LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN SERVICES

REPORT NO.43 (MARCH 2000)

THE DRAFT 2000-01 BUDGET FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN SERVICES [DUS]

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That in future years the public be heard before the Minister and officials, so that the concerns raised by members of the public may be directly taken up by the committee with officials.

   Rationale: It has been customary to schedule the appearance of the Minister and departmental officials at one public hearing and then to schedule members of the public (usually on a different day). The committee considers that it would be useful, and courteous to members of the public, to first hear community representatives so that the committee, if it chooses, may then question the Minister and his/her officials about matters raised by the public.

2. That the final Budget use tabs or coloured pages or some other means to separate the estimates for each department or operating unit.

   Rationale: While the *Table of Contents* in the Draft Budget identifies each agency's portion of the document, it would be useful if the document itself contained an easy means to identify where one agency commences or finishes (e.g. the DUS portion of the Draft Budget starts on page 115, immediately opposite the final entry for the Department of Health; this is confusing to the reader).

3. That a list of DUS's business units/functional areas be provided at the head of DUS's portion of the Budget, along with a brief explanation of why the department has chosen to adopt these particular units/functional areas. Also, that a brief explanation be provided about why the department has chosen the particular output classes shown in the Budget.

   Rationale: An important aspect of accountability is the provision of information about why the department has adopted a particular organisation structure, and why it has chosen to use the particular output classes shown in the Budget. Such information sets the scene for the detailed financial and performance data that follows. It also means that the department can state up-front any changes to the organisational structure from one year to the next.

The committee notes that a list of output classes for DUS appears at Appendix D of the Draft Budget [page 374]. This list should be replicated at the beginning of the DUS section of the Budget, followed by brief notes on why these output classes have been selected as the most appropriate for DUS's activities; and reference to any changes from previous years.

4. That the various portions of the Draft Budget dealing with DUS be grouped together so as to improve the reader's understanding of the estimates.

   Rationale: The preceding recommendation referred to the list of output classes for DUS. However, it is not only these that belong in the DUS section of the Budget but the descriptions of DUS's capital works [in Appendix F of the Draft budget at pages 397-408] and the additional information on DUS's budget variations [at Appendix G, pages 468-478].

5. That explanatory notes be provided for each large dollar item in the operating statements and output tables of DUS's business units/functional areas— and that these notes identify any adjustments (e.g. greater than $100,000) that affect year to year and item to item comparisons.

   Rationale: The operating statement for a business unit such as Environment & Heritage on page 146 of the Draft Budget includes items such as 'employee expenses' ($10.3m) and 'administration expenses' ($9.6m). No break-up of these large dollar amounts appears. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify causes for large changes (such as those over $100,000). To allow adequate parliamentary and community scrutiny, this kind of information needs to be available.

   Though some information of this kind is provided in the operating statement for the department as a whole [on pages 119-122 of the Draft Budget], it does not cover off each large dollar amount in the operating statement sand output tables of specific functional units. Also, it should not be necessary to move backwards and forwards between pages 119-122 and the particular page to which the explanation refers.

6. That quality performance measures for each output class include, not just annual ratings or surveys of client satisfaction, but measures of actual performance (e.g. for the output class of 'Nature Conservation and Land Management' there should be a performance measure bearing on actual changes in the number of feral animals and increases or decreases in the area of weeds).

   Rationale: The quality of performance cannot be assessed simply on the basis of annual ratings or surveys of clients, however well-designed these surveys may be. The various business units/functional areas should be able to identify quality measures which relate directly to their raison d'etre. This information appears for some business units/functional areas but not for others.

7. That the government review the large reduction in expenditure on PALM [from $6.25m to $4.8m, shown on page 115 of the Draft budget], in order to ensure that core planning and regulatory functions are not threatened by the proposed funding cut.

   Rationale: The drop in funding (described as 'injections for operations') is described in the notes to the Budget statements [page 122] as follows: 'Progressive reductions over the forward years reflect savings from the business restructure and achievement of benchmark cost structures for those outputs which have been benchmarked to date'. In the case of PALM, they follow the Ernst and Young review of its activities [transcript 18/2/00]. The reductions include a drop of $292,000 in the cost of administering the Territory Plan and a drop of $342,000 in the cost of policy reviews, policies and strategies [page 153 of the Draft Budget].

