



REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE CANBERRA PLAN – TOWARDS OUR SECOND CENTURY

JUNE 2009



The Canberra Plan was originally launched by the ACT Labor Government in 2004, with the aim to guide the growth and development of Canberra for this generation and beyond.

In August 2008 the ACT Government released "*The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*", which builds on the original Canberra Plan, identifying changes that have occurred over the four years, and updating the Plan to ensure that the vision, as well as the strategic themes, key objectives and future directions remain current as Canberra's centenary approaches. Key issues such as climate change, water security, housing affordability and skills shortages have become a higher priority for the people of Canberra and for the ACT Government in recent years, and this is reflected in the 2008 update of the Canberra Plan. While the future priorities listed in "*The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*" reflect long-term plans for the future of Canberra, in less than a year significant achievements in each of the priority areas have already been attained.

Obviously since the 2008 update things have changed again in Canberra with events locally, nationally and internationally impacting on the ACT. The ACT is not immune to the impacts of the global economic crisis being experienced around the world and the ACT Government's response, along with the Commonwealth Government's response through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, is having ongoing benefits for the ACT.

While managing the immediate issues arising from the current global economic downturn, sustainability for the ACT Government, its agencies and authorities, is about providing for people, protecting our place and creating prosperity – now and into the future. The Government has consciously adopted a triple bottom line approach to sustainability, recognising the interdependence of social, economic and environmental well-being, but also acknowledging that decision-making will often involve trade-offs between the three.

This approach is reflected in both the Government's sustainability strategy, *People, Place, Prosperity*, and in the Government's broader approach to sustainability as set out in the three core strategies of the Canberra Plan – the Social Plan, Capital Development - the Government's Economic Plan, and the Canberra Spatial Plan. This means Triple Bottom Line considerations are embodied within the broader strategic framework of the ACT Government.

Acknowledging the importance of sustainability and Triple Bottom Line considerations, the Government has a significant program of work scheduled. Two key projects relate to Triple Bottom Line assessment, building on the significant preliminary work undertaken by ACT Treasury into the development of a triple bottom line assessment tool to support decision-making, and the introduction of Triple Bottom Line annual reporting by government agencies.

Under its Citizen Centred Governance initiative, the ACT Government has embarked on a range of initiatives that include:

- listening to the community and exploring improved communication and engagement mechanisms;
- positioning for improved accountability and reporting; and
- developing frameworks for improved decision-making and coordination.

Updating the ACT's sustainability policy and developing policy frameworks to incorporate triple bottom line analysis across government decision making and accountability is part of this process.

The Citizen Centred Governance paper released last year outlined the directions of the ACT Government to meet the needs and expectations of the ACT community. This paper included a range of recommendations to build a more citizen-

centric approach to existing governance models and practices and to reinforce the role of citizens in shaping the decisions and services that affect them.

These recommendations covered a range of issues, including:

- Government's performance and accountability frameworks;
- opportunities to enhance community engagement;
- discussions on public satisfaction with government services;
- mechanisms to improve the community's awareness of planning proposals and then opportunities for comment;
- opportunities for further dissemination of government generated information; and
- opportunities for capacity building in the ACT Public Service.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that the Government's decisions keep the vision of the Canberra Plan in mind, and has been working over the past year to ensure strong progress against the 7 key themes outlined in *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*. These 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.





Quality Health Care

The ACT is doing well in delivering quality health care to the people of Canberra.

Community demand for health services is projected to increase rapidly over the next 15 years, and beyond. By 2022, the ACT's public hospital admissions are projected to increase by 77%, and overnight hospital admissions will increase by 49%. The ACT Government therefore committed \$300m over 4 years in the 2008-09 Budget and a further \$148m in the 2009-2010 Budget for the implementation of the Capital Asset Development Plan. This Plan incorporates the total health system, including new models of care aimed at better management of chronic disease and keeping people out of hospital. It also includes better use of technology and different ways of providing care such as community based post hospitalisation support. The health care workforce is another component of the Plan and initiatives will focus on sustainability via new workforce roles and expanded scope of practice for existing roles.

More Hospital Care

Achievement to date on implementing initiatives in the *Capital Asset Development Plan* has been good with some notable progress including:

- A temporary operating theatre at Calvary Hospital has been completed, and an additional 2 theatres at the Canberra Hospital are well advanced and expected to be completed in August 2009.
- The tender process for the new neurosurgery operating theatre equipment is complete. This new theatre will both increase theatre capacity and provide the ACT with state of the art neurosurgical capacity.
- A total of 24 additional beds will be delivered to Canberra Hospital by September 2009.

