

ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration

Joint Progress Report

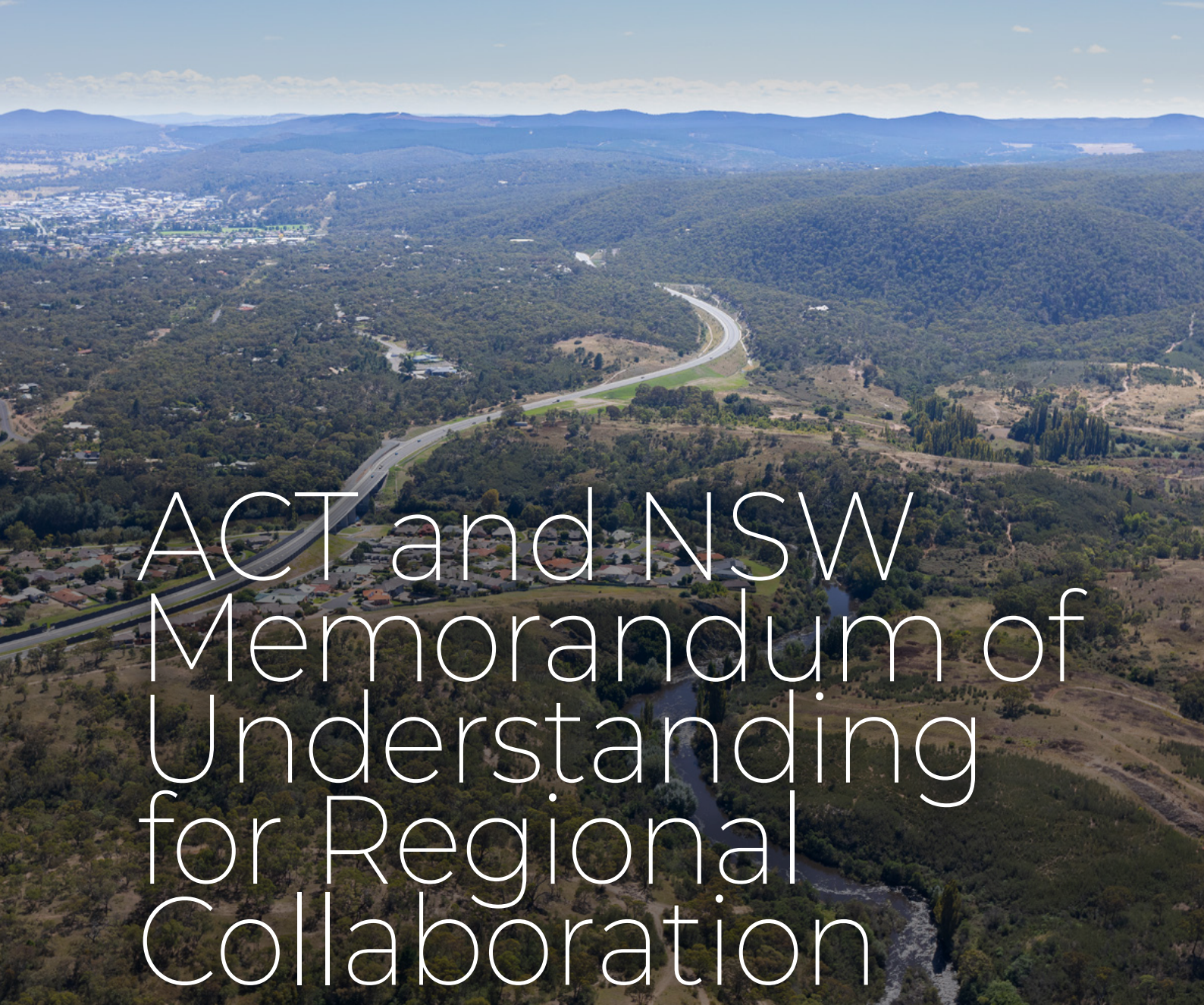
2020-2022

The Australian Capital Territory
and New South Wales



ACT
Government





ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration

The ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration (ACT and NSW MoU) is an agreement between the ACT and NSW Governments to work together to deliver improved policies, regulatory frameworks, and services delivery for cross-border communities in Canberra and South East NSW. It identifies opportunities to leverage the existing collaborative relationships between the ACT and NSW governments and to apply the combined experience and knowledge of both partners in achieving outcomes under the MoU.