   The committee deals frequently (almost on a weekly basis) with that part of PALM handling Territory Plan Variations. It is not obvious to members where cost savings in this area could be made, particularly when account is taken of the fact that some of the more contentious Plan Variations lead to this committee asking PALM to provide significant supplementary material – as well as to appearing several times before the committee at public hearings.

   The committee notes the addition to PALM's list of performance measures under Territory Planning of the item 'Master and other Plans' [also on page 153 of the Draft Budget]. This measure 'includes the development of criteria for local plans and the development of master plans, section plans and other plans specifying permitted development over an area' [ibid]. The committee is pleased to see specific allocation of money for the preparation of section master plans.

8. That the government give priority to completing an accurate, easily accessible land data system that can be accessed by the public to find all relevant information about individual parcels of land.

   Rationale: The Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services is keenly interested in an improved land information system. The committee notes the preposed expenditure of $3.9m on 'land information' [page 154 of the Draft Budget]. The committee also appreciates the current work on surveying and mapping modernisation that is described on pages 471-2 of the Draft Budget. The committee notes that the latter work is a three-year project 'to be funded from within existing departmental resources' [page 472].

   A recent public briefing by DUS officers indicated that the ACT's land information system (ACTMAP), now being developed, will greatly improve access to key information on land in the Territory. The committee is pleased by the progress being made to date.

The committee considers that it is very important the land database be connected, at the earliest possible opportunity, to other key databases in the Administration, including the registers of land ownership and ACTEW's list of current householders.

9. That the government carefully consider the four suggestions by the National Parks Association to raise additional funds for environmental measures in the ACT, noting particularly the Association's rider – *which is shared by this committee* – that higher charges will only be tolerated by the community if the increased revenue is seen to be going, in its entirety, to measures that improve the environment. The four suggestions for increased revenue involve the <u>existing</u> Water Abstraction Charge and the Pollutant Loading Fee, and a <u>possible</u> Bushland Preservation Levy.

<u>Rationale</u>: The continuing care and management of the ACT's significant areas of nature reserves and national parks is a heavy cost to the community which, however, **may** be prepared to pay higher amounts if assured that **all** of the increased revenue was devoted to environmental measures. The National Parks Association is to be commended for raising this issue, as well for the high quality of its submission. This committee itself has drawn attention in several of its reports to inadequate funding of important aspects of the work of Environment ACT.

10. That the government – and the Assembly – carefully monitor the performance of ACTION, taking particular note of the difficulties encountered in the current year and the government's *ACTION Discussion Paper* (February 2000).

<u>Rationale</u>: The Draft Budget states that the growth in patronage did 'not reach expectations'; that there is 'a below budget outcome in regard to fare revenue'; there were 'additional network costs of $1.5m; and employee expenses increased by $1.356m due to new network costs which were not anticipated' [page 178]. Consequently, the 'injection for operating requirements' is expected to increase from $1.943m in 1999-00 to $2.569m in 2000-01 and to $4.398m in 2001-02 [page 175 of the Draft Budget].

The *Discussion Paper* includes the following comments:
- 'Net greenhouse emissions can be reduced through buses carrying nine or more people who would otherwise drive. Most non-peak bus routes do not currently meet this target' [page 5]
- 'Canberra is a widely spread city with one of the lowest population densities of any city in Australia. Low urban population density is a disincentive to the use of public transport… Current [patronage] usage is estimated at about 5%' [page 6]
- 'About 70% of all ACTION users travel either on concession or school discount tickets' [*ibid*]
- 'Significant driver license and motor vehicle registration concessions provided to pensioners have… reduced potential patronage' [page 7]
- 'Changes in the employment market…, the increasing incidence of casual and home-based employment and a high degree of company vehicle use and/or free car parking, have… had a negative impact on the potential for increasing public transport patronage' [*ibid*]

- 'The rate of passenger growth is slowing and revenue projections remain inadequate compared to emerging cost pressures… ACTION is probably close to its patronage ceiling' [*ibid*]

11. That the government re-assess the adequacy of the proposed allocation of $300,000 for street tree replacement [Draft Budget page 160].