- The design architects for the new Women and Children's Hospital have been appointed and are well advanced in working with planners, staff and consumers to design the new hospital.

Access to Care

While working hard to plan and build for the community's future health care needs, the Government has also remained focussed on the immediate health care needs of Canberrans. *access health* sets the overall direction for public health services in the ACT and states that the Government's top priority is timely access to care, based on clinical priority. The document sets out 9 key performance indicators against which the progress of ACT Health services will be measured. Performance against all of these indicators has been strong in the last year. Of particular note:

- The proportion of patients who wait longer than eight hours from presentation at an emergency department to transfer to a hospital bed decreased from 33.1% in 2005-06 to 27.8% in the year-to-December 2008.
- The occupancy rate of the overnight hospital beds in the ACT has decreased from 97% in 2005-06 to 89% in the year-to-December 2008, due in part to the Government providing an additional 181 beds during that time.
- The ACT Government's dental health program has almost halved waiting times from 15 months recorded in the second quarter of 2007-08 to just 8 months in the second quarter of 2008-09 - the shortest waiting times in the nation.
- Overall access to elective surgery continues to improve in the ACT. The 5,247 elective surgery operations performed in the year-to-December 2008 was 551 more than provided in the previous year and as at 31 December 2008, there were 29 percent fewer people waiting longer than one year than at the same time a year earlier.

- Despite an increase in demand for radiotherapy services, the Capital Region Cancer Service reported that 100 percent of urgent patients received care within 48 hours for the year-to-December 2008–09.

Attracting Medical Staff

Since the launch of *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* ACT Health has continued to implement the *Workforce Plan 2005-2010*. The 2008-09 Budget included initiatives to attract training GPs to Canberra and increase nursing staff. The 2009-10 Budget expands on this work with a major investment of \$12 million over four years to grow the ACT's local GP workforce through GP training scholarships, establishing a business-hours aged care GP locum service and extension of the highly successful Prevocational General Practice Placements Program as well as other practical initiatives.

While working on the ACT's need for increased GP services is a priority, the Government is also investing in health professionals through an investment of \$8 million over 4 years, including establishing fifteen new health professional support roles in Allied Health and Nursing. Additional scholarship funds have also been provided for nursing and midwifery to encourage people to enter these professions - ACT Health currently supports 86 nursing and midwifery scholarships, and this new funding will provide an additional 140 full scholarships over the next 4 years.

The ACT Government places a high priority on initiatives to improve the prevention and management of chronic disease, and this is reflected in the recent ACT Budget. \$11 million over three years has been provided for a range of prevention initiatives including ongoing funding for the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures* program, workplace health promotion programs, a Chlamydia awareness campaign and programs to reduce tobacco use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mental Health Services

The Government also recognises the need for ongoing high quality mental health services in the ACT. The 2009-10 Budget has not only provided funding to allow for the growth in demand for mental health services, but also provided for mental health training for police, emergency services workers and teachers, allowed for the establishment of a Mental Health Assessment Unit which will allow faster transfer to specialised services for patients with acute mental illness who present at an emergency department, and provided additional resources for the ACT Magistrates Court Forensic Mental Health Liaison Team.





Police

A fair and Safe Community

The objective of the Fair and Safe Community theme is 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 the community are respected and supported. The ACT Government recognised the importance of this objective back in 2004 when through the release of the *Canberra Social Plan*. A review of the *Canberra Social Plan* is about to commence to bring the plan up to date for current times, and the times ahead.

In December 2008, \$3.5m in one-off funding for financial and material aid was provided to carers and volunteers as part of the 2008-09 Second Appropriation. The funds were allocated to boost the capacity of existing welfare providers to help vulnerable Canberrans with bills, groceries and other essentials.

The ACT's human rights legislation was the first in Australia, commencing in 2004. In accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2004*, the Department of Justice and Community Safety are currently working on a review of the first five years of operation of the Act. The review will consider the inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights in the Act and the success or otherwise of the implementation of a Bill of Rights in the ACT. The review process will include consultation with stakeholders and the public.

Recognising the needs of those with a Disability

In Canberra, recognition of the needs of those in the community with a disability is in keeping with world standards. The ACT supported Australia's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability in July 2008. With this support, the ACT has joined with others around the world in a global effort to promote the equal and active participation of all people with a disability.

