

2. THE CANBERRA PLAN

The Canberra Plan, released in March 2004, sets out the long-term vision for the ACT. As a strategic planning framework for Government and the community it provides the direction for Canberra's future growth and development.

Vision

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

Strategic Plans

The Canberra Plan has three key planning components *The Social Plan*, *The Economic White Paper*, and *The Spatial Plan*.

The Social Plan is about **people** - increasing the well-being of community; ensuring Canberra is a place where all people can reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community.

The Economic White Paper is about economic **prosperity** - providing greater economic opportunity and employment by supporting commercial, educational and research activities.

The Spatial Plan is about **place** - how we use and manage competing demands for the land and environs of the ACT. It outlines where we 'live, work, learn and relax'.

Underpinned by the concept of sustainability, the Plans provide an integrated strategy for strengthening Canberra's economy, capacity to deliver opportunities for all Canberrans and managing urban growth and change.

The 2004-05 Budget commits significant resources to a range of actions and measures identified in the strategic plans, including some key strategic actions.

Building Our Community — The Canberra Social Plan

Canberra is a fortunate and prosperous community. Yet the fact that some Canberrans are vulnerable and excluded from fully participating in the life of their community can not be ignored. The disadvantage may be exacerbated by the general prosperity of the community.

The Social Plan is a framework to guide government and community decision-making in social policy over the next 10 to 15 years. It identifies the changes in Canberra's social environment and the determinants of disadvantage and exclusion. It highlights the opportunities and challenges ahead, and the means of achieving sustained improvement in access, equity and participation for the people of the ACT.

The Plan also includes a clear statement on Human Rights and the Plan's central role in putting into effect the community's aspiration for economic, social and cultural human rights for all:

- the right to an adequate standard of living;
- the right to the highest attainable standard of health;
- the right to education;
- the right to work and to enjoy just and favourable conditions of work; and
- the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Through the Plan, the Government acknowledges that not all services can or should be delivered by government. It therefore sets out a new policy framework for the partnership with the community sector which gives providers the stability and certainty they need to deliver quality service to the Canberra community, while encouraging innovation and building on best-practice at the local level.

The Social Plan is also about ensuring that the Canberra's community builds on the things it does well; to allow Canberrans to enjoy Canberra's diversity, its cultural facilities and its open spaces; and children are raised and educated in the best environment possible - a safe, healthy and cohesive community.

In setting a framework for the future, the Plan it establishes seven social priorities, to be achieved over a 10-15 year timeframe. A number of goals are set within each priority, for achievement over 5-10 years. These are supported by shorter-term actions for the next five years¹.

The Plan includes specific targets to be achieved for Canberra's Centenary in 2013:

- increase the proportion of young people with a Year 12 certificate or equivalent to 95 per cent;
- increase the proportion of adults with a post school qualification to 70 per cent;
- reduce long term unemployment to 12.5 per cent of total unemployment;
- reduce primary homelessness to as near as possible to zero; and
- reduce income inequality as measured by Gini coefficient to average at most 0.25 over the next decade to 2013.

The Economic White Paper

The Economic White Paper outlines an economic and industry policy framework to achieve sustainable growth and development. The Paper is about creating highly productive and competitive regional economy and recognising that growth, properly managed, is the foundation of superior social and community outcomes. It re-states the interdependence of the three Plans and the underlying principles of sustainable development and prosperity for all.

¹ The Plan and its Priorities and Goals can be accessed at www.cmd.act.gov.au/socialplan/documents.

The Economic White Paper is also a strategy about building from within, looking to the firms, industries and institutions that have already committed to the ACT and working with them to grow and develop our economy, city and region. A core theme of *The Economic White Paper* is the need to harness the region's many assets.

At the policy level the Paper commits the Government to:

- being pro-business and committed to actions that will make the ACT the premier business friendly location in Australia;
- being judicious about how the community resources are applied to industry and business development;
- building Canberra's intellectual assets and related skills base and establishing better links between Canberra's world-class research institutions and the entrepreneurs; and
- providing supportive planning and highly competitive infrastructure to give Canberra the look and feel of a vibrant and dynamic 21st century city.

The Paper identifies 47 specific actions to support these policy commitments².

The Canberra Spatial Plan

The Canberra Spatial Plan is the key strategic planning document for directing and managing urban growth and change over the next 30 years and beyond. The Plan outlines a strategic direction to achieve the social, environmental and economic sustainability of Canberra.

The key principles underpinning *The Canberra Spatial Plan* are to:

- contain growth within 15 kms of the city centre to reduce sprawl and protect biodiversity;
- increase the number of homes within 7.5 kms of the city centre to provide a wider range of housing close to employment and services;
- locate new residential areas close to town centres and transport routes;
- locate employment close to residential areas and transport routes;
- provide good travel connections to minimise journey times and trip length;
- protect areas of high conservation value from the impact of development;
- protect and enhance important assets; and
- be a responsible partner in the region.

² A copy of the paper and the actions can be accessed at www.business.act.gov.au.

Key aspects of the Plan are:

- more housing in central areas, mostly in Civic, along Northbourne Avenue, Constitution Avenue, in Barton, Kingston and around town centres, while retaining the character and amenity of residential neighbourhoods;
- growing communities in Gungahlin, development in Molonglo Valley in the short term, and if needed in Kowen Plateau later;
- Civic and the central area to be a focus for culture, business, ideas, people and important events;
- jobs growth in Civic and town centres, with clustered activities along three employment corridors: Belconnen to Queanbeyan; Gungahlin to Tuggeranong; and Majura Valley to Jerrabomberra Valley;
- wildlife corridors linked to each other and the region to allow wildlife movement;
- transport links between town centres and Civic, and links from Molonglo Valley and Kowen Plateau to employment corridors, but through traffic directed away from the city centre;
- a bushfire abatement zone established and managed to protect the city from risk of major bushfire.
- rural setting to frame the urban area and provide non-urban land for agricultural purposes;
- landscape setting to create the green backdrop to the urban and rural areas; and
- water catchments protected from development that would adversely affect water quality.

The Plan will be implemented over the next 30 years through key interventions including land release, investment strategies and further investigations. Some immediate actions include land release, investment in infrastructure, Central Canberra Implementation Program, master plans for urban renewal sites, policy changes to the Territory Plan and the National Capital Plan and further investigations. *The Canberra Spatial Plan* contains indicators for measuring progress and developing new or revised strategies³.

³ A copy of the Plan can be accessed at www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev.