work through the Live in Canberra campaign and the Skilled and Business Migration Program. More than 30 Canberra businesses and organisations have joined forces with the ACT Government to support Live in Canberra, which promotes Canberra's unique qualities as a place to work and live, both nationally and internationally. Through the Skilled and Business Migration Program, \$45.5 million has been invested in the ACT economy by sponsored business migration clients who have been actively conducting business in Canberra.
- Established the ACT Skills Commission to provide high-level strategic leadership on skills issues. The ACT Government's comprehensive response to that advice was announced in the 2008–09 Budget, with a commitment of more than \$50 million over four years.
- Maintained strong support for the knowledge economy through a new five-year funding arrangement for National ICT Australia (NICTA), a national centre for excellence in science and innovation. NICTA's new \$60 million laboratory on London Circuit will also play a major role in developing the City West knowledge precinct.

### Objective

*To ensure that a strong, dynamic, resilient and diverse economy meets the needs of the Canberra community now and into the future; to maintain economic growth that promotes a fully sustainable city; and to promote the ACT's place as the heart of the economic region.*





- Helped young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to become job-ready through the successful Work Experience Support Program.
- Worked with the Canberra Institute of Technology to develop accelerated apprenticeships in hairdressing, panel beating and chef training.
- Record levels in the volume of non-dwelling construction work in 2007.
- Introduced a traineeship program for young Indigenous men and women through a strategic partnership with the ITMS Group and Indigenous Success Australia, with each successful participant earning a Certificate II in business administration and a permanent job in the ACT public service.
- Centralised regulatory services by setting up the Office of Regulatory Services as a one-stop shop for many regulatory dealings. This significant step is the first in a process that will streamline and reduce the regulatory burden on business, while maintaining employee and consumer protection.
- Revised procurement processes to facilitate access to ACT Government business and increase industry awareness of government procurement opportunities.

## New and Future Directions

The ACT Government has delivered on key policies and initiatives of the 2004 *Economic White Paper*, and now faces a range of new and emerging economic challenges and opportunities. To ensure it is best placed to capture the benefits of changing economic circumstances, the ACT Government has revisited and refreshed its strategic priorities for economic and regional development.

The ACT Government's refocused economic directions and priorities will be articulated in the ACT's economic and regional plan. This plan is based on three strategic priorities: investing in people, supporting business and innovation, and building and planning for the future. These priorities build on our ongoing commitment to prudent financial management, sustainable development and working cooperatively with the region to strengthen economic outcomes. The ACT Government will also release a Business and Industry Action Plan.

sectors, including health, education, research, commerce, tertiary industry, retail and transport. The region in turn provides many of the services on which Canberra is dependent and helps support a higher level of activities, commerce and services than would otherwise occur. The surrounding region also contributes significantly to ACT residents' opportunities for recreation, tourism, employment and business.

There are clear advantages for all governments of the Australian Capital Region to work closely to develop the economic strength of the region.

Being the economic hub for the region also increases demand for ACT services, further promoting growth and development. Facilitating this arrangement between the Territory and New South Wales is the *Regional Management Framework Agreement*, which commits both jurisdictions to negotiate and find solutions to the cross-border issues of policy variation and service delivery.

## The Australian Capital Region

The ACT is located in the centre of the Australian Capital Region—an area comprising 13 local government areas in south-east New South Wales. As the largest regional city in the Australian Capital Region, Canberra is the principal services centre for a broad range of



## Addressing the skills challenge

As a skill-dependent economy running at almost full capacity, the ACT faces a major challenge in finding skilled workers. The ACT Government's forward strategy to deal with the skills challenge is set out in *ACT Skills Future*, a comprehensive package of initiatives based on four key commitments:

- People and Workforce: support careful growth of the ACT's population by working to make Canberra an attractive place to live and work, and focusing attraction efforts on workers who will fill skill gaps and are likely to stay in the ACT.
- Productivity: help make the workforce more productive by supporting training of people throughout their working lives, and by sharing knowledge with the private sector.
- Participation: work to increase the pool of labour by engaging with those traditionally unable to participate in the workforce, and leveraging Commonwealth, Territory and private funding to lift participation rates.
- Education and Training: improve the productive capacity of the economy by engaging with educators to ensure that education and training systems are responsive to the need of participants, industry and the economy, and improve access to training opportunities for all Canberrans.

Key initiatives include:

- Expanding the Skilled and Business Migration Program, which offers a range of sponsorships for skilled and business migrants who wish to live in Canberra and apply their professional expertise by working in a skilled occupation, establishing a business or investing in the ACT.
- Increasing investment in vocational education and training programs to train more skilled workers.
- Building capacity in the ACT public service by implementing a new attraction and retention strategy, exploring a range of flexible traineeship and apprenticeship options, seeking to reform

graduate-entry programs, and improving leadership skills and managerial capacity.

- Broadening the reach and frequency of marketing activities of the Live in Canberra campaign, which was established in 2006 to promote Canberra to people both interstate and overseas as an attractive employment destination.
- Developing a program to connect tertiary students with employees through formal work experience.

## A strong education sector

A strong education sector and quality education outcomes are the foundation of a strong modern economy. Higher education levels provide more skilled workers, increase participation in the economy, drive higher capital and labour productivity, contribute to social and cultural welfare, and encourage investment and innovation.

Education has always been a priority for the ACT Government, as demonstrated by significant investments to create high-quality learning environments in our schools, provide students with state-of-the-art computing facilities, increase vocational training options, and provide learning opportunities for all Canberrans.

This investment has helped ensure that educational outcomes in the ACT are the best in Australia. The ACT has the highest Year 12 retention rate in Australia and in 2007, 71.0 per cent of ACT residents aged 25 to 64 had post-school qualifications, compared to the national average of 59.4 per cent.

The ACT Government is committed to improving on this already outstanding record to secure the economic future of the ACT. Building on these investments, we will work to strengthen the education sector by finding ways to encourage more international students to study in the ACT, improve links within the education and knowledge sectors, increase learning opportunities for all Canberrans, and retain knowledge in the ACT.





## Population and demographics

Although the ACT population is relatively young, it is ageing more rapidly than any other state or territory. As well as the obvious consequences for health services and aged accommodation, this demographic shift will have implications for the Territory's workforce, economic growth rate, revenue-raising capacity, and provision of housing, transport, and community and education services.

The ACT Government will respond to the challenge of an ageing population in its planning for all areas of activity.

Forecasts of the level, characteristics and location of future population growth are fundamental to developing quality policy and making informed decisions. Population forecasts provide the basis for assessing future requirements for residential and commercial land, housing, public utilities and a range of government services.

The ACT Government strengthened its focus on high-quality demographic information in the 2008–09 Budget by continuing the funding for a specialist demographer. Enhanced demographic analysis and population forecasting will better inform the ACT Government and community about the changing nature of Canberra's population, and thus enable more effective planning and delivery of infrastructure and services to the community.

## Encouraging innovation

Innovation and knowledge drive new business practices, processes and technologies. This recognition has led to the development of new approaches to understanding the economic performance of nations and regions, including the concepts of global, national and regional 'innovation systems'.

The ACT Government recently released its commissioned report into the ACT innovation system entitled *Innovation, Creativity and Leadership*. The report focuses on the economic and business aspects of innovation, but it also seeks to create awareness of the contribution that the ACT's creative industries make to economic outcomes.

The ACT Government is examining a number of initiatives with local partners, with the aim of increasing the level of innovation within the ACT economy.

As an initial investment, the ACT Government will fund the ACT node of the Australian Plant Phenomics Facility, a major new research facility co-funded by the Australian Government, the Australian National University and CSIRO under the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy.