In May of this year the ACT Government endorsed a *Policy Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families*. This framework draws together the principles and commitments of key ACT Government agencies that provide services to children and young people with a disability to provide a set of core principles that will underpin all services to children and young people with a disability and their families and provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of involved agencies.

This policy framework will build on the ACT Government's strong record in disability services. For the period 2003-04 to 2009-10, Disability ACT has delivered significant increases in the level of support available for people with a disability and their families.

- Accommodation Support places have increased by 31%;
- Community Support hours have increased by 55%;
- Community Access hours have increased by 70%;
- Respite Bed nights have increased by 11%; and
- Flexible Respite hours have increased by 96%.

Further to this, the 2009-10 Budget included new initiatives targeted at disability services. These include the *Transition from Hospital for People with a Disability* initiative which will enable individuals who are medically cleared for discharge from the ACT hospital system to receive appropriate community based support for their ongoing care needs. Also included was a new *ACT Companion Card* which is expected to commence in August this year. The card will enable people with a disability who require attendant care and support at events and venues to participate without incurring the cost of a second ticket for their



attendant carer. The *ACT Companion Card* program will be part of a *National Companion Card Scheme* making it possible for ACT cardholders to use their card at over 1,800 businesses across Australia that currently accept the card.

Working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults


In the 2008-09 Budget a total of \$4.118 million was allocated over four years to develop a regulatory system to screen people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the ACT. A draft *Working with Vulnerable People* Policy has been developed in consultation with all ACT Government Departments and the Human Rights Commission. Community consultations will commence in July 2009 with a finalised policy expected in late 2009.

ACT Indigenous Traineeship

The 2008-09 Budget introduced the *ACT Indigenous Traineeship Pilot Program*. Following the successful placement of 11 trainees into full time permanent employment in the ACT Public Service, the 2009-10 Budget provides an opportunity over the next 3 years for 15 Indigenous young people to commence traineeships annually.

Building for our Ageing Community

The *Building for Our Ageing Community* strategy was launched in 2003 and since that time has resulted in eight older persons care and accommodation developments being completed which have delivered 313 beds and 221 supported accommodation units. Five developments which will deliver an additional 350 beds and 300 independent living units are under construction and expected to be completed in 2009-2010, and there are a further 470 beds and approximately 316 supported housing units currently being designed and planned.



Access to affordable and appropriate housing is a basic right, and upholding that right is one of the Government's highest priorities. Measures included the establishment of the Affordable

Housing Steering Group to advise on real and practical ways in which the Government could help increase the supply of affordable

housing. Since the release of the *Affordable Housing Plan* in 2007, implemented actions have included: releasing more land to ease demand (with more than 3,400 dwelling sites released in 2007-08; a further 4,200 new dwelling sites scheduled for release in 2008-09 and an average of 2,750 dwelling sites to be released per year in the following four years); working towards a streamlined planning system; enhancing stamp duty concessions for first home buyers; introducing the land rent scheme and supporting CHC Affordable Housing to deliver 1,000 new properties for sale or rent over the next 10 years.

Housing and Homelessness Services

The ACT Government's strategic co-location of housing and homelessness services under the administrative structure of Housing and Community Services has enabled the development of a continuum from homelessness to housing.

This has resulted in an increased recognition that public housing has a role in identifying and supporting people who are vulnerable and at risk of homelessness. There are currently 46 homelessness programs operating in the ACT and in 2009-10, the ACT and Commonwealth Governments are funding a range of new programs to address homelessness in the ACT. This includes additional properties, new service delivery models, short term accommodation, including emergency accommodation for those escaping domestic violence, and support for those with complex needs, including mental illness and substance abuse. The Men's Accommodation Support Service program has also been extended to provide support and managed supported accommodation for people exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre and related criminal justice programs.

The Social Housing component of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan will further add to the

ACT's efforts in housing and homelessness and will return 243 dwellings to the social housing stock in the ACT by funding their refurbishment. A further 57 new social housing properties are scheduled to commence construction this month. Not only does this initiative contribute to a Fair and Safe Community through homelessness services, but it is also contributing to A Sustainable Future. All housing built in the ACT under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan will be built to conform to a Six Star Energy Efficiency rating which includes insulation, draught proofing, solar hot water heater, energy efficient lighting and energy efficient glazing, shading and a water tank.

