

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

POLICY POSITION

STATEMENT

Climate change and the Environment

What we stand for

ACT Labor has a track record of creating new, sustainable green jobs for Canberrans. We have a vision for the future of Canberra, where more of us work in fields that reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change, at the local, national and international level.

We don't just talk about climate change, we tackle it – that's why we made sure Canberra became the first city outside Europe to be powered by 100% renewable electricity earlier this year.

ACT Labor will keep Canberra leading the way, for other cities and States to follow. We've shown 100% renewable electricity can be achieved rapidly, in a way that both drives power bills down and protects energy security.

Labor knows climate change is real and that we need to invest now to deliver a more sustainable future.

Our innovative reverse auction approach to the procurement of renewable electricity has resulted in commitments to spend around \$500 million over 20 years in local industry investment in the ACT, creating new enviro jobs for Canberrans.

ACT Labor will protect our natural environment as our city grows. By listening to experts, we have improved our parks and reserves, to protect and create new natural spaces for Canberrans to enjoy.

We understand that you can look after the environment while also supporting and growing the economy. We have a plan for over 2,000 jobs in clean technology development, environmental conservation and delivery of sustainable improvements.

ACT Labor's Covid-19 economic recovery package supported jobs for Canberrans by hiring more rangers to help the Namadgi National Park and the Lower-Cotter Catchment recover from the devastating 2019-20 summer bushfires.

What we have achieved this term

Climate change and renewable energy

- Powered Canberra with 100 per cent renewable electricity.
- Reduced total carbon emissions by 40 per cent.
- Legislated an emissions target of zero net emissions by 2045.
- Driven down power prices by 2.6 per cent in 2020-21 due to our investment in renewable energy sources.
- Supported the renewable and clean technology sector to grow, so that now wind and solar are the cheapest forms of electricity generation.
- Rolled out battery storage to Canberra households.

- Developed and released our comprehensive Climate Change Strategy, which shows exactly how we will move to our zero emissions target.

Environment

- We have created new reserves and protected threatened species, woodlands and grasslands.
- We have improved the quality of water entering our lakes and waterways through the ACT Healthy Waterways Project.
- We have supported environmental volunteers and citizen scientists to undertake important conservation work, including through ParkCare, ACT Waterwatch and our catchment groups.
- Planted an additional 7,000 trees over the last four years across our existing urban environment, adding to the 766,000 trees in Canberra's urban forest. A further additional 10,000 trees have been planted in greenfield suburbs since 2016.
- Funded the planting of 25,000 trees from 2019-2023 (4,000 of which have already been planted)
- We have supported bushfire recovery efforts through ongoing environmental restoration works.

Recycling and reducing waste

- Provided green bins to every region in Canberra to reduce organic waste going into landfill.
- Provided free bulky waste collections to all households in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin, with an accelerated scheme providing this free service to all Canberra households by 2021.
- Introduced a container deposit scheme with 21 return points across the ACT, and tens of millions of containers returned for recycling.
- Invested \$21m in upgrades to the Materials Recovery Facility, which will lead to a lower rate of contamination in recycled material and allow for more processing of recyclables.
- Installed 100 new recycling bins, 40 standard bins, and 10 smart solar bins across the city.
- Invested \$7.55m for ongoing funding of concession card bulky waste and funding for GIVIT.
- Provided certainty to the community and industry by releasing a Waste to Energy policy for the ACT.

What we will continue to do

ACT Labor will continue to lead the effort to combat climate change, nationally and globally, while helping households reduce their energy costs. Now that we have reached 100%

renewable electricity Labor will tackle the other large sources of emissions whilst creating and protecting jobs in the clean energy sector.

Our 2020 election policies will create over 2,000 new jobs directly connected to reducing carbon emissions and protecting the environment, such as: building ACT Labor's Big Canberra battery; establishing a \$150 million no-interest loan scheme to help households install solar panels, batteries and heat pumps; buying and maintaining an electric bus fleet; and commencing food waste collection and recycling.

