



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Keeping Canberra Beautiful

The Greens will invest \$15.5 million to protect our environment

The Greens understand that the protection of water, air and biodiversity is essential for the well being of the planet, and all of us.

Canberrans are proud of our beautiful bush capital. As our city grows, we not only need to invest in convenient, fast public transport so we can get around the city; but we must protect our environment and provide opportunities for everyone to connect with Canberra's beautiful natural places.

The Greens understand that the protection of water, air and biodiversity is essential for the well being of the planet, and all of us. Degradation of catchments and global warming are impacting on the quality and amount of available water. And habitat loss caused by humans, and the spread of invasive species, are major threats to biodiversity.

The Greens believe that current generations have a responsibility to ensure that the environment is protected for future generations. That's why this election the Greens have a plan to preserve our natural environment, and to continue to protect and promote natural spaces in our town centres and urban spaces.

WATER

> An office for water

The ACT Greens will establish an Office of Water to manage all aspects of the water cycle. Right now the management of water is disjointed, with different agencies responsible for different aspects of the water cycle.

That's why the Greens will establish an Office of Water which will be informed by an independent panel of experts including scientists, industry, community land carers, agriculturalists and Government.

It will work closely with ICON Water to co-ordinate all aspects of managing the water cycle including:

- » Potable water supply and charging;
- » Sewage;
- » Stormwater and groundwater;
- » Maintenance of Water Sensitive Urban Design features and green infrastructure such as tree pits, swales, ponds and wetlands;
- » Monitoring water quality and compliance regarding pollution;
- » Environmental flows;
- » Ecological management of water dependent ecosystems;
- » Standards for recreational use of lakes and waterways; and
- » Planning and development controls as they impact on water.

Integrating all aspects of water management would ensure that the design and construction of water infrastructure, including stormwater, will be done with ongoing maintenance in mind, and with the day to day maintenance properly funded.

BIODIVERSITY

> Funding to tackle weeds and pests

Biodiversity conservation is an important issue for the community, both now and for future generations. Weeds and pest animals not only damage the ACT's biodiversity, but they increase the risk of wildfires and water erosion. And, the thing with weeds, is that you either need to do it properly or not at all. In the past we have seen the government give short term funding that has dried up and allowed pests to re-establish themselves.

The Greens want to see an end to this short term thinking that is costing both our budget and our environment. The ACT Greens will:

- » Commit \$2 million per year in recurrent funding to ongoing weed and pest control. This will include targeting specific weeds, like African Lovegrass which poses a threat to biodiversity and agricultural productivity and increases fire risk.

> Strategic conservation planning

The ACT is renowned for being the bush capital, but in practice, we have many isolated hilltops in reserves that are not connected and are not always strategically managed for biodiversity conservation.

We must revegetate our hilltops and riparian zones to create stronger biodiversity links. The ACT Greens will empower the newly created single conservation agency by funding additional staff and research capacity. This will help undertake strategic conservation planning and management, across the ACT and within the region in collaboration with NSW agencies and local governments.

This will include:

- » Identifying and actively managing biodiversity linkages and corridors to build resilience and help adapt to a changing climate;

- » Determining and managing buffer zones for key species, including predators such as the Little Eagle;
- » Protecting mature and hollow bearing trees in agricultural and urban areas;
- » Directing changed management practices, including strategic mowing in key areas such as urban parks to allow natural regeneration (balanced with the need for bushfire management);
- » When trees do need to be removed, identifying opportunities to relocate for habitat enhancement (or in parks for nature play);
- » Undertaking monitoring of the effectiveness of offsets to ensure net biodiversity gain;
- » Building relationships with universities to undertake research aspects of this work and provide funding support for scholarships; and
- » Working with landholders to create the right incentives for habitat creation on privately leased land.

> Funding rangers and volunteers

We all know how much work it takes to protect and conserve our biodiversity and water resources. The Greens value the work that Natural Resource Managers, Park Rangers and volunteers all do to care for our environment.

As a community-based party that is powered by volunteers, we also understand that it takes time, effort and skill to manage volunteers effectively.

That's why the ACT Greens are committed to:

- » Employing two additional full time rangers, one of which is a designated role for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee for on-ground biodiversity management in the ACT reserve system; and
- » Employing an additional volunteer coordinator for Waterwatch, Landcare and Park Care groups.

> **Enforcing cat containment**

Cats have a major impact on native wildlife in our suburbs and in our nature reserves. While cat containment areas have been declared in new suburbs, better enforcement is required and research undertaken into the effectiveness of cat containment.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Continue to ensure that cat containment areas are established in all new suburbs, and those adjacent to key nature reserves, for example Jerrabomberra Wetlands;
- » Increase the level of enforcement to ensure compliance in existing cat containment areas;
- » Research to assess the effectiveness of cat containment areas in reducing impacts on wildlife; and
- » Undertake detailed feasibility of cat registration and microchipping as occurs in other jurisdictions.

