

2019

# SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT

Our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals





## INTRODUCTION

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Icon Water is Canberra's supplier of essential water and sewerage services. We recognise we have a key role in the lives of our community through the protection of public health and the environment.

We're proud of our role and we're proud that sustainability is at the heart of what we do.

This publication sets out our practical steps towards economic, social and environmental sustainability. These are framed by our commitment to the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2017, Icon Water was one of a number of water utilities that committed to support and promote the United Nations SDGs. We also support the United Nation's Water Action Decade, which began on World Water Day, 22 March 2018.

We recognise the benefits of taking a whole-of-industry approach to the SDGs, enabling us to extend our reach beyond state and territory borders and develop consistent indicators and measures.

*"Australia's water utilities have a once in a generation opportunity to make a substantial contribution to advancing the SDGs, creating additional shared value through collaboration and partnership with government, industry, communities and customers"*

Water Services Association of Australia

These goals align strongly with our vision to be a valued partner in our community.

While this is not our first sustainability report, it is the first time we have linked many of our business activities to the SDGs. The SDGs came into effect in January 2016 and represent an opportunity to drive sustainability actions across the utility sector, for the benefit of the communities we serve.

In particular, as Canberra's water utility, we recognise the significant role we play in realising SDG 6: clean water and sanitation for all.

# WHAT WE DO

We source, treat and supply water—and collect, treat and return wastewater—through a direct relationship with our customers and community. We provide these services to around 460,000 people including the supply of high quality bulk water to the Queanbeyan community.

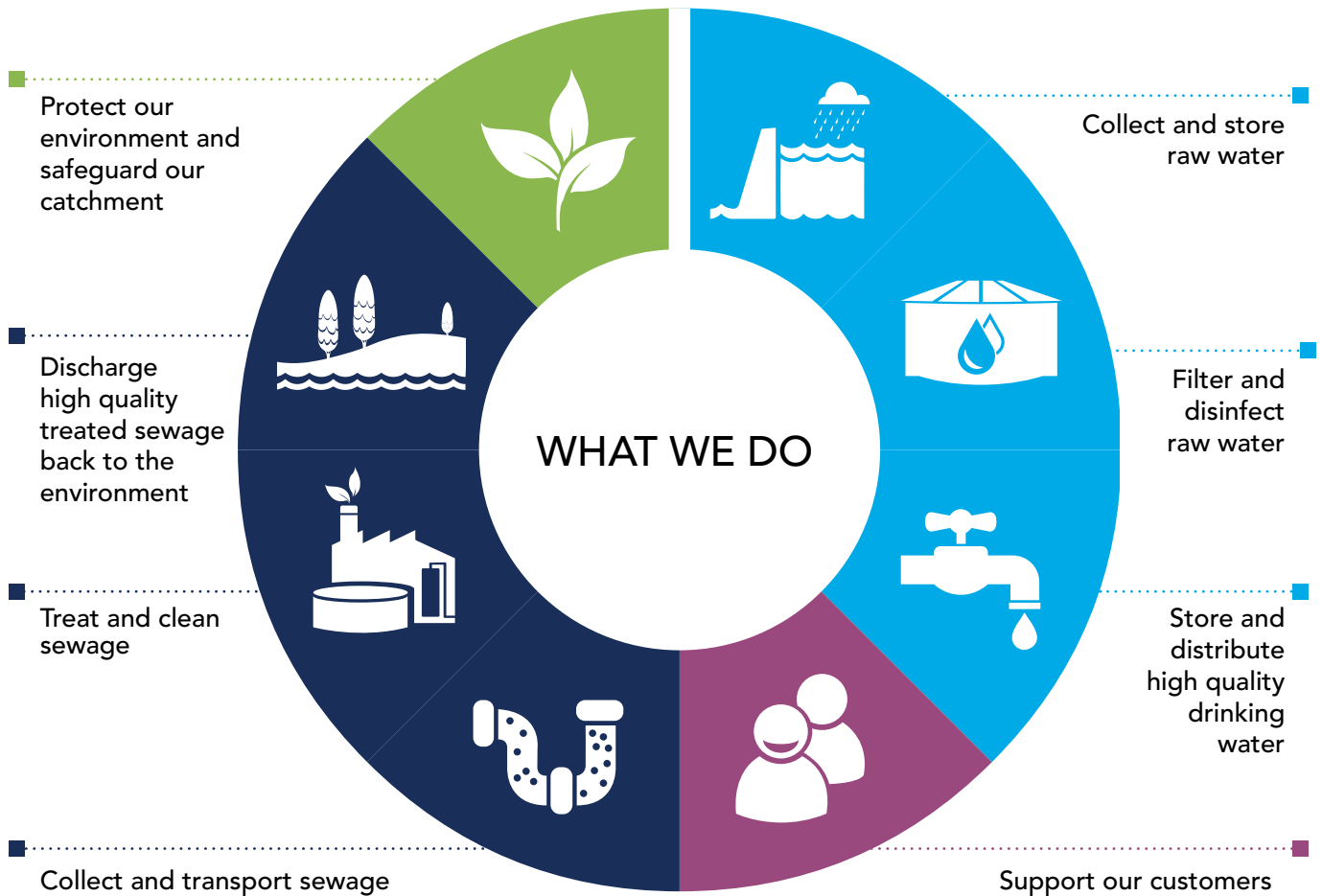
Having a reliable source of water was an important consideration when selecting the site for Canberra. More than 100 years later, Canberra still relies on sound water security planning to ensure its sustainability, growth and prosperity. As a result of a number of water security measures our water supply is more secure.

