Ginninderry will have 11,500 new dwellings over the next 30-40 years in four new suburbs. It features 800 hectares of protected open space, including 600 hectares that will be set aside for conservation, bushfire management and recreation.

Construction is underway on a community facility called The Link. It will be a hub and meeting space for community groups and organisations and an entry point and visitor centre for the conservation corridor that runs along the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek.

A cross-border community that includes the new Belconnen suburbs of Strathnairn and Macnamara has been named ‘Ginninderry’ in recognition of the area’s Indigenous and European history.

When the first flight from Singapore landed on a wet Canberra day a couple of months ago, our city changed for the better. We became a globally connected city.

Our young and vibrant city is growing up. We have reached 400,000 people and are growing at more than 5000 people a year. The ACT Government is investing in new city shaping infrastructure while making sure we keep the Canberra we love. Whether it be the new light rail, better healthcare and mental health services or investments in the future of education, Canberra is set for its next exciting phase.

It’s been a big year in the ACT and as 2016 draws to a close, I’d like to wish all Canberrans a very Merry Christmas and may 2017 be a happy and prosperous New Year.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MINISTER, ANDREW BARR

For more stories and information from across Canberra, visit act.gov.au/ourcanberra or follow us on social media.
Primary schools, high schools and colleges across Canberra will be getting some major upgrades and improvements over the next four years.

An infrastructure upgrade program will provide new classrooms and upgrade existing classrooms, refurbish toilets, new gardens, upgrades to equipment and heating and cooling systems.

**SCHOOL UPGRADES ACROSS CANBERRA**

Dhulwa, the secure mental health unit in Symonston officially commenced operations in November.

Dhulwa is the first unit of its type in our region and has capacity for 25 residents. This includes 10 acute care beds and 15 rehabilitation beds, as well as 24-hour clinical support.

Dhulwa is a Ngunnawal term meaning ‘honey suckle’, a native plant with healing properties.

For more information visit health.act.gov.au/dhulwa

This award recognises and celebrates the community’s most outstanding contributors. To nominate, go to act.gov.au/cbcitizen

Nominations close 31 January 2017. The winner will be announced in March 2017.

For information on holiday period operating hours for ACT Libraries, Domestic Animal Services, Yarralumla Nursery and Waste Management Services visit act.gov.au/our-canberra
Discover Canberra’s tracks with a new app that uses augmented reality technology to bring the tracks to life.

By using the app, you can learn about ‘Belco’s’ life before European settlement, or learn about tracks in other regions of Canberra.

Start with a cycle around Lake Ginninderra then into the town centre. Visit sites of homesteads, the border, an unmarked burial ground, a former naval transmitting station, student residences and finish with a walk or ride up Gossan Hill.

Visit canberratracks.act.gov.au to download the app.

BELCONNEN TOWN CENTRE IN 15 YEARS

The final Belconnen Town Centre master plan has been released, guiding its growth and development over the next 10 to 15 years.

The master plan encourages the redevelopment of Lathlain Street and Emu Bank, better integration of the centre with the University of Canberra, and public space upgrades to attract more visitors to the centre.

To view the plan visit planning.act.gov.au

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ACT AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the four ACT Australian of the Year recipients. ACT Australian of the Year Alan Tongue, ACT Senior Australian of the Year Dick Telford, ACT Young Australian of the Year Heidi Prowse, and ACT Local Hero Stasia Dabrowski.

You can learn more about these remarkable Canberrans and their contribution to our community at australianoftheyear.org.au. They will represent Canberra on the national stage on 25 January 2017.

RECYCLING TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Find out more at act.gov.au/recycling/home

These items can go in the recycling bin:

- Christmas cards and envelopes – even with glitter
- Cardboard packaging – even with hard plastic windows
- Wrapping paper – no need to remove sticky tape or gift tags
- Empty wine bottles, soft drink bottles and beer cans
- Containers – no need to rinse, just empty them.

These items can’t go in the recycling bin:

- Tinsel, Christmas decorations and Christmas lights
- Leftover or unwanted food
- Foil and cellophane wrapping
- Polystyrene
- Christmas trees
- Crockery or glassware.
For more stories and information from across Canberra, visit act.gov.au/ourcanberra or follow us on social media.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

Christmas in the City is back in 2016 and as well as the giant Christmas tree on City Walk, the Christmas Food Markets will be on in Civic Square.

Featuring a number of delicious culinary themed nights, as well as live music, Christmas in the City runs from 16 to 24 December.

For more information visit inthecitycanberra.com.au

LONG-TERM CANBERRANS SHAPING OUR CITY

The Canberra Gold Awards recognise the unique contribution made by individuals and groups who have lived or operated in the ACT for 50 years or more. Nominate a family member, colleague, friend, or group who has helped shape our city.

Nominations close in early February with the awards to be presented in March as part of Canberra Day celebrations.

Nominations can be made online at act.gov.au/CBRgold

FIREWORKS & FREE ENTERTAINMENT FOR NEW YEAR’S EVE IN THE CITY

Canberra is set to ring in 2017 in style with a fantastic line-up of free entertainment and state-of-the-art fireworks this New Year’s Eve.

Kick start your evening with music from the Brass Knuckle Brass Band. Potbelleez will also heat up the stage, performing energetic sets which will get your body moving. Nostalgia and Heuristic will feature, making sure there’s no stop to the celebrations. Fireworks displays will light Canberra skies at 9pm and midnight, with best viewing from Civic Square.

For more information visit events.act.gov.au or phone Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUN AT THE ARBORETUM & TIDBINBILLA NATURE RESERVE

There are plenty of free activities at the National Arboretum during these summer school holidays.

Let the kids have fun in Pod Playground or fly a kite in the amphitheatre. The Arboretum grounds will be open until 8.30pm every night in summer.

Visit nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve has lots of activities for the whole family.

Discover the natural wonders of the sanctuary daily with a volunteer guide, feed the pelicans, spot an elusive platypus or maybe just go for a walk through the koala enclosure to see the latest addition – ‘Ghanbi’.

Visit tidbinbilla.act.gov.au