The ACT Government is also funding specialist advisory services to work closely with young innovation- and technology-based businesses to accelerate their development into investment-ready or commercial entities. A small-grants program will co-fund specific projects and activities that contribute to company innovation performance.

## Pursuing internationalisation— increasing the export focus

International business includes exports, foreign investment, and business and skilled migration, which are critical to economic growth and quality of life. Engagement in international business drives the international competitiveness of ACT organisations and companies. It keeps them at the forefront of innovation and helps them attract and retain world's-best talent and provide employment opportunities for a skilled workforce. Internationalisation also broadens the industry base and creates a diversity of opportunities beyond the public sector.



The ACT Government will continue to have an important role in the local export success of the business community. In the past, successive ACT governments have been involved in an array of initiatives—grants programs, trade missions, overseas offices, and mentoring and advisory service roles to individual firms. The key issues for the business community in these commendable initiatives are consistency, continuity and commitment to core functions and activities.


The ACT Government will continue its strong support for export development, including some refinement of existing programs. It will lead and coordinate, bringing together local stakeholders and providers of services to the export community. The ACT Government is currently working on a new internationalisation strategy to combine these elements in a systematic approach to service delivery, one that will also introduce greater synergies with the government's other internationalisation activities such as skilled and business migration, investment attraction and better use of our sister-city agreements.

## Supporting business

The ACT Government will support business by providing additional venture capital in the local investment vehicle, the Canberra Business Development Fund (CBDF). The CBDF invests strategically in ACT-based businesses to accelerate their development.

The ACT Government has increased the payroll tax threshold of 20 per cent to a new upper ceiling of \$1.5 million and abolished the duty on the establishment of trusts.

In addition, the ACT Government will support a range of activities to promote the Territory's investment and business profile through targeted marketing activities, including investment



information resources and partnering with the private sector in an annual event to facilitate business investment.

## Streamline business regulations

Following the establishment of the Office of Regulatory Services, the ACT Government will continue to minimise business regulation and cut red tape, while ensuring that regulation meets the needs of the community. Cooperative work with the Federal Government and other states and territories will also continue through the Council of Australian Governments.

## Building infrastructure for the future

The ACT Government is committed to a sustained and significant program of new capital works and maintenance of existing infrastructure across the Territory. Building for the Future, the strategic infrastructure investment program announced in the 2008–09 Budget, provides \$1 billion over five years. It aims to:

- increase the productive capacity of the economy by expanding infrastructure provision
- reduce future costs
- provide for the growth in the economy and a competitive edge against other urban centres.

The program will improve infrastructure with targeted funding:

- \$300 million for improving health infrastructure
- \$250 million for integrated transport initiatives
- \$100 million for climate change initiatives
- \$100 million for improving urban amenity
- \$50 million for information and communication technology initiatives
- \$200 million increase in funding for the existing capital works program.

In addition, feasibility studies or infrastructure design have been funded for a range of future projects. These include a pool and enclosed facility at Gungahlin, a child and family centre at Belconnen, a trade skills centre at Fyshwick, a master plan for the Reid campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology and a scoping of possible new camping and caravan parks.

## Increase broadband and connectivity

The ACT Government's vision for Canberra is a city of the future. Improved access to information and services via a broad range of telecommunications devices and information and communication technology will influence the way we communicate, do business and live our lives. We will continue to work towards a fully connected city where everyone in the community has access to a wide range of telecommunications and IT services.

## Canberra International Airport

The Canberra International Airport is an important element of the ACT's economy and the ACT Government will continue to support the planned expansion of both passenger and freight activity. These developments complement our ongoing efforts to attract new migrants and businesses to the Territory, and also facilitate the diversification of the ACT economy by providing the opportunity for new economic activity.

It is imperative that the proposed airport expansion be well planned and managed in close consultation with the ACT Government. Development at the airport should take account of relevant ACT planning laws and policies in order to moderate significant impacts on metropolitan planning and local infrastructure provision.



## Strategic Project Facilitation

The ACT Government has developed a Strategic Project Facilitation (SPF) unit to streamline the processes through which a proponent obtains the necessary approvals for a project. In deciding to provide the higher level of service inherent in SPF, the ACT Government recognises that the selected project is of special significance to the ACT.

SPF status aims to provide an efficient and coordinated process for obtaining necessary ACT Government approvals. It provides the proponent with a case manager to assist with access to government agencies; where appropriate, facilitation may include introductions to relevant local businesses and organisations.

The efficiencies in the assessment process could result in earlier completion and realisation of the economic and community benefits of a project.

## Sustainable residential land release

Timely and appropriate land releases are crucial to support the continued population and economic growth of Canberra. Provision of housing choice, and a range of housing that meets affordability criteria, will enable Canberra to attract and retain the workforce it needs, as well as encouraging social inclusion. Coordinated and appropriately located land releases also minimise the costs to the community of providing infrastructure and services.

With these objectives in mind, the *ACT Land Release Strategy 2008–09* provides the framework and direction to achieve the greatest benefits for the community from government land holdings and to assist in the provision of affordable housing.

Key components of the land release strategy include initiatives such as the promotion of high-density residential development, including

small, low-maintenance homes so that ageing households can downsize, thus freeing the existing housing stock for growing families.

The five-year land release program will also provide for growth by facilitating the delivery of 15,000 dwelling sites in a combination of new release areas such as those planned for Molonglo, and the more efficient development of existing residential areas through appropriate urban infill.



This level of supply will meet demand for residential development. It will also create an inventory of serviced land, enabling the ACT Government to respond quickly to changes in market conditions.

## Commercial and industrial development

The *ACT Land Release Strategy 2008–09* provides for the release of 100,000 square metres each for commercial and industrial land to facilitate continued economic and employment growth for Canberra in the short to medium term.

The continued development of a sustainable city will be promoted by facilitating appropriate development at Civic and the town centres through the new *Territory Plan*. A number of studies are currently investigating the infrastructure capacity at Civic and town centres and will provide advice on needed improvements and the investment required to accommodate additional activity.

Fyshwick, Hume and Mitchell will continue to meet demands for industrial development in the short to medium term through the take-up of existing land and the logical extension of the existing developments.

## Eastern Broad Acre Study

The *Eastern Broad Acre Study* was foreshadowed in the *Canberra Spatial Plan*, which recommended the investigation of an eastern employment corridor extending from Majura through to Hume for further industrial, broad acre, commercial, tourism, recreation and transport activities.



Photo: Australian Capital Tourism

The potential development opportunities in this locality can reinforce the strengths of the ACT economy. The area also possesses locational and development potential that is unlikely to be replicated on the same scale within the ACT, such as its proximity to road and air transport.

The detailed study being undertaken will ensure that any development would occur only in the context of a sustainable and coordinated land release. The development of the area would enable Canberra to plan for the long-term demand for quality commercial, industrial and other land uses.

Australia's cultural, historical and democratic past, present and future.

The ACT Government will deliver a five-year strategic plan (2008–2013) which will articulate the future direction and activities of Australian Capital Tourism and define a vision statement. The plan will also identify strategic directions and key performance indicators for the organisation.

An integrated e-strategy will update the website [visitcanberra.com.au](http://visitcanberra.com.au), improving media and trade content to assist with wider exposure.

## Tourism

Tourism makes a significant and growing contribution to the ACT economy and community, and it plays a critical role in defining our national and international image.

The diverse and extensive range of major events and tourist attractions, including the national institutions, draw visitors to the region. Events include Floriade, Summernats and the National Folk Festival; venues include the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia, Parliament House, the National Library and the National Museum of Australia.

These famed national attractions hold the stories of our nation. Australian Capital Tourism's brand—'See Yourself in the Nation's Capital'—indicates that, irrespective of who we are or where we come from, the best place to see our true reflection as Australians is in the nation's capital—Canberra. The brand derives from Canberra's status not only as the capital of Australia, but also as keeper of

The ACT Government has funded the upgrading and refurbishment of the National Convention Centre.