We are focused on delivering an exceptional customer experience in a sustainable manner.

We own and operate assets worth over \$2.4 billion, comprising the ACT's network of dams, water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, reservoirs, water and sewage pumping stations, mains and related infrastructure. We have Australia's largest inland sewage treatment plant, treating water to the highest standard to allow environmental flows to be returned to the Murrumbidgee River system.

We are committed to working in partnership with the community and ACT Government to manage water wisely and provide a safe, secure and sustainable water supply for the people of the ACT and region for generations to come.

Our reliability and community focus allows us to enhance the quality of life of our community and the environment while providing essential services.



# OUR SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTION

We strive to balance financial, environmental, social and cultural outcomes and have adapted the United Nations Brundtland Commission definition of sustainability.

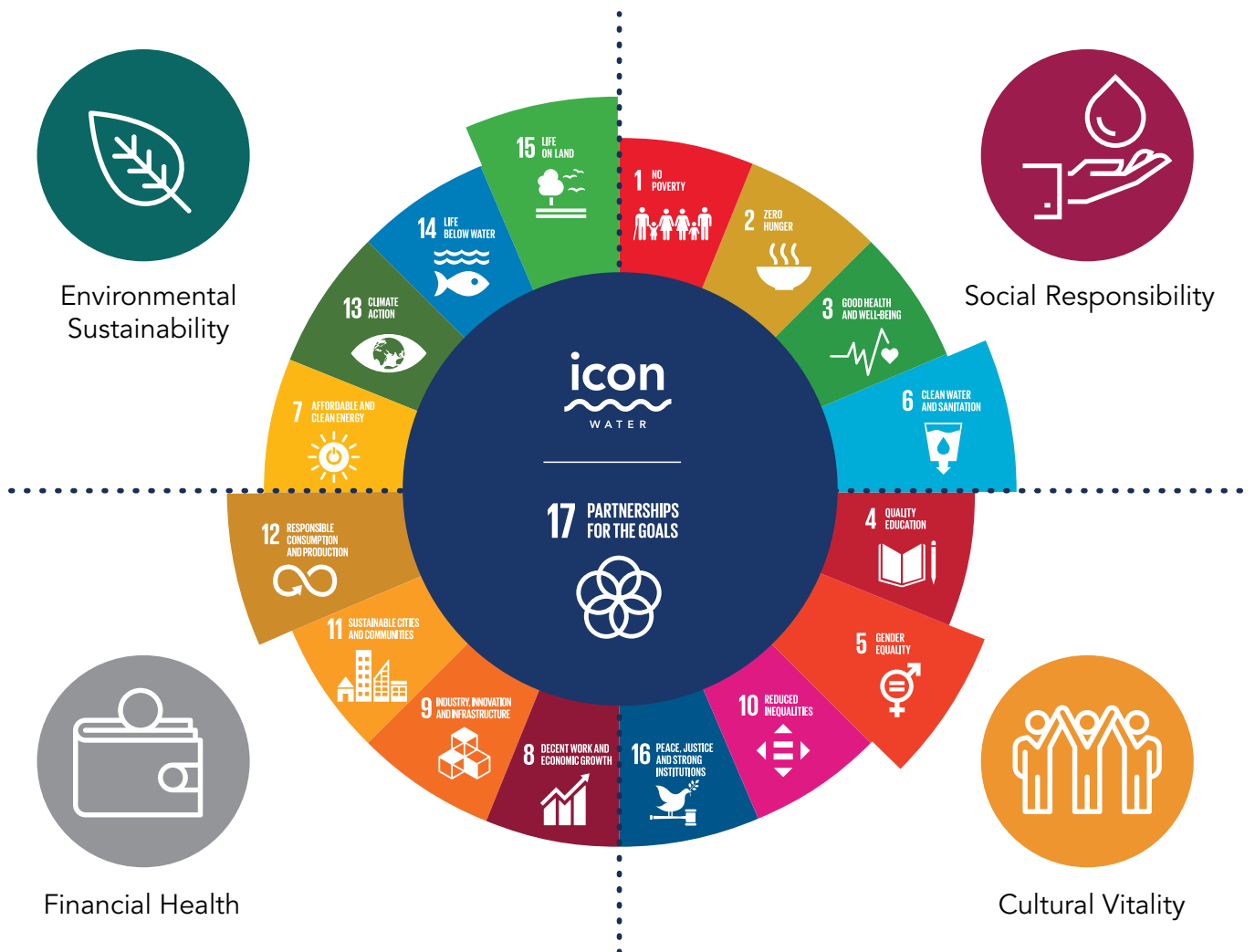
*Balancing financial health, environmental sustainability, cultural vitality and social responsibility to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs.*

Our Sustainability Forum, established in 2014, drives sustainability programs across the business and acts as champions, fostering an improved internal culture.

Through a materiality assessment, forum members mapped Icon Water's activities across our four sustainability themes below together with the 17 SDGs.

