



Parliament of Youth  
on Sustainability

# Parliament of Youth on Sustainability

## 2017 Project Information

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## Contact Us

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or visit:

[www.see-change.org.au/ParliamentofYouth](http://www.see-change.org.au/ParliamentofYouth)

This document is also available on the SEE-Change website at:

<http://www.see-change.org.au/school-resources/>

# Introduction

**Prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings – within the ecological limits of a finite planet. The challenge for our society is to create the conditions under which this is possible. It is the most urgent task of our times.**

Tim Jackson, 2009, *Prosperity without growth? The transition to a sustainable economy*, UK: Sustainable Development Commission  
(Available at <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=914>)

The central challenge of this ‘most urgent task’ – sustainability – is the growing human ecological footprint, which is the amount of biologically active land and sea area needed to supply the resources that a human population consumes and to assimilate its associated waste. As a human species our ecological footprint is more than 50 per cent larger than the planet can sustain for the long term.

Many rich countries like Australia, and rich cities like Canberra, are using more than their fair share of the world’s resources and much more than their fair share of the world’s footprint.

Consider the facts. The average global biocapacity, or amount of biologically active land and sea area available to support human life, is 1.7 global hectares per person.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the average ecological footprint for each person on earth is 2.6 global hectares<sup>2</sup>; the average footprint for an Australian resident is 8.2 global hectares<sup>3</sup>; and the average for an ACT resident is 8.9 global hectares.<sup>4</sup> It’s time for action!

## **What is one action we should take to reduce Canberra’s ecological footprint?**

The Parliament of Youth on Sustainability gives ACT school students from kindergarten to year 12 the chance to have their say on how we should reduce Canberra’s ecological footprint and make Canberra a more sustainable city.

Our dream is that every student in Canberra has the opportunity to inform their school’s response to this challenge. Teachers around Canberra have shown that assessment tasks and units of work for the Parliament can readily be integrated into subject areas across the curriculum. This is broader than a science project – this is a real life project for our future.

At the Parliament our aim is to provide participating students with an encouraging, engaging and respectful forum to share ideas and together build a positive vision for a sustainable Canberra.

<sup>1</sup> WWF, 2016, *Living Planet Report 2016*, WWF, Gland, Switzerland, available at [http://www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/all\\_publications/lpr\\_2016/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/lpr_2016/)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Dey, C., 2015, *The 2011-2012 Ecological Footprint of the population of the Australian Capital Territory*, The University of Sydney, p4 available at <http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/ecological-footprints>

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

# Project Detail

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## Project Question

The Parliament of Youth on Sustainability project is based around a single key question for students:

**What is one action we should take to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint?**

## When?

The project culminates in a one-day student Parliament on **29 May 2017** (Monday of week 6, term 2) at the Australian National University.

## What happens at the Parliament?

Students from kindergarten to year 12 attend the Parliament in teams. Each team submits one Green Paper\* with one proposal for action (due 5 May 2017) and delivers one five minute presentation at the Parliament.

**Morning of Parliament:** Students assemble in year group committees to deliver their five minute presentations to other school teams, to watch other teams present, and to discuss and debate the various proposals presented. Respectful, robust discussion, as well as collaboration, is encouraged. Students also take part in hands-on activities.

The aim is for students to gather the information they need to make an informed decision about which proposals from their committee are the best. Combining proposals is an option.

At the end of the morning, student parliamentarians vote for the best proposal/s in their committee. One student from each team with a proposal selected becomes the Minister to represent that proposal and their year group committee.

**Afternoon of Parliament:** All of the year groups gather for a full Parliament session to hear the best proposals from each committee, take part in a question and answer session with politicians and other Parliamentarians, and vote for the proposals that should be included as recommendations in the Parliament White Paper# and presented to local and federal politicians. At this session, student Ministers have one minute to speak to the full Parliament about their proposal and to convince the Parliament of its merits.

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\* **What is a Green Paper?** In real life, a Green Paper is a policy discussion paper issued by the government. It contains a discussion of the issue being considered and proposed policies to address the issue. It is intended to promote public debate and discussion before a final decision is taken on the best policy option.

Green Papers from all participating schools and the final recommended proposals for action are collated into a Parliament White Paper for presentation to ACT politicians.