    Rationale: The Draft Budget states that the proposed expenditure of $300,000 'aims to address the need to progressively renew major elements of the landscape assets as they age and assists in meeting the needs of the community in keeping recreational open space at an acceptable standard' [page 405]. The committee notes that the entry on page 160 refers only to street trees whereas that on page 405 refers to street and park trees.

    The committee will shortly release its report on a tree protection and management policy for the ACT. During the committee's inquiry, a number of witnesses referred to the need to increase the amount of money being spent on replacing the ACT's tree asset, especially in view of the fact that many are nearing the end of their natural life. The committee also was told of the need to develop an appropriate methodology to place a dollar value on this asset.

12. That the government consider placing a priority upon constructing the full extension of Horse Park Drive in Gungahlin so that it links to the Federal Highway and to Majura Road, thus providing access from Gungahlin to the north and east (and, through Campbell, to the city centre).

    Rationale: The Draft Budget includes an allocation of $2.05m to construct a rural road along Horse Park Road alignment and other works to provide access to Amaroo [page 406]. The Master Builder's Association suggested that Horse Park Road be brought forward so as to link to the newly constructed intersection on the Federal Highway – this would improve access into and from Gungahlin. The MBA estimated the cost of a basic road as around $2m [transcript of the public hearing on 22/2/00].

13. That the government consider the need to advance work on the duplication of important roads such as William Hovell Drive between Coulter and Bindubi Streets (Belconnen), and Drakeford Drive in Tuggeranong.

    Rationale: Though not raised by witnesses during the inquiry, members of the committee are conscious of delays and problems with these major roads where they narrow to two lanes only (one in each direction). It appears time to begin planning for their duplication, given the constant traffic and importance of the roads.

14. That expenditure on bicycle paths in 2000-01 include the provision of a bike path along the length of Ellenborough Street, Lyneham, to facilitate bicycle access from central Canberra to north Canberra and e specially to Gungahlin.

    Rationale: The Draft Budget states it is intended to construct a short section (100m) of the bike path (at the Barton Highway end) if funds are available. The committee considers it is important to provide an adequate cycleway between Gungahlin and the City in the coming year. This will facilitate efforts to promote bicycle usage, as well as removing a risky, incomplete portion of the bike path to Gungahlin. The committee notes the department's appreciation of the missing link [transcript of the public hearing on 18/2/00].

15. That the government, when assessing it's trial of a third garbage bin during 2000-01 (intended for compostible material), take due account of the concerns of existing recyclers about the detrimental effect it may have on their businesses (such as demonstrated in written evidence to this committee by Tom's Trash Paks).

    Rationale: The committee appreciates the rationale for the trial; also, the committee notes the Minister's observation that some cities are finding the third bin useful while others have rejected the idea and are even moving back to just one bin for all waste [transcript of the public hearing on 18/2/00]. The committee considers that existing recyclers are entitled to be consulted about the trial, and the manner in which it is assessed.

The following section of the report describes the conduct of the inquiry and summarises the evidence put to the committee by the public. The purpose of the summaries is to highlight key points in the submissions for the benefit of members of the Assembly, the public and government officials.

While some points contained in the submissions are the subject of specific recommendations (above), the committee urges the government to take all submissions into account when finalising the Budget.

The committee thanks the people who lodged submissions and/or gave oral evidence, as well as the government officials who compiled the Draft Budget over the Xmas/New Year period and who attended the committee's hearings. Finally, the committee thanks the Minister for Urban Services (Mr Brendan Smyth MLA) for his cooperation - and willingness to take a wide range of questions from members of this committee.

Harold Hird MLA
Chair

23 March 2000

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN SERVICES

The committee was established on 28/4/98 to inquire into and report on planning and lease management, road and transport services, housing and housing assistance, government purchasing and public utilities purchasing, electricity industry and regulation, construction industry policy, parks and forests, private sector employment inspectorate, building services, environment, heritage and municipal services and any other related matter (*resolution of appointment, as amended on 25/11/99*).