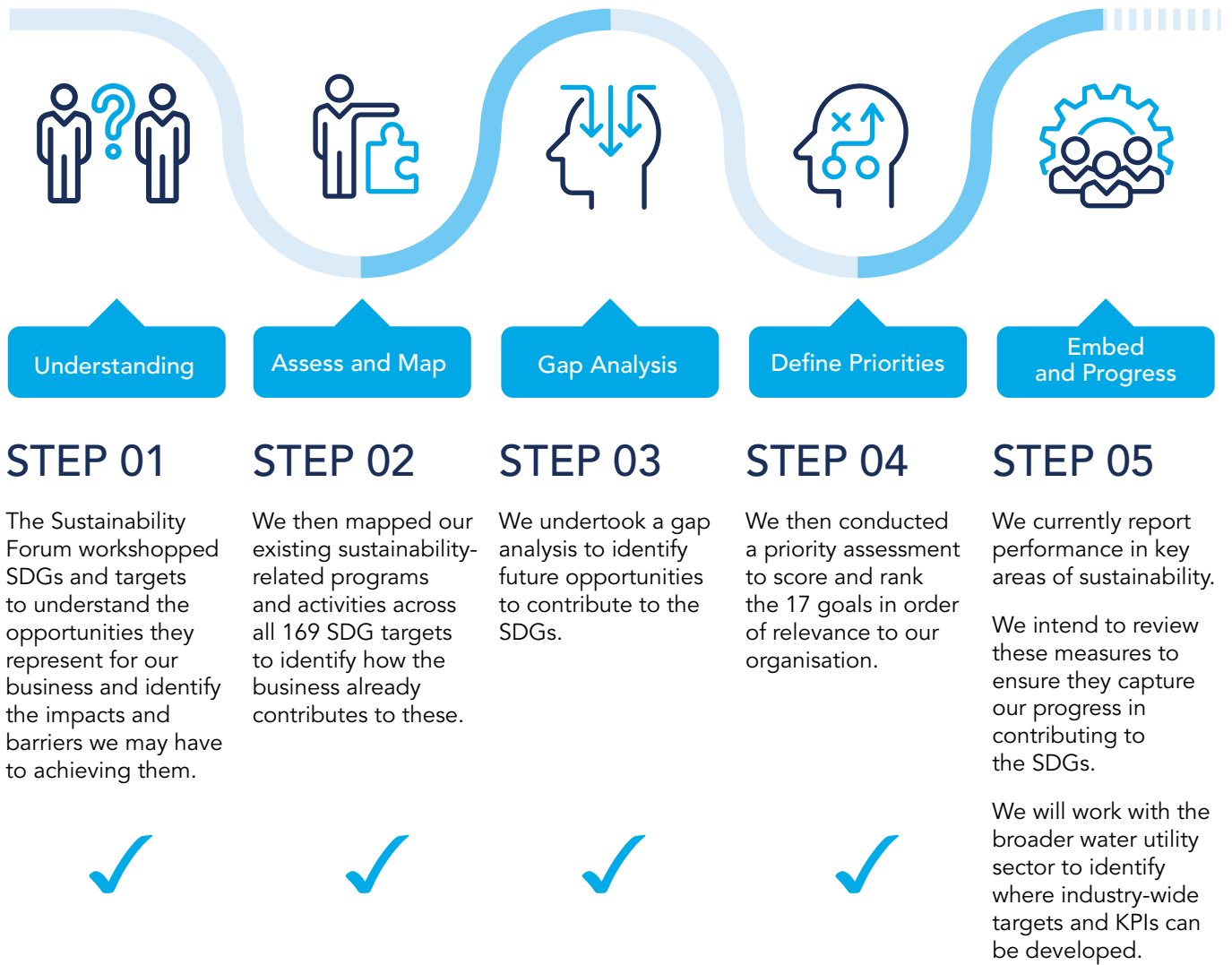
- Social responsibility
- Environmental sustainability
- Cultural diversity
- Financial health

We are committed to contributing to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) – a set of 17 goals that seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. We are dedicated to advancing all SDGs, with a priority focus on providing clean water and sanitation, protecting the environment, ensuring gender equality and having responsible consumption and production.















# OUR SDG JOURNEY

The following table sets out the results of this work. We also provide case studies that cover initiatives in more detail. As you will read in this report, we aim to contribute to all SDGs.

















