

# REAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP FOR THE ACT

## STEPPING UP AMBITION FOR A RAPID AND JUST TRANSITION TO NET ZERO EMISSIONS

The ACT is different to the rest of the country. We take the climate crisis seriously. We have 100% renewable electricity and we've banned new gas connections, but we need to go further, faster to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

Our community wants real climate action that leaves no person behind, but for years, federal Liberal governments held everyone back. Labor has been a massive let-down, approving more coal and gas projects, fuelling global emissions and making the climate crisis worse.

The Greens are the only party providing real climate leadership. We understand that the climate emergency demands urgent action and that a zero emissions future is incompatible with new coal and gas projects that only fuel rising global emissions and make the climate crisis worse. With more Greens in the Legislative Assembly we can continue leading the way to show what's possible, while improving the lives of Canberrans.

Climate action that cuts the cost of living, alongside targeted government support, will enable everyone to be part of building the ACT's clean, green future.

### THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Fully fund gas-to-electric upgrades for 5,000 of the lowest income households in the ACT
- ▲ Deliver pilot projects to demonstrate all-electric apartment solutions to help extend the benefits of electrifying to Canberrans who live in apartments
- ▲ Prohibit the installation of new gas appliances from 2027
- ▲ Update the Utilities Concession to better support low-income households
- ▲ Establish a nation-leading Electrify Canberra Skills Hub at CIT
- ▲ Increase the pace of change by accelerating the ACT's emissions reduction targets
- ▲ Turn the trajectory of the ACT's scope 3 emissions, which originate outside the ACT, to be in decline from 2028 onwards
- ▲ Deliver an additional 300MW of battery storage in the ACT
- ▲ Take on the ACT's biggest polluter – transport – with huge improvements to buses and light rail, the path network, and support for more people to choose an electric vehicle.

# ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING (AND MAKE IT A JUST TRANSITION)

## **CUT ENERGY BILLS AND EMISSIONS WITH GAS-TO-ELECTRIC UPGRADES FOR CANBERRA'S LOWEST INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**

The cost of living crisis is an inequality crisis, impacting some Canberrans much more than others. The Greens know that's unfair, which is why we're ensuring government support is targeted toward the people who need it most.

The same goes for taking climate action. People in Canberra overwhelmingly take the climate crisis seriously, which is how we've been able to lead in the shift toward net-zero.

But even when we understand the need to act, not everyone can afford the upfront costs of the climate action they want to take.

That's why the Greens will fully fund gas-to-electric upgrades for 5,000 eligible lowest-income households, so they can disconnect from gas.

This will cut their bills, improve their comfort, deliver better energy efficiency and reduce overall emissions. It's also a healthy step for families with asthma, as Asthma Australia estimates the impact of gas cooking is about the same as tobacco smoke in the home, when it comes to childhood asthma.

## **NO NEW GAS APPLIANCES IN HOMES OR BUSINESSES FROM 2027**

With Greens in government, the ACT has already sent a strong signal to industry and the community that the future is all-electric. The ACT Government has committed to phasing out fossil fuel gas use in the Territory by 2045, giving people plenty of time to switch out gas use for electricity.

For most people, that means switching from gas to electric hot water, heating, cooktops or ovens – and the most efficient time to do that is when your old system stops working and you need to replace it with a new one.

To meet our target of net zero emissions and no fossil gas use by 2045, we need to stop installing new gas appliances. Given the average useful life of gas appliances, installing new gas systems beyond 2027 could mean replacing those gas systems with electric systems before they reach end of life .

To stop making our gas problem worse, the Greens will prohibit the installation of new gas appliances in the ACT from 2027, with exemptions in cases where this is not feasible.

## **REVIEW AND IMPROVE UTILITY CONCESSIONS**

With living costs increasing, we know there are households that are struggling to pay their energy bills. We will review and reform the existing Utilities

Concession to improve equity across households.

This will include considering options for scaling concessions depending on household size or energy requirements, and a system for automatically applying concessions to eligible people, without them needing to apply.

### **NEW JOBS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

Electrifying Canberra will create (and is already creating) many new jobs. It will also require the reskilling and upskilling of workers from other trades.

The Greens will establish a nation-leading Electrify Canberra Skills Hub at CIT in Fyshwick to deliver practical training and skills development in electrification and zero emissions technologies.

This will establish the CIT as a centre of excellence and create a hub for building the skills that will be in high demand, in the ACT and nationally, as we electrify.

### **SOLAR ROOFTOPS ON ACT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

The ACT Government has been working to improve energy efficiency and increase solar generation at government sites, however there is room for improvement.

ACT Government buildings still have roof space to host at least 7MW of generation capacity, which is enough to power more than 4000 homes.

This initiative will aim to ensure all available roof space has solar panels by 2030.

