



ACT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2019–25 SUMMARY



To download the full version of the
ACT Climate Change Strategy and to find
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Front photo by Sujay

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face. Globally, if we continue to release greenhouse gases at current rates, our climate will reach a dangerous tipping point in coming decades, which will result in irreversible changes to the Earth's systems.

We have a chance to avoid this dangerous climate disruption, but we need to act now. By working together we can build a smarter, healthier, net zero emissions future. The ACT is a small jurisdiction but we are making a difference. We are a world-leading jurisdiction in addressing climate change in our own backyard, and participating in national and international forums dedicated to addressing climate change. We are internationally recognised for being on track to achieve 100% renewable electricity supply by 2020, our ambitious emissions reduction targets, our work to encourage the shift to zero emissions vehicles, and for our innovative projects to build a smarter and more reliable electricity network.

In May 2019, the ACT joined many other cities, states and territories around the world in declaring a state of climate emergency, acknowledging the need for urgent action across all levels of government. We are committed to doing everything we can to solve this global threat in the interests of securing a liveable and healthy future for our community, for all species and for future generations.

This strategy builds on achievements to date and identifies new measures to further reduce emissions and increase our resilience to unavoidable climate change impacts. It sets a path toward achieving our target of reducing emissions by 50–60% (from 1990 levels) by 2025 and outlines initial steps towards achieving our goal of net zero emissions by 2045. Our targets are ambitious. Achieving them will require continual learning and improvement as well as the active participation of the whole community. Government is committed to collaborating with the community and businesses to find new ways of working together to respond to climate change.

In addition to addressing climate change, many of the actions in this strategy will deliver other benefits for the community, such as cost savings, more comfortable homes and a cooler and more liveable city. Taking early action on climate change can bring economic benefits such as attracting zero emissions research, businesses and investment and job opportunities to Canberra.

I look forward to working with the community as we implement this strategy to achieve a sustainable, modern and climate-wise Territory.

Shane Rattenbury MLA,
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

An aerial photograph of a landscape. In the background, a city is visible with a range of blue mountains behind it. The middle ground features a winding road, a small white building, and a large area of green land with rows of young trees. The foreground shows a grassy field with some trees and a small body of water.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The ACT Government acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future of the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and where we conduct our business. We recognise the significant contribution of the Ngunnawal people and neighbouring Nations—the Ngambri, Ngarigo, Wolgalu, Gundungurra, Yuin and Wiradjuri to the Canberra region. For thousands of years these Nations have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to these lands and waters.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canberra in 2045 will be a smart, modern and highly liveable net zero emissions city which is leading by example to address the global challenge of climate change.

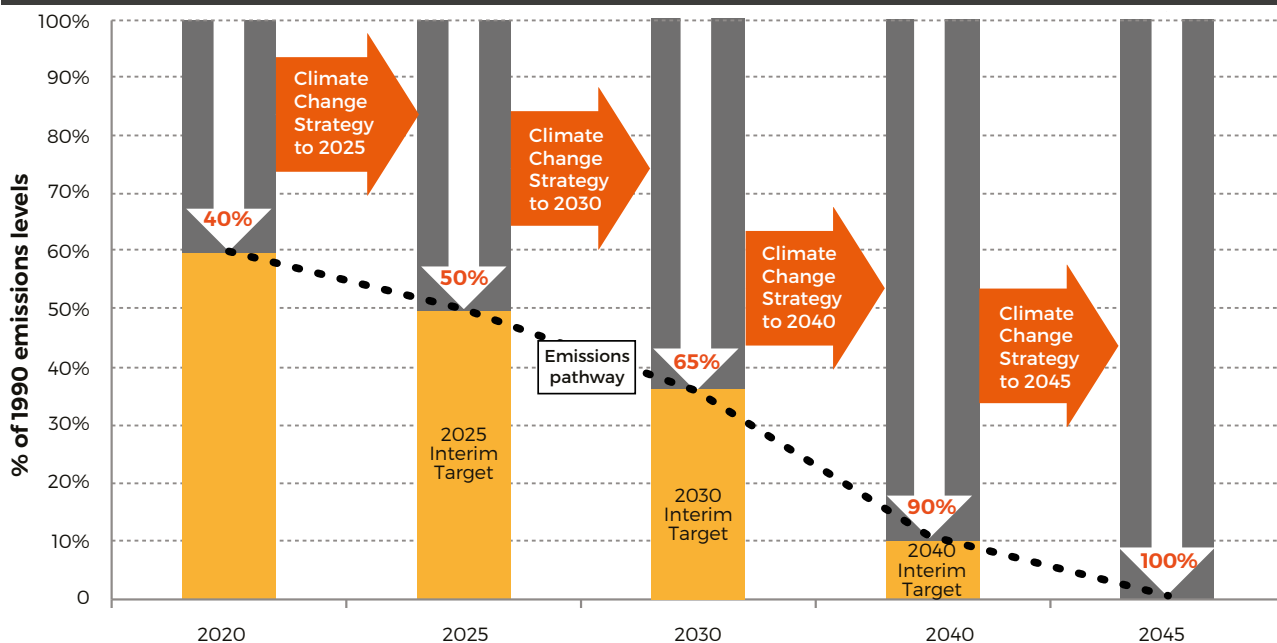
To build this future, immediate action is needed to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change. Our climate is already changing and the necessary adjustments to how we live, work and play will take time. As a prosperous, educated and progressive community, we are ideally placed to show the world how to meet this global challenge.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has made good progress on climate change action in recent years. We are internationally recognised for being on track to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020, and for our world leading greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, including a 40% reduction in emissions by 2020. Achieving these targets is driving innovation in energy and transport industries, helping businesses and households save energy costs, improving government productivity and introducing new technologies and practices to the community.