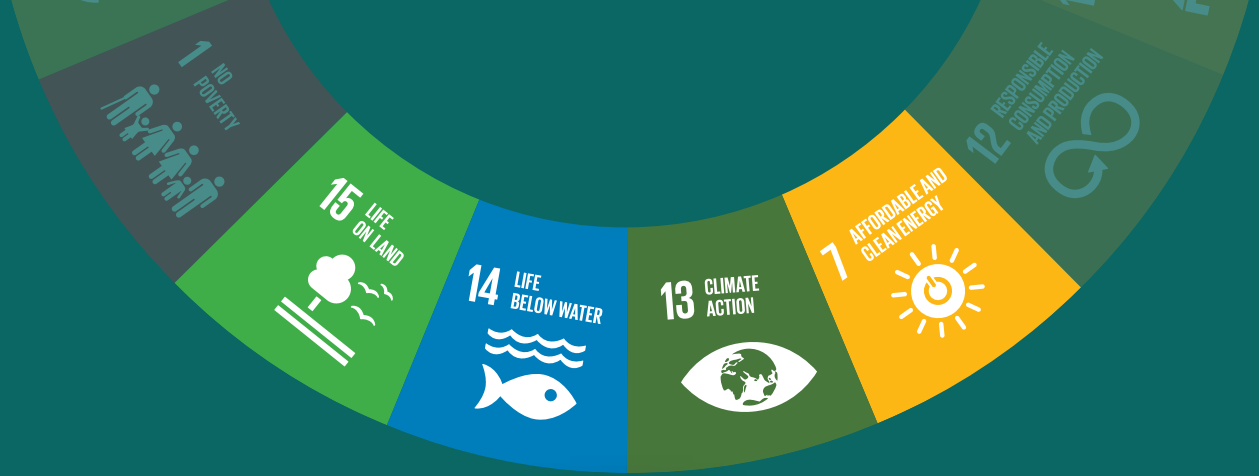
OUR SDG  
ALIGNMENT

Goal	Relevance	Potential impacts	Icon Water's contribution
 <p><b>1 NO POVERTY</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Access to clean water empowers vulnerable communities.</li> <li>- Price of water can impact customers from low income households.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides essential water and sewerage services to all regardless of economic status.</li> <li>▪ Supports a range of community organisations that provide assistance to the underprivileged.</li> <li>▪ Provides payment programs for disadvantaged customers.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>2 ZERO HUNGER</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Provision of clean water supports food production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recovers resources that improve land and soil quality.</li> <li>▪ Supports a range of community organisations who help feed the underprivileged.</li> <li>▪ Encourages people to choose tap water over bottled water, benefiting their health, their wallet and the environment.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workplace incidents can lead to injuries.</li> <li>+ Provision of safe drinking water supports human health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintains a strong commitment to staff health and safety and runs active health and wellbeing programs.</li> <li>▪ Promotes a culture of safety first.</li> <li>▪ Delivers high quality drinking water that meets or exceeds Australian and world standards.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Educating the community on how to keep our catchments and water sources clean increases environmental awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides quality training resources for schools.</li> <li>▪ Offers graduate programs, and sponsors community education and the Aspi Baria research endowment.</li> <li>▪ Promotes programs to boost youth employment in the water industry.</li> <li>▪ Provides professional development to staff.</li> <li>▪ Provides technical advice to overseas government and student delegates and offers site tours to increase public awareness.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>5 GENDER EQUALITY</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Effective workplace policies strengthen female numbers in the workplace.</li> <li>- Historical gender roles lead to imbalances in gender in some business areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthens gender equality as part of a focus on Diversity and Inclusion program.</li> <li>▪ Values gender equity, with female representation of over 50 per cent of Board Directors and Executive, and one third of managers.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Safe, clean water and sanitation services provided to the ACT and region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensures the sustainable production and delivery of water and wastewater services to over 460,000 people.</li> <li>▪ Delivers award-winning water - the best tasting in the NSW/ACT region in the 2017 IXOM WIOI national drinking water competition.</li> </ul>

Goal	Relevance	Potential impacts	Icon Water's contribution
<p><b>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</b></p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Pumping water and wastewater is energy intensive.</li> <li>➕ The flow of water from dams can provide energy via hydro-electric generators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commits to reducing energy consumption through our Energy Management Strategy.</li> <li>▪ Focuses on improving energy efficiencies.</li> <li>▪ Generates renewable energy through hydro-electric generators and solar photovoltaic arrays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b></p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➕ Provision of ACT and regional services leads to employment in the local community.</li> <li>➖ Potential to impact businesses when procurement is not managed carefully.</li> <li>➕ Responsible procurement can lead to the protection of human rights and support for local economies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Directly employs around 400 people from the local community and supports local businesses.</li> <li>▪ Provides a safe working environment with fair working conditions outlined in our Enterprise Agreement.</li> <li>▪ Is a high performing business, recording a 2017–18 net profit after tax of \$107.7 million.</li> <li>▪ Is expected to be 7 per cent more efficient by 2023 than we were in 2017.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➕ Able to influence customer expectations through our customer programs.</li> <li>➕ Investing in research and development to improve operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Works with the water industry and others to trial and adopt innovative technologies.</li> <li>▪ Is digitising our network and improving data analytics to increase response times.</li> <li>▪ Is a member of the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) and Water Research Australia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b></p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➕ Equitable recruitment can contribute to reducing poverty in local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is an equal opportunities employer with Equity and Diversity officers who support equal opportunities irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status.</li> <li>▪ Has processes in place to protect the rights of vulnerable people and protect against discrimination.</li> <li>▪ Offers customised billing arrangements for vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b></p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Long term population growth is likely to have a greater demand on water resources.</li> <li>➕ Sharing knowledge of water sensitive urban design features for city developments can enable ecological sustainable local development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides water and sewerage infrastructure to all residential types across Canberra.</li> <li>▪ Our sustainability scorecard assessment ensures sustainability is embedded in all Icon Water infrastructure projects.</li> <li>▪ Promotes indigenous culture and water heritage through our Reconciliation Action Plan and the Cotter Dam Discovery Walk.</li> <li>▪ Supplies essential services to ACT and regional emergency services.</li> <li>▪ Provides water for irrigation for green and public spaces and public drinking water fountains.</li> </ul>