<u>Committee members</u>

Mr Harold Hird MLA (Chair)
Mr Dave Rugendyke MLA (Deputy Chair)
Mr Simon Corbell MLA

Secretary – Mr Rod Power

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SUMMARY OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR DUS, BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN SERVICES

(A) CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

9/12/99—resolution by the Legislative Assembly referring the *Draft 2000-01 Budget* for each appropriation unit to the relevant standing committee 'to consider the expenditure proposals, revenue estimates and the capital works program for each portfolio and make recommendations that maintain or improve the operating result'. For the Department of Urban Services [DUS], the relevant standing committee is the Planning and Urban Services committee

17/1/00—the Treasurer forwards the 2000-02 *Draft Budget Estimates* and *Draft Budget Overview* to the standing committees

11/1/00 and 15/1/00—advertisements in the local media inviting public input by 14/2/00

18/2/00—first public hearing attended by the Minister for Urban Services and departmental officers

22/2/00—second public hearing attended by:
- *ACTCOSS*: Mr Stubbs (director) and Mr Matthews (policy officer)
- *ACT Shelter*: Reverend Webster, Ms Seymour and Ms Kollas
- *Conservation Council*: Ms Maxwell (president) and Ms Davies (director)
- *National Parks Association*: Mr Hurlstone (president), Mr Polglaze (research officer) and Mr Esau
- *North Canberra Community Council*: Dr Dickins and Mrs Kellett
- *Master Builders Association*: Mr Dawes (executive director)
- *Watson Community Association*: Ms Smith Ms Derrett and Ms Davey

1/3/00—the Minister for Urban Services provided responses to questions on notice from members

10/3/00— the Minister for Urban Services provided a copy of the government's *ACTION Discussion Paper*

The written submissions and transcript of the hearings—along with all written material passed to the committee by the Minister—were authorised for publication by the committee; and is available on request from the Committee Office of the Assembly (ph: 6205-0127).

(B) EVIDENCE (in alphabetical order)

<u>Note</u>: This summary of evidence relates only to matter in the DUS portion of the Draft Budget.

ACTCOSS 'is concerned with an increasing emphasis on… [higher] user charges… [which have] a disproportionate impact on low-income households'.[1] Also, it is concerned about the proposed funding for ACTION because it is 'essential' to retain 'an accessible, affordable and high quality public transport system'.

[1] Written submission dated 9/2/00.

ACTCOSS calls for 'an appropriate balance between public and community housing' and a review of the way the latter sector handles 'tenant participation and consumer protection measures'. It calls for more detail about 'the future transfer of properties from public to community providers'.

ACTCOSS calls for the development of an 'Indigenous Housing Policy as soon as practically possible'.

Also, ACTCOSS calls for the audit of community facilities (announced in the 1999-2000 Budget) to be completed, so that the community sector can be clear about the suitability of its present accommodation.

ACTCOSS supports the trial of kerbside recycling of 'organinics and residual waste' (costing $300,000) because it will 'benefit the aged, people with disabilities, and low income households' who may not have composting facilities at their homes.[2]

ACT Shelter states that it 'does not consider it is in a position to recommend a decrease in spending on other essential Urban Services (such as ACTION or road safety) in order to increase the provision of publicly-subsidised housing'.[3]

It calls on the government to increase funding for publicly-subsidised housing, in view of the ACT's low vacancy rate for private rental accommodation. Further, ACT Shelter calls on the housing policy unit of DUS to investigate the potential to expand the ACT housing private leasing scheme. Also, it calls on the government to develop an 'explicit Indigenous housing policy'.

ACT Shelter asks that funding for the 'Adaptable and Accessible Housing Working Group be continued'; and that ACT Housing develop 'a strategy to asses the level of demand for non-elderly person accessible housing and expand their stock of suitably built dwellings accordingly'. It also calls for 'an increase in safe housing options for single women' and an analysis of the need for 'emergency accommodation options'.[4]

ACT Shelter supports the proposed expenditure upon insulation and draught prevention in ACT Housing stock.

Conservation Council of the South-east Region and Canberra (Inc) calls for greater expenditure on environmental measures, to be funded by using the projected Budget surplus and/or increasing the level of taxes and charges.[5] The Council states that staff cuts in Environment ACT and PALM have 'undermined' their capacity to 'perform core functions'. With respect to Environment ACT, important tasks that are not adequately funded include monitoring the provisions of the Environment Protection Act 1997, implementing the 24 'action plans' for threatened species and communities, developing a vertebrate pest management strategy, implementing the ACT firewood strategy and the 'no waste by 2010 strategy', monitoring wildlife, developing land management agreements with rural lessees, and removing weeds.

With respect to raising greater revenue, the Conservation Council suggests:
- increasing car parking charges at all town centres along with other efforts to 'shift the balance

[2] *ibid*.
[3] Written submission dated 14/2/00.
[4] *ibid*.
[5] Written submission dated 16/2/00.

between private and public transport'
– 'at least some of the funds proposed for capital works aimed at improving the city and town and group centres ($7.595m) spent instead on the provision of key environmental services'
– the imposition of a 5% environment levy on land rates.[6]

Council on the Ageing (ACT) calls upon the government to target any increases in fees and charges, as 'across-the-board flat fees and charge increases have most effect on the poor as they consume a greater proportion of their limited incomes'.[7]

The Council states that 'many older people are customers of ACT Housing' who 'will benefit' from the proposed expenditure of $1m per annum by ACT Housing on insulation and draught prevention measures.

Further, the Council supports the Streetsmart program ($1.5m over two years) to improve the appearance of Canberra's streets and parks – and the Lakesmart program ($0.5m over two years) also.[8]

The Council calls on the government to provide 'appropriate land to the not-for-profit aged persons housing providers'. Even though 'it means foregoing revenue now', it is a useful means of providing housing 'for aged people who do not enjoy priority for public housing and lack the capital to enter the full commercial market'.[9]

Mr. Lloyd calls for the inclusion of funds to build either an overpass at the intersection of Hindmarsh Drive and Mugga Lane/Dalrymple Street at Red Hill/Narrabundah or to install double queuing lanes on Mugga Land and Dalrymple Street or to close this intersection and divert traffic to the existing Hindmarsh Drive/Jerrabomberra Avenue traffic lights. Such action would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and wear and tear on vehicles going uphill along Hindmarsh Drive.[10]

Master Builder's Association ACT called for specific funding for roads maintenance, given that roads are a $2b asset and it is essential 'to prioritise some of the repairs and the maintenance'.[11] It calls for the construction of Horse Park Road to link to Majura Road, as well as the extension of Flemington Road to Gungahlin Town Centre.[12] The Association expressed concern about DUS's tendering process 'especially when it comes to pre-qualification'.[13]

National Parks Association of the ACT Inc calls for more detailed information on budget activities[14]:

- items in the operating statements need amplification including identifying any significant adjustments (such as greater than $100,000) that affect year-to-year and item-to-item comparisons: e.g. items in the operating statement for Environment & Heritage[15] include the

[6] *ibid*.
[7] Written submission dated 17/2/00.
[8] The Draft Budget describes these programs at pages 469-470.
[9] Written submission *op. cit.*
[10] Written submission dated 4/2/00.
[11] Transcript of the public hearing on 22/2/00.
[12] The Draft Budget allocates $40,000 for a feasibility study of extending Flemington Road (to rural road standard) [page 407].
[13] Transcript *op. cit.*
[14] Written submission dated 21/2/00.
[15] Draft Budget p.146.

following (though there is no breakup of the totals) – 'employee expenses' of $10.318m (does this include redundancy costs and/or greater staff numbers?), 'administrative expenses' of $9.630m (does this include IT modernisation and/or CPI increases and/or 'transfer of employee functions to contractors offset by reductions in insurance')

- similarly, items in the output tables need amplification e.g. the output table for 'nature conservation and land management'[16] includes 'cost of nature conservation services' at $10.3m. 'It is not possible to interpret what this single figure means in terms of expenditure on a range of activities' in the 53% of the ACT that is national park and nature reserves. 'It should be broken down into functional categories' such as administration, maintenance of visitor facilities, enforcement, education, monitoring, feral animal control and weed control. It should also be broken down into the four districts: Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Canberra Nature Park.