The ACT has committed to reducing emissions (from 1990 levels) by:

- » 40% by 2020
- » 50–60% by 2025
- » 65–75% by 2030
- » 90–95% by 2040
- » 100% (net zero emissions) by 2045.

Figure 1: ACT emission reduction targets to 2045 (shown at the lower level of ambition e.g. the 2025 target of 50–60% below 1990 levels is shown as 50%).



This strategy outlines the next stage of the ACT Government's climate change response and identifies actions to meet the above targets and prepare for climate change. The actions have been developed with the community and stakeholders and are focused on:

- » meeting the 2025 target
- » building resilience to climate change impacts
- » ensuring we don't 'lock in' future emissions
- » laying the foundations for achieving net zero emissions.

This strategy replaces the previous Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2 (2012) and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2016) and is complemented by Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City, which sets the direction for maintaining and enhancing trees, soils and waterways to keep our city cool, healthy and liveable in a changing climate. It builds on successful initiatives including our transition to 100% renewable electricity, the Actsmart program and Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme, the construction of our first light rail line, our growing cycle path network, and our improving knowledge of potential vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

This strategy is aligned with the ACT Planning Strategy 2018, the ACT Housing Strategy (2018) and the draft Moving Canberra: Integrated Transport Strategy. It is also aligned with the goals of other related Government policies including in health, waste management and nature conservation. Together, these documents provide the framework for achieving a smart, sustainable and net zero emissions Territory by 2045.

The ACT's climate change response is urgent, ambitious, collaborative, equitable, innovative and integrated, and is informed by an understanding that the world is in a state of climate emergency. These principles informed the development of this strategy and will guide its implementation. Government is also committed to a just transition to net zero emissions that supports low income households and the most vulnerable in our community, and will work with industry to re-train affected workers and pursue opportunities for new, zero emissions industries.

This strategy places a strong focus on reducing emissions from transport and gas—the two largest sources of emissions from 2020 once emissions from electricity are zero. Unlike electricity, emission reductions in these sectors are less influenced by Government and will require active participation of the whole community.

Government will endeavour to provide the services, incentives and regulatory framework to support change and will continue to work closely with the community and businesses to find new ways to reduce emissions. The actions that Government will undertake are listed in the following table of actions to 2025. Further information about these actions is included in the ‘Actions to 2025’ section of this strategy.

The ambitious scale and rate of change required to meet our targets is unprecedented and necessitates an innovative approach. As we will be breaking new ground in working to reduce emissions so rapidly and extensively, we don’t yet have all the answers. A successful transition to net zero emissions will require constant learning, collaboration and a dynamic approach to finding solutions to new challenges. Many of the actions rely on active community participation in making different choices, which is difficult to predict. While the transition to net zero emissions is a major challenge, this shift is possible with the participation of the whole community and through consistent effort and a clear vision. Government will take an adaptive and innovative approach to implementing the strategy, trialling and evaluating new approaches and responding to feedback. We will continue to learn, collaborate with the ACT community and adjust our approach.