The conference building has had a \$26.4 million facelift to improve its facilities and provide a state-of-the-art





iconic facility in the ACT. As a result of the upgrade, it is expected that Canberra will increase its share of the national conference market from 6 to 7 per cent.

The Canberra Convention Bureau will receive additional funding of up to \$1 million by 2009–10 to promote Canberra as a destination for meetings and conventions. The aim is to ensure that Canberra is positioned as a leading destination for business events for Australian and overseas companies.

The ACT Government has provided \$250,000 in 2008–09 for cooperation between the ACT Government, the Canberra business community and the Federal Government on a feasibility study to establish a trust fund for the Convention Centre.

Floriade will celebrate its 21st anniversary in 2008. We will continue to develop the event to attract new and repeat visits under a five-year plan currently being developed. Meanwhile the inaugural Floriade NightFest, an extension to the traditional Floriade, will be piloted in September 2008.

## Live in Canberra

The ACT Government initiated the *Live in Canberra* campaign in 2006 to promote Canberra interstate and overseas as an attractive employment destination. The program is strongly supported through sponsorships by Canberra businesses, Federal Government agencies and tertiary institutions. It has been very successful and will be expanded to attract new skilled workers and their families to the ACT. The program works in partnership with the ACT Government's Skilled Migration Program, which will also be enhanced as a key measure to respond to the skills shortage.

## Related Plans

ACT Land Release Strategy, April 2008  
[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/2237/Ind\\_residential\\_land\\_rls\\_prgrm.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/2237/Ind_residential_land_rls_prgrm.pdf)

ACT Skills Commission Final Report, April 2008  
[http://www.actskillscommission.org.au/files/ACTSC\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.actskillscommission.org.au/files/ACTSC_final_report.pdf)

ACT Skills Future: Key Initiatives in a Long Term Strategy to Address the Skills Challenge  
[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/2254/ACTskills\\_future.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/2254/ACTskills_future.pdf)

Innovation, Creativity and Leadership—Report of a Study of the ACT Innovation System  
[http://www.business.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/97415/Innovation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.business.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/97415/Innovation_Report.pdf)

Investing in Canberra  
<http://www.business.act.gov.au>

Territory Plan  
[http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools\\_resources/legislation\\_plans\\_registers/plans/territory\\_plan](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/tools_resources/legislation_plans_registers/plans/territory_plan)

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Position and market Canberra as a 'City for the Asia Pacific'.
- Create Infrastructure ACT, including a transport hub around the airport and links to major cities via a very fast train.
- Source access to efficient broadband.
- Radically reconceptualise housing and planning to enhance affordability, which will assist Canberra to attract and retain skills and talent.
- Refocus the public sector on risk and outcomes rather than process.
- Retain competitive tension between IT

infrastructure providers and aim to provide high-speed broadband to everyone in the ACT at low cost.

- Investigate the concept of a city with 'unlimited data', that is, access to broadband through an internet service provider that does not charge extra for uploads and downloads. This will encourage companies to start up or relocate to Canberra, bringing with them their families, skills and potential.
- Develop Canberra as an information and innovation hub of the Asia-Pacific region (similar to Geneva in Europe).
- Establish a business-led entity to manage a program of civic enhancement and promotion.

## Strategic Progress Indicators


- Maintain triple-A credit rating
- Deliver budget surplus
- Maintain levels of unemployment below national average
- Foster diverse employment opportunities
- Raise the level of broadband usage
- Ensure planning and building codes meet or exceed national benchmarks.







*A Vibrant City and Great  
Neighbourhoods*



The experience of living in the ACT is strongly influenced not just by the quality of services and the strength of the community, but also by the quality of urban infrastructure, the design of centres and neighbourhoods and the ability to encourage and sustain cultural diversity. The ACT Government has invested heavily in urban infrastructure improvements, and the planning regime has been comprehensively overhauled. In addition, public art, major festivals, local community events and Canberra's position as a centre of creativity have been supported and extended.

The ACT Government will continue to support and facilitate the future of Canberra as a vibrant city, while also improving major infrastructure and neighbourhood renewal and regeneration. Road improvements, city maintenance, heritage asset management, public art and events across the city will all be emphasised, along with the maintenance of open space areas for sport and recreation activities and events. Planning for Canberra's centenary in 2013 will be an area of ongoing investment. Community participation will be essential to ensuring that the occasion is accessible to, and valued by, all Canberrans.

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Overseen the transformation of Civic over the past few years into a modern and vibrant hub befitting the nation's capital. The opening of the new Canberra Centre has successfully restored Civic as a premier shopping destination.
- Engaged in a concentrated program of land release, housing, infrastructure improvements, public domain, transport improvement, entertainment and public events. This ambitious program has given new life to Canberra's heart by attracting visitors and fostering business, tourism and employment opportunities.
- Commenced the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the new *Territory Plan* and associated regulations to improve development assessment procedures and reduce associated costs.
- Funded a \$26.4 million refurbishment of the National Convention Centre, which has seen it re-emerge as a leading and high-quality conference and event facility.
- Developed a conceptual master plan for the Lyneham Sports Precinct and allocated \$8.6 million towards the first stage of its redevelopment. The precinct will provide a central sporting hub to service community needs and improve capacity to host major sporting events, while making environmental improvements to the Sullivans Creek catchment.
- Developed Stromlo Forest Park, a world-class multi-use facility for recreation and sport available to both recreational and professional users.
- Opened the new Civic Library—the completion of which complements the Canberra Theatre Link Project.
- Opened the Kippax Library and refurbished the Belconnen Library.
- Initiated the Childers Street Project, which represents a major public sector investment

### Objective

*To ensure that Canberra—its heart and its town, group and local centres—offers the best in sustainable city living; to ensure that all facilities are of high quality and meet the needs of the community; and to ensure that all Canberrans are able to participate in the diverse cultural and social life.*



in the implementation of the City West Master Plan. The \$6 million project, funded by the ACT Government, features infrastructure and street furniture to make the Childers Street precinct a vibrant gateway.

- Installed the ACT Memorial, a graceful and evocative memorial that honours all Canberrans who offered their services or lives to defend our nation in conflict or to support peacekeeping efforts throughout the globe.
- Funded the construction of the \$11.5 million Canberra Glassworks, a landmark cultural attraction and glass art facility, located in the historic Kingston Powerhouse.
- Opened the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, which pays tribute to those from other nations who have helped to enrich our community and diversify our culture and provides community meeting facilities.
- Organised an ongoing program of community events—public celebrations of Christmas, New Year, Australia Day and Canberra Day, and the highly valued 'Round Town and Groovin' in Garema events.

## New and Future Directions

### Creative Canberra, creative nation

Canberra's role as a centre of national excellence in creativity will be further developed, building on the strengths of local and national institutions and extending our cultural expertise and reach across the nation and beyond. In particular, the ACT Government will seek to link local and national cultural institutions and will work with the Federal Government to achieve greater recognition of Canberra's status as the national capital and host of a diverse range of cultural centres.



## Continued investment in public art collection

Public art celebrates our community's dreams, reflections and passions in the public realm, it connects us with the beauty and depth of human experience, and it invites us to engage more deeply with the landscape that surrounds us. Public art draws us together as a community.

The ACT Government's Percent-for-Art Scheme, commencing in the 2007–08 Budget, is a significant new and ongoing investment in public art in the ACT. The scheme gives Canberrans even greater opportunities to engage with public art than before—while going to work, driving, meeting a friend for lunch or simply walking the dog.