Goal	Relevance	Potential impacts	Icon	Water's contribution
<b>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Provision of services exerts direct and indirect impacts on the depletion of natural resources.</li> <li>➕ Through well managed processes, service delivery contributes to the circular economy by reducing waste to landfill.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduces waste to landfill through our Waste Management Strategy with a focus on resource recovery.</li> <li>▪ Approximately 80 per cent of the water supplied for drinking is treated and returned to the river as environmental flows.</li> <li>▪ Recycled around 81 per cent of waste in 2017–18 and reduced our tonnage of waste sent to landfill by three per cent over the prior year.</li> <li>▪ Continues to research new waste reduction opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Service provision exerts a direct and indirect impact on greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.</li> <li>➕ As significant energy users, water businesses have opportunities to make changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduces the region's exposure to drought and bushfire climate related events through our water security measures and annual Bushfire Operations Plans.</li> <li>▪ Offsets emissions via two major carbon offset plantations.</li> <li>▪ Prepares and responds to climate change impacts in infrastructure planning, water demand forecasting and long term planning.</li> </ul>
<b>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Dam development impact on fish ecosystems.</li> <li>➕ Responsible, active catchment management supports aquatic biodiversity.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funds programs and works with the community and partners to protect and conserve fish species in the river systems and dams.</li> <li>▪ Encourages people to choose tap water over bottled water to reduce plastic pollution.</li> <li>▪ Funds assessment of erosion hot spots in source water catchments to help prioritise rehabilitation efforts to improve water quality.</li> </ul>
<b>15 LIFE ON LAND</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➖ Service provision can exert a direct impact on land contamination and the destruction of ecosystems in rare cases.</li> <li>➕ Water businesses have significant opportunities to restore/protect ecosystems and ensure sustainable land management.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improves the habitats of endangered species and protects catchment areas.</li> <li>▪ Works under environmental legislation, water licences and our own vegetation management strategies to ensure best practice land management and control of discharges to the environment.</li> <li>▪ Maintains biodiversity and carbon forestry offsets.</li> <li>▪ Returns approximately 80 per cent of water extracted back to rivers (with the remainder recycled on land).</li> </ul>
<b>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➕ Responsible procurement can actively oppose human rights violations and corruptive practices.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manages ethical risks through our culture, based on core values of Safety, Excellence and Openness.</li> <li>▪ Provides mental health and anti-discrimination support to all staff, plus assistance for victims of domestic violence.</li> <li>▪ Undertakes drug and alcohol testing program of staff to provide a safe work environment.</li> </ul>
<b>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</b> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➕ Professional networks support knowledge transfer and capacity building within the water industry.</li> <li>➕ Opportunities to foster strong relationships with a range of stakeholders can achieve greater community outcomes.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertakes localised corporate responsibility initiatives and support through our local community partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Has a vision to be a valued partner in our community.</li> <li>▪ Shares SDG commitment and knowledge through WSAA.</li> </ul>



# Environmental sustainability

We will provide our services to the community in an environmentally sustainable manner.

## Key Sustainable Development Goals

**SDG 7**  
Affordable and clean energy

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 11

**SDG 13**  
Climate action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

**SDG 14**  
Life below water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

**SDG 15**  
Life on land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 12



## MANAGING OUR ENERGY USE



Solar PV panels at Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre

Like many businesses, we recognise the need to reduce our energy consumption, curb our greenhouse gas emissions and limit our contribution to climate change.

We are doing this through our Energy Management Strategy, which outlines our commitment to driving energy efficiency, reducing energy use across the business and improving energy performance when operating our plants and network.

We are increasing our focus on renewable energy generation. We have four [mini-hydro electricity](#) generators at our Water Treatment Plants, producing over 1.2 MW electricity to run the plants and feed electricity to the grid.

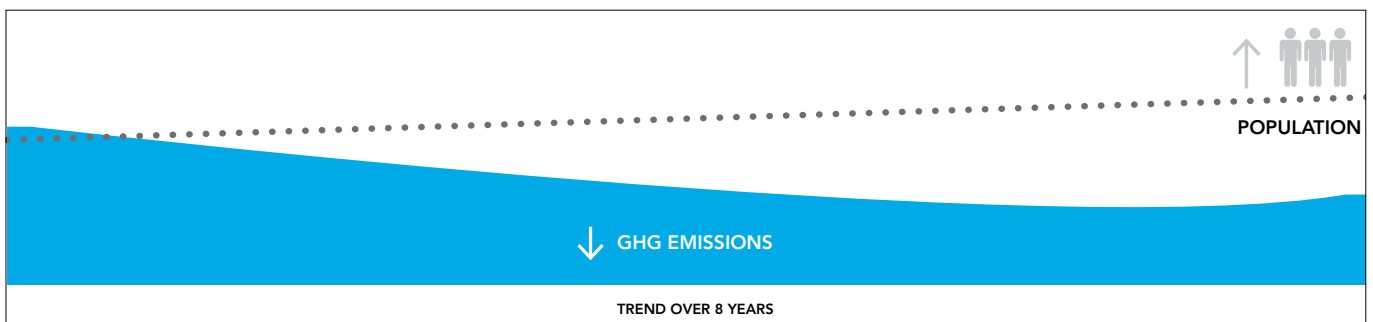
Solar photovoltaic arrays are installed across four sites at Icon Water, with the goal of generating over 2 MW in the coming years, aligned with other building and renovation projects.

We have strived to reduce our energy use and emissions. Despite increases in some operations, due in main to environmental conditions leading to increased use of our infrastructure, we have lowered our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions despite a steady increase in the population we serve.

**70**  
HECTARES

To help reduce our emission profile further, Icon Water has [carbon offsets](#). One of our offsets is located in Western Australia to restore land that was previously degraded and another is a **70 hectare property with a plantation of eucalyptus trees in Tullamore, NSW.**

GHG emissions FY09-10 to FY17-18





15 LIFE ON LAND



## INNOVATIVE FISH CONSERVATION



Maquarie Perch

The Cotter Reservoir was enlarged in 2013 to improve water security following the millennium drought.

It contains the only self-sustaining ACT population of the nationally endangered Macquarie perch, *Macquaria australasica*, one of only a few populations in south-eastern Australia. Working closely with experts from the University of Canberra, Australian National University and University of Sydney, Icon Water has developed a comprehensive program to protect this threatened aquatic species.

Macquarie perch require flowing water to spawn, as they lay their eggs in runs and riffles where the flowing water keeps the eggs oxygenated and clear of sediment.

While constructing the enlarged Cotter Dam, Icon Water established artificial fish habitats - specially constructed habitat reefs to provide artificial shelter habitat for the Macquarie Perch until the reservoir filled and new natural habitat was established.

Research continues to be conducted by the University of Canberra (Institute for Applied Ecology) and Icon Water, in consultation with catchment land managers and regulators, to address key risks during the filling and operational phases of the reservoir.

On ground works have included the physical modification of barriers and construction of fish passages, review of environmental flow releases and a comprehensive fish monitoring program.

An acoustic monitoring program and spawning site characterisation research have helped to determine the timing and extent of Macquarie perch movements in the spawning seasons since 2016.

These studies discovered that the vast majority of spawning migration by the fish occurs at night (between 5–6pm) and spawning is closely related to rises in water temperature over 16°C.

These research findings are world leading and have broad implications for management of inland reservoirs and rivers with native fish populations.



Our sustained effort achieved the 2017 ACT Water Research Innovation Award from the Australian Water Association for our Enlarged Cotter Dam Fish Monitoring and Research Program.



# Social responsibility

We will continue to address the interests and needs of the community and consider future generations in all that we do.

## Key Sustainable Development Goals

### **SDG 1**

No poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

### **SDG 2**

Zero hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

### **SDG 3**

Good health and wellbeing

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 14

### **SDG 6**

Clean water and sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 15



## SWITCHING ON TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Health and safety is key to Icon Water. We have implemented four core safety initiatives: Switch On, Safe to Start, Courageous Conversations and Act on It.

Every employee is encouraged to make a personal commitment to a safer workplace through our health and safety strategy. This involves being accountable for their own safety, as well as looking out for their colleagues. We foster a core belief that all incidents, particularly repeat incidents, are preventable.

The Switch On program begins this change process for new starters and is the foundational program of our safety strategy. Since 2017, every employee of Icon Water has participated in Switch On.

All participants are encouraged to have Courageous Conversations, to address safe plant, systems of work and behaviours, enabling them to be Safe to Start.

Each participant develops and implements personal action plans and makes a commitment to Act On It and directly contribute to preventing incidents.

This is delivering a cultural shift in attitudes to safety, in individual employees and across the business.

Safety is part of each employee's personal development plans.

### Core 4

SWITCH ON

SAFE TO START

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

ACT ON IT

**ALL INCIDENTS ARE PREVENTABLE**





## HIGH QUALITY AND SAFE DRINKING WATER

Icon Water plays a fundamental role in the community – providing clean, safe and sustainable drinking water and sewerage services that contribute to public health, the future prosperity and liveability of the region.

We carry out extensive drinking water quality monitoring. Over 5,000 water samples are taken each year from a range of catchment areas, including taps and reservoirs. This ensures that the water delivered to Canberra and Queanbeyan remains of the highest quality and complies with our legal requirements. [Our Annual Drinking Water Quality Report 2017–18](#) provides a detailed insight into our water treatment processes and water quality results.

### Water supply and sustainable water usage

Securing water for the region has been a major priority for Icon Water and we took steps back in 2013 to increase our overall storage capacity. This included enlarging the Cotter Dam, (which increased our overall storage capacity by 35 per cent).

Since 2010, water consumption across the ACT and Queanbeyan has been guided by Permanent Water Conservation Measures. Despite our secure supply, these common sense measures are still in place as good judgement should always be applied to water use, especially with ongoing hot dry conditions predicted and as the region's population increases.

In September 2017, Icon Water released a revised Source Water Protection Strategy with the overall objective to protect drinking water supply within the ACT region. Through this we continue to work with relevant land management agencies and regional catchment groups to identify and mitigate potential contamination hazards within the

catchments, the first barrier step to protecting the quality of water sources for potable water supply. We also have a number of Actions for Clean Water (ACWA) Plans to identify sediment erosion hotspots and help direct efforts to stabilise and rectify sites over time. Plans have been completed for the Googong and Upper Murrumbidgee catchments. The Cotter catchment ACWA Plan is under development.

### Clean effluent water

The Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre (LMWQCC), (Canberra's primary sewage treatment plant) is Australia's largest inland sewage treatment facility. During 2017–18, LMWQCC treated 33.3 GL of raw sewage.

Sewage is treated by physical, chemical and biological treatment processes before the treated effluent water leaving LMWQCC is released into the Molonglo River. Download the LMWQCC brochure for more on our treatment process from our [website](#).

Icon Water returns approximately 80 per cent of water extracted back to rivers. Treated water from LMWQCC is a major proportion of environmental flows for the Molonglo River and critical to river health in times of drought.

This treated water then flows into the Murrumbidgee River as part of the Murray-Darling Basin river system, ultimately discharging into the ocean south of Adelaide. Water leaving this plant is thoroughly treated to one of the highest standards in Australia, so it is returned to the natural water cycle and can be reused by other towns further downstream.





# Cultural vitality

We will develop a culture that grows the capability of our people and drives high performance.

## Key Sustainable Development Goals

**SDG 4**  
Quality education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 17

**SDG 5**  
Gender diversity

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 18

**SDG 10**  
Reduced inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

**SDG 16**  
Peace and justice, strong institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.





## VALUING EDUCATION



Hydration Girl and Drain Sheriff rode out to Duffy Primary School for Ride to School day.

Icon Water runs engagement and educational activities for all sectors of our community.

These activities are a valuable opportunity to educate our community and customers on what we do, how our network works and how each of us has a responsibility to protect the environment and use water wisely.

Our external education strategy delivers educational programs and events to schools, the community and to industry. These programs are designed to encourage positive behaviour change by highlighting the impact personal behaviour can have on local water and sewerage services.

Throughout the year we run a number of tours for overseas delegates. These tours allow us to share our experience and knowledge with delegates during visits to our dams and treatment plants.

### Encouraging STEM

We believe we have an important role in encouraging students, especially girls, to explore the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and to consider careers in the water industry. This includes supporting school career events, the National Science and Youth Forum and STEM subject tours. In 2018, we ran 21 local school tours emphasising STEM. These programs show primary, secondary and tertiary students how science, technology and engineering are used in our water treatment processes.



### Hydration and draincare education – our mascots

Icon Water has two mascots who visit schools and events to take our messages to the community. Hydration Girl reminds the Canberra community of the health benefits of hydration, and that by carrying your own water bottle and refilling it at one of the public water refill stations we can save money and help our environment.

Hydration Girl is supported in her education campaign by Drain Sheriff - "Take care of your drains".

Drain Sheriff has his trusty plunger and hose at the ready. His job is to educate the community about what should and shouldn't go down the drain, and how the wrong things can lead to blockages and affect the sewage treatment process.



## GENDER EQUALITY AT ICON WATER



### Leading from the top

We are proud that five of the eight directors on our Board are women. They bring diverse experience to the oversight of our operations and are champions of gender equality in Icon Water.

### Inspiring our workforce

InspireCo is a collaboration between ActewAGL, Evoenergy and Icon Water that supports gender equality in our organisations. The forum brings together interested and engaged employees to provide networking and professional development opportunities.

Previous speakers at InspireCo forums have included social commentator, writer and lecturer Jane Caro, and Victorian Australian of the Year, cancer fundraiser and actor Samuel Johnson.

### Giving women a helping hand

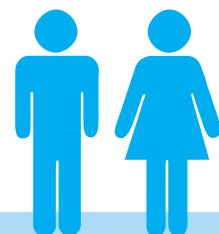
Karinya House is an ACT based organisation founded in 1997. Karinya House deliver services directly to women who are pregnant or parenting, 24 hours, seven days a week.

We have been proud to partner with Karinya House for the past three years, with funds contributing to the direct cost of service provision to women and families through their outreach and residential services – an investment that results in an enduring return for many women, their families and the broader Canberra community.

We also sponsor the Lifeline Women of Spirit Awards. The Awards recognise inspirational women in our community; women who have triumphed over adversity, who give back to the community and inspire others to do the same.

*"It was inspiring to hear the stories of some truly remarkable women who have triumphed over adversity. The nominees and the guest speaker showed exceptional strength of character, determination and a selfless dedication to the community and I felt honoured to attend on behalf of Icon Water"*

Neil Smith, Manager  
Maintenance Services



Our gender pay gap (base salaries) is down to 2% compared to the national gender pay gap of 15.3% in the industry.



# Financial health

We will drive efficiencies in our operations and deliver profit for shareholders through sustainable business management.

## Key Sustainable Development Goals

### SDG 8

Decent work and economic growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

### SDG 9

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

### SDG 11

Sustainable cities and community

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 20

### SDG 12

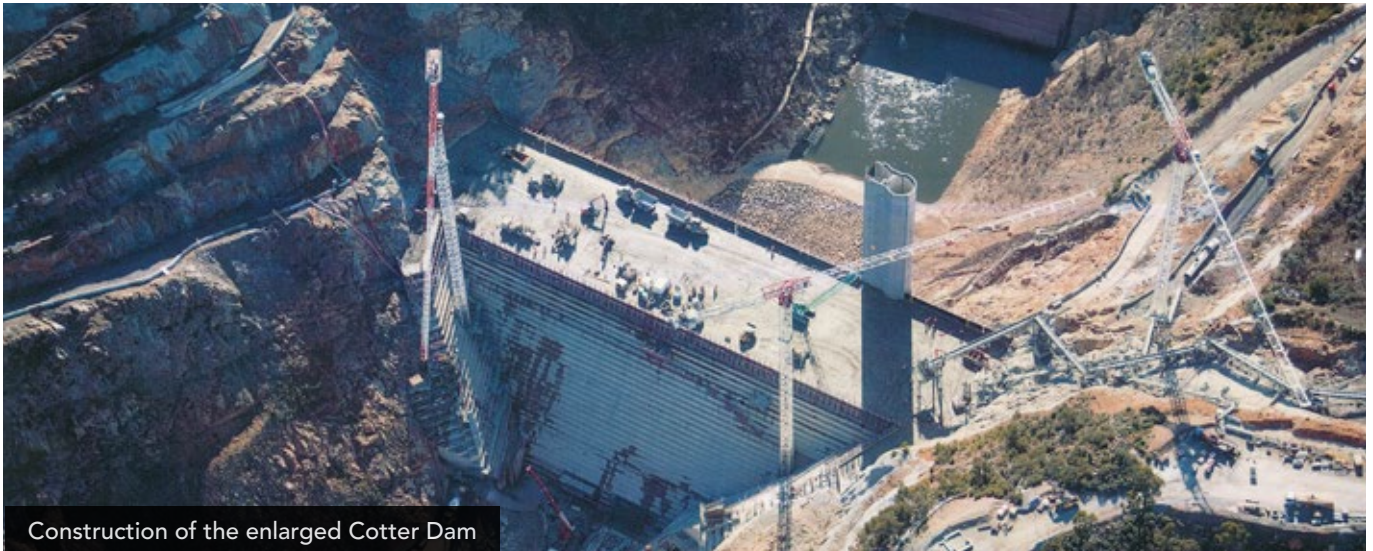
Responsible consumption and production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**CASE STUDY** PAGE 21



## EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN OUR ASSETS



Construction of the enlarged Cotter Dam

Icon Water has developed processes to ensure that new developments are sustainable in design and operation.