KEY PRIORITIES

The key priorities of this strategy are summarised below and the full list of actions is included in the following section.

Community leadership and just transition

- Support community-driven solutions to climate change including through grants and trialling new models for collaboration.
- Encourage preparedness and adaptation action by households and businesses.
- Provide tailored programs and support for low income households and vulnerable sectors of the community.
- Review progress annually and work with experts, stakeholders and the community to identify innovative new ideas for implementation.

ACT Government leadership

- Transition to a zero emissions Government passenger vehicle fleet and a zero emissions bus fleet (where fit for purpose).
- Reduce emissions from Government operations by more than 33% by 2025 (from 2020 levels) without the use of offsets.
- Shift to high efficiency, all-electric and climate-wise Government buildings and facilities.
- Consider the 'social cost of carbon' and climate change adaptation outcomes in all policies, budget decisions, and procurement and capital works decisions.
- Invest the social cost of emissions from Government operations from 2020 onwards in measures to further reduce emissions rather than purchasing carbon offsets.
- Monitor climate change projections and ensure infrastructure and services are resilient to climate change impacts.

Transport

- Support higher uptake of public transport by continuing to improve services to meet community travel needs.
- Trial new ways of using roads that most efficiently move people and goods and better support sustainable transport modes.
- Encourage active travel by continuing to improve cycle paths and walkability.
- Continue to encourage the uptake of zero emissions vehicles and explore the need for further incentives.
- Plan for a compact and efficient city to improve access to public transport and active travel options, reduce travel distances and reliance on private car use.

Waste avoidance and management

- Divert organic waste from landfill by continuing to roll out garden waste collection to all suburbs and expanding to include household food waste.
- Investigate options to divert additional organic waste from landfill by requiring key sectors to have a separate organic waste collection.
- Identify opportunities to reduce emissions from organic waste treatment including wastewater and consider sites for organic waste processing.

Energy, buildings and urban development

- Encourage a shift from gas to electricity by removing the mandated requirement for gas connection in new suburbs, supporting gas to electric appliance upgrades and transitioning to all-electric new builds.
- Maintain 100% renewable electricity through efficiency and additional procurement of renewable electricity if required.
- Improve energy performance and climate change resilience requirements for new buildings and introduce minimum energy performance requirements for rental dwellings.
- Improve liveability and adapt to the impacts of climate change by implementing Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan to ensure adequate and appropriate mature tree cover, account for the value of living infrastructure and assess local needs for managing heat.
- Plan for efficient and sustainable urban land use to reduce emissions and maintain and enhance living infrastructure and biodiversity.

Land use and biodiversity

- Identify and enable opportunities for carbon sequestration in trees and soils and for adaptation innovation.
- Encourage sustainable farming practices which are fit for the current and future climate.
- Continue to identify the risks from climate change to species, ecological communities and ecosystems and take action to improve resilience and adaptation.

ACTIONS TO 2025

GOAL		ACTION		DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
1. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP				
1A	Encourage community-driven solutions to climate change	1.1	Expand the scope of the Community Zero Emissions Grants to support community projects that reduce emissions and/or increase resilience to climate change and prioritise projects that offer replicable solutions.	EPSDD From 2019
		1.2	Support and enable community action on climate change by providing tools and resources and recruiting a dedicated climate change community liaison in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.	EPSDD From 2020
		1.3	Deliver the Actsmart programs to encourage and support community efforts to reduce emissions and improve sustainability outcomes.	EPSDD Ongoing
		1.4	Enable community members to share ideas for ongoing improvements to the strategy via Government digital platforms.	EPSDD Ongoing
		1.5	Work with the ACT Climate Change Council to encourage community participation in climate change initiatives.	EPSDD Ongoing
1B	Collaborate for resilient communities	1.6	Work with the local Traditional Custodians and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to integrate traditional knowledge into landscape management.	EPSDD Ongoing
2. JUST TRANSITION				
2A	Support low income residents	2.1	Partner with community service organisations to identify vulnerable and disengaged sectors of the community and implement measures to support their participation in shifting to net zero emissions.	EPSDD/CSD By 2021
2B	A just transition for workers	2.2	Engage with industry and workers to identify sectors likely to be affected by the transition to a net zero emissions economy and support re-training of workers where needed.	EPSDD/ CMTEDD By 2021



