

**2025**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY**

**Bus Frequency Improvement - Assembly Resolution of 5 December 2024 –  
September 2025 Update**

**Government Response**

**Mr Chris Steel MLA  
Minister for Transport  
September 2025**



The ACT Government has an ambitious agenda to deliver more bus services more frequently, making it easier and more convenient for Canberrans to use public transport.

With our city growing and evolving, a frequent, accessible, and reliable public transport network is more important than ever. Whether you live in the heart of the city or the outer suburbs, our goal is the same: to provide more efficient and sustainable transport options that support Canberrans in their daily lives.

Our vision for Canberra's public transport is clear, improved frequency reduces wait times, provides greater flexibility, encourages mode shift from private vehicles, and contributes to our broader climate and planning goals.

## **Progress to Date**

### Term 2 2025 Network

The Government delivered early on its commitment to provide more rapid, local and school services with the commencement of the "Term 2 2025 Network" on Monday, 28 April 2025.

The new network aligned with the opening of Woden Bus Depot, Australia's largest all-electric bus depot. This nation leading infrastructure allowed for network benefits and efficiencies to be realised, with approximately 2,000 kilometres of "dead running" per day put back into the network as 96 new weekday services.

This uplift prioritised increased frequency on rapid routes to meet peak demand, expansion of rapid and local bus coverage across high-growth areas, including Molonglo, Belconnen, Woden and Denman Prospect, and improvements to school services in direct response to community feedback.

Service highlights included:

- ten additional Rapid-2 services in the morning peak and four in the afternoon between Belconnen and the City, which increased frequency (up to 3 minutes) and capacity on the City-Belconnen corridor during high demand periods, and improved the distribution of vehicles fitted with bike racks;
- four additional morning and three additional afternoon Rapid-4 services between Woden and the City, which increased frequency (up to 3 minutes) and capacity on the Cotter Road during high demand periods;
- three additional Rapid-10 morning services from Molonglo, which extended 15-minute frequency extended across the day and provided earlier services from Denman Shops;
- three additional late-night Rapid-3 services from Canberra Airport, which extended 15-minute frequency of inbound services to the City to 8:30 PM;
- six new trips on Route-47 between Molonglo and Belconnen, which extended hourly service times by nearly three hours in the evening and provided 30-minute frequency during the afternoon peak; and
- additional services on Route 66 between Woden and Molonglo during the high demand period in the morning peak.

Supporting student travel remains a core part of our public transport network, and the new network also provided refined routes and new school services across Canberra.

These were developed in consultation with school communities and aligned with feedback about bell times, coverage gaps and transfer points.

Improvements include additional services and timing adjustments that now benefit students at over 30 schools. These enhancements make getting to and from school more convenient, particularly for students living in Molonglo, Weston Creek, Gungahlin and the Inner North.

Looking ahead, school service planning will continue in step with general frequency uplifts. By aligning student routes with the broader network, we are creating a more coherent and accessible system that supports independence and reliability for young Canberrans.

The improvements delivered through the Term 2 2025 network were the result of strategic infrastructure planning, enhanced driver recruitment, and our commitment to a zero-emissions future.

### Weekend Network Uplift – More Sunday Services

The ACT Government is undertaking a staged increase to route bus service frequencies on the weekend. Rapid buses have always remained frequent across both days.

Increased local bus frequencies on Sunday commenced on 31 August 2025, which has extended hourly services from first service in the morning until approximately 2:00 pm across Canberra. Rapid services continue to run every 15 to 30 minutes across the weekend.

Following the successful rollout of hourly Saturday local services in April 2024, funding through the 2025-26 ACT Budget enabled Transport Canberra to

respond to community demand and further deliver on the Government's commitment to provide reliable and increased weekend bus services.

This uplift provided:

- 87 additional bus services in the Belconnen region.
- 61 additional bus services in the Gungahlin region.
- 77 additional bus services in the Central Canberra region.
- 111 additional bus services in the Woden region.
- 54 additional bus services in the Molonglo and Weston Creek regions.
- 85 additional bus services in the Tuggeranong region.

These weekend improvements are being achieved without compromising weekday service delivery and being implemented under the Weekend Reliability Trial from the *2023-2026 Transport Canberra Operations Agreement*. A staged approach ensures that reliability of services is maintained, which is a function of bus driver availability.

Transport Canberra will review and evaluate reliability across the day before making an informed decision to further extend the frequency of Sunday bus services.

### **Fleet, Drivers and Depots**

Increasing bus frequency is not simply a scheduling exercise. It requires real investment and a coordinated strategy to ensure that fleet, staffing and infrastructure are scaled appropriately.

Our zero-emissions transition is leading the nation. Canberra now has the highest per-capita electric bus fleet in Australia. We've procured 106 battery electric buses with over 70 already delivering services, and the remainder expected to enter service progressively by the end of 2026. In addition to the 106, a further 30 replacement buses have been funded through the 2025-26 Budget

The new Woden Bus Depot, which officially opened and became operational on 28 April 2025, is currently servicing 70 commuter vehicles, in addition to Special Needs Transport (SNT) buses. It is anticipated that the depot will reach full operational fleet capacity by the end of 2026.

A key element in supporting future network improvements is the planned retirement of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses, which will reduce the need for specialised infrastructure and deliver operational savings as infrastructure is decommissioned. These savings will be directly reinvested into service frequency improvements without increasing overall fleet size.

During the last election, this Government also made a commitment to recruit at least 350 new drivers during this term of government to maintain service delivery as the network expands. This will ensure establishment driver numbers are maintained throughout natural workforce attrition while also supporting service expansion through workforce growth.

To meet this commitment, Transport Canberra is continuing its active driver recruitment efforts. Since 1 January 2025, 71 commuter drivers have graduated and are now servicing Canberra's public transport system. The March 2025 recruitment campaign received 453 applications, including 320 for part-time roles and 133 for casual positions, and Transport Canberra has

processed 271 applications as part of the current recruitment round for permanent part-time drivers which is open until 28 September 2025.

### **The Next Phase**

Improvements to Canberra's bus network will be strategically phased in over the remainder of this term. The current focus is on localised enhancement, starting with areas where demand is growing or where existing services are not meeting community expectations.

This will be guided by detailed usage data and community input. It allows for a tailored approach - delivering extra services where they are needed most, while maintaining operational viability across the network. Future network uplifts will also align with a steady growth of operational capacity, including fleet availability, driver resourcing, and depot capacity, to ensure every new service added to the timetable is one that can be delivered consistently.

It is important to note the National Capital Authority's upcoming works on the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge will have forthcoming impacts on the broader transport network. These works will see a full closure of one bridge at a time for a period of up to one year each, therefore two years in total.

This is expected to have significant impact on our ability to run an efficient bus network, and these impacts will be felt network wide. The ACT Government is continuing to work closely with the National Capital Authority to try and minimise impacts, however much of this is outside of the Territories control.

I have asked Transport Canberra to do all they can to minimise these impacts and to communicate any impacts on the bus network to the community as soon as they are known.

The ACT Government remains committed to building a transport network that meets the needs of a dynamic and inclusive city, and we are doing so in a way that is sustainable and future-focused.

I look forward to keeping the Assembly and community updated as this work progresses.

ENDS