Community Safety

In *The Canberra Plan – Towards Our Second Century* the ACT Government committed to community safety, through a variety of measures. Recorded crime rates in the ACT in 2008-09 were the lowest for many years. The December 2008 Criminal Justice Statistical Profile indicates that, over the longer term, the reports of burglary offences represent the lowest 12 month figure in 10 years, showing a decrease of 7% over the 12 months to December 2008.

When people do commit offences the community can now be assured that they will serve their sentence in a facility that is close to home and also one that will protect their human rights and aim to provide effective rehabilitation. *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* recognises the importance of throughcare and aftercare for ensuring the successful rehabilitation of offenders. Rehabilitation plans have been developed for sentenced prisoners who have been transferred to the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). Most eligible prisoners have a busy day in terms of programs, employment, activities and leisure. The Throughcare community comprised of government and community based service providers who have an interest in working with

offenders and their families, has met to discuss and define their abilities to be involved and regular working groups are scheduled to occur through the year.

In addition to the new AMC, the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre became fully operational at the end of 2008. Bimberi is the first youth custodial facility in Australia to be designed, built and operated under human rights legislation. The purpose-built centre is designed in the style of a secondary school campus and can accommodate up to 40 young people. Young detainees at Bimberi have access to education, vocational training, rehabilitative programs and recreation activities. Bimberi's key objective is to assist sentenced young people to understand, address and take responsibility for their offending or risk taking behaviours. Staff work with young people to give them the skills to help them successfully transition back into the community.





Excellent Education,
Quality Teaching and
Skills Development

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring a quality education for all in the ACT, which begins with early childhood education. Delivering on its commitment to early childhood health and vulnerable families four Early Childhood Schools have been established at Lyons, Isabella Plains, Narrabundah and Southern Cross at Scullin. These schools operate as early learning and development centres providing integrated services for children from birth to age 8 and their families. The sites will eventually provide a range of family services and discussion is taking place with Health and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services in relation to the range of services to be provided.

In September 2008 the ACT Government announced that the Commonwealth and ACT Governments had come to an historic agreement that will see all ACT government preschool students having access to 15 hours free preschool. The Government is committed to providing Canberra's children with the best start in life and the provision of 15 hours of free preschool will greatly add to the education opportunities for preschool students and cement the ACT as a national leader in the provision of early childhood education.

Smart Schools: Smart Students

As part of the *Smart Schools: Smart Students* program, the Department continues to improve access to ICT with the provision of high speed fibre to schools. As at May 2009, all ACT public secondary schools are connected to ACT government fibre providing world leading high speed internet access. In addition 30 public primary schools have been connected, with the project scheduled for completion in May 2010.

The 2009-10 Budget provided \$5 million over three years to ensure all ACT primary school students have access to state-of-the-art ICT equipment. The initiative will provide access to computers at a ratio of 1 computer to every 6 children, as well as one Interactive Whiteboard for every two primary school classrooms. Special needs students will have increased access to assistive and adaptive technologies.

As part of the Digital Education Revolution rounds 1 and 2, ACT secondary schools will receive 4,278 computers. ACT secondary schools are eligible for a further 5,375 computers in the next two years, raising the level of access to one computer to each student in years 9 to 12.

Quality Teaching

In both the 2008-09 and the 2009-10 Budgets, the ACT Government has invested in the provision of additional teaching staff to significantly improve teacher to student ratios in all Government schools, as well as investing in maintaining the ACT's strong record in literacy and numeracy. In May 2009, the ACT Government announced that as part of the commitment to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for ACT students, the following targets to be achieved by 2013 had been set:

- to increase the mean score in National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 by eight points in reading, writing and numeracy ; and



- to reduce the achievement gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy by 25 per cent.

Equity for Every Student

The 2009-10 Budget invested specifically in Indigenous education through an increase in the number of Indigenous teachers and teacher's assistants in public schools.

The ACT Government is working hard to ensure equity for every student in the ACT. This means ensuring that every student gets an education that challenges them, meeting both their abilities and their needs. In March 2009, the Government announced that Professor Tony Shaddock would lead an independent review of special education in the ACT. The Government looks forward to receiving Professor Shaddock's final report and will respond to the report during the course of the coming year.

The 2008-09 and 2009-10 Budgets included total funding of \$7.2 million to help children suffering disadvantage or with disabilities to reach their full potential in non-government schools.

A further \$984,000 has been invested over 4 years to assist gifted and talented students, their families and teachers, meeting its election commitment to ensure gifted and talented students in ACT public schools are challenged and provided with the opportunities to develop to their full potential.