Now more than ever Canberra needs an ACT Labor Government that has a proven plan to take action on climate change, reduce power bills and ensure a better future for our city. We have a clear plan to reduce emissions, and a track record of actually delivering on our climate change commitments.

ACT Labor will protect and enhance our surrounding natural environment as we recover from the worst economic crisis in a century. We need an ACT Labor Government to ensure we protect the bush capital and stop urban sprawl.

As we move to zero net emissions by 2045, ACT Labor will:

- Deliver our climate change plan which will create good, local enviro jobs. Through the implementation of our suite of policies, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will create more than 2,000 local green jobs.
- Provide \$100 million to establish ACT Labor's Big Canberra Battery. ACT Labor's Big Canberra Battery will deliver at least 250MW of battery storage – that's more than double the largest battery currently operating in Australia – ensuring lower electricity prices and a more stable and resilient power grid.
- An ACT Labor Government will offer households zero-interest loans between \$2,000 and \$15,000 to help with the upfront costs of investing in rooftop solar panels, household battery storage or hot water heat pumps. This addresses cost of living pressures while continuing to support investment in clean technologies.
- Establish an additional low interest loan scheme of up to \$200,000 for each non-government school, including not-for-profit early childhood learning centres, to support investment in solar panels, battery storage systems and high efficiency hot water heat pumps.
- Create hundreds of new jobs and help Canberrans take further action on climate change by investing in a city-wide food waste collection service for the ACT.
- Continue its sustainable infrastructure agenda, including ensuring new schools are environmentally friendly. The new schools that ACT Labor has announced it will build in growth areas over the coming term will all be zero-emissions schools.
- Buy 90 battery electric buses, build a zero emissions depot and retrofit our existing depots and upskill our workforce, creating up to 500 new jobs as we transition Canberra's public bus fleet to zero emissions.
- Continue towards a zero emissions ACT Government fleet and more electric vehicle charging stations.
- Make major investments in walking and cycling infrastructure and continue to support the rollout of zero emissions technology like e-scooters and e-bikes.

To protect and enhance our bush capital we will:

- Plant 450,000 trees to meet our 30 per cent tree canopy target.
- Hire more rangers to help Namadgi National Park recover and rebuild following this year's bushfires
- Protect our suburbs and surrounding forests and bushland, by not allowing new suburbs in sensitive natural areas like Tuggeranong west of the Murrumbidgee River or in Kowen Forest – both areas the Canberra Liberals indicate they will bulldoze for urban development.
- Build on our network of green spaces by identifying new areas where we can invest in our natural assets, so that we are not just maintaining, but also improving, our city's environment.
- Oppose any Commonwealth plan to build Monash Drive behind Hackett, Ainslie and Braddon – the Commonwealth refuses to remove the proposed road from the Territory Plan, and the Canberra Liberals have not provided a position. Under an ACT Labor Government Monash Drive will never be built.
- Continue improving our lakes and waterways, including delivering on our 10-year plan for a healthier and cleaner Lake Tuggeranong.
- Upgrade outdated and substandard reserve visitor infrastructure and trails to realise our tourism potential and deliver on our CBR Nature Based Tourism Strategy.
- Begin construction works on existing infrastructure, and complete final feasibility and business planning to deliver an iconic mountain bike trail network, to position Canberra as the 'mountain bike capital of Australia'.
- Fund ACT catchment groups and ACT Wildlife to encourage more people to be more active in caring for nature.
- Formally sign up and take necessary steps to reduce public and private use of pesticides, to become a "bee-friendly city".
- Increase the number of nature playscapes in the ACT.
- Continue hiring more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans, including as rangers, as part of our journey of reconciliation, a journey which includes cultural burns and the incorporation of other traditional land management practices, in consultation and partnership with traditional custodians.
- Continue working with the Conservation Council and Landcare Australia to keep improving our natural environment.
- Phase out single-use plastics by 2022.
- Bring forward the rollout of the successful bulky waste pickup service to all Canberrans by next year.
- Roll out a food waste service, and provide every house with a free green bin, kitchen caddy and weekly pickup by 2023.