The ACT and NSW MoU introduces a framework of accountability and a governance mechanism that supports progression and achievement of shared priorities. It stipulates reporting against key milestones to inform the discussions of senior officers from both jurisdictions at the annual Senior Officials Dialogue meeting envisaged under the MoU – the first of which took place in December 2022.

Report period

This joint progress report provides an update of progress against priority actions agreed in 2020. The findings from the report will inform the future update of priority actions for implementation.

Priority Focus Areas

- > A Regional Approach to **Health Outcomes**
- > A Regional Approach to **Infrastructure and Transport**
- > A Regional Approach to **Strategic Water and Land Use Planning**
- > A Regional Approach to the **Environment**
- > Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy (CREDS)
- > Parkwood Urban Release Area Governance Framework

Priority actions against each of the Priority Focus Areas are outlined in an addendum to the ACT and NSW MoU. The priority actions are key initiatives to drive a regional approach to each priority focus area and to assist in achieving outcomes under the MoU.

From March 2020 to January 2022 the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent border closures undertaken by all jurisdictions diverted business as usual operations for all agencies. Available resources were necessarily focussed on supporting communities impacted by border closures.

As conditions have eased, responsible agencies across the ACT and NSW Governments have re-focussed efforts back to priority actions for which they have responsibility as outlined in the ACT and NSW MoU.

While some progress was disrupted, the work of the ACT and NSW Governments, and councils of the cross-border communities in Canberra and South East NSW remained aligned with the intent of existing agreements.

Health services in Canberra are essential to the wellbeing of people living within the NSW and ACT border and to those in the wider region.



Health Outcomes

Initiatives
New cross-border partnership agreement
Better integration across multiple health domains
Strengthen governance arrangements
Strengthen cross-border operational delivery

Canberra serves as a hub for health services for the Canberra and South East NSW region which includes a major health network extending to the Southern Tablelands and South Coast. There are several initiatives identified in the ACT and NSW MoU that help to govern the cross-border flow of health services and to improve health outcomes for patients.

Final negotiations are underway with a view to a new Bilateral Cross Border Agreement to June 2025 for the funding of health services being finalised in early 2023.

Better integration across multiple domains will be aided by the ACT & Southern NSW Joint Operations Committee 2023 business plan which will be guided by the goals to:

- > Maximise the efficient use of infrastructure and services;
- > Strengthen joint planning and redesign efforts;
- > Enhance data and information sharing; and
- > Increase robustness of governance arrangements.

The new bilateral cross border agreement is expected to establish a new ACT and NSW Cross Border Management Group responsible for providing strategic oversight and direction on the new agreement and be the primary collaboration and joint decision-making forum for the ACT Health Directorate and the NSW Ministry of Health.



Regional connectivity relies on an efficient transport network to support a diverse economy and growing population.



Infrastructure and Transport

Initiatives
Regional Infrastructure Plan
Cross-Border Transport
Sydney-Canberra Faster Rail Business Case

In collaboration with the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, the ACT and NSW Governments have established a cross-border public transport working group to identify issues requiring attention, and options to support progress towards an integrated public transport system for our cross-border communities. With counterparts from the NSW Government and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, the ACT Government participated in stakeholder and community consultation for the holistic planning phase of the Transport for NSW 16 Cities program in the Queanbeyan area in 2021-22, with the objective of improving regional bus services. Improving cross border connections for Queanbeyan is a key priority of the holistic planning phase.

Progress towards improved cross-border public transport has been made through Transport for NSW conducting trial services from key regional locations into the ACT, as well as an isolated communities trial service.

Sydney to Canberra fast rail has long been envisaged as a facilitator for improved movement and intercity connectivity. A strategic business case for fast rail in the southern inland corridor was completed in 2019. The NSW Government will consult with the ACT on next steps for fast rail in the corridor with fast rail likely to be developed and delivered in stages as part of a multi-decade program.

The ACT and NSW MoU envisages the establishment of a cross-border regional infrastructure steering committee to investigate options to improve freight, public and private transport networks in the region through a regional infrastructure plan. Impacts from the effects of the COVID-19 health emergency and recent natural disasters delayed implementation with work set to commence in the near future.

The ACT and NSW Governments also collaborated to introduce the NSW FuelCheck scheme to the ACT as part of a six-month pilot.



Strategic Water and Land Use Planning





The ACT and NSW MoU stipulates that both signatories will pursue a borderless approach that optimises best outcomes for our cross-border communities.