The Government met another election commitment in the 2009-10 Budget providing funding for one hundred young Canberrans who will be able to learn while working in ACT public schools under *Australian School Based Apprenticeships*. The investment of \$1.4 million will help young Canberrans gain further skills working as an apprentice while at ACT public schools and provides practical support in helping ACT students get the training they need to find a career that suits their abilities and needs.

Additionally, the Government has put in place several new initiatives to support students in school. Three Achievement Centres for students in years 7 and 8 were opened in semester 2, 2008 at Canberra High School, Campbell High School and Wanniasa School. The centres support students who have not experienced a successful transition to high school or are not successfully engaged in learning.

From the beginning of the 2009 school year there is a CONNECT10 program located at Lake Tuggeranong College, Lake Ginninderra College and Dickson College that supports year 9 and 10 students who have disengaged from schooling, to re-engage.

Throughout 2008 and continuing in 2009 the Department of Education worked with the ACT Youth Coalition, Creative Safety Initiatives and the Construction Industry Training Council to develop an innovative program designed to provide an avenue for disengaged youth in the Tuggeranong Valley to reconnect with school. The program is being delivered through the Lanyon Youth Centre and is designed to give at risk students practical hands on experience in the trades along with exposure to occupational health and safety principles.

Building Education Infrastructure

The *Building the Education Revolution* component of the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan* is assisting the ACT Government to deliver on its commitment of Schools for the 21st Century by funding approximately \$230m worth of projects in public and private schools for infrastructure projects including libraries, halls and sporting centres. This in turn provides a boost to the building and construction industries and helps to retain employment in these industries. In addition, the ACT Government has invested \$189m in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 capital works budget for public schools including construction of the new Kambah P-10 School, Harrison High School, Gungahlin College and in schools infrastructure refurbishment.



A Strong, Dynamic Economy

The ACT Government is committed to a strong and dynamic ACT economy. Obviously the current world economic downturn is having an impact on the ACT economy. Despite what will be a temporary budget deficit, the ACT Budget delivered in May of this year is one designed with carefully targeted new spending initiatives to support investment in the ACT economy, to support jobs and to build a better city for all Canberrans to enjoy.

In this climate of national economic downturn Canberra has experienced a continuing growth in population – 1.7% over the last year, and growth of 2.5% in the economy. The average weekly earnings for full-time employed people in the ACT in 2008 was \$1,328 – which is more than 16% higher than the national average of \$1,141, and the trend unemployment rate for the ACT in May 2009 was 3.3% - the lowest of all Australian jurisdictions and comparing very favourably to the national unemployment rate of 5.7%. All these elements combine to demonstrate that the Government is doing the right things to promote a Strong Dynamic Economy in Canberra.

The ACT continues to enjoy a triple-A credit rating, lower than average unemployment rates and higher than average labour market participation rates. Standard & Poor's reaffirmed the ACT's triple-A credit rating in September 2008 and following the release of the 2009-10 ACT Budget in May Standard & Poor's announced that the Territory's Budget was broadly consistent with a AAA credit rating. While the Territory has moved into deficit in the recent budget, this Government's strong record in financial management will see the ACT through the budget's seven year plan to return to surplus. On 5 May 2009 Standard and Poor's issued a Bulletin which stated "we believe that this weaker operating position does not materially alter the robust profile of the ACT's public finances, as the strength of the government's balance sheet provides flexibility to absorb cyclical deficits of this nature".

ACT Skills Future

On 5 May 2008, the ACT Government launched *ACT Skills Future: key initiatives in a long term strategy to address the skills challenge*. This initiative was supported by \$51m over four years in the 2008-09 Budget. An analysis of achievements made in the first year of implementation of ACT Skills Future was undertaken in May 2009. The analysis provides a basis for discussion on emerging priorities in the current environment and also outlines achievements across the four priority areas of:

- people and workforce;
- productivity;
- participation; and,
- education and training.

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Government continued its investment in key areas to address skills challenges, allocating approximately \$46.7 million to support programs across the four priority areas, including new *Australian School-Based Apprenticeships* in schools each year, the expansion of CIT's scholarship program that provides assistance with fees and course material in areas of skills shortages and funding through the Health Workforce Development program.

