Legislative Assembly for the ACT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

ACTION Buses and The Sustainable Transport Plan

AUGUST 2007

Report 29

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The Sustainable Transport Plan

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What am I ?
A long rolling roomful of frost-brightened faces,
or strangers to sweat with at forty degrees;
a babbling bubble of crossed conversations;
a crowd to get lost in and be at your ease;
a lumbering oblong of light in the darkness;
a half-hour of freedom to do as you please.

Melinda Smith
Canberra poet represented in *Poetry in ACTION 2007*

Committee membership

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA	Chair
Mr Zed Seselja MLA	Deputy Chair
Ms Mary Porter AM MLA	

Acknowledgements

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The Committee thanks the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, ACT and inter-state government officials, and the many community stakeholders who assisted the Committee during this inquiry. The Committee is particularly grateful for the contribution made by peak bodies, community councils, and community groups who submitted detailed analyses following participatory consultations.

The Committee also welcomes the interest taken in the issues driving this inquiry by the media, and particularly *The Canberra Times*, *The Chronicle* and *CityNews*.

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Resolution of appointment and terms of reference

On 7 December 2004 the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed to establish general purpose standing committees. The Assembly resolved that:

(1) The following general purpose standing committees be established and each committee to inquire into and report on matters referred to it by the Assembly or matters that are considered by the committee to be of concern to the community: …

(e) a Standing Committee on Planning and Environment to examine matters related to planning, public works and land management, conservation and heritage, transport services, and environment and ecological sustainability. .[1]

On 15 March 2007 the Legislative Assembly resolved that:

(1) the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment inquire into and investigate the services provided by ACTION buses, specifically:

(a) examining how well it meets the needs of different segments of the community while recognising that ACTION's role is a mass transport provider;

(b) incorporating comparative analysis of other bus transport operators in Australian jurisdictions;

(c) focussing on ACTION's services within the context of the Sustainable Transport Plan with particular reference to:

(i) the appropriateness of the plan, especially targets;

(ii) progress towards implementation; and

(iii) measures needed to ensure targets are met; and

(d) providing guidance on principles and key priorities for future service planning;

(2) the Committee report by 30 June 2007; and

(3) if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee is ready to report, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation.[2]

On 7 June 2007 the Legislative Assembly resolved to extend the Committee's reporting date to 30 August 2007.[3]

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[1] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, no 2–7 December 2004, pp12–16

[2] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, no 96–15 March 2007, pp983–4

[3] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *2007 Week 6 Hansard* (7 June), p1560

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Committee membership i
Acknowledgements i
Contact information i

RECOMMENDATIONS IX

1 INTRODUCTION 1

The ACTION bus service 2
Other bus services in Canberra 6
History of public transport in Canberra 7
The National Capital Plan 10
Griffin Legacy amendments 15
Broader Australian Government policies 16
Tax concessions for public transport users 18
Externalities of private vehicle use 20
Territory Plan 23

2 MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY 27

Discrimination issues arising from identified social needs 27
General comments about ACTION services 30
Specific comments about ACTION services 33
Bus services to and from the airport 35
Issues with particular bus routes 36
Customer feedback services 39
Stakeholders with special needs and interests 41
Older people 48
Footpaths and bus shelters 51
Smaller buses 53
Concession fares 54
Young people 56
School students 59
Tertiary students 65
Women 65

Commuters 66
Pay parking 68
Car sharing and car pooling 71
Visitors and tourists 72
Residents of the Causeway 74
Environmentally aware passengers 74
Cyclists 76

3 COMPARING ACTION WITH OTHER BUS SERVICES 79

ACTION's budget 2006–07 79
Woden depot 83
Bus fares 84
Commonwealth Grants Commission data 88
General comparative comments 89

4 ACTION AND THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN ... 91

How appropriate is the Sustainable Transport Plan and its targets? 92
General comments on the Plan 92
Specific comments on targets 95
What progress has been made towards implementing the Sustainable Transport Plan? 103
What measures are needed to ensure targets are met? 108

5 PRINCIPLES AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR PLANNING FUTURE ACTION SERVICES 111

The centrality of human rights considerations 111
Bus fleet replacement 112
Climate Change Action Plan 2007–2011 113
Sustainable Transport Contribution Fund 114
Human resource management 115
Marketing and promotion of ACTION services 116
Integrated transport, urban development and infrastructure 120
Light rail 121
Busways and bus priority measures 122
Loop service around the Parliamentary Zone and through Civic 126
Free bike scheme for town centres and universities 127
Timetabling 129
ACTION's consultation processes 130

Ticketing 131
Bus shelters and interchanges 132
Belconnen bus interchange 133
Woden bus interchange 134
Other safety matters 135
APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL AND DISSENTING COMMENTS 139
Mr Zed Seselja MLA 139
APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS 143
Submissions received 143
APPENDIX C: ACTION'S MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS 147
APPENDIX D: DRAFT PROVISIONS OF THE RESTRUCTURED TERRITORY PLAN 151
APPENDIX E: ACT GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT 161
APPENDIX F: ACTION TICKET TYPES AND FARES 163
APPENDIX G: EXTRACTS FROM THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN 165
GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS 169

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

1.40 The Committee recommends that as part of the review for Network 08 and future service planning, that relevant ACT Government agencies and the National Capital Authority review inter-town and Xpresso routes in view of the projected completion of the Gungahlin Drive Extension in 2008, and the proposed urban expansion in Molonglo.

RECOMMENDATION 2

1.68 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to seek an Australian Government review of the statutory formula for Fringe Benefits Tax concessions to remove the perverse incentive for increased kilometres of car travel, and/or to seek the extension of tax exemptions or other incentives to public transport users.

RECOMMENDATION 3

2.8 The Committee recommends that ACTION develop Network 08 in explicit compliance with human rights principles.

RECOMMENDATION 4

2.22 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support the delivery of TravelSmart or equivalent programs in Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION 5

2.26 The Committee recommends that ACTION, when developing Network 08, review the comments made in submissions to this inquiry about ACTION services in general, and about particular bus routes in Network 06.

RECOMMENDATION 6

2.31 The Committee recommends that as part of the development of Network 08, that ACTION reviews its bus timetables to ensure that services are not avoidably clustering.

RECOMMENDATION 7

2.55 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government not support any weakening of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport in the context of the 5–yearly review of the standards.

RECOMMENDATION 8

2.56 The Committee recommends that ACTION continue to consult closely with disability advocacy groups and individuals, and continue to adapt its services for people with disabilities, consistent with human rights principles.

RECOMMENDATION 9

2.57 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to lobby for increased Australian Government funding for public transport improvements, including for more accessible services.

RECOMMENDATION 10

2.76 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine the role of community transport provided by Regional Community Services under the Home and Community Care Program, with a view to strengthening this program to assist it in providing alternative, affordable and flexible transport options for the elderly and people with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION 11

2.85 The Committee recommends that the review of government concessions be completed, and that favourable consideration be given to extending the permitted use of ACT Seniors Cards for concession travel on ACTION buses, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

RECOMMENDATION 12

2.97 The Committee recommends that demand-responsive travel be re-examined for possible future re-introduction to the ACT, once an integrated smart-card ticketing system is in place and functioning effectively, and the Belconnen interchange has been refurbished or replaced.

RECOMMENDATION 13

2.110 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services include the ACT Walking School Bus Program within a broad marketing and health promotion campaign linking physical activity with sustainable transport, including ACTION bus services.

RECOMMENDATION 14

2.111 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Australian Institute of Sport and sporting clubs in the ACT to enlist one or more high profile athletes to assist in promoting physically active sustainable transport options in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 15

2.112 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assist the YWCA of Canberra to secure adequate and sustainable long-term funding to support the growth and development of the ACT Walking School Bus program.

RECOMMENDATION 16

2.128 The Committee recommends that pay parking be introduced in all major employment areas in the ACT, with restrictions on long stay parking in nearby areas, but with incentives provided for multi-occupant vehicles. Where the Australian Government is responsible for pay parking policy, the Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage the implementation of a pay parking regime.

RECOMMENDATION 17

2.136 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that visitor information placed by ACTION in ACT tourism publications includes both the ACTION phone number and web address.

RECOMMENDATION 18

2.137 The Committee recommends that ACTION ensure that its call centre number is more prominent in future telephone directories for the Canberra–Queanbeyan–Yass region.

RECOMMENDATION 19

2.141 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that ACTION bus services for the Causeway area are reviewed, taking account of the views expressed in submissions to this inquiry.

RECOMMENDATION 20

2.153 The Committee commends the initiative in the ACT Government's Climate Change Action Plan permitting cyclists who use the bike bus racks to travel without charge as this will reduce the likelihood that bus services will be delayed by cyclists using this service, as their fare payment time will be eliminated.

RECOMMENDATION 21

2.154 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services consider better promoting the Bike 'n Ride service to increase its uptake during off-peak periods.

RECOMMENDATION 22

3.16 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-open the Woden depot for ACTION buses, and examine the viability of the provision of a gas re-fuelling station in north Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION 23

3.17 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that adequate time is provided for driver rest breaks in Network 08.

RECOMMENDATION 24

3.30 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase bus fares for Network 08, but that an appropriate level of concession protection should continue for disadvantaged and low income passengers.

RECOMMENDATION 25

3.31 The Committee recommends that ACTION consider the introduction of family fares on ACTION buses.

RECOMMENDATION 26

4.15 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government's strategic policy documents better engage with and more explicitly address the challenges likely to arise from declining supplies of fossil fuels.

RECOMMENDATION 27

4.34 The Committee recommends that Park 'n Ride services be extended to new sites as a priority action under the Sustainable Transport Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 28

4.35 The Committee recommends that ACTION's information services be improved and that targets be developed to assist with monitoring the implementation of those targets.

RECOMMENDATION 29

4.48 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions be amended to require that each agency report on the actions it has taken to implement specified actions in The Sustainable Transport Plan, including initiatives to support employees' use of sustainable transport.

RECOMMENDATION 30

4.50 The Committee recommends that when developing Network O8, that ACTION focus on the integration of services, convenience, frequency, safety, comprehensibility and accessibility of services.

RECOMMENDATION 31

4.57 The Committee recommends that resources be provided for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of workplace sustainable transport plans.

RECOMMENDATION 32

5.8 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government amend the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) to require public bodies to promote access, equity and equality.

RECOMMENDATION 33

5.15 The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transportation Contribution Fund proposed in the ACT Government's 2007 *Draft ACT Parking Strategy* be progressed.

RECOMMENDATION 34

5.19 The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services favourably consider the strategic priorities of increasing patronage, improving economic sustainability, and improving environmental sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION 35

5.27 The Committee welcomes the proposed introduction of real-time information for ACTION bus services.

RECOMMENDATION 36

5.28 The Committee recommends that bus travel time relative to cars be measured and reported.

RECOMMENDATION 37

5.29 The Committee commends the Poetry in ACTION initiative and recommends that it be continued.

RECOMMENDATION 38

5.32 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services suggests to PR Edge that the cover theme for future White Pages telephone directory for Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass, relate to a sustainable transport theme, and if possible, include an image of the Canberra Bus Map on the front cover for the local directory.

RECOMMENDATION 39

5.33 The Committee recommends that the maps in the Yellow Pages include ACTION bus routes and bus stops.

RECOMMENDATION 40

5.34 The Committee recommends that ACTION should increase its marketing efforts and promote public awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of public transport use.

RECOMMENDATION 41

5.36 The Committee recommends that every ACTION bus stop should provide a user-friendly current timetable and route map, and information about the closest alternate route bus stop.

RECOMMENDATION 42

5.57 The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transport Plan not be substantially amended in relation to its references to busways.

RECOMMENDATION 43

5.62 The Committee recommends that ACTION assess the feasibility of re-introducing a loop bus service or city circulator through Central Canberra and the Parliamentary Zone.

RECOMMENDATION 44

5.69 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage major employers in the ACT, including the ACT public service, to introduce bike fleets at their workplaces.

RECOMMENDATION 45

5.70 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney initiatives on inner-city cycling as part of an assessment of a possible trial of a free bike hire service for Canberra's town centres and universities.

RECOMMENDATION 46

5.77 The Committee recommends that ACTION review the frequency of services as a priority issue and increase frequency where that would be consistent with human rights principles, stakeholder feedback and the goals of the Sustainable Transport Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 47

5.100 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government progress the upgrading, at the earliest opportunity, of the bus interchanges at Woden and Belconnen.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This inquiry by the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment followed significant concern in the community that an appropriate level of service was not being provided by the ACT Internal Omnibus Network (ACTION). Complaints were communicated directly to ACTION,[4] to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and through the media.