We have developed our own sustainability assessment which to date has assessed the sustainability credentials of around 550 Icon Water capital works projects.

This tool has been integrated into our planning process to ensure all capital project options assess financial, social, environmental and cultural impacts and opportunities before being delivered.

The tool is broken down into twelve sustainability categories and provides scores related to energy and water use, waste generation, material and land use, climate change, discharge and ecological impacts, and risks to the community, workforce, heritage and urban landscape.

The resulting score for each option provides our project managers with the ability to compare project options and select those that provide the most sustainable outcomes for Icon Water.

### Providing critical assets

Icon Water has a range of strategies to improve the resilience of our water and sewerage networks when faced with climate change driven events. We deliver a Bushfire Operations Plan each year to remove fuel loads around key assets and facilities to reduce the risk to assets, staff and public safety.

We are also a critical stakeholder in ACT and region emergency management arrangements, providing support to Canberra's Emergency Services Agency when responding to incidents and providing essential water services for emergency events.



## RECOVERING OUR WASTE



Biochar

As part of our sustainability focus, Icon Water has developed a five year Waste Management Strategy.

As part of this strategy we have undertaken a comprehensive study that identifies opportunities to reduce waste to landfill, generate efficiencies and find alternative beneficial reuse options.

Across the business in the 2017–18 financial year, Icon Water successfully recycled 81 per cent of its waste.

### Overall Performance

**81%**  
Recycled or in preparation for recycling

**19%**  
Disposal/Landfill



### Agri-Ash

Canberra's location inland means that Icon Water treats sewage to a rigorously high standard, as the LMWQCC discharges directly into the Murray-Darling Basin river system (previously referred to as Murrumbidgee river system).

We produce Agri-Ash from this sewage treatment process. This product is the residual incinerated sewage sludge produced by the furnace. It is entirely recycled and used as a soil conditioner to increase crop yields. Our LMWQCC produces around 16 tonnes of Agri-Ash a day (more information can be found on the [Icon Water](#) website).

The process to produce Agri-Ash is of particular interest to other countries and communities who are located inland and have limited waste disposal options. Agri-Ash is rich in phosphorus and calcium which are excellent for acidic soils. In the future, Agri-Ash may increase in importance as the world's supply of phosphorus – vital for intensive agriculture – is depleted. It is also an economical alternative for farmers.

### ▶ [Agri-Ash video](#)

We are trialling a range of recovery options for other waste streams including the manufacture of bricks or commercial soils using alum sludge from water treatment and the creation of compost and biochar from biosolids. We continue to innovate in order to upgrade products and reduce waste sent to landfill.



## PARTNERING WITH OUR COMMUNITY



Orange Sky Laundry

Relationships and partnerships are a vital part of our business and building a sustainable ACT and region.

To protect our catchments and dams as drinking water sources, we liaise closely with key ACT Government departments, federal and local governments, regulators, residential groups, businesses, community groups, indigenous communities, academia, suppliers and contractors.

The Googong Township around the Googong Dam continues to expand, which has resulted in an increase in recreational activities on and around the dam.

To ensure that the water quality of the dam is not compromised with increasing recreational use, relationships have been established between relevant stakeholders, including ACT Parks and Conservation Services, Googong Township and Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council. These partnerships share messaging through targeted communication, community events and school programs.

The Cotter catchment is important not only as a primary water source but also as a place of cultural, recreational, historical and environmental significance.

The Cotter was a traditional Aboriginal dwelling place and has an abundance of cultural history. Before and during the construction of the enlarged Cotter Dam, archaeologists identified 90 Aboriginal sites and retrieved over 2,000 stone artefacts from the inundation zone. Before being re-interred, the artefacts were examined using stone-tool analysis techniques. The findings assisted in advancing historians' understanding of early Indigenous communities in this region of the ACT.

To ensure the Cotter's history is recorded, the Cotter Dam Discovery Trail was developed, including a 1.4 kilometre loop trail which leads along the Cotter River and through the surrounding natural environment. The trail is lined with stories of Canberra's water history, the heritage of the Cotter catchment area and its significance to the Canberra community.

The trail continues to be enjoyed by Canberrans and regional visitors alike.

### Our Community Support Program

Icon Water has a strong focus on demonstrating social responsibility and supporting the broader community. Each year we identify and provide support to a wide range of community partners, contributing about \$500,000 annually through donations, in kind support and sponsorships through our Community Support Program.

When assessing sponsorship opportunities, Icon Water seeks:

- local benefits to the ACT or surrounding communities
- alignment with Icon Water's core values of safety, excellence and openness
- to reach a range of direct beneficiaries
- applicants and/or activities that reflect, support and encourage the community's interests
- engagement on water and sewerage services
- the potential for broad employee involvement or benefit.



This brief snapshot covers some of the work we have underway to advance Icon Water's core purpose: **to sustain and enhance quality of life.**

Our core purpose is reflected in how we deliver sustainable value, how we build our internal culture and the way we serve our customers. Our [2019–20 business strategy](#) sets out how we will do that over the next four years, including projects to tackle our sustainability goals.

Our Sustainability Forum helps drive the process, bringing together staff from across the business to champion projects and ensure we embed sustainability in everything we do.

High on our agenda will be developing a climate change adaptation plan and building our climate resilience, as well as researching and prioritising resource recovery opportunities.

We will be working closely with the broader water sector to develop a suite of KPIs to ensure we monitor and measure our efforts and continually improve our contributions to the SDGs.

### Our sustainability principles

Enrich our  
neighbourhood

Respect  
resources

Care for  
tomorrow