The ACT Government's new *Forward Plan for Public Art, Towards 2013* describes the ACT's existing public art collection and develops themes to guide the commissioning and acquisition of new works. The overall aim is, by the centenary in 2013, to establish Canberra as a place where everyday activity, valued community places and the city fabric as a whole are noticeably enriched with public art.

## Developing arts precincts and facilities

Canberrans continue to attend more cultural events, spend more on cultural activities and benefit from a cultural landscape that is better supported by government, than the national average. Many of our creative industries are high achievers nationally and are showing strong potential for growth in international markets.

Significant investment will continue to be made in our growing arts precincts in Civic Square, City West and the Kingston Foreshore. These precincts will be developed in the years ahead to become even better places to celebrate and engage with our city's culture of diversity, creativity and inclusivity.

Major ACT arts facilities exist not only in our arts precincts, but right across Canberra in our town centres and our local neighbourhoods. The Belconnen Arts Centre will be a new focus for arts activity, and existing and new arts facilities will continue to be developed in line with community needs.

## Glassworks Tower

Opened on 24 May 2007, the Canberra Glassworks had over 80,000 visitors in its first 12 months, with 70 artists represented and 65 artists using the facility. The Canberra Glassworks has supported master classes and residencies with national and international artists, and has provided much-needed glass-working facilities for local and visiting artists.

An additional icon in the Kingston Foreshore precinct will be the Glassworks Tower, which will symbolise the former Kingston Powerhouse smokestack and be a unique marker for Kingston's arts and cultural precinct and an important link to the city's past. During 2009, expressions of interest will be sought from artists to design the Glassworks Tower. The cost of the \$430,000 project will be met by the ACT Government with contributions from ActewAGL and the Land Development Agency.





## Planning reforms

The ACT Government will continue to implement the planning system that came into effect on 31 March 2008. The system introduced new processes for tracking development assessment, added new terminology and structure to the *Territory Plan*, altered contemporary environmental assessment methods and introduced stronger compliance mechanisms. The system, which aims to be simpler, faster and more transparent, represents leading practice in Australia.

## Building community capacity

High-quality, safe and appropriate accommodation and facilities are fundamental to the effective operations of the community sector and community groups. The ACT Government is working to strengthen the capacity of the community by improving access to suitable accommodation and supporting, where possible, the use of shared resources to achieve greater administrative efficiency. Former school sites and other facilities will be made available to established community sector organisations and to local community groups seeking meeting venues or other facilities. Where appropriate, facilities will be refurbished to meet users' requirements, and in some locations new facilities will be constructed. Concurrently, landscaping and surrounding areas will be upgraded.

## Revitalising town centres

The ACT Government has identified the strategic directions for improving the vitality and viability of city and town centres. It has undertaken several measures to improve access and amenity, including integration of the bus services at Woden and Belconnen with the radial hubs, the refurbishment of Childers Street, and the adoption of a design manual that will unify the character and quality of the public spaces in the city centre.

As we move toward celebrating the centenary of Canberra, the emphasis will be on building community spirit and diversity across the ACT. We will continue to improve the quality and amenity of our public spaces and ensure that they are safe and accessible. We aim to reinvent the town, group and local centres, so they are not just marketplaces but places for community and social exchange.

## Canberra Theatre Scoping Study


A study on options for the upgrade of the existing Canberra Theatre is evaluating current capacity and technical constraints, siting, the case for enhancing the existing facility versus developing a new facility, and the benefits of completing the project in time for the centenary of Canberra celebrations. The study, coordinated by artsACT, is due to be completed by September 2008.

## Gungahlin Town Centre

The Gungahlin Town Centre is intended to be the major focus of commercial and community activity in the district.

To encourage commercial and community activity in the centre, the new *Territory Plan* rezoned most of the remaining undeveloped land to commercial uses and removed height restrictions to allow buildings taller than four storeys. Together these changes will ensure there is sufficient land to accommodate the forecast commercial and community uses for a town of over 90,000 people.

Attracting large office developments is a major objective of the Gungahlin Town Centre. The ACT Government's Land Development Agency is developing and promoting a business park to accommodate up to 78,000 square metres of floor space in buildings of two to seven storeys. There are opportunities for additional major office sites in the town centre should the demand arise.



In addition, a precinct for education, recreation and culture is being developed; it will include a secondary college, shared college–community facilities, a community library and a new town park. A site in the precinct has been reserved for a recreation building, potentially incorporating an indoor swimming pool, basketball courts and complementary facilities.

In 2008 the ACT Planning and Land Authority is undertaking a review of the Gungahlin Town Centre to identify issues in planning, transport and urban design. Stakeholders have been asked to comment on an issues paper released in May 2008, and a draft planning report is planned for release in late 2008 for further consultation.

### Local and group centres

Local and group centres provide for the day-to-day commercial and community requirements of the surrounding population, especially for people with low mobility. The centres are a focus for

neighbourhood activity and engagement and potentially reduce dependence on private and public transport.


The ACT Government's program of commercial land release will continue to provide sites where sufficient demand exists for viable local shops and facilities. Over the next five years land will be released for the development of local centres in Macgregor, Forde, Harrison, Franklin, Bonner and Molonglo. The refurbishment program will continue, with upgrades scheduled for Deakin and Lyons in the near future.

Group centres provide opportunities for grocery shopping and other retail and personal services, primarily for people in adjacent suburbs. To encourage competition and lower prices, the ACT Government facilitated the development of Aldi supermarkets at Conder, Kippax and Jamison Group Centres.

To meet the needs of Gungahlin residents, land for group centres will be released at both Amaroo and Casey over the next few years. The centres will host food shops and other retail, service and community facilities. A major group







centre in Molonglo will be a focus for services and community activities for residents of the town. The timing of the release will depend on settlement in the area.

## Sport and recreation facilities

Sport and recreation facilities are a vital aspect of community life in the neighbourhoods of Canberra.

Sportsgrounds form an integral part of suburban infrastructure planning. Space for sportsgrounds has been allocated in virtually every new suburb in Gungahlin and more recently extended to Stromlo. Harrison Neighbourhood Oval is now under construction in Gungahlin, and district playing fields will be constructed nearby during 2008, helping to meet the rapidly growing recreational needs of the area. The next major complex of this kind, now in the early stages of planning, will be in the suburb of Throsby, just north of the Gungahlin Town Centre.

The Gungahlin Town Centre will have its own enclosed oval for high-level local competition in various sports, and a site has been identified nearby for a major indoor leisure centre, which may include a swimming pool and auxiliary facilities. Early planning for these facilities is under way.

Water management will be critical for all facilities, especially sportsgrounds. The current drought has galvanised planning for long-term future climate change and water conservation. Inevitably potable water will come to be regarded as unsuitable for irrigation, and several projects now in progress are exploring potential solutions.

The Sanctuary Wetlands at Tidbinbilla have been redeveloped at a cost of \$8.3 million, in addition to the construction of adventure play facilities and upgraded walking tracks. Development and enhanced

educational opportunities at Tidbinbilla will continue, following a decision by the ACT Government to administer Tidbinbilla and Birrigai Outdoor Education Centre as a single entity under a management committee. The joint venture will become a major tourism destination, serving as a gateway to the ACT's extensive parks and open spaces.

The ACT Government will continue to promote and cater for all levels of sports and events that use the Canberra Stadium, Manuka Oval and Stromlo Forest Park. These venues provide elite and community facilities for residents and visitors and we will continue to explore and establish new business opportunities for national and international events.

## Events

The launch of the *Canberra Plan* in 2004 signalled a new commitment from the ACT Government to support high-quality community events.

For many years, Canberrans and visitors to the city have enjoyed a broad range of events, from Summernats, the National Multicultural Festival and Anzac Day to the spectacular autumn balloons and the colourful springtime Floriade festival. In recent years, as demonstrated by our successful hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games Torch Relay, the ACT Government has supported free events to provide an opportunity for shared experiences and to build harmony within the community.