1.2 Another catalyst for the inquiry may have been media reports of the views expressed by the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, in April 2007, shortly after he was allocated responsibility for ACTION buses (discussed in chapter 4). These suggested that aspects of *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT* would not be implemented.[5]

1.3 Several stakeholders have noted the irony in the fact that significant cuts to ACTION services in December 2006 coincided with the promotion of a more sustainable Canberra,[6] the running of a TravelSmart[7] program in north Canberra, and ongoing implementation of the Sustainable Transport Plan.[8] Some stakeholders conveyed their sense of disillusionment to the Committee.[9]

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[4] Complaints to ACTION escalated significantly following the December 06 service changes, upwardly trending from 61 in June 2006, to 441 in February 2007: Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 4 Hansard* (3 May), p1002

[5] C. Alexander 2007, 'Corbell's transport blueprint dumped', *The Canberra Times*, 23 April, p1

[6] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp22, 55

[7] TravelSmart is a voluntary behaviour change program which helps individuals to choose, without a top-down, regulatory mechanism, to use more sustainable transport options for personal reward, based on their personal knowledge or understanding. One aspect of the program provides assistance to people in planning journeys on local public transport and capacity building in using bus services where that is needed. The TravelSmart project has reached 11 000 households (or about 40 000 people) in north and west Belconnen, with a budget of over $1.3 million, including joint funding from the Australian Government: ACT Government 2007, *Climate Change Action Plan*, p10, Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 14 June 2007; *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June, p89

[8] Submissions no 7, 27, 49, 61

[9] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p58

1.4 Two relevant petitions[10] were tabled during the sixth Assembly to June 2007. One concerned ACTION bus timetabling, and the other called for more public consultation on transport initiatives.

1.5 The Assembly referred the inquiry to the Committee on 15 March 2007 after amending a motion moved by Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA.

1.6 The Committee's consultations and the submissions received are noted at Appendix B.

The ACTION bus service

1.7 ACTION is currently a business unit of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services. It was formerly a statutory authority under the *ACTION Authority Act 2001* (ACT), but the Authority was abolished from 30 June 2006, as a cost efficiency measure following the 2006 strategic and functional review. Services, administrative systems, and staffing within ACTION were streamlined, with corporate staff reduced by 32%.[11] In December 2006, a reported 240 daily bus services were cut as a cost-saving measure following the 2006–07 budget,[12] and 'to drive reforms to deliver better for money services'.[13] These reforms were estimated to deliver $4.3million in savings.[14]

1.8 In response to public criticism, some adjustments were made to the bus network from 5 February 2007, including the provision of 37 additional services.[15] From 30 April 2007, a further 84 services were provided. These extra services were on inter-town routes, and various routes servicing the inner north, inner south, Woden, Belconnen and Tuggeranong. Some timetabling

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[10] The petition with 1111 signatures about timetabling changes was tabled as an out of order paper; the other about consultation had 233 signatures; both from Dr Foskey: Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 2 Hansard* (6 March), p214; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *17 August Hansard* p2297

[11] Submission no 65; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, Reference: ACTION buses and the Sustainable Transport Plan, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p75

[12] G. Downie 2007, 'Prices watchdog set to be sidelined on taxis', *The Canberra Times*, 13 April, p5

[13] Submission no 65

[14] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 2 Hansard* (6 March), p188

[15] G. Downie 2007, 'More bus routes from April 30', *The Canberra Times*, 19 April, p10; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 2 Hansard* (6 March), p190

adjustments were also made to improve connections, and some weekday routes were re-introduced.[16] Other minor measures included an on-platform ticket validation service at the Woden and City interchanges, and more promotion for pre-purchasing tickets. Traffic lights on some peak direction routes to the city were also adjusted.[17]

1.9 While this inquiry was underway, ACTION was concurrently developing a 'Comprehensive Service Improvement Plan' for a new network. This was expected to be complete by October 2007, and a post-design consultation stage had been planned. The review would include a stop-by-stop boarding and alighting count, community consultation, and a customer survey (including feedback received on ACTION's Network 06). The new service plan was expected to be implemented in early 2008.[18] The Sustainable Transport Plan was also being reviewed.[19]

1.10 ACTION's services include:

- regular suburban route services and dedicated school services;
- a door-to-door service for clients with special needs, for the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health; and
- charter bus services for schools, sporting bodies and other organisations hosting Territory events and festivals.[20]

1.11 ACTION provides more than 2000 bus services every weekday and provides for about 17 million passenger boardings each year.[21] ACTION estimates that about two-thirds of all journeys on ACTION buses occur during the morning and afternoon peak periods (7am–9am, and 3pm– 6pm). According to the ACT

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[16] The 30 April adjustments to ACTION's services are detailed in submission no 65, p18 and attachment 4

[17] ACT Government 2007, 'Further improvements to ACTION bus services', Media release Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, 19 April < http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.asp?media=2471&section=&title=media&id=24> accessed 18 August 2007; Submission no 65

[18] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 June 2007, pp 71, 88

[19] C. Alexander 2007, 'Time for action on buses fiasco', *The Canberra Times*, 24 March, p4

[20] Submission no 65

[21] Advertorial 2007: 'Building a better and more reliable ACTION', *CityNews*, 26 April, p15; submission no 65

Government submission:

> In 2005–06 ACTION had 16 928 000 passenger boardings compared to 16 240,000 in 2004–05. This represents an increase of 688 000 boardings or 4.2%. The most significant increase was in adult passengers boardings (12%) with a small reduction in student boardings. Adult patronage has continued to grow in 2006–07 (at a reduced rate), with small reductions in both concession and student boardings.[22]

1.12 These figures are unreliable, however, and possibly up to 10% out, because the ticket machines installed on ACTION buses which record passenger numbers often break down.[23] Funding has been approved for updating ACTION's ticketing system.

1.13 Some bus services are provided under contract with private operators. For example, some services for school children living in rural areas are provided under contract, costing the ACT Government about $300 000 per annum.[24] If a service cannot be provided, a conveyance allowance may be available as a subsidy for primary carers for the cost of transporting rural children to their nearest school or bus stop.[25]

1.14 ACTION's minimum service levels are to be reviewed following completion of the service improvement plan, and a long term fleet replacement strategy will be developed. Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that ACTION's service levels specified in the contract between the (then) ACTION Authority and Department of Urban Services used to be based on service levels operating in NSW. These are reproduced at Appendix C. The Minister advised that 'ACTION's services now meet or exceed these service levels, with the exception of span of hours and the standard relating to the distance from bus

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[22] Submission no 65, p5

[23] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 June, pp79, 80; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, *Week 13 Hansard* (17 November), pp4374–5. See also Submission no 18; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp5–6

[24] Submission no 65

[25] Submission no 65

stops. Travel time relative to a car is no longer measured.'[26]

1.15 The Committee considers that travel time data may be a useful indicator of the success of sustainable transport initiatives. It should be easier to collect travel-time data following the introduction of real-time information systems on ACTION buses.

1.16 The frequency of services in 2007 were:

- primary and feeder services: a minimum service of 30 minutes during peak times and 60 minutes during off-peak times. Minimum off-peak services should not extend past an hourly frequency;
- trunk services: should operate at least every 15 minutes and link with the last route bus;
- night services: should operate at intervals of no more than 90 minutes on all routes, with the aim of more frequent services on higher patronage/major routes particularly on Friday/Saturday nights; and
- Saturday, Sunday and Public holidays: should operate at intervals of no more than 90 minutes on all routes. Trunk services should operate at least every 30 minutes.

1.17 The Minister advised that ACTION's decision to modify the span of hours in the off peak period was due to the low level of patronage demand on some early morning services. ACTION estimated that Network 06 was supplying buses to meet a capacity 70% higher than required, i.e. ACTION was only carrying about 2 500 passengers per day, mainly at peak times, when it had the capacity to carry about 8 000 passengers during on and off-peak times.[27]

> Changes made to the ACTION network in December 2006 focused on the less patronised off-peak services. For example, prior to Network 06 and between 6.00 am and 7.00 am at the weekends the lowest 88 patronised services carried a total of approximately 29 passengers. Seventy-

[26] Letter from Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, dated 17 May 2007, providing ACTION's minimum service levels in response to the Committee's request

[27] Submission no 65; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June, p84

four of those services had nobody on them, or nil patronage.[28]

1.18 Various demographic characteristics of Canberra and the region partly contribute to an understanding of the relatively low use of public transport in the ACT, but the Committee considers that more needs to be done to encourage better patronage of ACTION buses. The demographic reasons cited include:

- the relatively high number of licensed drivers per vehicle in the ACT compared with other states, suggesting a higher level of vehicle use than in other states;
- free parking around Commonwealth government occupied premises;[29]
- the dispersed urban form in the ACT resulting from the National Capital Plan; and
- the significant percentage of people who work in Canberra but live interstate.[30]

Other bus services in Canberra

1.19 Deane's Buslines Queanbeyan also operates bus services in the ACT, but can only pick up and set down passengers in areas that ACTION does not service, such as Oaks Estate, HMAS Harman and Canberra South Motor Park (except on weekends). Its major route service networks are Canberra City to Canberra Airport, Queanbeyan to Canberra Airport via Fyshwick, Queanbeyan City local route service (including a demand-responsive service, LocalLink), Queanbeyan to Canberra City, Queanbeyan to Woden and Queanbeyan to Bungendore. Deane's Buslines allege that the Transport Workers Union has lobbied the ACT Government to maintain a monopoly for ACTION, and that it

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[28] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June, pp68, 75

[29] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007, pp34, 47

[30] On the 2001 Census results, 12% of the total number of people employed in the ACT (or nearly 20 000 people) lived in NSW: Australian Capital Territory Submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission's Review of the Interstate Distribution of Local Roads Grants Issues Paper Cgc 2005/2 January 2006, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/4413/Local_Roads_Review_-_ACT_Submission.pdf>, accessed 24 July 2007

should be able to service customers in the ACT.[31]

1.20 Deane's Buslines has also operated the AirLiner Shuttle Bus Service between Canberra and the Airport since 2001. Despite early losses, the service is now economically viable, but the company says that it could be improved if customers could pay one harmonised fare to travel on ACTION and the airliner shuttle. This proposal was apparently not well received when first discussed with ACT Government officials in 2006.[32]

1.21 Other bus service operators in the ACT include Keir's of Canberra Charter Coaches, and the free ANU UniSafe bus service. Several companies offer cross-border and regional transport. These include the Transborder Express, Go Bush Tours Australia, Lever Coachlines, McCafferty's Greyhound, Murrays Australia, and Sid Fogg's Coachlines. There are also a range of hire car and mini-bus rental companies such as ACT Mini Bus Rentals.

History of public transport in Canberra

1.22 The design for Australia's national capital prepared by Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin, selected in 1912, included provision for rapid transit public transport, and in particular for a streetcar network (now known as a tram or light rail network). Radial boulevards were designed to concentrate traffic and travel on routes linked to important sites in the city. The Griffins intended that 90% of the population would live within 500 metres, or about a five-minute walk, of a tram stop.[33] The Griffins' revised 1918 plan was gazetted in 1927 as the first statutory Plan of Canberra.[34] The concept that all Canberra residents should have access within easy walking distance of public transport remains in the Territory Plan today.

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[31] Submission no 8

[32] Submission no 8

[33] Australian Government, National Capital Authority 2004, *The Griffin Legacy*: *Canberra the nation's Capital in the 21st Century*, Canberra, pp72, 74

[34] Canberra Chapter of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, submission no 34 to the inquiry by the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, < http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees/index1.asp?committee=55&inquiry=226&category=14 >, accessed 23 July 2007

1.23 According to the Canberra Chapter of the Walter Burley Griffin Society:

> Griffin's Canberra was to have relatively densely populated residential suburbs with an efficient and extensive tram system utilising hydro-electric power. Everybody would live within five minutes walk of public transport. The national capital was to be linked to the main railway line between Sydney and Melbourne by a new line from Yass to Canberra and linking with the Cooma branchline at Queanbeyan. It would have had its main railway station in central Canberra on the northern side of the lake, with other stations located in the suburbs.[35]

1.24 Public bus services have been offered in Canberra since at least the 1920s. In October 1923 the Commonwealth Department of Public Works ran a bus service for construction workers living at the Causeway, Pialligo and at Eastlake (now Kingston), to building sites in Canberra Central and Parkes. A private service started in Canberra in 1925, running between Ainslie and Eastlake and Queanbeyan. This cross-border service continues today, run by Deane's Buslines. The Federal Capital Commission began a Commonwealth bus service in 1926. Since 1930, the bus service has had various names such as 'Canberra City Omnibus Service'; 'Canberra City Bus Service'; 'Canberra Omnibus Service'; and 'Canberra Bus Service'. In February 1977 the Australian Capital Territory Internal Omnibus Network – or ACTION – was launched following a major upgrade of the service, which included 'new vehicles, a new range of pre-purchased tickets, passenger facilities such as shelters and a new colour scheme for the buses.[36]

1.25 Stakeholders who met with the Committee during public hearings referred to this public transport commitment in Canberra's history, and they explained that trams were not introduced because of Canberra's slow development and small population. The Griffins had made provision for trams, as had the former National Capital Development Commission in the designation of the

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[35] Canberra Chapter of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, submission no 34, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve nomination inquiry

[36] Anon, 'The History of Public Transport in the ACT', <http://www.action.act.gov.au/docs/history.pdf>, accessed 24 July 2007

Inter-Town Public Transport Route. The issue of light rail is discussed further in chapter 5.