Infrastructure Projects

While the Commonwealth has invested in ACT infrastructure through the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan*, the ACT Government has also continued its significant investment in infrastructure for the future. In the 2008-09 Budget the Government committed to a \$1 billion *Building the Future* program of investment in the Territory's infrastructure, and the 2009-10 Budget builds on and enhances the *Building the Future* program providing an additional \$274 million in capital for new projects. In total, combined budgets commit

just over \$2 billion to capital projects over the next 4 years. These are unprecedented commitments to the Territory's infrastructure, and will in 2009-10 support more than 2,000 jobs. There are a large number of infrastructure projects contained in the 2009-10 Budget, which include:

- an enhanced Community Health Centre in Belconnen;
- accelerating the replacement of stormwater drains with wetlands;
- Gungahlin Drive duplication;
- Canberra CBD upgrade program;
- a new Harrison High School;
- the Canberra College Performing Arts Theatre;
- commencement of a local shopping centre upgrade program; and
- in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, a new Child and Family Centre in West Belconnen.

The *Eastern Broadacre Planning Study* was completed in March 2009. Originally foreshadowed in the Canberra Spatial Plan, the investigation into an eastern employment corridor for potential development will now move into its next phase. It is hoped that public consultation on the findings of the study will commence in the second half of 2009. In the meantime, further detailed studies have commenced in parts of the study area under the 2008-09 Budget initiatives. These are supplemented by 2009-10 Budget initiatives including preparation of a discussion paper, community consultation and initial structure planning for the corridor.





*A Vibrant City and Great
Neighbourhoods*




Canberra is developing an increased reputation as a centre of excellence in arts.

The Canberra Glassworks was officially opened on 25 May 2007. Built and funded by the ACT Government, the Canberra Glassworks is the largest glass-making facility of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and has resulted in the steady growth of Canberra's already strong glass-making community. Many interstate artists regularly visit the ACT with some relocating here on a more permanent basis to utilise this state of the art facility.

Stage 1 of the Belconnen Arts Centre is progressing well and will be ready for opening later in 2009. In February 2009 the community consultation commenced on the draft *Theatre in the ACT Strategic Directions Statement*. The period for public comment closed in May, and the comments are currently being considered. In February 2009 artsACT commenced the Canberra Theatre feasibility study to identify the Canberra Theatre's ongoing needs. The 2009-10 Budget additionally allocated funding for the development of a Performing Arts Theatre at the Woden Campus of the Canberra College.





Floriade was another outstanding success in 2008, with a total attendance figure of 407,667 – the largest attendance figure since records began and a 3.2% increase on 2007. Floriade 2008 generated additional direct expenditure in the ACT totalling \$25.3 million – an increase of 24.6% on 2007.

The 2008-09 Budget provided funds for three artistic companies to work in schools, giving ACT students the benefits of the exposure to world-class arts organisations. KultureBreak has worked in high schools, Ausdance has delivered programs at, and from, Gorman House and Bell Shakespeare has also worked with ACT teachers and schools in drama development.

Community Facilities

Since 1 July 2008 the Land Development Agency has, through the direct sales process, provided 19 sites to eight community organisations for a range of purposes including aged care, health services and youth activities. The 2008-09 auction program included the release of a 100 bed aged care facility at Stirling and a 90 place child care centre at Harrison. In 2009-10, the LDA will continue to provide land through the direct sale process and auction programs for the purposes of aged care, educational and other community purposes.

Vibrant Town Centres

The Government identified the importance of maintaining the momentum to improve Canberra Central and build on the success of the significant developments that have remodelled Civic over the past four years. The 2009 - 10 budget identifies \$12m over four years for the Canberra CBD upgrade program and priorities for this expenditure will be co-ordinated through the agreed *Action Plan*. The Plan will provide a blueprint for future capital investment aimed at continued improvement to the functionality and look of Civic, and to support its growth as the central heart of Canberra.

Gungahlin is Canberra's fastest growing area, and as such a review of the planning of Gungahlin Town centre is underway with an expectation that a draft Territory Plan variation will be released for comment late in 2009 or early 2010. Work has begun on construction of the next major outdoor sporting facility for Gungahlin, the Harrison district playing fields, adjoining the Harrison School. The complex is expected to be completed in late 2009 and be ready for use in winter 2010.





A Sustainable Future

The Government is moving towards Triple Bottom Line reporting in all decision making processes as just one step in moving towards a sustainable future for Canberra.

In December 2008 the Government demonstrated its commitment to sustainability and climate change issues in establishing the new Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water. In establishing the new Department, the Government supported a substantial funding boost so that it has significant policy and planning capacity across the key areas of climate change, renewable energy, water security and environmental sustainability.