Today, Canberrans in their thousands flock to the Canberra-Nara Candle Festival, the official lighting of the Canberra Christmas Tree, New Year in the City and Australia Day activities. Plans for Canberra's birthday celebrations in March continue to grow as the city approaches its 100th anniversary in 2013. In addition, the outdoor lunchtime entertainment program, Groovin' in Garema, helps bring our city heart to life during the summer months.

The 2008–09 ACT Budget provided \$65,000 for a feasibility study to find a permanent home for Floriade. Options include Eastlake or the Arboretum, or the event could be held at multiple sites.

## Centenary of Canberra

The ACT Government is working towards a year of memorable celebrations to mark the centenary of Canberra's naming in 2013. Following intensive community consultation, planning has begun for a program of celebrations, activities and projects, many with lasting benefits for the ACT. Over the next two years priority projects will be identified and scoping and feasibility work will be undertaken.

The centenary of the nation's capital is a unique opportunity to showcase Canberra to a national and international audience. The ACT is working with the Federal Government to form a partnership so that the celebrations are not only for Canberrans but for all Australians.

A whole-of-government approach to the centenary will ensure a coordinated and well-managed planning process with a strong emphasis on engaging Canberrans.

## Albert Hall

Albert Hall is a cultural icon and treasured part of Canberra's heritage. The ACT Government has provided funding to refurbish the building, including re-roofing, external painting and upgrading of kitchen equipment and toilets.



## Related Plans

Statement of Planning Intent 2007

[http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/5331/Statement\\_of\\_Planning\\_Intent\\_2007.pdf](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/5331/Statement_of_Planning_Intent_2007.pdf)

Sustainable Transport Plan

[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/sustainable\\_transport\\_plan\\_actions/sustainable\\_transport\\_plan](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/sustainable_transport_plan_actions/sustainable_transport_plan)

The Canberra Spatial Plan

<http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/sp-pdf/spatialplan.pdf>

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Reinforce Canberra's place as the national capital and a place of 'hot science and cool design' through the strengthening of national institutions and the relocation of other cultural bodies such as the Australia Council.
- Make Canberra easily accessible by providing affordable transport to enable better interaction between artists and art communities.
- Bridge the ACT–national divide by increasing collaboration between local and national institutions and between sectors and levels of government.
- Convene the Third International Creative Industries Festival in Canberra by 2020.
- Position Canberra to be badged as a UNESCO city of arts, culture and design.
- Build Canberra's reputation as a 'boutique arts city' and 'arts incubator' that is accessible, cohesive, and offers a good quality of life.

- Integrate art into all areas, including planning (culturally interesting and beautiful places to live and work), business (linking commerce and art) and education.
- Support young and emerging artists with living allowances and subsidised arts spaces and facilities so that artists will be able to make a living in Canberra.

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Increase participation in the arts and cultural events
- Increase investment in public art and festivals







*A Sustainable Future*

Achieving a sustainable future for the ACT requires safeguarding our economic future and protecting our natural and built environments, as well as responding to external challenges such as climate change. We need to anticipate and meet social and community needs for high-quality and affordable services, facilities and accommodation. We must preserve our biodiversity while responding to the challenges—including transport, employment location and service delivery—presented by our garden city with its low density and high environmental values.

The ACT Government has already implemented a range of measures to strengthen the Territory's economic future. We continue to be proactive in tackling problems such as housing affordability, climate change and water security, which are the keys to a sustainable future.

As well as continuing to implement these measures, the ACT Government will work to achieve a sustainable future by focusing on sustainable transport and ensuring all future developments are sustainable and environmentally sensitive.

The ACT Government takes seriously its role as a leader in sustainability, ensuring that its accommodation and facilities are sustainable and energy efficient, reducing its carbon emissions and planting and maintaining trees.

The ACT Government will also continue to protect native plant and animal species and ensure that the significant tracts of land committed to the reserve are well maintained and preserved for future generations.

## Objective

*To ensure that Canberra becomes a fully sustainable city and region and that future developments are environmentally sensitive; to maintain and protect natural assets, both floral and faunal; and respond to the challenges of climate change.*

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Acted to protect our long-term water security with:
  - release of *Think Water, Act Water* to guide the management, planning and conservation of the ACT's water supply
  - establishment of the Water Security Taskforce to provide options to secure Canberra's future water supply
  - a range of significant new water security measures, announced in October 2007, including enlarging the Cotter Dam from 4 to 78 gegalitres and increasing the volume of water transferred from the Murrumbidgee River to Googong Dam
  - increased funding for measures to reduce water demand and a pilot program for smart meters.
- Launched *Weathering the Change*, the ACT Government's climate change strategy and



action plan. This innovative plan lists 43 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help us adapt to the likely changes in climate. This strategy commits over \$100 million to bold actions to tackle climate change, including a target of a 60 per cent reduction from 2000 levels in our emissions by 2050.

- As part of *Weathering the Change*, provided \$2 million a year over four years to improve the energy efficiency of public housing.
- Within the first year of the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*:
  - increased the supply of land by an additional 1,000 blocks
  - streamlined land release and approval processes and introduced englobo releases (the release of large areas of unimproved land to developers)
  - mandated the delivery of house and land packages priced between \$200,000 and \$300,000
  - provided generous concessions to help more Canberrans buy a home
  - invited institutional investors to provide affordable private rental accommodation
  - boosted community housing

with an equity injection of \$40 million and a loan facility of \$50 million

- ensured that better and more targeted use is made of public housing
- released two demonstration projects to showcase affordable land and housing packages
- funded a design award for excellence in affordable housing.
- Reduced our vulnerability to bushfires. The ACT Government has been proactive and vigilant in cutting bushfire hazards. The 2007–08 Budget provided \$226,000 for 10 extra Community Fire Units in suburban Canberra. We now have 38 units in our suburbs to supplement our professional and volunteer fire-fighters. In addition, bushfire guidelines have been established to inform the design of new suburbs.
- Initiated the process to have the ACT declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- Commenced development of the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens. Initially, the arboretum will feature spectacular trees from around Australia and the world, and eventually it will have a mosaic of permanent gardens.
- Constructed a new \$8.3 million Nature Discovery Centre at Tidbinbilla Sanctuary, which opened in April 2008.
- Opened Stromlo Forest Park in January 2007, on the former pine plantation site devastated by the 2003 bushfires. Spread over 1,000 hectares, the \$7.5 million park boasts a purpose-built event pavilion, criterium cycling circuit, grass cross-country running track and mountain bike tracks capable of hosting national and international events. There



are also trails for horse riders, runners and bushwalkers.


- Rebuilt the rural villages at Uriarra and Stromlo to ensure the legacy contains positive elements in which the whole community can share.
- Acted to further protect our native grasslands and yellow box and red gum areas by committing more land to the network of Canberra Nature Reserves. The reserves at Goorooyarroo and Callum Brae are high-quality additions, and with their inclusion 54 per cent of the ACT is now protected bushland.
- Improved the ACTION bus network through bus priority at intersections, purchase of new fuel-efficient and accessible buses and implementation of the first stage of the Gungahlin–City Busway.
- Made substantial progress towards achieving the targets set out in the *Sustainable Transport Plan*.
- Increased the use of public transport in the ACT by almost 15 per cent since the 2001 Census.
- Achieved among the highest rates of cycling and walking to work of all Australian capital cities.

## New and Future Directions

### Water security

Securing Canberra's future water supply is one of our highest priorities. We must develop the capacity to cope with extended dry periods if, as is forecast, the effects of climate change reduce the long-term average inflows to our dams. The new large-scale measures announced in 2007 equip us to cope with a drier future. In addition, the ACT Government will continue to explore and support ways to reduce demand for water, encourage





sustainable water use through building design and rain- and grey-water harvesting, and pursue various options to reduce our reliance on rainfall.