1.26 Mr Cooper, for the ACT Transit Group, referred to the Inter-Town Public Transport Route, other planning provisions for public transport in the Territory Plan, and the Woden Bus Interchange, as the first bus-to-bus interchange in Australia, as demonstrating that Canberra has not historically been regarded as developed for and dominated by private cars.[37]

1.27 The ACT has had public policies supporting sustainable transport in the Territory since at least 1981. Before self-government, in the early 1980s, the policy implemented by the former Department of the Capital Territory included inter-town public transport services operating on a reserve right-of-way as necessary; encouraging flexible working hours so as to promote efficiency in the transport system; discouraging unnecessary use of the private car for commuting purposes; provision of car parking in town centres at the minimum necessary to protect the environment and with priority given to short-stay parkers. This policy also recognised that public transport fulfils a social need which may require continued financial subsidy.[38]

1.28 One submission, referring to earlier publications, suggested that ACTION used to be a leader in public transport provision in Australia. It was the first service in Australia to introduce articulated buses, in the mid-1970s, and amongst the first to introduce ticketed flat fares. Its buses have included advanced safety features,[39] and the Belconnen Town Centre incorporated Australia's first significant busway linking Eastern Valley Way and Coulter Drive.

1.29 ACTION's services are reviewed and amended as needs arise. Between 1977 and 1988 half-hourly feeder services connected with inter-town services at interchanges, which departed every 15 minutes. In 1988 ACTION's network

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[37] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, pp21–22

[38] Department of the Capital Territory, Public Transit Branch 1981, *ACTION: Policy, Objectives, Standards*, Canberra

[39] Submission no 56, citing Office of Road Safety 1984, *Planning for Road Safety*, and P. Newman and J. Kenworthy 1991, *Towards a More Sustainable Canberra*

services were reviewed, and some service frequency was reduced.[40] ACTION was reviewed again in 1997, with interchange through-routing then introduced.[41]

The National Capital Plan

1.30 The National Capital Authority administers and implements the National Capital Plan which is prescribed under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (Cwlth). As explained in the National Capital Authority's submission, the National Capital Plan applies statutory policies for land use and the national and arterial road system throughout the Territory. The Plan includes the 'General Policy Plan – Metropolitan Canberra' which governs the metropolitan structure of Canberra,[42] and prescribes the current Inter-Town Public Transport Route (as indicated in Figure 1 below).[43]

1.31 Principles, policies and standards for transport in the ACT are prescribed in Chapter 6 of the Plan, as follows:

> 6.2 Principle for Transport
>
> Transport planning and provision will:
>
> - reserve a route for the development of a public transport service to link major employment nodes. As far as practicable the service will be segregated from other transport systems and will operate with priority of right-of-way
> - incorporate nationally recognised practices and standards consistent with the role and function of each road, or additional standards set out for the Designated Areas of this Plan.
>
> 6.3 Policies and Standards for Transport
>
> (a) The National and Arterial Roads System will:

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[40] Submission no 56

[41] Roger Graham & Associates Pty Ltd 1997, *Review of ACTION's Services, for the ACT Department of Urban Services*, Canberra

[42] Submission no 66; the National Capital Plan is accessible at <http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/planning_and_urban_design/national_capital_plan/consolidated_download.asp>

[43] accessed from <www.nationalcapital.gov.au/planning_and_urban_design/national_capital_plan/consolidated_download.asp#download_1>.

- generally not provide frontage access to development except where such access will meet appropriate design standards and road safety needs
- generally intersect with the local road network through distributor roads.

(b) A corridor between Civic, the town centres and major employment nodes, suitable for priority or segregated right-of-way for use by public transport services will be reserved against a possible future need to develop a system of inter town and express routes suitable for buses or other technologies as appropriate.

(c) Transport strategies should promote the convenience and efficiency of public transport use.

(d) The final alignment of proposed arterial roads shall be subject to consultation with the Authority and to a determination by the Authority that proposals are not inconsistent with the Plan.

1.32 The National Capital Authority describes the 'Y' plan of the metropolitan structure as follows:

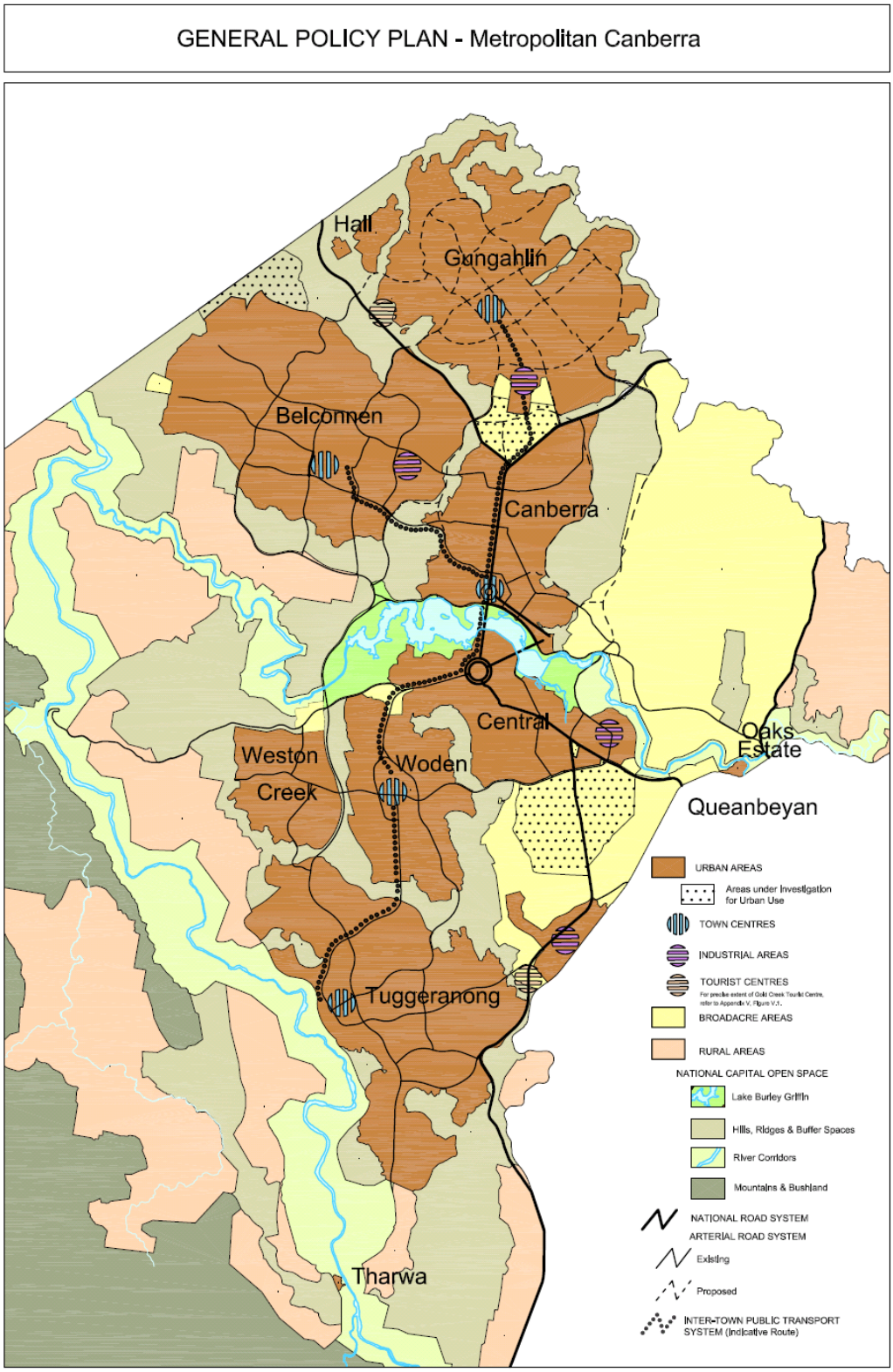
> The 'Y' plan provides for a linear arrangement of towns, each separated by hills and ridges or open space; networks of freeways in the form of a ladder, with peripheral parkways forming the uprights. The Plan also reserves a linear inter-town public transport spine (IPT) in the shape of a 'Y' which connects the town centres (containing employment, retail, education and community uses and higher density residential uses).[44]

1.33 In the Authority's view, the 'Y' plan, which is evident in Figures 1 and 2 (although not representing the Gungahlin Drive Extension), is suited to public transport 'in that it clusters major trip attractors into nodes (or centres) and locates these in a linear arrangement which can be efficiently and economically served by public transport'.[45]

[44] Submission no 66

[45] Submission no 66

<u>Figure 1:</u> The National Capital Plan's General Policy Plan – Metropolitan Canberra:



1.34 The Authority expressed support for the submission lodged by Dr Paul Mees, and agreed that the Canberra's bus network should have:

- a single administering agency;
- a frequent service at all times;
- a simple, legible and stable route structure;
- a limited number of direct routes and provision for transfers at interchanges enabling increased frequencies and lower costs; and
- high quality passenger transfers at interchanges and coordinated timetables and fares.[46]

1.35 Sustainable transport proponents Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy have compared long-term data from cities around the world that demonstrates that urban intensity less than about 35 residents and jobs per hectare significantly increases automobile dependence.[47] They suggest that this is partly because people have a universal tendency to be most reluctant to spend more than about one hour per day commuting. Other submissions agreed that total journey time was one of the crucial determinants for whether commuters travel by bus or car.[48]

1.36 The conceptual plan that Newman and Kenworthy advocate for town centres and local centres, which involves integration with public transport services, is similar to Canberra's defined office employment centres under the National Capital Plan,[49] which is loosely modelled on, but extends, Canberra's 'Y' plan.

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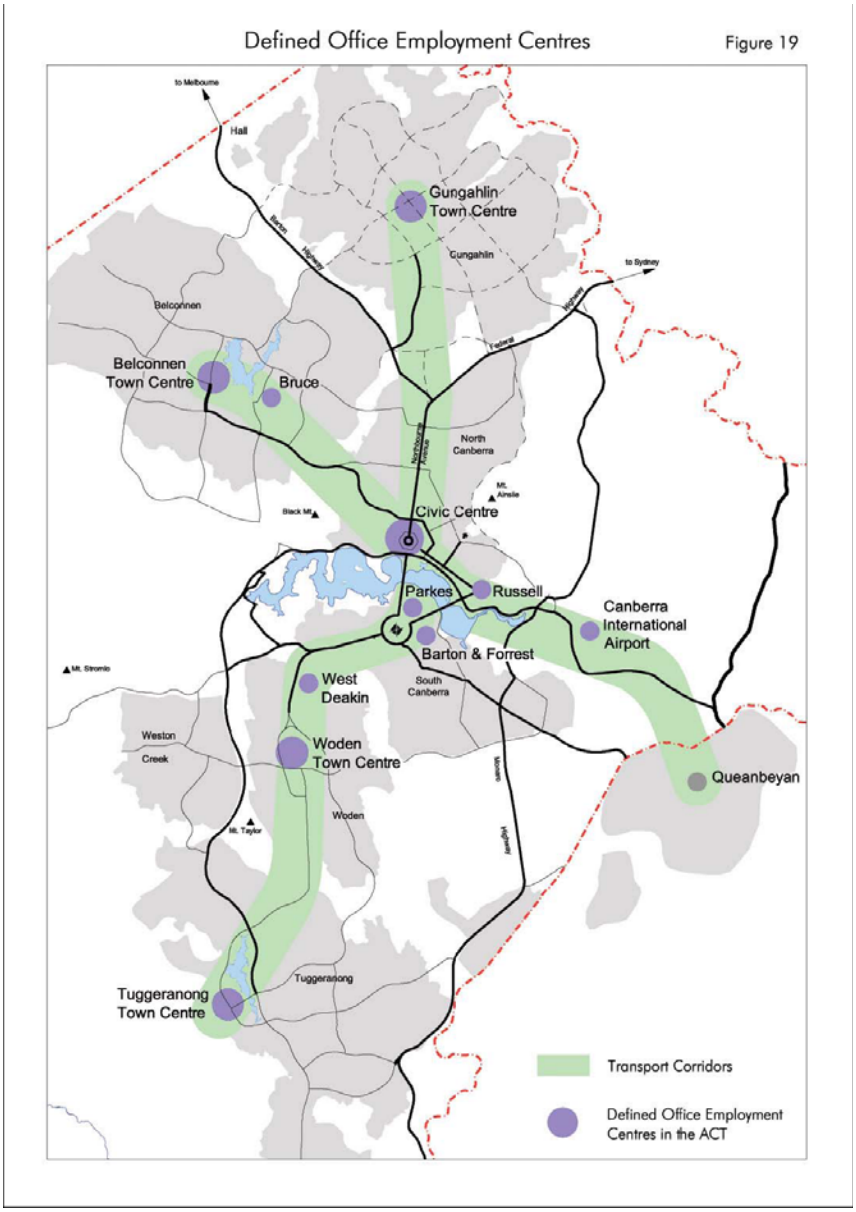
[46] Submission no 66

[47] P. Newman and J. Kenworthy 2006, 'Urban design to reduce automobile dependence', *Opolis: An International Journal of Suburban and Metropolitan Studies*, vol 2, issue 1, pp 35–52

[48] Submission no 61

[49] Amendment 44 to the National Capital Plan (Office Employment Location policies) was approved in 2005. It allows major office employment and private sector offices to be located within certain Defined Office Employment Centres in the ACT.