# **What is a White Paper?** A White Paper is a statement of a government's conclusions on a particular issue and firm policy recommendations or proposals for action.

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## Preparing for the Parliament

To prepare for the Parliament, participating schools and students should:

-  study the concepts of the ecological footprint and sustainability
-  research Canberra's ecological footprint
  - To focus their work, classes/students could study one aspect of our lifestyle such as transport or food, and how it relates to Canberra's ecological footprint – for more topic suggestions go to p10.
-  develop a proposal for action to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint: What is one action we should take to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint?
  - This could be an action for individuals, households, or the ACT. It may also be a national or international action as long as this will have an effect on Canberra's footprint.
  - Each proposal should set out a clear path for how the action could start in Canberra.
-  prepare a one-page Green Paper, or policy discussion paper, summarising their research findings and setting out their proposal with supporting arguments – use the Green Paper template on p16 and available at <http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Green-Paper-Template-2017.docx>
  - **Due to SEE-Change by 5 May 2017 (end of week 2, term 2)**
-  prepare a five minute presentation, based on their Green Paper, designed to engage other students and convince them of the merits of their proposal
  - Students should ensure their presentation clearly outlines their proposal for action. Remember: Parliamentarians will vote for the best proposals during the Parliament.
  - Students are encouraged to develop engaging and creative presentations. For example, the presentation may be a performance, a video, or an interactive activity for the audience.
  - **Due for presentation at the Parliament on 29 May 2017 (Monday of Week 6, term 2)**
-  choose one student in their Parliament team to be Minister if their proposal is chosen as one of the best in their committee. Ministers should prepare a one minute 'summary' speech outlining and selling the proposal for possible presentation in the full Parliament session.

## School Teams – Who can take part?

Schools are invited to send up to three representative teams from each of the following four year groups to the Parliament:

-  Kindergarten to Year 3 – six students per team
-  Year 4 to Year 6 – six students per team
-  Year 7 to Year 9 – three students per team
-  Year 10 to Year 12 – two students per team

*Remember:* Each team should submit one Green Paper by 5 May 2017, deliver one five minute presentation at the Parliament, and choose a team Minister who is ready with a one minute speech about their proposal.

## Whole School Activity

Schools may wish to incorporate the project into a unit of work and develop assessment tasks/projects around the preparation of a Green Paper and/or a presentation for a whole class or year group to complete.

The Green Papers and presentations from individuals or small groups can then be used to inform the development of the school team's Green Paper and presentation for the Parliament.

# Other Ways for Students to Get Involved

Senior students (Year 10, 11 and 12) may also take part in the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability project in a variety of other ways.

## Mentors

Senior students are invited to act as mentors for younger students in a participating primary or high school in the lead-up to the Parliament.

Mentors assist the teacher during sessions when the younger students are working on the project. Their role is to:

-  work as an 'extra pair of hands' in the classroom, assisting with individual student or small group activities;
-  act as a sounding-board for the younger students, supporting them as they research their project topic, develop proposals for action, write their Green Paper, and prepare their five minute presentation.

The Parliament of Youth Project Team will provide mentors with a 90 minute training session to introduce them to the role and discuss ideas about how to interact with younger students. The Project Team will also facilitate the connection to a primary/high school. Mentors will be responsible for negotiating suitable session dates and times with the primary/high school teacher.

Students may be able to count this activity as part of an R unit.

## Facilitators at the Parliament

Parliament facilitators are in charge of running the year-group committee sessions during the morning of the Parliament on 29 May 2017. Facilitators are paired with an adult assistant facilitator or an experienced Parliament facilitator.

Their role is to:

-  explain procedures and rules to their committee,
-  introduce school groups for their presentations,
-  ensure presentations run to time,
-  facilitate question and discussion sessions,
-  facilitate committee voting sessions,
-  assist school groups to use the audio visual technology in the meeting room if required (technology familiarisation training will be provided for all facilitators prior to the Parliament).

The Parliament of Youth Project Team will provide two 60-90 minute training sessions for facilitators covering the role, methods for generating discussion in committees, and technology familiarisation.

## Speakers at the Parliament

Three or four senior students will act as the Parliament Speakers in the full Parliament afternoon session on 29 May 2017. The Speakers will be in charge of running the full Parliament. Their role is similar to the Facilitator role and they will receive the same training.