The ACT Government will receive \$85 million in Commonwealth funding to reduce the amount of salt sent downstream from its water treatment facilities, as part of the Murray Darling rescue plan made at the Council of Australian Governments' meeting in June 2008. Planning for the project is under way with scoping to remove 40 tonnes of salt per day from the Lower Molonglo Water Control area.

Education for sustainable water use is being incorporated in the ACT schools curriculum through the Australian Schools Initiative. This partnership of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments seeks to support schools and their communities to use water sustainably.

With water prices likely to rise, we will explore ways to shield low-income earners from high prices, through concessions and measures to help manage demand.

To ensure that our efforts to provide water security do not intensify climate change, we will offset additional greenhouse gas emissions caused by the operation of all water projects.

## Climate change

In 2007, the ACT Government announced a \$100 million investment to tackle climate change and a bold blueprint to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, involving government, industry, households and individuals. Through its *Weathering the Change* action plan, the ACT Government committed to implement 43 actions under four themes:

- smarter use of resources
- designing and planning our city to be more sustainable

- building our capacity to adapt to and manage climate change
- improving our understanding of the causes and effects of climate change and how we need to respond.

The ACT Government is also committed to the long-term future of sportsgrounds and the sports industry. In October 2007 we released *Where Will We Play*, a strategy committed to the vision that 'by 2013 no sportsground in public or private ownership in the ACT will rely solely on the use of potable water to guarantee sporting operations'.

The ACT Government will continue to expand the provision of renewable energy by electricity retailers, introduce a feed-in tariff, examine renewable energy sources for the ACT, pursue carbon neutrality in its buildings and schools, provide incentives to purchase low-emission vehicles, invest in public transport, and continue to renew our urban forests and protect our wilderness areas.

We will also closely monitor national and international developments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and respond flexibly to emerging science and technology.

## Climate Change Adaptation Research Centre

To further support research into climate change and adaptation, the ACT Government will provide a \$2.5 million matching contribution for capital works to establish a Climate Change Adaptation Research Centre at the Australian National University.



## Exploring the feasibility of a solar power facility

The ACT Government, in partnership with ActewAGL, is undertaking a feasibility study for a large-scale solar power facility in the ACT. The study will examine location, size, current technologies, costs of construction and operation, cost–benefit analysis, social equity and planning requirements. The aim of such a plant, if it were introduced, would be to generate sufficient solar energy to power large numbers of homes and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## Social impact of climate change

The Community Inclusion Board and the ACT Government jointly undertook a social impact analysis of climate change. Following consultation with the community sector, the analysis quantified and modelled the expected impact of climate change on the capacity of low-income households to access and maintain adequate housing and to obtain energy, utilities, food and transport. It identified households that are likely to have trouble affording essential products and services as a result of climate change. The ACT Government will examine interventions that can help low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged households to reduce their demand for resources, mitigate the effects of climate change and maintain access to essential products and services. The ACT Government will identify how government and industry can invest in programs or change their practices to assist low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged households.

## Integrated transport strategy

The ACT Government has made significant investments in improving public transport and transport infrastructure in the ACT, including \$250 million to purchase new buses, provide additional car parking and build and upgrade roads and cycle paths. We will extend this work by developing and implementing an integrated transport strategy for sustainable transport, public transport, road safety, the taxi system, cycleways, pedestrian access, community transport needs, car parking and road infrastructure.

Other programs include providing community paths for cyclists and pedestrians at Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Nature Reserve and the Cotter Road, and opening temporary car parks to meet temporary or increased demand.

## ACTION buses

The ACTION bus network is a vital element in the vibrancy of our city and the accessibility of our neighbourhoods. For the first time in 10 years, the ACT Government has undertaken a full review of ACTION bus services in Canberra, which included comprehensive community consultation. As a result, a new ACTION bus network—Network 08—commenced on 2 June 2008. Network 08 delivers improvements to bus services throughout Canberra, including more buses, more often, on more routes. With an improved route design and better connections, bus services are more predictable and reliable.

The new network will be complemented by improved bus lanes on busy routes and the opening of new Park and Ride and Bike and Ride facilities.

New buses will be energy-efficient and accessible, with an extra 100 to be bought from 2008–09 to 2011–12. Replacement of the Belconnen Bus Interchange will improve passenger safety and comfort.

## Environmentally sensitive residential and commercial development

Measures have been put in place to improve the energy efficiency of homes and offices, and further actions will be taken as outlined in *Weathering the Change*, the ACT's climate change strategy. The ACT Government is considering a review of the codes for subdivision and residential design in the new *Territory Plan* to encourage greater innovation, as well as incentives for developers to incorporate innovative technologies. We introduced the water-sensitive urban design code, *Water Ways*, in March 2008. Further investigation of the sustainability of settlement patterns and transport systems is proposed. It is important to ensure that innovation is incorporated in developments by educating consumers and building industry capacity.

The ACT Government is investigating East Lake, immediately east of Kingston Foreshore, for major urban renewal incorporating sustainability principles. The vision for East Lake is a lively, high-density urban community of up to 9,000 people providing an Australian showcase of sustainable development. A mix of housing set in high-quality open space and public realm will be well connected to existing and new shops, employment opportunities, schools and other facilities. A range of innovative residential, commercial, retail and clean industrial uses will reflect the characteristics of the immediate and

surrounding environment and build on the existing diverse character of the area. This development will recognise the environmental importance of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, protect existing land uses and reflect the cultural and historical significance of the area. The ACT Government and CSIRO have established a partnership through the CSIRO Sustainable Communities Initiative to 'create a national showcase demonstrating innovation in sustainable urban redevelopment by embracing social, economic, and environmental sustainability principles, technologies and practices in redeveloping East Lake'.

## Affordable housing

The ACT Government has identified improving housing affordability in the Territory as one of its highest priorities. The *Affordable Housing Action Plan*, released in April 2007, includes a range of actions to increase the supply of affordable housing in the ACT. The strategies target land release, home ownership, private rental accommodation, community and not-for-profit housing, public housing, supported and aged accommodation. Initiatives include facilitating home ownership through accelerated land supply and providing land rent, shared equity and financial concessions to ease the up-front costs of home ownership.



In addition, to increase the supply and range of private rental properties, institutional investors are being encouraged to undertake developments incorporating 200 to 400 dwellings. The role of community housing providers in both home ownership and rental accommodation has been expanded, and the provision of public housing has been strengthened and targeted. More supported and aged accommodation is being built.

Since the release of the plan, the ACT Government has lifted the income threshold for the Homebuyer Concession Scheme from \$100,000 to \$120,000 and granted a one-off stamp duty exemption to pensioners who wish to downsize and move to accommodation better suited to their needs.

## Housing choices

The *Affordable Housing Action Plan* includes strategies to expand the range of housing across the accommodation spectrum, including less expensive smaller blocks and innovative housing design.


The ACT Government will examine the location of future housing in addition to the style and mix of housing designs and options. A more compact city has benefits such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, making better use of existing infrastructure and increasing housing choice, especially for older residents wishing to downsize within their present locality.

## Molonglo residential development

Development in the Molonglo Valley is subject to an amendment to the *National Capital Plan*, a variation to the *Territory Plan* and investment in capital works on ponds, roads and other infrastructure. Construction could commence in East Molonglo







in 2009. East Molonglo has a capacity of some 25,000 dwellings and is well located for existing metropolitan employment. Molonglo offers new residential opportunities at a high level of sustainability, within the compact city envisioned by the *Canberra Spatial Plan*. Molonglo residents will travel about 7.5 kilometres to employment and commercial centres in Civic, Woden and Belconnen, and these shorter trips will limit greenhouse gas emissions. Direct and convenient public transport and shared paths, along with the creation of local employment opportunities, will reduce reliance on private transport.