Figure 2: Defined office employment centres under the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan



1.37 Whether the new development of Molonglo will involve a change to the Inter-Town Public Transport Route has yet to be determined.

1.38 The Committee considers that a review of the Inter-town Public Transport Route would be timely given the expected completion of the Gungahlin Drive Extension in December 2008, and the progress that has been made with the proposed urban expansion in Molonglo.

1.39 It may be that some peak hour Xpresso services would be well-patronised between Gungahlin and Tuggeranong for example, and could travel along the

Gungahlin Drive Extension.

RECOMMENDATION 1

1.40 **The Committee recommends that as part of the review for Network 08 and future service planning, that relevant ACT Government agencies and the National Capital Authority review inter-town and Xpresso routes in view of the projected completion of the Gungahlin Drive Extension in 2008, and the proposed urban expansion in Molonglo.**

Griffin Legacy amendments

1.41 The implementation of the 2007 Griffin Legacy amendments to the National Capital Plan is intended to create an urban form featuring many wide multi-use avenues or boulevards with generous sidewalks and street trees. These avenues connect lower density neighbourhoods to higher centres of activity and protect neighbourhoods from through traffic. These avenues are intended to be 'linear corridors of higher density and mixed use development connecting nodes of activity', and to carry the highest volumes of pedestrian traffic, public transport routes and relatively slow moving traffic. The parkways (e.g. Tuggeranong Parkway) around the City and other by-pass routes are intended to reinforce the role of the main avenues as multi-use boulevards by diverting high traffic flows.[50]

1.42 According to the National Capital Authority:

> As the city matures consolidation along the main avenues and provision of transit within a right-of-way will reinforce their intended role in the city's structure. .... The completion of the peripheral parkway network (that forms part Canberra's metropolitan plan) will allow the main avenues to mature in the way Griffin intended.[51]

[50] Submission no 66

[51] Submission no 66

Broader Australian Government policies

1.43 There are several other Australian Government policies and programs of relevance to public transport in the ACT.

1.44 The Australian Greenhouse Office implements the Local Greenhouse Action Initiative which was funded for four years to 2007–08. Programs such as TravelSmart and the ACT Walking School Bus have been funded under this initiative.[52] In the 2007 budget, this measure was extended to 2008–09. Renewed policy development was underway in relation to initiatives under the extended funding.

1.45 Officers in the Australian Greenhouse Office consult with state and territory counterparts within a Travel Demand Management Network. This network has quarterly teleconferences and bi-annual congresses.

1.46 Another national process has been examining urban congestion issues. The Australian Government Minister for Transport and Regional Services chairs the Australian Transport Council (ATC). The Council provides a forum for Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand transport ministers to consult and provide advice to governments on the co-ordination and integration of all transport and road policy issues.

1.47 The Australian Transport Council is supported by the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT), the members of which are ministerial nominees and usually heads of department or agencies.[53] The Australian Passenger Transport Group (APTG) is a Council sub-committee which provides the Standing Committee with advice on a range of issues. Sub-committees within the APTG provide advice and support to the Standing Committee and the Council on the accessibility of public transport, and the regulation of taxis and buses.[54]

1.48 There is a joint Commonwealth and state/territory responsibility for the AusLink network. Budget items in this area relevant to sustainable public

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[52] Oral communication, Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources, Australian Greenhouse Office, 3 August 2007

[53] See generally 'About the Australian Transport Council', <http://www.atcouncil.gov.au/about_us/about_us.aspx#SECRET>, accessed 25 July 2007

[54] Submission no 65

transport include the review by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) of urban congestion trends, impacts and solutions; the Green Vehicle Guide, and new vehicle emission standards.[55]

1.49 In February 2006, COAG commissioned a Review of Urban Congestion Trends, Impacts and Solutions. The aim of the review was to inform the development of measures to reduce current and projected urban transport congestion, within existing jurisdictional responsibilities, focusing on national freight corridors.[56] The review recognised the importance of growing urban congestion as a worsening national issue. Urban congestion increases pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, lengthens journey times, and creates costs for individuals, businesses and the broader economy.

1.50 The review also found that there was no 'silver bullet' solution to growing congestion, but that there were opportunities for managing it better. These include infrastructure development and congestion management measures tailored for particular cities. Others included improved traffic management, particularly on urban motorways; moving freight outside congested periods; improved public transport services; better integrating transport and land use planning; and managing demand for road use through pricing and by encouraging non-car travel.

1.51 On 13 April 2007 COAG agreed 'that each jurisdiction implement its own specific responses to urban congestion, drawing on best-practice principles, and noted that AusLink would continue to consider contributions to future urban projects on AusLink corridors'.[57]

1.52 COAG also agreed that:

- AusLink contributions to future urban projects will continue to be considered – consistent with jurisdictional urban congestion responsibilities

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[55] Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources 2007, *Environment Budget Overview 2007–08*, p29

[56] Australian Government, Department of Transport and Urban Services 2007, *Review of Urban Congestion Trends, Impacts and Solutions: Report prepared for the Council of Australian Governments by the Competition and Regulation Working Group*, December 2006<http://www.btre.gov.au/info.aspx?ResourceId=256>, accessed 25 May 2007, pp2, 7, 10, 11, 14

[57] Council of Australian Governments' Meeting Canberra 13 April 2007, *Communiqué*, <http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/130407/docs/coag130407.rtf>, accessed 25 May 2007

– recognising jurisdictions' urban congestion initiatives on and off the AusLink national network. The projects will meet priorities identified in relevant AusLink corridor strategies and where the requests satisfy the AusLink processes consistent with the National Guidelines for Transport System Management in Australia;

- the Australian Transport Council will establish arrangements to improve urban congestion data, modelling and performance information for decision-making and report to COAG on progress by June 2008;
- jurisdictions will take travel demand management measures into account, drawing on the COAG urban congestion review and travel demand management strategies, when preparing their specific responses to congestion; and
- noted that the Australian Transport Council has referred the issue of tax concessions for public transport users for further consideration by the Ministerial Council for Commonwealth-State Financial Relations.[58]

Tax concessions for public transport users

1.53 A growing chorus has been calling for national policy reform in relation to the provision of Fringe Benefit Tax concessions for private motor vehicle use, but without success to date. The Sustainable Transport Plan commits to pursuing incentives for public transport use, and to review the concessional tax treatment for private cars.[59] The ACT Climate Change Strategy states that the Government will consult with business and employer groups (including the Commonwealth) to encourage and support the adoption of more sustainable transport options by commuters.[60]

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[58] COAG National Reform Agenda Competition Reform April 2007, pp24–25, <http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/130407/docs/coag_nra_competition_reforms.rtf#_Toc163035833> accessed 25 May 2007

[59] Action 9.3 says: 'lobby the Commonwealth Government to bring taxation and tax concessions for public transport and sustainable transport in line with car taxation concessions'. Action 10.2 says 'Encourage the Commonwealth Government to reverse the concessional taxation treatment for private cars in favour of public transport and environmentally friendly modes.'

[60] ACT Government 2007, *Weathering the Change: the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025*, Canberra, and ACT Government 2007, *Weathering the Change: Action Plan 1 2007–2011*, Action 17, p20

1.54 The Conservation Council urged the ACT Legislative Assembly to pursue this issue, claiming that in 2007–08, $1.22 billion will be spent on subsidising car use through salary sacrificing and Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) concessions.[61] In August 2007 public transport user groups called for a review of the statutory formula for Fringe Benefit Tax and for the introduction of incentives for public transport use.[62] Australian Treasury figures put the value of the fringe benefit tax concession in 2005 for employer-provided cars at $1.1 billion, or about $2 300 per vehicle.[63]

1.55 In August 2007 the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors called for the 'artificial tax haven provided through Fringe Benefits Tax exemptions' for salary packaging of private vehicles to be abandoned, or at least the same benefit be given to those who travel by public transport.[64] A similar recommendation was made in February 2007 by a Senate committee,[65] and in 2005 by a House of Representatives committee.[66]

1.56 In July 2007 the NSW Minister for Transport, Mr John Watkins, called for tax exemptions for public transport users.[67] A 2006 NSW transport consultancy report found that when public transport tax incentives were provided through employee benefit programmes, as occurs in the United States, a modal shift to public transport could be encouraged in journey to work travel.[68]

1.57 In 2003 the NSW State Transit Authority CEO called for national policies that created incentives for use of public transport addressing car, petrol and

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[61] Submission no 61, citing the Australian Government's Tax Expenditures Statement 2005

[62] Public Transport Users Association 2007, *Moving Australians Sustainably: Transport Policy in the National Interest*, August 2007 <http://www.ptua.org.au/federal/moving_australians-web.pdf>, accessed 16 August 2007. This report refers to calls by the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission and Parliamentary inquiries for similar reforms.

[63] Australian Parliament, Senate 2007, Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, *Australia's Future Oil Supply and Alternative Transport Fuels: Final Report*, Canberra, p161

[64] Council of Capital City Lord Mayors 2007, 'Draft: Capital Cities – Partners in Prosperity', August, p8

[65] Australian Parliament, Senate 2007, Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, *Australia's Future Oil Supply and Alternative Transport Fuels: Final Report*, Canberra, pp160–163

[66] Australian Parliament, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage 2005, *Sustainable Cities*, pp74–77

[67] Anon 2007, 'NSW Govt calls for tax-breaks for public transport users', *ABC News*, 18 July.

[68] NSW Ministry of Transport 2006, *Tax Incentives for Public Transport Users*, Consultancy report prepared by Ernst & Young, August, <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/taxconcessions/>, accessed 15 May 2007

alternative fuel prices and taxes, including less subsidies for car use.[69]

1.58 Under the Australian Government's Administrative Arrangements Order, the Australian Government Treasurer is the Minister responsible for possible tax concessions for public transport users. As the Treasurer declined to place the issue on the agenda of the Ministerial Council for Commonwealth-State Financial Relations March 2007 meeting, it was not discussed at the meeting, and nor is the Treasurer likely to ask for it to be considered at future meetings of the Council.

1.59 At the May 2007 meeting of the Australian Transport Council, Ministers noted the COAG decision that each jurisdiction would implement its own specific responses to urban congestion, and that inter-jurisdiction arrangements have been established to improve urban congestion data, modelling and network performance information.[70] According to officials in the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services, it would be a matter for the Australian Transport Council whether it wishes to consider any further action on the fringe benefit tax concession issue.

Externalities of private vehicle use

1.60 The Committee is concerned about the externalised costs of the relatively high rate of private vehicle use in the ACT. 96.5% of full-time employees have access to motor vehicles to drive, and only 3.6% of homeowners without a mortgage, and only 0.7% of full-time employees say that they cannot, or often have difficulty getting to the placed needed.[71] The private car is the most popular means of transport in the Territory; more so than in any other state capital.[72] The estimated cost of private car use per family is about 14% of their

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[69] J. Stott, Chief Executive, State Transit Authority of NSW, 2003, 'Opening address', 3rd International Conference on Smart Urban Transport, <http://www.transportroundtable.com.au/sut3/program.html>, accessed 25 May 2007, p 3

[70] Australian, State and Territory Transport Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) 2007, Joint Communiqué, 4 May 2007, Broome, <http://www.atcouncil.gov.au/communique/atc26.aspx>, accessed 25 May 2007

[71] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, *General Social Survey, Australian Capital Territory*, 4159855001, Table 10: Personal Characteristics by labour force status; Table 11: Personal Characteristics by household tenure and landlord type

[72] ACT Government 2004, *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, p16

total expenses. Over a working lifetime for a typical household this has been estimated to amount to about $750 000.[73]

1.61 The Review of Urban Congestion Trends, Impacts and Solutions, discussed above, estimated that the projected avoidable costs of congestion in Canberra in 2005 were $100 million, and could increase to $200 million by 2020.[74] In August 2007 the national costs of traffic congestion nationally were estimated at $20 billion annually.[75]

1.62 Costs are also generated from the environmental impact of greenhouse gas and toxic emissions, biodiversity loss and other environmental impacts. Car accidents are estimated to cost the ACT Government and Canberra residents about $120 million each year.[76] Externalised costs include increased fuel consumption, road infrastructure costs, transport-related ill-health, injuries and accident-related deaths, decreased staff punctuality, and the health and employment costs associated with these.[77]

1.63 The Committee received some submissions and considered views that clean technology vehicles had less environmental impact than under-patronised buses.[78] Mr Jamie Geysen said: 'On an annual average basis for fuel-efficiency, ACTION is currently no more environmentally friendly than a Toyota Corolla'.[79] But in the Committee's view, life-cycle analysis and externalised costs need to be factored into any assessment of the relative merits of public and private transport options, and discussion of subsidies. Mr Geyson's

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[73] L. Chambers 2002, *Sustainable Transport: A Background Paper prepared for the State Sustainability Strategy (WA)*, Perth, p19

[74] Australian Government, Department of Transport and Urban Services 2007, *Review of Urban Congestion Trends, Impacts and Solutions*, p5

[75] Public Transport Users Association 2007, *Moving Australians Sustainably: Transport Policy in the National Interest*, August 2007 <http://www.ptua.org.au/federal/moving_australians-web.pdf>, accessed 16 August 2007, p1

[76] Submission no 65

[77] NRMA 2007, 'Business hurt by traffic congestion', NRMA Media Release 12 April , <http://www.mynrma.com.au/cps/rde/xchg/mynrma/hs.xsl/4719.htm?cpssessionid=SID-3F5768EC-03ECF765>, accessed 21 May 2007 [reproduced in Open Road, May issue, p48]

[78] J. Geysen 2007, 'Public transport myth', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 7 May, p8 and J. Geysen 2007, 'No bus benefit', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 14 May, p10; submission no 33; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2007, pp19–21

[79] Submission no 33

detailed calculations were also done on diesel-fuel rather than the increasingly common CNG ACTION bus.