### **300MW MORE BATTERY STORAGE**

We need an electricity grid that is smart, connected and ready to support a 100% renewable energy future.

The ACT Government has already invested in large batteries to store energy and supply it to the local grid when needed. This helps to increase the resilience of our grid during times of peak electricity demand.

The Canberra Big Battery project has delivered 250MW of large-scale battery storage. Analysis shows more large-scale battery storage would benefit the ACT electricity network.

The Greens will deliver an additional 300MW of battery storage for the ACT. This could be a mix of battery sizes, including large and medium batteries like the Canberra Big Battery, and smaller batteries such as neighbourhood-scale batteries.

Neighbourhood-scale batteries help to soak up solar power during the day and discharge power back to the grid when it's needed, supporting all-electric solar suburbs. Placing these batteries in areas where there is high solar penetration – particularly in new suburbs where every house has solar panels – can help soak up solar and make the local grid more resilient and future-ready.

## CUT COSTS, MAXIMISE BENEFITS

Electrifying Canberra will take individual action, and system-level solutions.

The Greens will work through transition challenges like solar curtailment, which happens when local solar systems are generating more power than the electricity network can deal with. We'll explore options to enhance the network and ensure Canberrans are able to make the most of their rooftop solar.

We'll also explore ways to reduce the cost of disconnecting from the gas network, which is currently around \$870 per household or \$1600 per business, for removing all active gas equipment on the property.

Another part of the transition that's underway is the national rollout of smart meters, enabling people to better monitor and manage their energy use. Smart meters can help households and businesses reduce their energy costs, while also equipping our energy system for an all-electric, renewable-powered future.

However, there are increasing incidents in other jurisdictions of customers experiencing bill shock after being automatically shifted to a time-of-use plan with their electricity provider after they've had a smart meter installed. The Greens will implement new safeguards to protect ACT electricity consumers from upfront costs and unexpected changes to tariffs following installation, to help ensure an equitable and smooth smart meter rollout.

## BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF OUR ENERGY SYSTEM

As the climate changes, the ACT is predicted to experience more severe storms.

As observed in Victoria in 2023, storms can have a major impact on electricity distribution infrastructure, resulting in power outages and costly repairs.

To prepare for this increased risk, we will develop an Electricity Network Resilience Plan to identify risks, ensure we are well prepared for storm events and plan for an electricity network that is resilient to the impacts of severe storms.

## WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Upgrading 5,000 lowest-income homes from gas to electric: \$50 million, including \$47 million for upgrades and \$3 million in staffing, monitoring and evaluation.
- CIT Electrify Canberra Skills Hub: Initial investment of \$5 million, additional funding will be sought through a partnership with the Federal Government.
- 7MW more solar on ACT Government rooftops: \$14 million in capital costs, to be repaid through energy bill savings.
- 300MW additional battery storage: It is anticipated there will be no net cost.
- Initial work on reforming the Utilities Concession to be done within existing resources

- All other elements to be implemented within existing resources.

## SOLVING THE APARTMENT PUZZLE

### PILOT ALL-ELECTRIC PRECINCTS AND APARTMENT BUILDING SOLUTIONS

If we're going to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, electrification can't just be for people in standalone houses. As leaders in electrification here in the ACT, we are facing problems that are new to industry and governments.

The Greens will deliver Electrify Canberra pilot projects to showcase solutions to these challenges so we can share knowledge, build industry capacity and demonstrate what is possible.

The pilots will focus on solutions for apartment buildings, which face particular challenges to electrification where there are shared gas hot water systems in particular. This initiative will build local knowledge and demonstrate replicable solutions for others across the city, assisting apartment owners in overcoming common challenges.

### ADVISORY SERVICE TO HELP SHIFT APARTMENT BUILDINGS FROM GAS TO ELECTRIC

Apartment buildings with shared hot water systems face particular challenges to electrification. Gas hot water systems generally take up less space, so limited space can be a challenge when retrofitting for an electric replacement.

While operating costs are usually lower, electric hot water systems at this scale have a higher up-front cost to purchase. In addition, the challenges are not yet well understood, and apartment owners may not have the technical expertise to understand the issues and may find it difficult to access trusted expert advice at this early stage of the electrification pathway.

A high proportion of apartment residents are renters who lack the opportunity to influence decisions on electrification. Apartment owners who are renting their apartment out may be less likely to support investing in electrification given they will not directly benefit from reduced energy bills. These challenges, combined with limited industry expertise and complex decision-making processes, mean apartment building residents face greater barriers to electrification than residents of standalone houses.

The Greens will deliver an advisory service for apartment owners and strata managers, to assist them by providing a technical assessment of the building including feasibility and costing, advice tailored to the financial situation of the building, and support with navigating strata rules and processes. This will help to address some of the major barriers to electrification.