Walkable neighbourhoods will be a feature of Molonglo. Every house will be within about 400 metres of a neighbourhood focal point, which may be a bus stop, a corner shop or a retail and commercial activity centre. Neighbourhood design will encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

## No-waste strategy

As *NOWaste by 2010* reaches the end of its life, the ACT Government is developing a new, forward-thinking policy and strategy to manage and minimise waste. The new measures will continue to emphasise waste minimisation and embody the principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability. The goal will be to continue to progress *NOWaste* to an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable level.

The future priorities will be wastes generated by the business sector and the recovery of recyclables and organics. Construction and demolition wastes will have to be treated at mixed waste plants prior to land filling. In the domestic sector the focus will be on improving recycling, processing waste delivered to transfer stations and managing organic and compostable materials.

Increased activity by the private sector is seen as critical to increasing resource recovery levels in the ACT. The ACT Government will continue to support growth in this sector through the development of the Hume Resource Recovery Estate and to assist with market development for waste-derived products.

Work will continue at a national level on extended producer responsibility and take-back schemes for computers, e-waste, televisions, tyres, mobile telephones and batteries. Measures will be pursued to strengthen the National Packaging Covenant that targets packaging wastes.

## A green office building for the ACT Government

The ACT Government is undertaking detailed planning for the construction of an energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive ACT Government office building. Financial analysis to date presents a strong case for the new building, which would house many functions currently dispersed throughout the city, enhancing efficiency and productivity. According to the financial analysis, constructing a new building is more cost-effective than the current leasing arrangements.

## Improving knowledge and planning

To enhance our capacity for planning and heritage management, the ACT Government has provided funding to the University of Canberra to establish a cultural heritage management course and the Donald Horne Institute, improve water use and management, and establish an urban planning course.

## Energy-efficient street lights

Existing street lights will be replaced with more efficient sodium and metal halide lights, improving commuter safety and reducing energy consumption by 2.8 million kilowatt hours per annum. This is the equivalent of cutting 3,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

## Continue to protect endangered species and ecological communities

In the lowland areas of the ACT, in and around Canberra's suburbs, several endangered species are dependent on two endangered ecological communities—natural temperate grasslands and yellow box–red gum grassy woodlands. The grasslands are an endangered ecological community under the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 1980* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It is estimated that less than 1 per cent of Australia's natural temperate grasslands remain, although the ACT has 5 per cent of its pre-European extent of grasslands.

The yellow box–red gum grassy woodlands have also been declared endangered under the Nature Conservation Act and are critically endangered under federal legislation. Although the remaining lowland woodland area in the ACT is not large, a much higher proportion is relatively intact than is the case in New South Wales or nationally, so its ongoing protection from urban development is important for the ACT, the region and the nation.

## Land committed to nature reserve

The ACT Government has made a commitment to protect significant areas of land containing endangered ecological communities. We are applying or considering various protection mechanisms, including nature reserve, rural lease

and memorandums of understanding. The areas include grasslands in East and West Jerrabomberra (committed to nature reserve), woodlands in Kinlyside and Kama (committed to nature reserve), Aranda (rural conservation lease) and the Naas Valley (rural conservation lease). Other areas that have been identified but are currently national land include the Lawson grasslands and Newline Quarry woodlands.

## Urban forest replacement

Canberra has the largest urban forest in Australia, which is now ageing and suffering from the effects of prolonged drought. A study by the Australian National University values the urban forest at \$1.1 billion, with an annual contribution of \$15 million in environmental services. The ACT Government will investigate options for the timely replacement of the urban forest over the next 25 years in order to maintain the quality of Canberra's urban tree streetscapes.

The ACT Government has embarked on a major restoration of the Lower Cotter catchment following the 2003 fires. This is one of the largest restoration programs in Australia and will see the Lower Cotter returned to native vegetation over time with the support of community and volunteer efforts.

## Continuing to grow the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens

The ACT Government will continue to develop the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens, protecting threatened native and exotic tree species and contributing to its One Million Trees initiative and *Weathering the Change*, the ACT's climate change strategy. The arboretum will also provide invaluable research opportunities, supported by a memorandum of understanding with the Australian National University, and will become a key tourist destination as it develops.

## Related Plans

ACT Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/13340/actnaturalresourcemanagementplan2004.pdf](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/13340/actnaturalresourcemanagementplan2004.pdf)

Affordable Housing Action Plan 2007  
[http://www.actaffordablehousing.com.au/resources/pdfs/Action\\_Planrev.pdf](http://www.actaffordablehousing.com.au/resources/pdfs/Action_Planrev.pdf)

Integrated Nature Conservation Plan  
<http://incp.environment.act.gov.au/>

Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT  
[http://www.esa.act.gov.au/SBMP\\_v1\\_14jan04.pdf](http://www.esa.act.gov.au/SBMP_v1_14jan04.pdf)

Think Water, Act Water: A Strategy for Sustainable Water Resource Management  
[http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au/permanent\\_measures/the\\_act\\_water\\_strategy.shtml#strategy\\_documents](http://www.thinkwater.act.gov.au/permanent_measures/the_act_water_strategy.shtml#strategy_documents)

Weathering the Change: The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/63624/Climate\\_Change\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/63624/Climate_Change_Strategy.pdf)

- Move to best-practice building that is congruent with principles of sustainability.
- Increase community awareness and understanding of sustainability issues.
- Build community and government partnerships to develop social as well as technological solutions to issues.
- Produce more food locally.

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Meet the consumption targets of *Think Water, Act Water* and prevailing water restrictions
- Meet greenhouse gas emission targets
- Increase use of public transport, cycling and walking
- Decrease waste to landfill.

## Ideas Put Forward at the ACT 2020 Summit

- Make sustainability a consideration underpinning all decisions, for example, economic and policy decisions, permits, and decisions made by industry.
- Create a mix of living styles and design the city around public transport and 'walkability'.
- Implement a Bio-Regional Planning and Implementation Plan to provide connections with other states and territories.
- Set and achieve a target higher than carbon neutrality.



Photo: Australian Capital Tourism





CIVIC LIBRARY



The ACT Government places a high priority on service delivery, aiming to ensure all members of the Canberra community are able to access consistently high-quality services.

As a city-state, the ACT Government delivers a variety of services. They range from traditional state functions—health care, education, planning, emergency and police services, child protection, disability care, public housing, events management, infrastructure and justice—to local government services such as urban maintenance, public transport and waste disposal.

In many cases, partnerships with the Federal Government, the private sector and non-government agencies support the delivery of services and make available a broad range of services.

The ACT Government also plays a role in regulating service delivery and safety standards in areas such as child care, liquor licensing and workplace safety.

Improving service delivery and meeting community needs will be a priority over the coming years, building on the significant investments in health care, public education, public art and urban maintenance in particular.

ACT Government policy, programs and service delivery will centre on evidence, and the ACT Government and public service will continue to strive both to lead and to learn from other jurisdictions.

Many future directions relating to high-quality services are included under the relevant themes such as health and education.

## Objective

*To ensure that services are consistently of high quality, timely, effective and cost efficient and meet the needs of the community; that the city is well maintained and its assets protected; and that members of the community are able to participate in the making of decisions that affect them.*

## Achievements

The ACT Government has:

- Consolidated regulations through the establishment of the Office of Regulatory Services.
- Opened the Civic Library.
- Commenced implementation of e-Development, an online system for lodging development applications and tracking capability.
- Constructed the Gungahlin Drive Extension.
- Funded six community mini-buses in 2007–08 to provide affordable and flexible transport for seniors and people isolated in their regional communities. The new services will commence in mid-2008.



