

18/165 Climate Strategy and Action Plan

Summary of Impacts

- The Cabinet Submission seeks Cabinet's agreement to release the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025* (Strategy) and *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* (Plan) as official Government policy.
- The proposal will result in positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Key to impacts: Red – negative, Blue – neutral, Green – positive.

Social

Community and individual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy contains actions that will improve health through encouraging active travel and improving energy efficiency in households. • The Plan is designed to maintain and enhance our trees, open spaces, soils and waterways to improve liveability and keep our city cool in a changing climate.
Disadvantaged and vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy includes a range of actions that will support disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens in the ACT. • Measures have been designed to mitigate impacts on disadvantaged and vulnerable residents and provide support where needed. • The Plan will indirectly help with household energy bills by helping to reduce the urban heat island effect and reduce cooling need for buildings by providing shade.
Access to social networks & community activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the Strategy and the Plan include measures that encourage community activities to tackle climate change.
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy and the Plan have a positive impact on human rights. In particular, a healthy environment is viewed by UN Environment as a key pre-requisite to the enjoyment of human rights. Both strategies also increase options for citizen participation in environmental activities in collaboration with government.
Indigenous and Multicultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the Strategy and the Plan will maintain and extend opportunities to learn from traditional ecological knowledge and to engage with the community, including with the ACT's multicultural communities.

Economic

ACT Government Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking action now to reduce emissions and prepare for climate change is the most responsible and cost-effective approach in the long term. In addition to avoiding increased future budget costs should action on climate change not proceed, co-benefits of these strategies can contribute to reducing other Government expenditure, such as health costs. • Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience to climate change impacts requires Government investment. The Strategy includes measures that would require Government to significant ongoing funding in order to deliver them. • Investment in action on climate change has long term budget benefits, including increased property values from greater tree cover, health savings, industry development, improved productivity for businesses, and reduced government energy costs. Investment in adaptation measures will help develop resilience to increasing climate change impacts such as heat waves, bushfires and flooding.
Productivity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong government commitment to addressing climate change will help to position the ACT as a hub for low emissions investment and research which will provide ACT businesses with an opportunity to develop new and innovative products and services that thrive in a zero emissions economy.

Investment and Economic Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy promotes the development of a zero emissions economy, which will attract local low carbon investment and give rise to new investment opportunities and economic growth for key sectors of the economy. • The Strategy is expected to deliver significant economic benefits to the ACT. For example, improving energy efficiency in households and businesses will help to reduce energy bills and promote the development of new technologies. • The Plan will have a positive impact on Canberra's tourism industry.
Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Strategy has the potential to impact on the cost of living for some households by reducing energy bills. • The Plan has the potential to decrease energy bills by reducing the need for residents to cool their homes by increasing urban canopy cover and reducing the impact of extreme heat throughout Canberra.

Environmental

Greenhouse gas emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main objectives of the Strategy is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy supports biodiversity by providing for the development of strategies to mitigate risks to terrestrial and aquatic habitats at risk from climate change impacts. • The Plan supports biodiversity by maintaining and enhancing trees, soil and water.
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy and the Plan provide for collaboration to learn from traditional ecological knowledge on adapting to climate change.
Environmental quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the Strategy and the Plan contain actions that will support improved environmental quality in the ACT. For example, the Strategy will have a positive impact on reducing air pollution by promoting the ACT's transition to more sustainable forms of transport. The Plan will improve the environmental quality and visual amenity of Canberra's urban landscape through maintaining and enhancing trees, open spaces, soils and waterways. Trees also contribute to the removal of pollutants from the atmosphere.