## REVIEW AND IMPROVE STRATA RULES

The Greens will review strata rules to identify and resolve barriers to electrification, energy efficiency, solar panels and electric vehicle charging.

People living in townhouses and apartments want to be able to make upgrades to improve energy efficiency, install electric vehicle chargers and solar panels, and switch to electric appliances, just as much as people in standalone houses do.

But in some cases, strata rules can create a barrier to being able to implement these upgrades. We will review the strata rules that govern owners corporations to identify and resolve barriers to make it quicker and easier for residents to make these changes in their home.

## SUPPORT MORE SOLAR ON APARTMENT ROOFTOPS

We want people living in apartments to be able to benefit from rooftop solar power. Installing solar panels on apartments is more complex than on a standalone house as there is shared roof space, the need to share solar power between apartments and a group decision making process.

The Solar for Apartments program provides owners corporations up to \$100,000 in grant funds and zero-interest loans to install rooftop solar on apartment buildings. The program was initiated in 2023 in partnership with the

Federal Government and has made a good start in supporting apartment residents to install solar.

We will expand the existing program with new funding and will work to secure additional external funding to enable the program to grow. With around 43,000 apartments in Canberra, let's support these households to go solar and make use of all this roof space to help power our city. We will also investigate opportunities to encourage the installation of solar panels on retirement villages to benefit residents.

## WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Electrify Canberra Pilot Projects: \$5 million, including \$4.5 million in capital and \$0.5 million in staffing.
- Advisory service: \$2 million over 4 years, including \$1.2 million for technical advice reports and \$0.8 million for staffing costs.
- Strata rules review: to be done within existing resources.
- More Solar for Apartments: \$6 million, with additional funds to be sought from external agencies.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE & INCREASE THE PACE OF CHANGE



## **UPDATE TARGETS TO INCREASE AMBITION AND REFLECT THE LATEST CLIMATE SCIENCE**

The ACT Government adopted our current, world-leading emission reduction targets in 2018 based on advice from the ACT Climate Change Council. At the time they reflected the ACT's portion of global effort needed to keep warming to below 1.5 degrees, to stay within the global 'carbon budget' (the emissions we can release globally and still keep warming to below 1.5 degrees).

Since then, global emissions have continued to increase and the remaining carbon budget has decreased. Updated advice from the ACT Climate Change Council suggests the ACT's emission reduction targets need to be revised to net zero emissions by 2040 (5 years sooner than the current target of 2045) and that the interim targets for 2025 and 2030 should also be updated to reflect this revised trajectory.

The ACT Greens will adopt this advice and the latest climate science and will set new emission reduction targets to increase ambition and play our part in keeping warming to below 1.5 degrees.

## **DELIVER THE NEXT ACT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY**

The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25 delivered some major reforms including introducing new financial incentives for EVs; a ban on new gas connections and a pathway for an all-electric city.

Building on these achievements, the ACT Greens will deliver a new ACT Climate Change Strategy that goes further and faster to continue our leadership on climate change.

The new strategy will have a strong focus on ensuring a just transition for our community, with support for those who need it most. Climate change disproportionately affects lower income households, people with a disability, and those who are experiencing health and mental health issues.

The Strategy will also include training opportunities to re-skill in any sectors that are affected to ensure we are all on this journey together.

The ACT Greens are committed to delivering a just transition and this will be the lens through which all climate change policies and programs are considered.

## **GET SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS INTO DECLINE**

Scope 3 emissions, or embodied emissions, are the emissions that are generated outside the ACT in producing the items we consume here. For example, the emissions from growing and harvesting the food we buy from outside the ACT, or the emissions generated from manufacturing the cars that we buy.

Scope 3 emissions are not included in our annual emissions reporting or our emissions targets because, as required by international greenhouse gas

accounting practices, they are counted in the jurisdiction where the manufacturing takes place.

In 2021 a report by the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment recommended that the ACT Government implement a methodology for estimating Scope 3 emissions and publicly report them every three years.

In line with this, and recommendations from the ACT Climate Change Council, the ACT Greens will commit to scope 3 emissions declining from 2028 and will work to reduce Scope 3 emissions across the ACT and from government operations.

We will publicly report on progress at least every 3 years.

### **MAKE EVERY BUDGET A CLIMATE BUDGET**

Budget decisions have a major influence on how the work of government is delivered - what infrastructure is built and with what materials, how waste is processed and what programs are prioritised. These decisions shape our community and directly affect our lives.

They can also influence the local economy and interact with national and global supply chains which are a way that we can indirectly influence sectors. For example, a government decision to only purchase electric vehicles, or to require recycled building materials, can have a significant impact not only on local industry but broader supply chains by sending a signal to the market.