Initiatives
Land and Housing Monitor and Framework
Cross-Border Water Issues steering committee
Murrumbidgee Water Catchment Strategy
NSW-ACT Water Trading Framework
South East and Tablelands Regional Plan Review

Optimising best outcomes by pursuing a borderless approach is particularly pertinent to strategic water and land use planning noting the broad influence that strategic planning has on the future structure of the region and wellbeing of its residents.

A key action under the MoU is the review of the 2036 South East and Tablelands Regional Plan. The NSW Government has led the review of the plan and is approaching release of the final plan which will extend the current plan by

five years to 2041. The NSW Government undertook comprehensive consultation with regional partners, including the ACT Government.

Another key achievement in land use planning was the establishment of a working group to develop and deliver an internal Cross-border Land and Housing Monitor and Framework. The Monitor aims to provide the ACT and NSW Governments with an integrated understanding of housing supply in the region. The first iteration of the Monitor covers the ACT, Yass Valley, and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Local Government Areas.

Under the ACT and NSW MoU, actions to address regional water issues are underway, including modelling for and development of the Murrumbidgee Water Catchment Strategy, investigation of a water trading mechanism, and work to progress establishment of a cross-border water issues steering committee.

The Environment Priority Focus Area covers a range of initiatives including an electric vehicle network, natural resource management and waste and recycling in the region.



The Environment

Initiatives
Electric Vehicle Network
Natural Resource Management
Canberra Region Waste and Recycling

The NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change has been in discussion with relevant ACT government directorates regarding coordination of respective electric vehicle charging infrastructure development for the last 18 months. Although the ACT is rolling out slightly different public chargers to NSW, there is good alignment with NSW grant programs for ultra-fast charging stations and destination chargers.

The process to establish a Natural Resource Management steering committee will begin in 2023 with the committee

also agreed to in the *Caring for Dhawura Ngunnawal: A natural resource plan for the ACT*. The steering committee will maintain productive, collaborative relationships between ACT and NSW government natural resource management agencies.

Waste Management and Recycling in the region is an area of focus shared between the ACT and NSW MoU, and the CRJO-ACT MoU which is a complementary agreement between the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) representing Canberra Region councils and the ACT. An inter-jurisdictional working group, involving relevant councils, was established to address a specific cross-border issue relating to the illegal dumping of waste and the ACT and NSW continue to engage with regional stakeholders on broader waste management and recycling matters.



Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy

A prospectus for collaboration.

Initiative
Release of the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy

The ACT and NSW Governments and the CRJO renewed their commitment to collaborating for the broader benefit of the region by releasing the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy (CREDS). The strategy was released in 2022 and outlines a coordinated approach to activate critical regional economic development opportunities.

The CREDS is a landmark joint strategy developed by three government bodies and is the culmination of a concerted tripartite effort that has demonstrated successful regional collaboration, the primary objective of the ACT and NSW MoU.



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Parkwood Urban Release Governance Framework

Parkwood is the site of a future urban area in NSW to be developed as the final stage of Ginninderry. The ACT and NSW MoU recognises the importance of a robust framework to govern the Parkwood urban release area by allocating the governance framework as its own priority focus action area under the MoU.

Initiative
Establish the Steering Committee for the Parkwood Urban Release Area Governance Framework
The MoU committed to a steering committee which was established and first met in the 2020-21 financial year. The steering committee will undertake detailed work on cross-border service delivery models necessary to facilitate residential development at Parkwood. The steering committee meets regularly to progress a workplan examining service delivery options. Noting the ACT's preference is to investigate an ACT-NSW border move at Parkwood, the ACT continues to work with NSW on cross-border service delivery models required if the border remains unchanged.





Next Steps

Information gathered from consulting with both Governments and regional stakeholders to inform this report, and from executive staff at the Senior Officials Dialogue will now be used to review and refresh the priority actions first identified at the time of the 2020 re-signing of the ACT and NSW MoU. Updating the priority actions will serve to ensure the ACT and NSW MoU is a living agreement that remains up-to-date with growth and change in the region.





Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT and NSW Governments and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation acknowledge they stand on Country which always was and always will be Aboriginal land. The region encompasses the traditional lands of Ngunnawal, Gundungurra, Yuin, Ngarigo, Tharawal and Wiradjuri.

The ACT and NSW Governments and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waters, and show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally, and economically through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work. The vision is to strive for better outcomes in partnership with Aboriginal people, communities and businesses in the Canberra region.



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Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic
Development Directorate



Accessibility
Ph 13 22 81



Interpreter
Ph 131 450