GOAL		ACTION	DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
3. TRANSPORT			
3A	Support sustainable travel choices	3.1 Expand the Actsmart Home, School and Business programs to include travel choices and integrate with the work of the Active Travel Office.	EPSDD/TCCS By 2020
		3.2 Explore options for implementing a reward scheme for community members who increase their use of public transport and/or active travel.	EPSDD/TCCS By 2020
3B	Plan for a compact and efficient city	3.3 Plan for a compact and efficient city with improved access to sustainable transport options by delivering up to 70% of new housing within our existing town and group centres and along key transit corridors.	EPSDD Ongoing
3C	Increase use of public transport	3.4 Prioritise improving public transport services and supporting infrastructure, including buses, light rail stage two and connecting services.	TCCS Ongoing
		3.5 Maximise accessibility to the rapid bus and light rail networks through feeder services and expanding the Park and Ride network.	TCCS By 2024
3D	Encourage active travel	3.6 Expand and promote the Active Travel Office and schools-based active travel initiatives.	TCCS/ED/HD Ongoing
		3.7 Finalise an active travel strategic plan and update the Active Travel Framework to provide coordinated active travel networks across the Territory.	TCCS By 2020
		3.8 Implement the Municipal Infrastructure Standards for Active Travel and develop best practice guidance for industry and stakeholders to inform better design outcomes for active travel infrastructure.	TCCS By 2020
		3.9 Prioritise walking and cycling and enhance active travel infrastructure to improve safety and connectivity of the active travel network.	TCCS Ongoing
		3.10 Support bike share schemes and other measures to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of cycling as a 'last kilometre' solution.	TCCS Ongoing
		3.11 Finalise and implement the End-of-Trip Facilities General Code to encourage improved bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities in commercial developments.	TCCS/EPSDD By 2021
3E	Reduce car use	3.12 Trial and evaluate innovative approaches to planning and development that prioritise active travel and public transport.	EPSDD By 2024
		3.13 Implement car free days and consider car free areas, shared zones and traffic calmed streets.	EPSDD/ TCCS/CRA By 2021
		3.14 Support car share schemes and transport-on-demand solutions across the ACT region.	TCCS Ongoing
		3.15 Investigate and implement options for encouraging a shift to public transport and active travel through planning and a smarter approach to parking.	CMTEDD/ EPSDD/TCCS By 2022

	GOAL	ACTION	DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
3F	Smarter use of roads	3.16 Explore and implement new approaches to improving the productivity of key transport corridors through prioritisation of public transport and/or active travel.	TCCS By 2024
		3.17 Improve efficiency and usability of public transport through the adoption of emerging smart cities technologies such as smart street lights, congestion monitoring, real time data and optimisation of timetables to reduce journey times.	TCCS By 2023
		3.18 Investigate options for dedicating a greater proportion of road space and public realm space to sustainable transport modes.	TCCS By 2023
		3.19 Consider options for reforming car registration fees to incentivise efficient road use.	CMTEDD/ TCCS/EPSSD By 2022
3G	Encourage zero emissions vehicles	3.20 Explore and trial financial incentives such as increased registration discounts, rebates and low interest loans to encourage the uptake of zero emissions vehicles and electric bikes.	EPSSD By 2020
		3.21 Implement the Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan 2018–21, explore opportunities to promote investment in public charging infrastructure, and identify new actions to support the uptake of zero emissions vehicles from 2021 onwards.	EPSSD By 2021
		3.22 Amend road rules to facilitate the safe use of new sustainable personal mobility options, such as electric scooters.	JACS/TCCS Ongoing
		3.23 Investigate regulatory options to drive the transition to zero emissions commercial vehicle fleets.	JACS / CMTEDD By 2023



GOAL		ACTION		DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
4 ENERGY, BUILDINGS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT				
4A	Maintain 100% renewable electricity supply	4.1	Legislate a 100% renewable electricity target to continue from 2020.	EPSDD By 2019
		4.2	Develop and implement a Sustainable Energy Policy 2020–25 that sets out actions to deliver sustainable, affordable and reliable energy to the Territory and drives the continued development of the renewable energy industry in the ACT.	EPSDD By 2020
4B	Reduce emissions from gas	4.3	Amend planning regulations to remove the mandating of reticulated gas in new suburbs.	EPSDD By 2020
		4.4	Conduct a campaign to support the transition from gas by highlighting electric options and savings opportunities to the ACT community.	EPSDD From 2020
		4.5	Develop a plan for achieving zero emissions from gas use by 2045, including setting timelines with appropriate transition periods for phasing out new and existing gas connections.	EPSDD By 2024
4C	Climate-wise, zero emissions rental homes	4.6	Introduce mandatory disclosure of energy performance for all rental properties.	EPSDD By 2022
		4.7	By 2021 introduce legislation for staged minimum energy performance requirements for rental properties to come into force in 2022–23.	EPSDD By 2021
		4.8	Expand the Actsmart Home Energy Program to provide free, tailored in-home energy assessments for renters.	EPSDD From 2021