> **Appoint an eco-tourism manager**

The ACT is a fantastic place for nature based tourism. Tidbinbilla in the south, Jerrabomberra Wetlands in central Canberra and Mulligans Flat in the north. These are great resources that could be enhanced for increased tourism opportunities.

The ACT Greens will provide planning support and other in-kind support and promotion for privately funded facilities such as:

- » A visitor centre and cafe in Mulligans Flat
- » Investigating the feasibility of accommodation in Tidbinbilla, Mulligans Flat, and the Arboretum
- » A visitor centre at Jerrabomberra Wetlands

> **Establishing a Ginninderra Falls national park**

The expansion of Canberra's urban footprint with the Riverview development to the west of Belconnen and across the NSW border raises a number of challenges. There will be administrative issues around service provision and rates collection.

There will also be environmental issues, with areas of biodiversity conservation and recreation significance lying within NSW including the Ginninderra Falls.

The ACT Greens will fight to move the ACT boundary to include the area of the proposed riverview development, using more natural boundaries of the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek. This would therefore include access to the Ginninderra Falls within the ACT which would be protected as part of a National Park.

The ACT could also play a more direct role in protecting and managing areas containing regionally significant species such as the Scarlet Robin, Rosenberg's Goanna and the Little Eagle that are currently within NSW.

> **Lower Grassy Woodlands national park**

The ACT Greens will undertake a detailed feasibility study into the establishment of a new National Park to conserve and showcase Lowland Grassy Woodlands potentially including Kinlyside, Mulligans Flat, Goorooyarloo, Mt Majura, Mt Ainslie, Mt Pleasant, Mt Mugga Mugga, Callum Brae and Isaacs Ridge.

WASTE

> **Reducing waste in the ACT**

The ACT Greens want to see the ACT restate its claim as the national leader in waste management by reducing the generation of waste and the amount of waste that goes into landfill.

The ACT Government is currently conducting a Waste Feasibility Study that has identified multiple categories of existing materials. Many of these waste streams are going to waste that could be recycled.

The ACT Greens will

- » Invest in establishing a nation leading recycling and innovation technology park, building on existing infrastructure at Hume.

The waste recycling park would form the basis for new and exciting recycling industries that will receive waste streams, then develop, recycle and repurpose new, marketable products.

> **Ban Polystyrene packaging**

Polystyrene is a harmful material for our environment. Production of polystyrene requires significant energy use and is produced using non-renewable resources. Polystyrene is also a non-degradable material and it contributes greatly to landfill, litter and has impacts on wildlife.

The ACT Greens believe that the banning of free lightweight, single use plastic shopping bags has been a success in the Territory.

To build on this work, the ACT Greens will:

- » Aim to ban all polystyrene packaging of goods, food and beverages, where those goods are packaged and/or served in the ACT; by
- » Undertaking a review of experience of polystyrene bans internationally such as in San Francisco and Miami, followed by consultation with local businesses about a phased introduction and helping them to source alternative recyclable products.

> **Support donation of food to charity and rescue organisations**

As much as 44 million tonnes of food is wasted in Australia on an annual basis. The ACT Greens believe that the Territory can be a leader in restricting food waste, while simultaneously supporting vulnerable groups.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Provide incentives and funding support to local food organisations to work with supermarkets so that less of their unsold edible foods are thrown out and ending in landfill; and

- » Support local food organisations who operate in the ACT, through a capital pool of funds of \$100,000 that could be used to purchase trucks, or food recycling bins, to support the donation of suitable unsold goods to rescue groups.

> **Organics processing plant for food waste**

Much of the ACT's existing food waste from homes and restaurants ends up in landfill. This situation is only expected to get worse as the proportion of people living in apartments increases.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Work with the private market to support a new processing plant for organic food waste,
- » Invest further in the Waste Feasibility Study to identify new marketable uses for the compost and methane gas produced from the processing plant including local agricultural uses;
- » Call for expressions of interest from companies who process food and other organic waste to establish the processing plant. The plant would be owned and operated by the private sector within the new Waster Recycling Technology Park at Hume; and
- » Once organic processing systems are in place the ACT Greens would ban organics from going to landfill.

> **More public recycling bins**

Canberrans are good at recycling when given the opportunity. The trials of recycling bins in public places, alongside general waste bins, have demonstrated good results in terms of people putting items into the right bin.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Fund an additional 100 double bins provided at local shops and town centres, phased in over 4 years.