The *Sustainable Future* program is part of an ACT Government commitment to building resilience to climate change through both mitigation and adaptation measures. This program focuses on reviewing planning policy and identifying strategies and measures that complement the sustainability policy and climate change strategy. Its underlying aim is to create a planning policy framework for more sustainable living. More information is available on the ACT Planning and Land Authority website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

The Government provided \$9m in the 2008-09 Budget for new purpose built horticulture facilities at the Bruce Campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology. This facility will open in 2010. The new facilities will demonstrate environmentally sustainable development features and provide for the latest in water efficient plantings, efficient water management and recycling processes on a site that is potentially carbon neutral. With Government funding and support, CIT's Bruce Campus is being developed as a state-of-the-art training ground for sustainability skills.

On 5 June 2009 the CIT became the first stand-alone Australian TAFE Institute to sign the *Talloires Declaration*. The *Talloires Declaration* has been

signed by over 350 colleges and universities in over 40 countries and is a ten-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy into teaching, research, operations and outreach in higher education institutions.

Sustainable Utilities

In a major step towards securing the ACT's future water supply, on 25 March 2009 the Government approved ACTEW building the Murrumbidgee to Googong pipeline and buy water which would be stored in and then released from Tantangara Dam. ACTEW has also commenced the planning approval stages for the enlarged Cotter Dam including the lodgement of the project's Environmental Impact Statement with the ACT Planning and Land Authority.

ACTEW is undertaking community consultation on the water security projects and following completion of community consultation, construction of the Murrumbidgee to Googong pipeline is expected to start in February 2010 and is expected to be completed by July 2011, while construction of the expanded Cotter Dam is likely to start in August 2009 with an expected finish date of April 2011.

On 12 May 2009 the ACT Government announced a long-term target for the ACT of zero greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is outlined in the ACT Government's submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into *ACT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets*, together with a reaffirmation of the commitment to legislate greenhouse gas reduction targets.

On 15 May 2009, the Government announced the formal calling of Expressions of Interest (EOI) in the proposed ACT solar power facility. The EOI is the first step in a two stage process, with the Request for Detailed Proposals set to follow the formal evaluation of the Expressions of Interest.

In the 2009-10 Budget the Government invested over \$48 million in a range of measures that assist Canberrans reduce their carbon footprint, as well as preserve the natural environment. This included the expansion of the *switch your thinking!* Program and will provide for a single point of access for ACT householders and businesses to access information and support to assist them in reducing their consumption of energy and water and generation of waste. It also includes increased uptake of renewable energy, new plantings in the lower Cotter catchment, the commencement of community consultation on reducing the use of plastic bags within the community and the trial of the REDEX bus service.

Transport

In August 2008 the Government released the *Integrated Transport Framework* to provide a set of high-level guiding principles for transport decision-making in the ACT. The ACT Government has consistently outlined its commitment to an integrated transport system, which will help create a more sustainable transport environment in the ACT to help respond to climate change, and provide benefits to the whole community by making

the transport system more efficient, effective, sustainable, and accessible. Consequently, the Government committed around \$250 million on integrated transport, which includes infrastructure, public transport, cycling and walking, over the next five years. Results over the past year are very positive. Compared to the same 4 week period in 2008, average weekday adult patronage is up 1.2%, use of Bike 'N Ride is up over 65% and average weekday patronage compared to the first four weeks of the Gold Card program is up 92.9%. Use of public transport is expected to increase even further in 2009-10.

2008-09 saw the introduction of an additional 16 compressed natural gas buses into the ACTION bus fleet. The new buses reduce the environmental impact by producing less emissions than the older vehicles which they will replace. In addition the new buses allow disability access, providing greater accessibility for customers. In 2009-10 ACTION will continue its fleet replacement program with 100 new buses to be acquired over 4 years.

Housing

Housing also plays a major part in ensuring Canberra's sustainable future. Urban development in Molonglo Valley will set new standards for sustainability in the context of safe and walkable neighbourhoods with good access to services and facilities, including fast and frequent public transport, community facilities and recreational opportunities. Its sustainability credentials are enhanced through its close proximity to Civic and the Woden and Belconnen town centres. The Department of Territory and Municipal



Services is working with other government agencies as part of Technical Working Group for the Strategic Assessment Report - Molonglo and North Weston. The Strategic Assessment will identify environmentally sensitive issues in particular matters of national environmental significance protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* that may be affected. The commencement of englobo releases and government development will coincide with the completion of these environmental investigations and confirmation of development and release potential.

