

MEDIA RELEASE**23 February 2024****Urban Tree Management**

ACT Auditor-General, Mr Michael Harris, today presented a report on **Urban Tree Management** to the Speaker for tabling in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The *Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045* sets out the ACT Government's vision for a resilient and sustainable urban forest. A key objective of the Strategy is to increase canopy cover to 30 percent by 2045 and the Strategy identified an intention to plant over 450,000 trees on urban public land to achieve this. The audit assessed the effectiveness of TCCS' management of urban trees to support the goal of achieving 30 percent tree canopy cover by 2045.

The audit found that TCCS has undertaken a range of activities to plan for a significant increase in tree plantings, but there are significant challenges to the successful implementation of the planting program.

Challenges include difficulties in securing in-house and contractor resources and an appropriate supply of stock, as well as a lack of available planting locations. Managing community expectations for the planting of trees is also a challenge as resident opposition to tree plantings also impacts program achievements. In response to the challenges, TCCS has reduced future planting targets from 2024-25. Without appropriate planning to address the ongoing risks and challenges to the planting program, the achievement of the canopy cover goal is at risk.

Mr Harris says 'the report identifies a number of activities that need to be addressed and prioritised by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate in order to meet tree planting targets and achieve the 30 percent tree canopy cover goal by 2045'.

The report makes eleven recommendations for actions to be taken by TCCS.

Urban Tree Management is available to download from the ACT Audit Office's website www.audit.act.gov.au. If you need assistance accessing the report please phone 6207 0833.