1.64 Single occupancy journeys in older and less-fuel efficient private vehicles are usually more environmentally impacting than well-patronised public transport travel. Whether a bus is more fuel efficient than a private vehicle depends on the type of fuel used, the vehicle compared, and the nature of the route travelled. It has been estimated that while at least 37 people would have to travel on one bus to have about the same total emissions per kilometre as nine Prius vehicles carrying the same total number of people. But for an average, commonly-driven car, about four people on a bus would have the same emissions per passenger as a single occupancy driver.[80] Very few people currently drive the most fuel-efficient and environmentally preferable vehicles, such as the Prius, and there is a trend towards use of heavier, high performance vehicles such as four wheel drives, which tend to consume more fuel, impact more heavily on road infrastructure, and have higher emissions.

1.65 The Queensland Government has undertaken similar comparisons:

> Currently 87% of Australians travel by private vehicles, and 13% of Australians use public transport. The average fuel consumption for a car is 11.4 l/100km whereas the average fuel consumption for a bus is 27.1 l/100km. If a bus has 30 occupants, this equates to 0.9 l/100km, which is 10.5 l/100km less than a single occupant vehicle. …[I]f the bus patronage across Australia increased by 1%, and assuming those patrons were in the past driving vehicles, the number of cars off the road each year would total 153 million, which equates to 600 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year.[81]

1.66 Similar issues are discussed further in chapter 4.

1.67 In view of these considerations, the Committee is of the view that the Sustainable Transport Plan is a sound policy document in its promotion of public transport for a more sustainable Canberra.

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[80] Personal communication, Staff of the Fuels and Technology Team and Australian Greenhouse Office, Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 16 August 2007

[81] Queensland Government, Queensland Transport 2007, *Draft Bus Industry Analysis 2006 In Brief*, Brisbane, p7

RECOMMENDATION 2

1.68 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to seek an Australian Government review of the statutory formula for Fringe Benefits Tax concessions to remove the perverse incentive for increased kilometres of car travel, and/or to seek the extension of tax exemptions or other incentives to public transport users.**

Territory Plan

1.69 Both Commonwealth and ACT law and policy governs planning in the ACT. The *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (Cwlth)[82] enables the Legislative Assembly to establish a statutory planning authority – now the ACT Planning and Land Authority – to develop and implement the Territory Plan. The *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* (ACT)[83] requires the Territory Plan to set out the planning principles and policies for giving effect to its object,[84] which is:

> to ensure, in a manner not inconsistent with the national capital plan, that the planning and development of the ACT provides the people of the ACT with an ecologically sustainable, healthy, attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and have their recreation.[85]

1.70 The Territory Plan includes both a written statement and a map. The written statement contains general planning principles (Part A), specific land use policies (Part B), overlay provisions (Part C), and definitions of terms (Part D). The Territory Plan map shows which land use policies and overlays in the written statement apply to particular sections of land in the Territory. The Territory Plan is developed and implemented taking account of other strategic ACT Government policy documents such as *The Canberra Plan* and *People Place*

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[82] Accessible at <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/legislation/actcompilation1.nsf/browseview?openform&VIEW=current&ORDER=bytitle&CATEGORY=actcompilation-Au>

[83] Accessible at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1991-100/current/pdf/1991-100.pdf>

[84] Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, sub-section 7(2))

[85] Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, sub-section 7(1)

Prosperity: a Policy for Sustainability in the ACT.[86] The provisions of the Territory Plan that refer to public transport are extracted at Appendix D.[87]

1.71 As noted above, the integration of land use and public transport planning is an effective policy approach for responding to traffic congestion issues. Planning for public transport has been integrated with other land use planning in the ACT as part of the Territory Plan for decades, but broader behavioural change is necessary as the roads have to cope with an estimated additional 5 000 vehicles per year.[88]

1.72 *The Canberra Spatial Plan*, as a strategic policy document, promotes the use of public transport as it includes a commitment to higher density development along transport corridors. It provides that residential intensification will occur within a 7.5km radius of the city centre over the next 15 years. Areas within central Canberra: Civic, along Northbourne Avenue, Constitution Avenue, Barton and Kingston are residential intensification areas.[89]

1.73 The Territory Plan, as the Territory's statutory instrument, implements the Spatial Plan. It also promotes greater use of public transport by intensifying residential areas along transport routes and close to commercial and employment centres. It includes a land use policy for Medium and High Rise Residential Development in specified areas, including Kingston/Griffith, Forrest, the City, along the Northbourne Avenue Corridor, adjacent to the Belconnen Town Centre and in Kaleen. The Urban Residential (Area B9) and Urban Housing land use policies (B11) permit a variety of medium and high density housing types (2–3 storeys) close to commercial centres, transport corridors and employment centres. In addition, the Territory Plan says that A10 Residential Core land use areas typically consist of residential areas within approximately 300 metres of group or town centres or 200 metres of

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[86] Accessible at <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/canberraplan/> and <http://www.sustainability.act.gov.au/policy.html>

[87] ACT Planning and Land Authority 2007, *Draft Restructured Territory Plan for Consultation*. See also the earlier ACT Department of Urban Services 1999, *Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning in the ACT: Towards an ACT Response to the National Greenhouse Strategy*, Canberra

[88] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 2 Hansard* (6 March), p190

[89] See ACT Planning and Land Authority 2004, *The Canberra Spatial Plan*, Canberra, Map 5 and pp12, 18

some local centres.[90] The A10 Residential Core land use policy applies throughout Canberra.

1.74 Not all stakeholders support this approach. Advancement of Public Transport called for a re-invigoration of the idea of quality town centre nodes, with more employment in Gungahlin and Tuggeranong rather than predominantly in Civic.[91] One submission suggested that Civic was being preferentially advantaged in service provision, including bus services, at the expense of outer suburbs.[92]

1.75 Parts of the inter-town public transport routes in the ACT are also already included in the Territory Plan. The Committee recently supported a proposed variation to the Territory Plan that had included a slightly different route for the City end of the Inter-town Public Transport Route between Belconnen and the City.[93]

1.76 In the Committee's view, planning policies such as urban consolidation, as manifest in the Spatial and Territory Plan, are important counterweights to continuous urban expansion which discourages public transport use, and encourages travel by private vehicles.

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[90] ACT Government 2002, *The Territory Plan*, Canberra, Part B1

[91] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p59

[92] Submission no 56

[93] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Draft Variation No 276 –ANU City West Precinct – The ANU Exchange (DV276): Report 28*, Canberra, accessible at <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees/index1.asp?committee=55&inquiry=713>

2 MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY

2.1 This section examines issues raised in evidence before the Committee in relation to the inquiry's term of reference concerning how well ACTION buses meet the needs of different segments of the community, whilst also acknowledging ACTION's role as a mass transport provider.

Discrimination issues arising from identified social needs

2.2 The Committee notes in this context, that the ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to enact human rights legislation which creates an overarching normative framework within which ACT law and policy has to be assessed. The Act is intended to encourage a dialogue about human rights amongst and within the ACT Legislative Assembly, the ACT Executive, the judiciary, the Human Rights Commission, and the broader Canberra community.

2.3 On 18 May 2007, the Committee wrote to the Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Helen Watchirs, requesting advice as to whether the administration of ACTION concession fares, and the operation of its services, could be regarded as discriminatory in a legal or practical sense. Dr Watchirs responded in a joint submission with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Disability and Community Services, Ms Linda Crebbin. The Commissioners' advice commented in relation to the ACT human rights framework, that

> To comply with the *Human Rights Act 2004* (HR Act), the goal of equality and non-discrimination should be at the heart of planning and decision-making by the ACT Government and its agencies. Section 8 of the HR Act protects the rights to equality and equal protection of the law – under s.31 this imports the international law concept of substantive equality, and allows for positive action that goes beyond temporary special

measures to accommodate fundamental differences and achieve equal treatment.[94]

2.4 During the public hearing, the Commission also emphasised that the transport needs of the disadvantaged, including people with disabilities, should be at the centre of public transport planning and service provision. In the Commission's view, the Discrimination Act should be amended to impose a clear statutory duty on government agencies, such as ACTION Buses and the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, to address the needs of less advantaged as part of their planning and service delivery processes.[95]

2.5 The view expressed in the Commission's submission and in oral evidence before the Committee,[96] was that the matters noted by the Committee and canvassed in submissions raise issues of possible unlawful discrimination under the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT). Dr Watchirs advised that whether complaints could succeed under the Act would turn on their facts, but she noted that even if a discrimination complaint failed, that did not necessarily mean that discrimination had not occurred in a practical, non-legal sense. The submission said that 'as long as off-peak services are significantly inferior (e.g. longer and slower routes, less frequent service) to peak-hour services there is a risk that a discrimination complaint may succeed if it meets the tests.'[97] ACTION may also be 'vulnerable' on the concession issue.[98]

2.6 The Commission's submission summarised the relevant provisions of the Discrimination Act. It noted that the low frequency of services in off-peak times, and lengthy routes and poor connections, had been identified as a concern for many disadvantaged groups. The aim of anti-discrimination law is to protect human rights, and to prevent disadvantage on the basis of protected attributes. If a discrimination complaint were to be lodged against ACTION, the onus would be on ACTION to establish that the detrimental requirement that it imposed on someone with a protected attribute (i.e. sex, status as a

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[94] Submission no 67
[95] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August 2007, pp96–97, 100
[96] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August 2007, pp92, 101
[97] Submission no 67
[98] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p101

parent or carer, pregnancy, disability, or age) was reasonable in the circumstances.[99] Financial and economic considerations would have to be considered in this context.[100]

2.7 The Commissioners recommended that:

- ACTION conduct a comprehensive review of user needs, including unmet needs, with particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged people. This should include the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, with the assistance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics if possible;
- ACTION be required to monitor the adequacy and affordability of bus services for disadvantaged people, and report regularly on the outcomes to the Legislative Assembly;
- ACTION should, in redesigning its services, put in place a human rights compliant planning framework with the goal of ensuring equitable service outcomes;
- ACTION should involve disadvantaged user groups in the planning and review of public transport services to ensure accessible and appropriate services; and
- this Committee recommend that the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) be amended to provide for a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality.

2.8 The Committee discusses human rights issues elsewhere in this report. The Committee notes as an initial comment here, that ACTION has received several awards for its promotion of social inclusion and services for the vision impaired.[101] But the Committee agrees with the Human Rights Commission that in view of the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT) and the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT), ACTION should be providing bus services which are explicitly consistent with human rights principles. Whether it does so across the board cannot be assessed adequately during this limited inquiry.

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[99] Submission no 67

[100] *Waters v Public Transport Corporation* [1991] HCA 49

[101] ACTION Authority 2006, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p8

RECOMMENDATION 3

2.8 **The Committee recommends that ACTION develop Network 08 in explicit compliance with human rights principles.**

General comments about ACTION services

2.9 The Committee is aware that ACTION has commissioned a market research company to undertake a detailed survey of passengers on ACTION buses for a three week period beginning on 30 July 2007, and that an on-line survey has been undertaken. Further community and expert feedback is to be sought later in 2007, to also inform the development of ACTION's Network 08.[102]

2.10 The ACT Government's submission referred to 'a recent independent survey' as rating customer satisfaction generally at 71%, customer satisfaction with drivers at 88%, customer satisfaction with personal safety at 86%, and satisfaction with timetables at 49%.[103] This data is from a very low passenger level however, as less than 10% of Canberra's population travel on ACTION buses.

2.11 Several submissions noted that ACTION provides a reasonable level of service overall. ACTION drivers and platform assistance staff were commended in various submissions for being helpful, friendly and polite.[104] But several submissions also referred to the stress that ACTION bus drivers have experienced; stress caused in part by grievances arising from cuts to services.[105] Some noted that some drivers take risks and drive dangerously,[106] possibly because of timetabling pressures.