## Event Management Volunteers

Senior students are also invited to assist with preparing for and running the Parliament. This could include:

-  organising and compiling 'Participant Packs',
-  devising and running sustainability-themed activities for younger students at the Parliament,
-  setting up and packing down on the day of the Parliament,
-  videoing committee and full Parliament sessions,
-  taking photographs,
-  collecting ballot papers in the full Parliament session and tallying votes,
-  assisting with catering and set up of afternoon tea.

The Parliament of Youth Project Team will run at least one 60-90 minute information and task allocation session for volunteers. More sessions will be available for students devising and running activities at the Parliament.

# Focus Topics

Below are some suggested focus topics for the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability.

TOPIC		NOTES
<b>TRANSPORT</b>		
1	TRANSPORT	Private, public, new technologies (eg electric cars), sharing
<b>URBAN PLANNING</b>		
2	URBAN PLANNING	Urban planning, street lighting
<b>SMARTER BUILDINGS</b>		
3	SMARTER BUILDINGS	Building design – domestic and commercial; building materials
<b>ENERGY</b>		
4	USING LESS ENERGY	Energy – changing how we live to use less
5	RENEWABLE ENERGY	Energy – renewable (new sources of energy)
6	ENERGY EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY	Energy – making our lives more energy efficient through better technology
<b>FOOD</b>		
7	FOOD	Food production; food miles; seasonality
<b>WATER</b>		
8	WATER	Importance of water, how we use it
<b>WASTE</b>		
9	WASTE	Waste – recycling and creating less; electronic waste; capturing methane and other waste gas
10	DEALING WITH CO <sub>2</sub>	Getting rid of CO <sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere – eg capturing carbon (urban forestation)
<b>HUMAN SYSTEMS</b>		
11	THE ECONOMY	Making our economic system more responsive to the needs of the planet
12	THE POLITICAL SYSTEM	Making our political system more responsive to the needs of the planet
13	POPULATION	Growth in population, impact on the environment
<b>LIFESTYLE</b>		
14	LIVING MORE SUSTAINABLY	How can we live more sustainably in our communities, in our neighbourhoods, as individuals?
15	CONSUMPTION	Impact of consumption on the environment; what do we really need?
16	HUMAN HEALTH BENEFITS OF CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	Importance for human health, wellbeing and survival of caring for our environment
<b>OTHER</b>		
17	EDUCATING OTHERS ABOUT THE NEED TO CHANGE	Educating others, in particular adults, about sustainability and possible new ways of living
18	OTHER TOPICS	Topic of your own choice

<b>Key:</b>		Internet
		Video
		Booklet
		Resource prepared by SEE-Change volunteer teachers and topic experts

## Parliament of Youth on Sustainability Project Information

 **Parliament of Youth web pages** 

Visit [www.see-change.org.au/parliamentofyouth](http://www.see-change.org.au/parliamentofyouth) for more information about the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability.

 **2017 Parliament of Youth on Sustainability in a Nutshell** 

<https://youtu.be/wQd1znQjYo>

1:38 minute video explaining the key things you need to know about the 2017 Parliament of Youth on Sustainability.

## Help for the Classroom

 **Teaching Sequence** 

A four step teaching sequence to prepare your students for the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability: [www.see-change.org.au/poy-teaching-sequence/](http://www.see-change.org.au/poy-teaching-sequence/)

 **Teaching modules** 

Teaching modules covering a range of sustainability topics with a Canberra focus. The separate modules provide ideas for classroom activities and discussion for [Kindergarten to Year 6](#) and [Year 7 to Year 12](#).

 **Parliament Teaching Tips** 

<http://youtu.be/zXQSkFwfj6Y>

Primary school, high school and college teachers talk about how they have incorporated the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability into their teaching program.



