

POSITION STATEMENT



"Many hands...one voice"

CANBERRA'S PERI-URBAN LANDS

Landcare ACT (LACT) is the peak body for land stewardship by the community in the ACT.

The 2017 LACT workshop for Territory farmers, rural land-holders, land managers and community members considered land use at the urban-rural interface. Based on workshop findings, this position statement has been prepared by the LACT Board.

LACT advocates for the sustainable and productive uses of peri-urban land now and into the future and calls for collaborative action on the top five impediments to realising this goal:

1. Managing land better

As the largest holder and manager of land in the Territory, leadership in good land management lies with the ACT Government. Pest animals and plants are a threat to wildlife biodiversity, agricultural productivity and human life and property. The expanding ACT areas affected by pests are an indicator of biosecurity failure and inadequacy of strategies and resources. LACT calls for harnessing the power of landcare volunteers to lift capacity plus greater transparency in annual reporting on containment and control of pest species.

2. Planning for multiple uses of all land

Achieving healthy functioning landscapes requires good planning to determine the best uses of land to facilitate multiple 'products', while maximizing the environmental, social and economic services and benefits. LACT calls for clear policies to avoid single use of this finite resource.

3. Improving certainty of tenure and opportunity

To increase opportunity and viability for innovation in agri-business, security of tenure and progressive regulatory controls are needed. To achieve this Territory controlled land outside the metropolitan boundary should have 90 year leases and broadened production uses. LACT calls for policies promoting production of food and fibre plus environmental services co-benefits such as wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration.

4. Fostering the circular economy

ACT soils are an important natural resource that require improvement to achieve desired outcomes, such as carbon sequestration, a healthy landscape and food production. LACT calls for actions to be prioritised to improve the circular economy and zero net emissions through turning our waste organic materials into compost for use in our ACT soils where appropriate.

5. Supporting regional food security

Land planning should prioritise food growing within a 200km radius of Canberra for people to have affordable fresh food year round that generates minimal transport greenhouse gas emissions. Not much ACT land is fertile and arable, so planning for the ACT and region should prioritise uses that need this resource with regulatory impediments removed. LACT calls for enabling food production at multiple scales using a range of technologies to increase employment and economic growth.

LACT has an important role in advocacy for and education about these issues to enable efficient and effective on-ground solutions.

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