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[102] G. Downie 2007, 'ACTION passengers asked for feedback', *The Canberra Times*, 31 July, p5

[103] Submission no 65; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June, p23

[104] Submissions no 7, 20, 23, 36, 37, 41, 52, 53, 61, 63, 64, 65 cf 45; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 1 Hansard*, (15 February), p96; G. Downie 2007, 'Poor planning and funding cuts cause bus chaos', *Sunday Canberra Times*, 8 July, p27 who wrote 'ACTION… drivers are almost without exception courteous and helpful…'.

[105] Submissions no 7, 15, 20, 27

[106] Submission no 41, Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2007, p105; personal communication, Transport Workers Union delegate, 11 May 2007

2.12 Several stakeholders expressed the following views:

- 'We believe that over the years, and within budgetary and other constraints, ACTION provided a reasonable service to the population of Canberra. ACTION has faced an ongoing lack of long term commitment to investment and recurrent funding, together with intermittent forward planning since 1992'.[107]
- 'I travel on the bus fairly often and it is just great. It is relaxing, hassle free and peaceful. Also through time, perfect strangers become familiar to one another whilst travelling on the same route, and conversations and smiles are exchanged'.[108]
- 'The only aspect of the ACTION network that works adequately is the inter-town express service which has a rolling timetable and is as fast as one can drive'.[109]

2.13 By far the most common comment in submissions was that hourly off-peak services were too infrequent,[110] especially at weekends (and Sunday night in particular).[111] One submission suggested that circular routes with hourly clockwise and anti-clockwise services could improve the service.[112] Some submissions and oral evidence also said the services were unreliable,[113] and often overcrowded, especially during peak hours.[114] When buses are at capacity waiting passengers can be left at the bus stop.[115] Several submissions noted that if an off-peak bus is early and a passenger misses the bus, this can

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[107] Submission no 7

[108] Submission no 4

[109] Submission no 34

[110] Submission no 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22, 23, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34, 35, 41, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 60, 61, 64, Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May, 15 June, 7 August 2007

[111] Submission no 30, 35, 41; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, pp104–105

[112] Submission no 26

[113] Submission no 16, 17, 23, 31, 33, 41, 50, 61

[114] Submissions no 15, 16, 23, 34, 41, 51, 61, 64; see also C. Alexander 2007, 'Time for action on buses fiasco', *The Canberra Times*, 24 March, p4; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, pp2, 8

[115] Submission no 41

mean that travel can be delayed for an hour, with connecting services and appointments missed; but meeting appointments generally is more difficult with less frequent services.[116] One submitter suggested that ACTION should penalise drivers who run early.[117] Early departures understandably concern potential passengers who miss the bus.[118]

2.14 Several submissions noted that Canberra's layout created particular challenges for public transport, but that bus services should be a priority as they are an essential service,[119] and sacrifices made in other areas.[120] One submission made recommendations which were consistent with existing law and policy, such as current Territory Plan provisions concerning higher density residential areas close to transport corridors, local centres and employment centres so as to encourage public transport use, as noted above.[121]

2.15 One submission suggested that it was not good public policy to promote heavily subsidised and overburdened public transport at the expense of private vehicles using cleaner fuels.[122]

2.16 On the issue of overcrowding, the ACT Government's submission[123] noted that the loading capacity for buses provides for some standing passengers, as follows:

- Irisbus Rigid: 46 seated, 31 standing
- Renault Rigid PR 100.3A: 43 seated, 28 standing
- Scania Rigid: 45 seated, 17 standing

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[116] Submissions no 2, 7, 15, 23, 17, 28, 31, 41, 59, 64. See also submission no 61
[117] Submission no 28
[118] Submission no 38
[119] Submissions no 7, 9
[120] Submission no 11
[121] ACT Government 2002, *The Territory Plan Written Statement Vol 1*, Canberra, Part B1; submission no 23
[122] Submission no 33
[123] Submission no 65

2.17 The ACT Government noted further that ACTION had received many complaints from customers now having to stand, but that some additional services had been introduced to alleviate capacity issues.[124]

Specific comments about ACTION services

2.18 Many submissions criticised the cuts to ACTION services made in December 2006. The Canberra branch of the Transport Workers Union, most of whose members are ACTION bus drivers and transport officers, described the post-December 2006 services 'probably the worst network they have seen in 30 years'.[125] Other stakeholders expressed similar views.[126] The ACT Transit Group, an unincorporated association of people with an interest in public transport, submitted:

> Overall the new network gives regular passengers the impression that the new structure was the result of a panic reaction to a reduction in budget funding. Almost all aspects of the network were ill conceived and ineffectively launched onto the citizens of Canberra at a time when the Government was simultaneously attempting to generate demand for ACTION services through the TravelSmart program and the Sustainable Transport Plan.
>
> It appears that there was:
>
> - an absence of any serious consideration of pre-existing passenger loadings – individual trips carrying in excess of 30 passengers were deleted and yet peak period services carrying only a few passengers were retained;
> - no consideration of the impact on passengers of an absence of connections between various services at town centre interchanges – there are now many instances where journeys within the one town, involving two local buses are well nigh impossible to undertake

[124] Submission no 65

[125] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2007, p3

[126] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p54; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p108

under 90 minutes and journeys involving three buses, including one inter-town bus and local buses in adjacent towns, are almost impossible to complete in under two to three hours;

- no attempt to re-time bus routes, especially the inter-town routes, to improve their reliability, prior to the introduction of the new schedules, thus compounding the late running and reliability difficulties and further impacting on the inability of many passengers to undertake cross town journeys by bus;
- no consideration of the types of journeys needed to be undertaken at lunch time between outlying office blocks and town centres; and
- no consideration of the level of information now required in order to plan a cross town journey – in some instances a passenger must carry up to five separate timetables for a weekday journey spreading from the afternoon into the early evening, where previously one comprehensive timetable was adequate.[127]

2.19 One commentator suggested that to address the problem of overcrowded commuter services the number of larger articulated buses in the ACTION fleet could be increased. These are said not to cost much more to run than smaller buses, but can carry nearly twice the number of passengers.[128] When questioned about the provision of articulated buses, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that a bus replacement strategy was being developed to determine ACTION's future fleet requirements, and that the strategy would address the suitability and cost effectiveness of articulated buses.[129]

2.20 One submission criticised the poor siting of some bus stops on main roads which disadvantage the residents of some suburbs.[130] Another said that it would be better if the distances between bus stops was regularised at between 300 and 400m rather than the current irregularities, where some bus stops are

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[127] Submission no 7, para 6.1.2.1
[128] D. Brudenall 2007, 'No bus benefit', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 14 May, p10
[129] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[130] Submission no 23

100m to 200m apart in older suburbs and 400m or longer in other places.[131]

2.21 The Committee heard evidence from a consultant who had been involved in the delivery of a TravelSmart program in Canberra and was impressed with the aims and outcomes discussed.[132] As noted previously, TravelSmart is a voluntary behaviour change program which helps individuals to choose, without a top-down, regulatory mechanism, to use more sustainable transport options for personal reward, based on their personal knowledge or understanding.

RECOMMENDATION 4

2.22 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support the delivery of TravelSmart or equivalent programs in Canberra.**

Bus services to and from the airport

2.23 Several submissions called for ACTION services to and from the airport precinct, from Gungahlin to the airport,[133] and for more routes to pass through the Parliamentary Zone.[134] The Gungahlin Community Council polled the community via its website and found that 27 people would use a Gungahlin to airport service on weekdays, and 39 who would use it occasionally.[135] Others suggested that an employment base must be developed in Gungahlin to help alleviate the traffic congestion in the area.[136] Other submissions also criticised the lack of provision for adequate public transport services for Gungahlin.[137]

2.24 When questioned about the likelihood of a Gungahlin to the airport bus service being introduced, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised the Committee that the comprehensive service plan being developed

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[131] Submissions no 26, 40 (saying Knox St Watson has four stops within 500m)

[132] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 14 June 2007

[133] Submissions no 10, 15, 23, 24, 29, 40

[134] Submission no 7, 23, 24, 29, 40, 42, Exhibit 1

[135] Submission no 40

[136] Submission no 54

[137] Submissions no 7, 19, 24, 32, 40, 41, 54, 61; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May 2007, pp21, 25, 33

by ACTION, as the basis for a new bus network, would evaluate the community's public transport needs and the extent to which these were currently being met. The development of the service plan would include a survey of passengers' journeys. The Department advised that there was an ongoing discussion about airport and commuter services to Brindabella park with Canberra Airport management and Deane's Bus Lines.[138]

Issues with particular bus routes

2.25 Various submissions expressed concerns about particular bus routes. These are summarised in the following table:

Route number	Comment
13/313	more services should run between 3.30pm and 4.20pm to pick up students[139]
16/116/216	no weekend service on Dalley-Macrossan Crescent loop adds a 20 minute walk which may not be possible for the elderly and infirm[140]
27	should be restored to the old timetable so that parents can arrive at a convenient time to pick up primary school age children from Arawang Primary School in Waramanga[141]
30 & 31	routes could be combined into a longer route passing through the Parliamentary Triangle with a 20–30 minute schedule[142] The last service leaves Barton at 5.50pm;[143] the change in route numbers between 30 & 32 is confusing[144]
33 & 40	these services, which run past the Australian War Memorial, are both hourly and leave 1 minute apart; service 33 no longer operates in the evenings, which disadvantages inner-north residents[145]
40, 41, 42	Hourly off-peak services are too infrequent and services 40 and 41 both run within 15 minutes of each other, leaving a 45minute wait, and off-peak the wait is 50–55minutes[146]

[138] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[139] Submission no 41
[140] Submission no 41
[141] Submission no 23; see also submission no 36
[142] Submission no 23
[143] Submission no 41
[144] Submission no 64
[145] Submission no 61, 64
[146] Submission no 61,

34 & 48	run through O'Connor within minutes of each other, creating an hour's wait between alternate services; route 34 is too circuitous, and service 48 is too limited[147]
35/935/936/937	these services are inadequate, there are too many timetables, and some trips between the inner-north and Manuka take almost five times as long as an equivalent car trip;[148] too many services are full of school children and they drive past the stop because they're full[149]
36 & 39	need to be better spaced during peak hours[150]
38/ 935/938	these weekend services between Civic and Manuka leave within 8 minutes of each other and arrive in Manuka within 3 minutes of each other, creating a waiting time of 50 minutes for the next service;[151] the route is too circuitous[152]
40, 41	needs to be supplemented with a more direct route for commuters to Barton (e.g. Coulter Drive, Redfern Ave or Lyttleton St, Bindubi St, William Hovell, Parkes Way, Cwlth Ave, to Barton, Manuka, Kingston or Woden)[153]
43/243/45	services on routes 43 & 45 should be better spaced rather than the hourly services passing through Dunlop at the same time[154]
48	a morning service arrives at Belconnen Interchange at 8.15am; this is too early[155]
53	employees can no longer use this service or other services and arrive in Gungahlin before 8am[156]
62	poor connections at Woden interchange with route 267 morning and late afternoon services[157]
73 & 74	Seniors disadvantaged by reduction in off-peak services after 1.48pm[158]

[147] Submission no 61
[148] Submission no 61
[149] Submission no 64
[150] Submission no 38
[151] Submission no 61. See also submissions no 7, 19, 20, 64
[152] Submission no 64
[153] Submission no 42
[154] Submission no 41
[155] Submission no 39
[156] Submission no 61
[157] Submission no 35
[158] Submission no 41

80	the route is too circuitous[159]
84	ACTION has given insufficient explanation for why this essential route has been cut[160]
Melba	access to the National Museum is difficult during off-peak hours[161]
Nicholls	lack of services between Nicholls and Civic[162]
227	Waranganga–Barton–City: needs additional services because of overcrowding[163]
314	two peak-time 314 services between 5pm and 5.30pm replaced with one service at 5.08pm[164]
300 routes	should be dropped in favour of more 312–315 through-routes[165]
925	it is no longer possible to travel from Holder and Duffy to arrive in Civic before 10am on weekends, making travel to Sunday church services in Civic difficult[166]
927	it takes more than an hour to travel to Woden from Coolamon Court because of poor connections in Civic, and it is too far to walk from Duffy and Holder to get the bus from Coolamon Court[167]
Deane's Queanbeyan thru Canberra service	this is too expensive for young people to use on weekends[168]

RECOMMENDATION 5

2.26 **The Committee recommends that ACTION, when developing Network 08, review the comments made in submissions to this inquiry about ACTION services in general, and about particular bus routes in Network 06.**

2.27 Some submissions made practical suggestions for reducing boarding delays such as reviewing whether the rear door should be opened for exits at stops

[159] Submission no 61
[160] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard* (15 March), p663;
[161] Submission no 41
[162] Submission no 41
[163] Submission no 23
[164] Submission no 41
[165] Submission no 41
[166] Submission no 21
[167] Submission no 21
[168] Submission no 64, young person's comment

other than interchanges.[169]

2.28 The Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised, in response to a question from the Committee about rear door exiting, that a change of policy on this matter was unlikely. For the safety of passengers, disembarking was allowed through the rear door only at interchanges.[170]

2.29 One community group fears that ACTION services were being run down as a prelude to privatisation.[171] The Minister for Territories has stated publicly that further privatisation is not on the ACT Government's agenda. The *Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act 2001(ACT)* already enables the introduction of public transport services by authorised carriers other than ACTION.