## Kitchen Table Conversations



The 'kitchen table conversation' method has been used widely in Australia and more recently in Canberra to engage adults in the community in a consideration of big issues that affect their future. Teachers might also find them a helpful way to engage all of their students in a consideration of action to reduce our ecological footprint, and so feed into a whole school contribution to the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability. Read more here: [www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/KTCs-in-Schools-Parliament-2016.pdf](http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/KTCs-in-Schools-Parliament-2016.pdf)

## Subject Matter



### Global Footprint Network

[www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/)

The Global Footprint Network website contains a wealth of material on the ecological footprint including definitions and explanations for the ecological footprint and related concepts, footprint science, an online personal footprint calculator, and an interactive world map showing the total and per capita ecological footprint and biocapacity by country.



### World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

[www.wwf.org.au/our\\_work/people\\_and\\_the\\_environment/](http://www.wwf.org.au/our_work/people_and_the_environment/)

The 'People and the Environment' section of the WWF Australia website includes information about the human footprint, global warming and climate change, as well as the *Living Planet Report*, a biennial publication documenting 'the state of the planet - the changing state of biodiversity, ecosystems and humanity's demand on natural resources - and what this means for humanity'.



Find the report at:

[http://wwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/all\\_publications/lpr\\_2016/](http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/lpr_2016/)



### Sustainability Illustrated

[www.sustainabilityillustrated.com/en/](http://www.sustainabilityillustrated.com/en/)

This website presents short animation videos explaining sustainability concepts in an engaging visual format. Topics include: the ecological footprint, earth overshoot day, sustainable development.

## Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE)

[www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/](http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/)

The OCSE prepares reports on the state of Canberra's environment as well as commissioning reports on Canberra's ecological footprint.



For the *ACT State of the Environment Report 2015* go to:

<http://reports.envcomm.act.gov.au/actsoe2015/downloads/index.html>



For *The 2011-2012 Ecological Footprint of the population of the Australian Capital Territory*, go to:

[http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/825406/2011-12-Ecological-Footprint-ACT-for-2015-ACT-SoER.pdf](http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0007/825406/2011-12-Ecological-Footprint-ACT-for-2015-ACT-SoER.pdf)

## ACT Government Environment and Planning Directorate



[www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/what-government-is-doing/emissions-and-mitigation](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/what-government-is-doing/emissions-and-mitigation)

The ACT Government Environment and Planning Directorate website provides information about the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions and what the Government is doing about them.



To find out about the ACT Government's strategy for the Territory to meet its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction targets and become a sustainable and carbon neutral community, go to Action Plan 2 at:

[www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/581136/AP2\\_Sept12\\_P RINT\\_NO\\_CROPS\\_SML.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0006/581136/AP2_Sept12_P RINT_NO_CROPS_SML.pdf) or for the summary report go to:

[www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/581138/AP2\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0008/581138/AP2_executive_summary.pdf)



## Actsmart (ACT Government Environment and Planning Directorate)

[www.actsmart.act.gov.au](http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au)

The ACT Government Environment and Planning Directorate Actsmart website offers information about climate change and its impacts; practical tips for taking action as an individual, in the home, school or broader community; and information about ACT Government action to make Canberra a more sustainable city (under headings including water, planning, transport and energy).



## Transition Streets Canberra

Transition Streets is a program aimed at encouraging neighbours to come together and support each other in becoming more energy and water efficient, more vibrant and more connected. The Transition Streets Canberra workbook provides information on the ecological footprint; a paper-based ecological footprint calculator; facts about the impact of our lifestyles on the topics of water, energy, food, transport, waste and consumption; possible actions to reduce our footprint for each of these topics; and action plan worksheets. The workbook could be adapted for school and student use.

<http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Transition-Streets-Canberra-Workbook-Feb2016.pdf>

You can also visit the Transition Streets Canberra web page at [www.see-change.org.au/transition-streets-canberra/](http://www.see-change.org.au/transition-streets-canberra/)



### Climate Change: What's the Story?



<http://youtu.be/wPLboZK6vRw>

A 2014 update on the thinking in climate science with Professor Michael Raupach, the late Director of the ANU Climate Change Institute; Em Professor Bob Douglas, Parliament of Youth Project Leader; and Ali Carrera, former Merici College student.



### Climate Change: What's the Story?



[www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Teacher-Resource-Climate-Change-Whats-the-Story.pdf](http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Teacher-Resource-Climate-Change-Whats-the-Story.pdf)

This resource provides an entry point for teachers and students to find out about the current thinking and action on climate change. It contains information on seven topics, from the science of climate change to what can be done, each with a brief introduction followed by a series of accessible websites or documents.