GOAL		ACTION		DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
4D	Climate-wise, zero emissions public housing	4.9	Continue to upgrade to efficient electric appliances in existing public housing properties where technically feasible and assess the costs and benefits of shifting to all-electric public housing.	CSD From 2019
		4.10	Ensure all newly constructed public housing properties are all-electric (fitted with efficient electric appliances) from 2019.	CSD From 2019
4E	Climate-wise, zero emissions low income homes	4.11	Continue to deliver the solar for low income program and investigate options for providing solar to public housing.	EPSDD Ongoing
		4.12	Trial facilitating access to interest free loans or other innovative finance for gas to electric upgrades and deep retrofits of low income homes.	EPSDD By 2022
4F	Climate-wise, zero emissions homes	4.13	Provide information and training tailored to first home buyers, home owners and owner-builders to support higher awareness of zero emissions, climate-wise homes.	EPSDD Ongoing
		4.14	Facilitate demonstration projects showcasing zero (or negative) emissions climate-wise homes.	EPSDD By 2024
4G	Climate-wise, zero emissions buildings	4.15	Design, and commit to a timeframe for implementing, higher minimum energy performance and climate resilience standards for new buildings that will deliver efficient, zero emissions buildings.	EPSDD By 2022
		4.16	Provide information and facilitate education and training of developers and design and construction practitioners in zero emissions technologies and systems and climate-wise design.	EPSDD Ongoing
		4.17	Develop a new residential energy assessment tool that adequately assesses the year-round thermal performance of buildings in the Canberra climate.	EPSDD By 2022
		4.18	Trial incentives and other measures to encourage all-electric, high efficiency apartment and commercial buildings.	EPSDD By 2024
		4.19	Expand the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme to increase support for low income priority households and further encourage a shift from gas to high efficiency electric appliances.	EPSDD From 2020
		4.20	Encourage the use of smart financing by medium and large businesses and organisations to support energy efficiency improvements, space heating upgrades and zero emissions vehicle fleets.	EPSDD By 2023
4H	Climate-wise built environment	4.21	Review planning regulations and identify opportunities to require sustainable, climate-wise built environment including through developing a Climate-wise Code.	EPSDD By 2021
4I	Reduce urban heat and improve liveability	4.22	Implement Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan to work towards 30% urban canopy cover and 30% surface permeability, account for the value of living infrastructure and assess local needs for managing heat.	EPSDD Ongoing