2.30 The Committee considered the comments made in several submissions about several routes which have been timetabled in such a way that clusters of services pass through bus stops within minutes of each other, leaving a long wait for the next service. The Committee considered that these services should be reviewed as a matter of priority during the development of Network 08.

RECOMMENDATION 6

2.31 **The Committee recommends that as part of the development of Network 08, that ACTION reviews its bus timetables to ensure that services are not avoidably clustering.**

Customer feedback services

2.32 Several stakeholders queried whether ACTION's customer feedback services were adequate. The community group, Advancement of Public Transport, said that buses are often late or just do not arrive, and that 'the access system

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[169] Submission no 26, 61

[170] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[171] Submission no 27; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p55

by phone is not always very reliable'.[172] The Belconnen Community Council said that two responses to its request for 'bus stories' had complained that ACTION did not take complaints seriously,[173] and another submission said that customer service officers were not easily accessible.[174] Comment in the Young Coalition's submission also referred to frustration with ACTION's lack of responsiveness to complaints. The complainant wrote:

> I used to live in west Sydney and the Westbus bus company had no problem in providing buses for the whole of western Sydney. My mother worked for the Windsor area of Westbus and whenever they got a complaint of any form, phone, email, post anything they had to give a copy to a government adviser, along with how they looked into it, and how they responded to it. They had to look into every complaint and here in ACT whenever I ring up to complain about the bus not turning up (which happens quiet frequently) they just shrug you off by saying that the bus was definitely there when I have been waiting there for 20 minutes and it definitely wasn't there. In Sydney whenever a bus driver wasn't able to do his run for any reason, they had to get someone else to do it. While here in ACT the buses just don't turn up quite frequently because the bus driver didn't turn up or something. The buses in Sydney all have GPS locaters in them and it is recorded so the depot can see where they are at any given time, even the next day they can go and look back and see especially when they get complaints about it being late or not arriving. The ACT system is shocking and lazy. The Government only has to provide one type of public transport and they can't even do that. There has to be a better way to do things!!!!!!!!!![175]

2.33 In response to these concerns about customer feedback, the Committee asked the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to explain the complaints services available. The Department advised that customer complaints or

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[172] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p57; submission no 27

[173] Submission no 41; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p62

[174] Submission no 41

[175] Submission no 64, quote no 33; see also Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, pp108–109

feedback could be sent by e-mail, fax, phone, letter or communicated verbally. Written complaints were forwarded to the Correspondence Officer but they could also be made to any of the ACTION Customer Service areas at bus interchanges. When the complaint had been investigated the customer was advised of the outcome.[176]

2.34 The Department advised that during 2005–06 there was some interaction with the ACT Ombudsman. Of the four complaints received by the Ombudsman, one required no further action. Two were assessed as not warranting further investigation. The complaint that was investigated was found to require no action by ACTION. [177]

2.35 The ACT Government's submission noted that despite vocal criticism of some of the changes to ACTION's services, customer satisfaction levels were generally fairly high except in relation to ACTION's timetables. As noted above, it cited an independent telephone survey of 1 000 ACT residents conducted in May 2007 which found the following satisfaction levels, in relation to:

- the ACTION buses website (www.action.act.gov.au) – 73%
- the ACTION buses call centre (13 17 10) – 78%
- the routes travelled by ACTION buses – 71%
- the ACTION buses timetables – 49%
- personal safety whilst using the ACTION bus network – 86%
- the facilities provided act ACTION bus interchanges – 60%
- the customer service provided by ACTION bus drivers – 88%; and
- the overall customer service that ACTION provides – 71%.[178]

Stakeholders with special needs and interests

People with a disability

[176] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[177] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[178] Submission no 65

2.36 The *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and provides mechanisms for handling complaints of discrimination in areas such as the provision of services. The Human Rights Commission receives eligible complaints and attempts to conciliate them in the first instance. A discrimination complaint in relation to a transport service was being progressed at the time of the inquiry.[179]

2.37 In 2000 the ACT Government adopted an Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport in the ACT, for 2004–2007. The Department of Territories and Municipal Services receives feedback on accessibility issues through its community advisory group and an internal disability reference group monitors progress across a range of areas.[180]

2.38 The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth) is national legislation designed to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people with a disability. Since October 2002, Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport have required public transport providers and operators to make their services accessible to people with a disability over a 30 year timeframe, with milestones at the fifth, tenth, fifteenth, twentieth and thirtieth years. Temporary exemptions are available to prevent undue hardship. Standards apply to matters such as access paths, manoeuvring areas, ramps and boarding devices, allocated spaces, handrails, doorways, controls, symbols and signs, the payment of fares and the provision of information.[181]

2.39 ACTION currently complies with the requirements of these standards. By 31 December 2007, 25% of ACTION's fleet must be fully accessible; by 2012, 55%; by 2017 90%, and by 2022, 100%.[182] ACTION exceeded the first target as at November 2006; 106 of 379 buses in the ACTION fleet were low floor, accessible buses. These were used on the inter-town 300 series routes and selected local routes, including to hospitals.[183] ACTION also has 18 mini-buses

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[179] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2007, pp92–93

[180] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 12 Hansard*, 21 November, pp3710–3711

[181] Australian Government Attorney-General's Department 2006, 'Disability standards for accessible public transport', <http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Humanrightsandanti-discrimination_DisabilityStandardsforAccessiblePublicTransport>, accessed 30 May 2007

[182] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 12 Hansard*, 21 November, pp3710–3711

[183] Routes 34 and 84 and 11 inter-town services (operating between the 4 major interchanges)

to move people who have special needs. By 2012, 55% of ACTION's fleet is expected to be accessible.[184] Notwithstanding ACTION's compliance, some operational and personal difficulties continue for ACTION and passengers with a disability.[185]

2.40 The ACT Government is currently commissioning a study on the status of ACTION's fleet and possible options for fleet replacement, and provided $8 million in the 2007–08 budget to replace up to 18 buses.[186]

2.41 Free travel is also available for carers accompanying a person with vision impairment. 28% of bus stops had been made compliant with the standards. A study of 19 other routes would identify the level of upgrade to the bus stops that would be required to enable them to meet the relevant disability standards applying to bus stops.

2.42 The four ACT bus interchanges have also had some adaptation work done to enhance access by people with a disability. These include tactile ground surface hazard and directional indicators, and information in Braille indicating bus bays. Three of the interchanges have open street-level access which is suitable for persons with a disability. By December 2007 upgrading work is expected to be complete at two interchanges. In the longer term the remaining two interchanges will be redeveloped.[187]

2.43 ACTION has provided information and active demonstration sessions for people with a disability to practice boarding and disembarking from accessible buses. These are aimed at improving the community's confidence in the use of public transport by providing an opportunity to acquire relevant information, practice boarding and moving along the bus in a wheelchair, and disembarking. [188]

2.44 Information on timetables and routes is also provided. Alternate information

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[184] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p69

[185] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August 2007, p97

[186] Submission no 65; at $500 000 each, costing $8 million: Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p77

[187] ACT Government 2006, *Report on ACT Public Transport Accessible Infrastructure and Services*, <http://hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/transport/Rpt%20ACT%20DDA.doc>, accessed 30 May 2007

[188] ACT Government 2006, *Report on ACT Public Transport Accessible Infrastructure and Services*,

services include the 'bustext SMS for your bus' message service for route information along with the ACTION web site and central service phone number.[189]

2.45 The ACT Government also provides a taxi fare-subsidy for eligible permanent ACT residents who have a severe disability[190] and who are unable to use public transport for a minimum period of 6 months. Taxi vouchers are provided to approved members, and these are used to pay part of the cost of the taxi fare. Eligibility factors include income, eligibility for other subsidy, concession or pension, the availability of, or proximity to public transport, and the length of journey, or timetable problems. The subsidy is available for taxi fares for regular or wheelchair-accessible taxis. The subsidy can be granted for an initial period of three years or for a limited period of 6 or 12 months.

2.46 Members approved for the 50% subsidy are eligible for a maximum subsidy of up to $17.00 per trip. Members approved for the 75% subsidy are eligible for a maximum subsidy of up to $26.00 per trip. Eligible members who receive a 75% subsidy may also receive a 'lift fee' to partly cover the cost of loading and unloading fares. Members can use their vouchers interstate, but are ineligible if they are already a member of an interstate taxi subsidy scheme.[191]

2.47 Several submissions commented on the inadequacy of ACTIONS services for people with a disability, suggesting:

- the closure of primary schools in the ACT has had impacts on high support needs children as some have had to travel further to have their learning needs met;[192]
- it was 'almost impossible' for children and older people in wheelchairs to catch a bus;[193]
- more routes should be made accessible for people with a disability and

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[189] ACT Government 2006, *Report on ACT Public Transport Accessible Infrastructure and Services*,

[190] Severe disability is defined as including severe mobility disability, legal blindness, as defined for social security purposes; severe vision impairment; cognitive/intellectual/severe psychiatric disability; and severe and uncontrolled epilepsy

[191] 'ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme', <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/Services/Services.htm>, accessed 13 August 2007

[192] Submission no 31

[193] Submission no 31

accessible buses should run on them consistently;[194]

- overcrowding is a significant disincentive against bus travel for people with a disability, and especially for people with impaired vision or mobility, or intellectual disability;[195]
- accessories should be installed to make bus travel for people with a disability safer. For example, attachment straps should be fitted to enable wheelchairs to be securely fastened within the bus, and dimpled flooring can improve safety;[196]
- interstate bus services and the airport bus service should be accessible (just as the airport service is in Melbourne);[197]
- the ACT Government should be lobbying the Australian Government for more funding to enable accessibility targets to be met or exceeded;[198]
- comparative assessments should be made of accessible public transport services in the Australian states and territories and the Australian Government should be lobbied for more funding to assist implementation of accessibility targets;[199] and
- more consultation is needed with people with disabilities to ensure that the implementation of accessible transport is suitable and appropriate for their needs.[200]

2.48 More positively, some submissions note that ACTION's low floor and accessible compressed natural gas (CNG) buses, and buses with bicycle racks, demonstrate a commitment to both mobility restricted passengers, and the environment.[201] The ACT Government has committed in its Climate Change Action Plan to purchasing further CNG buses and to continuing to 'respond to research and evidence relating to the comparative merits of all fuel and

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[194] Submission no 52
[195] Submission no 52
[196] Submission no 52
[197] Submission no 29
[198] Submission no 29
[199] Submission no 29
[200] Submission no 29
[201] Submission no 7

technological alternatives.'[202] CNG buses are expected to contribute to a lesser overall fuel cost for ACTION over time as CNG is usually a cheaper fuel than diesel.

2.49 The Committee welcomes this commitment. The Transport Workers Union had urged that ACTION improve its forward planning, particularly with respect to an appropriate vehicle replacement program and driving training.[203] The community group, Advancement of Public Transport, suggested similarly that Canberra's older buses were uncomfortable and contributed to the increasingly manifest tensions between passengers and drivers, and that bus drivers need to be better trained to deal with passengers.[204]

2.50 During a public hearing Ms Porter AM MLA referred to the benefits for vision-impaired bus travellers of having access to voice-activated bus information and bus timetables in Braille. Ms Porter also noted that some bus service providers train their drivers so that they know how to speak clearly and helpfully to vision-impaired passengers using their service.[205]

2.51 Discrimination on the basis of disability across a wide range of areas is the leading cause of complaint under anti-discrimination legislation around Australia.[206] One of the defences available to service providers is that the provision of non-discriminatory services would create unjustifiable hardship for the service provider. The factors relevant to assessing unjustifiable hardship in all the circumstances of a case include cost, consultation with people with a disability and whether good faith efforts have been made to be non-discriminatory.[207]

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[202] Action 12: ACT Government 2007, *Climate Change Action Plan 2007–2011*, Canberra

[203] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, p12

[204] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp55, 57

[205] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 14 June 2007, p45

[206] Submission no 67

[207] Submission no 67 suggests that the ACT Discrimination Tribunal may have given undue emphasis to resource allocation and budgetary considerations in its decision in *Woodbury & Ors v ACT* [2007] ACTDT 5 April, and not considered the applicable High Court decision of *Waters v Public Transport Corporation* [1991] HCA 49

2.52 In 2007 the Standards were undergoing their 5-yearly review by the Australian Government Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in consultation with the Attorney-General. The review will consider whether discrimination has been removed as far as possible according to the compliance requirements, and whether any amendments to the standards are needed.[208]

2.53 The Commissioner for Disability and Community Services, Ms Linda Crebbin, advised the Committee that 'a number of oral submissions' had been made by individuals concerned with ACTION bus services as they related to issues such as accessibility, the number of routes that run accessible buses, ticket validation systems and the problems faced by people with vision impairment.[209]

2.54 The submission from the office of the Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner urges the ACT Government to ensure 'that the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport are not reduced in any way, as that would be contrary to existing government policy.'[210]

RECOMMENDATION 7

2.55 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government not support any weakening of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport in the context of the 5–yearly review of the standards.**