  The same output table also includes an item called 'cost of wildlife research and monitoring services' of $1.361m (presumably this includes 'decreases due to transfer of staff, ending of a grant, reduction in depreciation costs offset by increases in rent… [and] may also include the effects of salary increases, redundancy payments, IT modernisatoin and CPI increases')

- the model for brief, yet more detailed, information of the relevant kind is itself provided by DUS in the brief notes on the department's total operating statement[17]; these provide an insight into the broad totals

- Environment ACT should provide 'a clear and comprehensive statement of the implications of the proposed budget for each of the ACT government's nature conservation and environment plans and strategies' such as the management plans, the Nature Conservation Strategy, the Environmental Flow Guidelines and the Bushfire (Fuel) Management Plan. Unless the implications are spelt out, it is not possible to know whether the department's priorities are the most appropriate

- Draft implementation plans for the nature reserve management plans and the Nature Conservation Strategy should be prepared and circulated for comment concurrently with the draft Budget

- The 'performance criteria for nature conservation and land management [should] include measures of actual performance in addition to client perceptions of performance'[18] e.g. the 'quality' measures for Nature Conservation and Land Management at page 150 of the Draft Budget are only two and both refer to annual ratings/surveys. But 'many key trends in nature conservation performance are not readily apparent… and may require subtle and sophisticated monitoring to identify them… e.g. changes in the populations of threatened species, changes in population of feral animals (e.g. pigs) and increase or decreases in the areas of weeds (e.g. blackberries)'[19]

The National Parks Association [NPA] also calls for greater expenditure on nature conservation management within Environment ACT so as to 'restore staff numbers to the 211 staff it had prior

[16] *ibid*, p.150.
[17] At pp.119-122 of the Draft Budget.
[18] *ibid*.
[19] *ibid*.

to the business restructure in the 1998-99 Budget'.[20] This is because 'Environment ACT's performance is primarily constrained by lack of resources'. Outstanding work includes management of Canberra Nature Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (increasing the ranger presence; increasing routine maintenance costs to cover increased visitor numbers; improved control of feral animals especially pigs and foxes in Namadgi), water management, environmental protection and management planning.

The NPA also sees a need to boost funding of the survey, research and monitoring program; and to provide improved nature conservation services on land managed by Canberra Urban Parks, ACT Forests and rural lessees.

Further, the NPA calls for greater funds to be allocated to Environment ACT 'to cover the salary increases agreed in the enterprise bargaining agreements… These salary increases, if not met by supplementary funding, would amount to further effective reductions in funding to Environment ACT'. Likewise, the NPA calls for additional funding to cover IT modernisation costs and Intact charges.

In terms of specific capital works, the NPA 'is concerned that the allocation for Landcare projects has been reduced from $245,000 in the 1999-2000 Budget to $125,000 in the 2000-01 Draft Budget' [see page 398 of the Draft Budget], the allocation for exotic weed control has similarly been reduced from $300,000 to $200,00 [ibid.], the allocation for urgent rural fencing is inadequate at $100,000[ibid.], the allocation for blackberry control in ACT Forests is inadequate at $100,000 [page 408 of the Draft Budget], and some money should be provided for repairs to Corin Road.[21]

In terms of funding these additional measures, the NPA suggests four new measures:

- 'that the funds raised by the Water Abstraction Charge be allocated to environmental initiatives including water resources management, catchment management and wildlife research and monitoring' [in 2000-01 it is expected that the Water Abstraction Charge will raise $5.06m[22]]

- 'that the ACT government consider increasing the Water Abstraction Charge to generate further funding for environmental initiatives', perhaps even from the current average of $28 to $80

- 'that the funds generated by the Pollutant Loading Fee [$450,000[23]] be allocated to environmental protection initiatives'

- 'that the ACT government consider implementing a Bushland Preservation Levy to raise funds for nature conservation management', such as is done in Brisbane where the city council levies an amount of $30 per ratepayer; if this was imposed in Canberra, the NPA estimates it would raise $3.5m.[24]

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[20] *ibid*.
[21] Written submission by the NPA.
[22] Draft Budget p.126.
[23] *ibid*.
[24] Written submission.