Climate Change

Action 29 of the *ACT Climate Change Strategy Action Plan 2007-2011* stated that the ACT Government and the Community Inclusion Board would work in partnership to undertake a “social impact analysis of the effects of climate change on low income, disadvantaged and vulnerable ACT residents”. The findings of this independent research were considered by the Community Inclusion Board at a meeting in June 2008 who then provided the ACT Government with advice on policy measures that could support low income, disadvantaged and vulnerable households to improve sustainability and maintain access to energy, water, food, housing and transport. This advice is now being considered in the framing of policy and programs relating to climate change. The Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water has several programs which assist low income, disadvantaged and vulnerable households to reduce energy and water use. These include: ACT Energy Wise, Home Energy Advice Teams and Home Energy Kits.



Native Wildlife

Canberra has rich and abundant native wildlife, and the ACT Government is working to ensure its ongoing sustainability. Significant work has been undertaken on establishing the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, protected by a predator-proof fence. The project aims to restore woodland habitat to enable the reintroduction of some locally extinct species. The sanctuary will also facilitate education, research and community use. The predator-proof fence has now been completed, and feral animal removal is nearly complete.

The recovery of Namadgi's plant and animal communities following the 2003 Canberra fires, including sphagnum bogs, corroboree frogs and sensitive alpine ash forests, is into its seventh year. Rehabilitation of sub-alpine peat bogs in Namadgi National Park entered a new phase with a new five year plan developed to address ongoing recovery activities.

The Northern Corroboree Frog program successfully bred these endangered frogs for the first time in captivity in Australia. The success of the program has resulted in an expansion of the facility to provide more space for the growing captive population. Releases back into the wild are planned within the next two to three years.

The endangered species breeding program has had great success this year. Four Brush Tailed Rock Wallabies were successfully released back into the wild in the Grampians National Park in November 2008 as part of the national endangered species breeding program. Another three were sent to Victoria at the end of April 2009 for potential release back into the wild at a later date. The Animal Breeding Centre, a state of the art facility, was opened by the Chief Minister in December 2008, and has significantly enhanced the Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby breeding program.



CIVIC LIBRARY



High Quality Services

High Quality Public Service

Central to the delivery of high-quality services in the ACT is the staff employed in the ACT Public Service. In September 2008 the *ACT Public Service Attraction and Retention Framework* was launched. The main objectives of the Framework are to improve the capability of all ACT Public Service employees, to retain employees through professional development and targeted retention strategies and to attract new employees. A range of initiatives including the *Great Careers Come with the Territory* campaign, manager training, executive networking events and a Young Professionals Network hosted by the ACT Public Service's senior executives all contribute to a combined *ACT Public Service Attraction and Retention Framework*.

From 1 July 2009 the Government has committed \$7.06 million over 4 years to introduce an additional 4 weeks paid maternity leave and an additional week of bonding leave for the ACT Public Service. Extending paid maternity is a significant initiative in making the ACTPS an 'Employer of Choice', supports the economic independence of women and their access to the labour market, provides a model and incentive for private sector employers and is supported by research pointing to the positive impacts of mother/child bonding on early childhood development and life outcomes.

Citizen Centered Governance

The Government recognises the involvement of the community in Government decision making and is committed to community engagement in Government decision-making.

As part the Citizen Centred Governance initiative, the Government announced last year that it would consult with the community on preferred

engagement methods and techniques. This work is underway. The project is applying different methodologies such as online and telephone surveys and focus groups to get feedback from the community about its preferred methods of engaging with government. One aim of the project is to reach a broad demographic and in particular make sure the hard to reach are not missed.

The 2009-10 Budget provides \$398,000 for community engagement initiatives across government. The first year includes project funding to support a broader community conversation on big picture issues that affect Canberra's future. The Community Engagement team in Chief Minister's Department will also be supplemented with one position to work across government to enhance coordination, planning and targeting of engagement activities. The community engagement function returned to Chief Minister's Department in December 2008, and the new position will work across government to enhance coordination, planning and targeting of engagement activities.

The ACT Government acknowledges that the achievement of objectives outlined in *The Canberra Plan: Towards our Second Century* involves a great number of individuals and organisations, both Government and non-Government, and would like to express its gratitude to all who work so hard to ensure that the vision of *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century* is achieved. The Government is committed to working with and for the ACT community to build on the strong foundations already put in place as the ACT approaches its second century.