### Imagining a Sustainable Canberra: A manual for teachers, parents, volunteers and senior students



[www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Imagining\\_a\\_sustainable\\_Canberra-2.pdf](http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Imagining_a_sustainable_Canberra-2.pdf)

This manual presents an overview of the challenge of sustainability and the need for transformative change in Australian society. The five discussion modules are designed for use by teachers, parents and senior students in small groups.

# One-Page Green Paper Instructions

To take part in the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability, student groups should complete the one-page Green Paper template (see p16, also available at <http://www.see-change.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Green-Paper-Template-2017.docx>) summarising their research findings and ‘selling’ their proposal for action.

The Green Paper is limited to a single side of A4 paper. Please retain the formatting in the template (that is, the font type, size, margins etc).

Students may use text and illustrations/graphics in their Green Paper.

How you arrive at a single one-page Green Paper per school team is your choice. Some examples are:

-  get your students to work together as a group to come up with one Green Paper;
-  split your students into smaller groups to come up with separate Green Papers, present these to the class, then work together to summarise the separate papers into one paper;
-  ask each student to write their own Green paper and get the group to vote for the best.

For older students, the Green Paper may be an abstract of an essay-length paper written for assessment purposes.

**Green Papers are due to SEE-Change by 5 May 2017 (end of week 2, term 2).**

# One-Page Green Paper Template



**School**      Name of your school

**Topic**      The topic you have chosen

## What's the problem?

- The project question is: **What is one action we should take to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint?**
- In this section, students should summarise what the student group found out about their topic in relation to Canberra's ecological footprint. This section should clearly identify the problems and issues.
- This section should lead the reader logically to the next section, 'Proposal for action', ie if these are the issues, then here is our suggested solution.
- Use dot points.

## Proposal for action:

How can we, as Canberra citizens, solve these problems? The proposal for action should flow logically from the 'What's the problem?' section.

The proposal should be a suggestion for action that could be implemented by Canberra people or the ACT Government. If a proposal suggests change across Australia, students should frame their proposal in terms of how we could start that change in Canberra (eg by talking to the ACT Government, by contacting federal politicians) and how the change will reduce Canberra's ecological footprint.

## Justification:

In the 'Justification' section, students should provide reasons for why this is a good proposal and one that is better than possible alternatives. Some things to consider include:

- how will the proposal reduce Canberra's ecological footprint and how effectively?
- what makes the proposal feasible? (eg cost, available technology, attractive to the community, easy to implement)
- how fair is the proposal to different groups of people in our community, such as:
  - people who don't have a lot of income
  - older people, like your grandparents
  - people who live in different parts of Canberra (for example, close to Civic or in Tuggeranong)
  - people with disabilities and who have additional needs
  - families with children
  - any other group of people different to you.
- why is this proposal better than other possible proposals?
- what are the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal?
- do the advantages of the proposal outweigh the disadvantages?

# Registration Form



I would like to register a school team for the Parliament of Youth on Sustainability to be held on Monday, 29 May 2017 at the Australian National University.

1. Name of school	
2. Year Group of Team	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten - Year 3 (6 team members) <input type="checkbox"/> Year 4 - Year 6 (6 team members) <input type="checkbox"/> Year 7 - Year 9 (3 team members) <input type="checkbox"/> Year 10 - Year 11 (2 team members)

3. Name of school contact	
4. Phone number of school contact	
5. Email address of school contact	

6. Name of 2 <sup>nd</sup> school contact	
7. Phone number of 2 <sup>nd</sup> school contact	
8. Email address of 2 <sup>nd</sup> school contact	

**NOTE:** Registered teams will receive a team member registration form during Term 1, 2017 for providing team member names and the name/s of supervising teachers for the Parliament. All team members will require parental/carer media permission.

**Need more information?** Contact the Project Officer on 0431 360 181 or at [parliament@see-change.org.au](mailto:parliament@see-change.org.au)

Please return this form to SEE-Change by:

**Post** or **Email**  
SEE-Change [parliament@see-change.org.au](mailto:parliament@see-change.org.au)  
PO Box 7025  
WATSON ACT 2601

**Closing date for registration: 5 May 2017**