GOAL		ACTION		DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
5. ACT GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP				
5A	Reducing risk in a changing climate	5.1	Reflect climate change projections and risk vulnerabilities in disaster and emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, particularly for extreme heat, bushfire and flash flooding.	ESA/EPsDD Ongoing
		5.2	Encourage community preparedness for climate risks through targeted Emergency Services Agency outreach and the Actsmart sustainability programs.	ESA/EPsDD Ongoing
5B	Leading by example	5.3	Reduce staff travel needs by co-locating staff in centralised offices, providing facilities for teleconferencing, exploring co-working hubs and supporting flexible work arrangements and explore incentives to support staff use of public transport and active travel.	EPsDD/ CMTEDD Ongoing
		5.4	Implement a user-friendly sustainable procurement approach for goods and services and capital works that ensures greenhouse gas and adaptation outcomes are considered in all procurement decisions.	CMTEDD By 2021
		5.5	Ensure the social cost of carbon and climate change adaptation outcomes are considered in all ACT Government policies, budget decisions, capital works projects and procurements.	CMTEDD/ EPsDD By 2021
		5.6	Ensure all new Government capital works with a budget of more than \$10 million either seek or are consistent with an independent sustainability rating such as an Infrastructure Sustainability rating from the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA), or a Greenstar rating from the Green Building Council of Australia or equivalent, and review ratings at least every five years.	CMTEDD/ EPsDD From 2020
5C	Collaborating for increased ambition	5.7	Foster partnerships with sub-national governments and non-government organisations locally, nationally and internationally to promote climate action and increased ambition.	EPsDD/ CMTEDD Ongoing
		5.8	Join the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals network to improve sustainability performance and reduce emissions from ACT Health facilities.	HD By 2020
5D	Zero emissions Government	5.9	Develop and implement a roadmap for transitioning Transport Canberra buses to zero emissions by 2040 at the latest while continuing to improve service levels, and review progress every five years.	TCCS/EPsDD From 2022
		5.10	Establish and implement a pathway to a zero emissions ACT Government health sector by 2040 informed by an assessment of all current and planned public health facilities.	HD/EPsDD From 2020
		5.11	Invest an interim price of \$20 per tonne of emissions from government operations into measures to meet the Zero Emissions Government target from 2020–21, and arrange for an independent body to develop a social cost of carbon for application from 2025.	All From 2020
		5.12	Establish a pathway to zero emissions ACT Government schools supported by an interim emissions reduction plan to 2025.	ED/EPsDD From 2020
		5.13	Ensure all newly built or newly leased Government buildings and facilities are all-electric and climate-wise (where fit for purpose).	CMTEDD/ EPsDD From 2020
		5.14	Replace all space and water heating systems in Government facilities with electric systems at the end of their economic lives (where fit for purpose).	CMTEDD/ EPsDD From 2020
		5.15	Ensure all newly leased ACT Government passenger fleet vehicles will be zero emissions vehicles from 2020–21 (where fit for purpose)	CMTEDD/ EPsDD From 2021
		5.16	Investigate the use of innovative finance options such as Energy Performance Contracting as a method of reducing costs and emissions in Government assets.	EPsDD By 2020

GOAL		ACTION		DIRECTORATE TIMEFRAME
6. WASTE AVOIDANCE AND MANAGEMENT				
6A	Reduce waste generation	6.1	Support food rescue organisations to avoid food waste.	EPSDD Ongoing
		6.2	Implement the Actsmart programs and household waste education programs to reduce waste generation and increase recycling.	EPSDD/TCCS Ongoing
6B	Reduce emissions from waste treatment	6.3	Introduce a food and garden waste collection for all households (including multi-unit dwellings) from 2023, and support with an education program from 2020.	TCCS From 2020 From 2023
		6.4	Develop and consult on a scheme for requiring large organic waste producers such as hospitality and food retail businesses to have a separate organic waste collection.	TCCS By 2023
		6.5	Identify opportunities to reduce emissions from organic waste treatment including sewage such as through the use of anaerobic digestion and composting, and investigate potential sites for organic waste processing.	TCCS/EPsDD Ongoing
7. LAND USE AND BIODIVERSITY				
7A	Protect local species and habitats	7.1	Identify opportunities to increase resilience of terrestrial and aquatic habitats at risk from climate change and implement land management changes and relevant on-ground works with delivery partners.	EPSDD Ongoing
		7.2	Ensure action plans for threatened species and communities consider the impact of climate change.	EPSDD Ongoing
7B	Sequester carbon in the landscape	7.3	Identify suitable sites in the ACT for ‘carbon sinks’ and develop a plan for planting trees or using soil carbon in these areas to sequester carbon with consideration of biodiversity outcomes and competing land uses.	EPSDD By 2022
7C	Encourage sustainable and resilient farming	7.4	Encourage sustainable farming practices which are fit for the current and future climate and enhance soil and water quality, and work with farmers to identify opportunities for net zero emissions farming and innovation to increase resilience.	EPSDD Ongoing
8. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION				
8A	Promote a zero emissions economy	8.1	Work with industry to support innovation, research and partnerships that will enable and accelerate the transition to a net zero emissions economy.	EPSDD/ CMTEDD Ongoing
9. MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND IMPROVEMENT				
9A	Evaluate and improve	9.1	Improve data capture, integration and sharing across Government to enable accurate tracking and reporting of progress.	CMTEDD Ongoing
9B	Measure and report progress	9.2	Collect and report ACT travel data at least every two years on a range of journey types.	TCCS/EPsDD Ongoing
9C	Measure and report resilience	9.3	Collect and report data to monitor progress against resilience indicators, including continuation of the longitudinal survey and climate-related health impacts and costs.	EPsDD/HD Ongoing
10. INCREASING AMBITION				
10A	Explore negative emissions technologies	10.1	Investigate opportunities for implementation of negative emissions technologies in, or supported by, the ACT.	EPsDD By 2024