# New and Future Directions

## Renewed focus on municipal functions

The ACT Government will concentrate on improving municipal services with additional resources from the Strategic Infrastructure Investment Program. The focus will be on improving facilities and maintenance of roads and supporting infrastructure around Civic and town centres, and on long-term planning and provisioning for maintenance. Funding has been provided for additional cleaning and sweeping of shopping centres, playgrounds, public toilets, bus shelters, underpasses and car parks; for increasing mowing, shrub maintenance, planting and weed control; and for major pavement improvements.

In addition, recognising the iconic and core status of Civic as a place of social engagement, entertainment, employment and transport exchange, a Place Manager will be engaged to oversee the maintenance of the Civic Centre and contribute to the design of its future development.

The ACT Government is working in partnership with Canberra CBD Ltd to improve the promotion and general levels of maintenance in the city centre. Working together, the government and Canberra CBD Ltd will improve maintenance in both the public and private realms in the city.

## Road infrastructure—major roads and maintenance

Well-maintained infrastructure is crucial to support a strong and dynamic economy. The ACT Government has developed asset management



plans that consider life-cycle costs which assists in determining the necessary investments in assets such as roads, bridges and stormwater infrastructure.


Work is progressing on planning and construction of the extension of the Federal Highway to Monaro Highway, with the first stage to be built in 2009–10. The Federal Highway extension will join the city's parkways, providing the final link in this critical road system. Funding has been provided to upgrade Tharwa Drive and Airport Roads; to duplicate Athllon Drive and Flemington Road; to upgrade the intersection at Wakefield Avenue and Doorring Street; to upgrade the Cotter Road; to upgrade the intersection of Flemington Road, Sandford Street and Morisset Road; and to extend Horse Park Drive.

The ACT Government has funded feasibility and planning studies for future projects such as Parkes Way and the duplication of the Gungahlin Drive Extension.

## Community engagement

Effective community engagement will build a strong, cohesive relationship between Canberrans and their government. The ACT Government aims to ensure all Canberrans have a voice and participate in the Territory's democratic processes. We will implement a range of measures to further enhance community engagement and continue to provide opportunities for the community to participate in decisions. Recognising the growth of e-democracy nationally and internationally, we will examine options for encouraging Canberrans to get involved in decision-making and the governance of the Territory through accessible online engagement.





The launch of *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* marks a new phase of community engagement, which will be supported by a dedicated website to promote feedback and to notify the community about future forums, focus groups and discussion papers.

## Public feedback on services

Effective service delivery depends on public feedback about perceptions of service quality. The ACT Government will continue to regularly survey consumers of its services to guide planning and delivery.

## Enhance the availability and accessibility of information

The ACT Government has continued to develop fast and efficient integrated service delivery through its Canberra Connect shopfront, telephone and online operations. Canberra Connect will continue to improve information and payment services by accelerating the deployment of technology that provides:

- a self-service system for frequently asked questions (FAQs), integrated directly with a public feedback and enquiry website; most ACT Government agencies are connected to this popular and effective self-service technology
- an online system enabling customers to track progress of requests for services from the ACT Government such as reports of potholes or graffiti
- Smart Forms payment technology, providing flexible, integrated electronic forms and secure online payments from citizens and businesses to government.

Canberra Connect will progressively implement other information and payment services to continue to improve access to ACT Government services.

In addition, the public library collections will continue to be refreshed through the acquisition of contemporary resources.

## Build the capacity of the public service

The ACT Government delivers services to the people of the ACT in an increasingly complex environment. Demand for services is growing and there are fewer skilled people to deliver them. There is record low unemployment in the ACT and a shortage of skilled workers; demographic trends indicate the labour shortage will continue for some years. The ACT Government must continue to respond to these demands in an innovative way. A strong, highly skilled public service is essential to deliver services to the people of Canberra.

To respond to the demographic challenges and deliver a complex range of services to the people of the ACT, we need to embed a culture of learning and development, of good leadership, of managerial skill and of constant improvement in the way we manage our most valuable asset—our people.

The whole-of-government attraction and retention strategy will support the ACT public service by improving leadership skills and managerial capacity in our executive and our future leaders. The strategy also looks at recruitment practices to ensure the right staff with the right skills are employed and processes are fast and efficient. Entry-level programs, such as the ACT Public Service Graduate Program, will employ a new group of people keen to make a difference and work in the public service to support their community. A feature of our strategy is providing our staff with opportunities to grow and develop and to support their own learning and development.



The ACT Government will also develop and implement a performance and accountability model for the public service.

## Freedom of information

The ACT Government is working to further improve the administration of freedom of information legislation across government and will examine reform proposals at the Commonwealth level and those put forward by other jurisdictions, such as Queensland, with a view to assessing their potential application in the ACT.

## Related Plans

ACT Community Engagement Online  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/engagement>

Strategies and Plans for Parks, Forests and Reserves, including Urban Parks and Sportsgrounds Plans of Management  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/parks\\_forests\\_and\\_reserves/policies\\_and\\_publications/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_reviews](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/parks_forests_and_reserves/policies_and_publications/strategies_plans_and_reviews)

Policies for Urban Areas, including Memorials Policy, Sharps Policy, Irrigation Policy, Playgrounds Policy and Mowing Policy  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/parks\\_forests\\_and\\_reserves/policies\\_and\\_publications/policies](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/parks_forests_and_reserves/policies_and_publications/policies)

2006–07 Workforce Profile  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic\\_human\\_resources/workforce\\_profile2006-07.pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic_human_resources/workforce_profile2006-07.pdf)

An Equity and Diversity Framework for the ACT Public Service, June 2006  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic\\_human\\_resources/act\\_public\\_service\\_equity\\_and\\_diversity\\_framework\\_june\\_2006.pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic_human_resources/act_public_service_equity_and_diversity_framework_june_2006.pdf)

The ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability 2004  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic\\_human\\_resources/act\\_public\\_service\\_employment\\_framework\\_for\\_people\\_with\\_a\\_disability-september\\_2004.pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic_human_resources/act_public_service_employment_framework_for_people_with_a_disability-september_2004.pdf)

ACT Public Service Executive Capabilities  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/employment\\_policy/executive\\_capabilities.pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/employment_policy/executive_capabilities.pdf)

Managing and Recognising Performance—Principles and Guidelines  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/publications/performance\\_mgmt\\_fwok\\_May04\(current\).pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/publications/performance_mgmt_fwok_May04(current).pdf)

Work and Life Balance Policy 2005  
[http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic\\_human\\_resources/Work\\_Life\\_and\\_Balance\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.psm.act.gov.au/strategic_human_resources/Work_Life_and_Balance_Policy.pdf)

## Strategic Progress Indicators

- Increase the level of satisfaction with ACT Government services
- Reduce the costs of service delivery.

# Data Sources

ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics, Catalogue Number 3101.0

ABS, Australian National Accounts (State Accounts), Catalogue Number 5220.0

ABS, Labour Force Australia, Catalogue Number 6202.0

ABS, General Social Survey: User Guide, Australia, Catalogue Number 4159.0

ABS, Census of Population and Housing

ABS, Tourism, Accommodation Australia, Catalogue Number 8635.0

ABS, Counts of Australian Business, Catalogue Number 8165.0

ABS, Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation, Catalogue Number 4177.0

ABS, Deaths, Australia, Catalogue Number 3302.0

Australian Education International ([www.aei.gov.au](http://www.aei.gov.au))

National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling 2007, *Characteristics of Low Income ACT Households*, October 2007

Real Estate Institute of Australia, Market Facts