The ACT Greens will embed emissions impacts and adaptation considerations into all budget decisions over \$5 million by introducing quantitative and qualitative climate assessments.

### **MAKE OUR MONEY TALK BY SWITCHING THE ACT GOVERNMENT TO CLIMATE-FRIENDLY BANKING**

How we invest our money influences the economy and shapes our society. By choosing a bank that does not invest in the fossil fuel industry we can be sure our money is working for good, not wrecking the climate.

The ACT Government manages money on behalf of the whole ACT community and, just like any other customer, we think it's important to consider who we choose to bank with and whether their values align with ours. We will switch to a bank that does not invest in fossil fuels. We think this would better align with the policies of the ACT Government and with the strong support in our community for climate action.

### **REVOKE THE SOCIAL LICENCE OF FOSSIL FUEL ADVERTISERS**

We have already banned fossil fuel companies (as well as other harmful industries) from advertising on our buses and light rail vehicles.

The Greens will build on this to ban fossil fuel companies from advertising on bus shelters and at ACT Government venues and events.



Fossil fuel companies are causing climate pollution that is driving the climate crisis. Allowing these companies to advertise at government venues and events is inconsistent with our climate leadership status.

### **MORE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY CLIMATE PROJECTS**

The Community Zero Emissions Grants have supported a whole range of inspiring community projects over recent years including upgrading facilities for Oz Harvest food rescue, installing composting facilities for schools and organisations and upgrading community facilities to electric appliances.

It's inspiring how many ideas there are in the community and how much dedication there is to creating positive change.

We will increase the funding available for these grants and continue them for another four years so that many more inspiring community ideas can come to life.

### **PLAN FOR ACT GOVERNMENT EVENTS TO BE POWERED BY 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Many ACT events continue to rely on diesel generators to power stalls, stages and equipment. Diesel generators add to ACT emissions and cause air and noise pollution which detracts from the enjoyment of events. We will develop a plan for overcoming the barriers to all-electric events and will aim for events to be 100% renewable wherever possible.

The plan will consider options in detail, including whether grid upgrades at specific locations may be the best option, and look at options to develop local industry capability to power events without the use of diesel generators.

### **ESTABLISH A CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FUND TO SUPPORT START-UPS, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

The ACT has a strong knowledge economy and is well positioned to lead on zero and negative emissions technologies and solutions.

The ACT Greens will build on the knowledge and experience that is in the ACT by establishing a Climate Solutions Fund. The Fund will aim to foster new ideas and projects with a focus on developing local industries and expertise to position the ACT as a world-leading knowledge and innovation hub for climate solutions.

### **SPEAK OUT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AGAINST NEW COAL AND GAS**

We will use opportunities like national Ministers' meetings to highlight the need to end new fossil fuel extraction, and will encourage the ACT Government to use opportunities to advocate for change. All jurisdictions have now set a net zero emissions target, but there is a disconnect between this and decisions by the Federal Government to continue to allow new coal and gas exploration and extraction. The hypocrisy of Australia claiming to be a climate leader while continuing to export fossil fuels to the world is beyond belief.

The ACT Greens will continue to advocate for an end to fossil fuel extraction and highlight Australia's responsibility to stop exporting polluting fossil fuels and instead position itself as a renewable energy superpower which will bring enormous opportunities.

### WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- Expanding Community Zero Emissions Grants: \$1.5 million in grant funding over four years (increased from \$0.6 million). Administration support to be delivered within existing resources.
- Climate Solutions Fund: Initial funding of \$5 million, with additional funding and partnerships to be sought from external agencies.
- All other elements will be delivered within existing resources.

## TAKE ON THE ACT'S BIGGEST POLLUTER

### OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORT EMISSIONS

Transport emissions are the highest contributor to ACT emissions, at over 60%, and they are continuing to rise.

The ACT Greens want Canberra to be a truly livable city with convenient, affordable and accessible options to get around.

At the moment, too many people are locked into the expense of having a car because there isn't an easy alternative.

We need frequent and reliable public transport, safe bike paths and footpaths, and we need to make sure all private and commercial vehicles are zero-emissions as soon as possible.

The ACT Greens will prioritise reducing transport emissions by making low and zero emissions travel a genuine option for many Canberrans.

We will increase bus frequency to create a 'turn up and go' bus service, so you won't have to plan your day around catching the bus.

We will properly invest in our path network so you can pop down to your local park or shops safely and easily without having to use the car.

We will build light rail faster, to create a genuine transport network and invest in our cycling infrastructure so Canberrans have real options for getting from A to B.

Because we understand that we need to invest in the infrastructure and services in order to make these viable transport options for Canberrans.

More detail on our transport policy can be found on our website <https://greens.org.au/act>