North Canberra Community Council Inc. is 'critical of the [proposed] expenditures on Civic and Northbourne Avenue… [Further,] a special effort should be undertaken to foster employment at the town centres including Gungahlin. This will decrease expenditure on infrastructure and services… We advocate bringing forward the construction of the John Dedman Drive according to the community's option and provision for the beginning of this in the present Budget'.[25]

Pedal Power ACT Inc calls for greater funding of cycling projects in view of the government's bicycle strategy. Pedal Power particularly draws attention to:
- the termination of Stage 1 of the Russell to Kingston link cycle path at the Jerrabomberra bird sanctuary instead of continuing to Newcastle Street, Fyshwick, as originally planned (Pedal Power estimates it would cost about $75,000 to complete this link)
- the deferment of Stage 2 of the Russell to Kingston link cycle path
- the lack of funds for rehabilitation of cycle paths (which Pedal Power states are 'rapidly deteriorating').[26]

Tom's Trash Paks objects to the government's trial of a kerbside collection of organic and residual waste. The trial will involve 800-1000 households using a third 'green bin'. It is estimated to cost $96,000. Tom's Trash Paks states that the trail 'would be a retrograde step for the government and its commitment to small business and employment', because it will lessen demand for services by the existing 'trash pak industry'. The latter pays commercial tipping fees to the government, so the trial will reduce government revenue from this source (as householders will not continue with their trash pak service once the 'free' government bins are provided).[27]

Volunteering ACT points out[28] that:
- the draft Budget may be quite different from the final Budget in May 2000, due to changing 'economic parameters'
- 'the non-government sector is currently very apprehensive about the potential effects of the GST on their purchaser-provider arrangements'
- 'a comprehensive audit of community facilities' is needed as 'many non-government groups are disadvantaged by sub-standard or inappropriate accommodation'
- funds should be provided 'to examine the range of needs, levels and resourcing of volunteer management in the public sector' because sometimes volunteers 'are not well managed' under existing arrangements (Volunteering ACT cites Landcare groups, which are supervised by rangers, as an example where 'the government agency is at "arm's length" but expected to exercise various levels of supervision and coordination of the activities of largely unfunded groups')

Watson Community Association objects to the proposed expenditure of $90,000 on the forward design of stormwater infrastructure at north Watson because it appears to be 'the opening gambit

[25] Written submission dated 12/2/00.
[26] Written submission dated 7/3/00.
[27] Written submission dated 3/2/00.
[28] Written submission dated 17/2/00.

for the north Watson infill'.[29] On the same grounds, the Association objects to the proposed expenditure of $200,000 on minor new works at Watson (Negus Crescent extension).[30]

Youth Coalition of the ACT Inc. calls for:

- the development of 'mechanisms… to ensure growth of community housing does not always occur at the expense of public housing by considering such options as: utilising betterment tax toward funding affordable housing; handing title of existing stock over to community housing so that it may raise its own finance against these assets to purpose-build appropriately designed and located housing for low-income groups such as youth'[31]

- 'outreach support services [to] be increased to ensure that young people with support needs who are housed in non-supported accommodation are provided the assistance necessary to ensure their housing remains secure'

- 'the provision of hostel/boarding house facilities to accommodate the growing demand for crisis-to-medium term housing by young people with support located on the premises'

- allocation by ACT Housing of 'resources to a Youth housing Officer's position who will link in closely with the youth sector and help facilitate housing and support for young people in public housing'

- 'the Housing and Policy unit of DUS identify and report on strategies for providing appropriate housing to young people…'.[32]

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[29] Transcript of the public hearing on 22/2/00. The Draft Budget states that this work 'is aimed at protecting Sullivan's Creek from increased stormwater discharge and pollution from development at north Watson' [page 407].

[30] Written submission (undated). The Draft Budget attributes this proposed expenditure to the Department of Treasury and Infrastructure rather than DUS. The work is described as extending 'the existing Negus Street stub on Antill Street to access Block 6 and allow for its sale' [page 418].

[31] Written submission dated 16/2/00.

[32] *ibid*.