RECOMMENDATION 8

2.56 **The Committee recommends that ACTION continue to consult closely with disability advocacy groups and individuals, and continue to adapt its services for people with disabilities, consistent with human rights principles.**

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[208] See The Allen Group 2007, *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002: Issues Paper*, <http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au/>, accessed 1 August 2007

[209] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2007, p96

[210] Submission no 67

RECOMMENDATION 9

2.57 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to lobby for increased Australian Government funding for public transport improvements, including for more accessible services.**

Older people

2.58 The infrequency of ACTION bus services, circuitous routes, poor connections, and changing routes for off-peak and weekend services, are of particular concern to older Canberrans, some of whom rely on public transport to access health services and meet appointments.[211] Although the positive health benefits of walking to catch buses was noted during hearings,[212] evidence also suggested that the distance needing to be walked to catch a bus can create difficulties for some older people. So can buses moving off before an older person has had time to sit down,[213] and younger passengers not making way for seniors and the less able.[214]

2.59 Mr Flint, for COTA, explained that as a result of having less frequent bus services people had to spend much longer outside, as well as spending a longer time waiting for the bus, and this was tiring for older people. If they had to return home or be elsewhere by a certain time, the infrequency of the buses might mean that they abandoned the journey. Mr Flint said that the number of people who gave up on social and educational activities after one or more instances of missing the bus was surprisingly high. These were unexpected impacts of infrequent services, and they increased the risk that older people in Canberra would become socially isolated.[215]

2.60 Between August and December 2006 the Ministerial Advisory Council for Ageing (MACA) was also involved in a Seniors Transport Needs Survey. In

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[211] Submissions no 2, 7, 22, 23, 31, 32, 38, 41, 56, 59, 61, 63, 64 Exhibit 1, See also Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp51–2; *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May 2007, pp33–38

[212] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp50

[213] Submission no 31, 52

[214] Submission no 41

[215] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp48

their submissions and evidence to the Committee, COTA and MACA suggested that since late 2006 the general perception of ACTION services has been that it is inadequate both in the core areas of Woden, the inner south and inner north areas, and in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin. Older people were being deterred from travelling by bus because of the nature and level of service, and this was having a detrimental impact on their social and everyday life. With incentives such as more regular services and more direct routes, more older people might choose to travel by bus. Disincentives for public transport use included the distance needing to be walked to a bus stop, ill health and poor mobility, having access to a car, and the perceived inconvenience of taking buses.[216]

2.61 COTA suggested that ACTION should be actively helping older people to make the transition from private vehicles to public transport as early as possible. This would help make the transition to public transport easier, as some elderly drivers found giving up their car quite traumatic. It may improve road safety, and reduce the social isolation often experienced by the elderly.[217] Other submissions also recognised that people may need to have the procedures and advantages of bus travel explained by 'volunteer ambassadors'.[218]

2.62 But COTA suggested that services other than the current range of ACTION bus services were also needed. These included dedicated busways for mass transport, community transport, flexible mini-buses for short trips like the Arafura cab service, taxis and the taxi subsidy scheme, and services that were better integrated across the available options.[219]

2.63 In 2005–06 COTA (ACT)[220] surveyed[221] about five per cent of older Canberrans,

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[216] Submission no 32, 49, Exhibit 1; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May 2007, pp32–34

[217] Submission no 32; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p53. See also submission no 56 re encouraging older people to use public transport.

[218] Submission no 37

[219] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p53

[220] COTA: The People for People over 50, is an independent consumer organisation for older people in Canberra. It is concerned with advocacy, policy development and analysis, research, project management and information dissemination: submission no 32. The survey was done before the December 2006 cutbacks to services.

or 1600 older people, for an *Older Person Road Safety Needs Analysis for the* NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust. The survey found that:

- 49% of the older people surveyed found ACTION buses to be a convenient transport option;
- 40% said they would use ACTION buses as a means of maintaining their independence;
- 34% said they minimised the use of ACTION buses due to cost; and
- 40.7% said that bus travel was the transport option to be avoided if time was an issue (which was a higher percentage than for walking, at 25.1%, and taxis, at 16.2%).[222]

2.64 COTA advised the Committee that some of the conclusions that could be drawn from the focus group and consultation processes, and demographic trends, included:

- that the ACT needed to develop policies and programs to facilitate increased reliance on alternatives to private transport for seniors who are seeking to reduce their dependence on cars or retire from driving;
- ACTION should better target its services to meet the needs of older Canberrans, young people and those with a disability, in order that they can access medical and other goods and services, and social activities;
- more frequent off-peak services were needed, using smaller buses if necessary, because older people were particularly vulnerable to social isolation.[223]

2.65 COTA stressed the contribution that good public transport services could make to ecologically sustainable development. One witness suggested that promoting public transport could be another means for stimulating the ACT economy, as people tend to spend more money when they are out and about

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[221] Research methods included a survey and focus groups

[222] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp51–2; *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May 2007, p48

[223] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p48

rather than at home.[224]

2.66 The Ministerial Advisory Council on the Ageing recommended that ACTION actively assist older Canberrans to learn about how the bus system worked so that if they become unable to drive they do not become socially isolated and lose quality of life. In the Council's view it might be more efficient, and provide a higher quality of service, if more resources were provided for community transport schemes for the elderly.[225]

Footpaths and bus shelters

2.67 The lack of bus shelters at some bus stops, and poorly maintained footpaths, can also cause distress for older Canberrans.[226] The Ministerial Advisory Council on the Ageing recommended that the ACT Government prioritise its footpath repair program by identifying suburbs with the highest concentrations of older people and by rectifying unsafe footpaths in areas most likely to be used by older people for accessing ACTION buses, such as near retirement villages, older persons units, seniors clubs etc.

2.68 In relation to footpaths, the Department advised that there were about 1 869km of footpaths and 374km of cycle paths in the ACT, totalling about 2 234 km of pathways. The condition of this network was variable, with about 12% being unsatisfactory to poor, 27% fair, and 61% good to excellent.[227] The Government recognised its duty of care to maintain a safe path network. Roads ACT had adopted a number of strategies for maintenance inspections to best utilise the available resources. Generally, planned inspections were carried out for pedestrian paths around major shopping areas such as Canberra Central. Most reactive inspections were carried out in response to requests from the community, but were also generated by contractors following routine work and following random audits by Roads ACT

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[224] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p63

[225] Exhibit 1; submission no 32

[226] Submissions no 61, 63, Exhibit 1, Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 May 2007, p34

[227] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

officers.[228]

2.69 The Department also advised that Roads ACT had a medium term program to assess the condition of the community path network. This was expected to take approximately 3 years, subject to available resources. About 25 suburbs, assessed as high risk due to the greater pedestrian traffic (i.e. generally those with large shopping centres or business offices) would be targeted. The assessments were intended to identify defective sections of footpaths, identify and prioritise appropriate repairs, and include such works in optimum sized packages to maximise efficiency and minimise costs to provide best value for money.[229]

2.70 In relation to bus shelters, the Department advised that requests for bus shelters on all routes were assessed against various criteria including:

- whether an average of 12 or more people had used the stop per hour during peak periods;
- whether it was located at a local centre;
- whether it was within 200m walking distance of aged care accommodation;
- whether it was within 400m walking distance of a primary school, high school, college or university;
- whether it was located within walking distance of significant node of employment outside Civic, town or group centres;
- whether it would service a tourist facility outside Civic, town or group centres;
- whether it was located within walking distance of a significant community facility; and
- whether it would service an increased density development.

2.71 The Department advised that if one or more of the above criteria were satisfied, then a bus shelter would be justified, and a request would be placed in a database for consideration in future programs against other competing

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[228] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[229] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

priorities.[230]

2.72 The Government had also already announced in the finalisation of an agreement with Adshel Street Furniture Pty Ltd for the supply, installation and maintenance of 241 new bus shelters in the ACT by the end of 2009. The company will use 133 of these for advertising but will supply and maintain the shelters;[231]

Smaller buses

2.73 Some stakeholders advocated the use of smaller buses with more flexible routing.[232] One submission noted that mini 12-seater buses were used in other states and offered a cost-efficient service.[233] Others also suggested that buses providing shuttle-bus services between major centres of office accommodation could be a viable alternative to taxis and government vehicles.[234]

2.74 Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that smaller buses were not necessarily the answer because the cost of running them was only marginally less than full-size buses, and they could not be used for the range of services ACTION provides. But it may be possible to commission a private operator to run small buses as a demand-responsive transport service.[235]

2.75 The Home and Community Care program (HACC) is funded jointly by the Australian and ACT Governments. The Committee regards the services provided by community and service organisations under this program, including community transport, as an essential service for Canberra's older residents in need of home-based or community care. On the evidence presented to the Committee, it is apparent there would be merit in reviewing the adequacy of the current funding support provided to this program.

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[230] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[231] ACT Government 2007, 'New Bus Shelters for the ACT', Media release Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA 21 August

[232] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p56; submissions no 4, 28, 30, 32, 38, 41, 64

[233] Submission no 20, referring to the SunBus Service, in Queensland <http://www.sunbus.com.au>

[234] Submission no 23, see also submission no 28

[235] Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p86

RECOMMENDATION 10

2.76 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine the role of community transport provided by Regional Community Services under the Home and Community Care Program, with a view to strengthening this program to assist it in providing alternative, affordable and flexible transport options for the elderly and people with disabilities.**

Concession fares

2.77 Several submissions said that pensioner and Seniors Card concession tickets should be available for all day use. Various reasons were given, such as: so as encourage the elderly to be more socially and physically active; to enable older people to meet early appointments; and to avoid waiting times for off-peak services in the early evening.[236] COTA submitted that the restrictions on off-peak fares for older people were 'unfair, discriminatory and unnecessary, particularly if greater bus use was to be encouraged'. While bus services were affordable at off-peak times, fewer services were available.[237]

2.78 The submission from the ACT Division of the Association of Independent Retirees expressed many of the common concerns about ACTION bus services, for older people, and suggested that overcrowding on the first of the off-peak buses would be lessened if holders of Seniors Cards could use them at an earlier time. The Association also called for a more economical ACTION service between Canberra Central and the airport.[238]

2.79 At least one submission disagreed, suggesting that passengers not travelling to work or travelling on concession cards should travel outside peak hours.[239]

2.80 ACTION officials advised the Committee that ACTION's most challenging issues included the need for ACTION to meet its community service obligation to provide transport for relatively disadvantaged stakeholders, and the

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[236] Submission no 28, 41 suggesting a $2 all day fare, Exhibit 1; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp3, 6, 64

[237] Submission No 32; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp48, 52

[238] Submission no 15

[239] Submission no 5

provision of services during off-peak times.[240]

2.81 In response to questions from the Committee for an explanation of the rationale for not allowing pensioner concession tickets to be used all day, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that demand for bus services was very high, and there was little spare capacity during peak periods. The discount fare at off peak times was designed to encourage travel when capacity was available.[241]

2.82 The ACT Government is planning to conduct a telephone survey of a representative sample of Seniors Card holders. On 15 March 2007, ACT Minister for Ageing Ms Katy Gallagher MLA and Minister Hargreaves announced that Canberra's older citizens would be invited to participate in a survey to find out how their usage of ACTION bus services would change if they were able to purchase concession tickets during peak as well as off-peak times, and whether extending the concession would increase their usage of bus services and help them to stay better connected with the community.[242]

2.83 The Human Rights Commission agreed that a review would clarify issues and contribute to policy development.[243]

2.84 The Committee notes that the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services has invited submissions to its review of government concessions in the ACT by 21 September 2007.[244]

RECOMMENDATION 11

2.85 **The Committee recommends that the review of government concessions be completed, and that favourable consideration be**

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[240] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 June 2007, p87

[241] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[242] ACT Government 2007: 'Opinions sought on Seniors Card travel concessions', Media release 15 March, accessible at <http://chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.asp?media=2353&section=53&title=media&id=53>

[243] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August , p7

[244] *The Canberra Times*, 18 August 2007, Public Notices pB10 <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/community/concessions.default.htm>

given to extending the permitted use of ACT Seniors Cards for concession travel on ACTION buses, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Young people

2.86 Young people are often dependent on ACTION buses for travel outside peak hours.[245] They may be students, casual employees, clients of medical services, friends, partners, parents, carers, or be travelling in any of a range of other capacities.

2.87 The Youth Coalition of the ACT advised the Committee that access to public transport was important for young people in terms of participation, social connectivity, and employment.[246] A majority of the 200 respondents to an on-line survey by the Youth Coalition said that bus services had deteriorated over the previous 12 months, and were particularly poor in Gungahlin. The number one concern was for more frequent services, followed by (in descending order) better routes, more reliable services, faster travel, less expensive tickets, safety and better concessions.[247]

2.88 Other submissions expressed the following views:

- young people need more frequent and reliable bus services to travel to and from work, including at weekends;[248]
- employment patterns have changed, with seven-day and late-night trading, which means that more young people need good public transport services;[249]
- services to Tuggeranong require too many changes to connecting services;[250]
- services need to be available late on Friday and Saturday nights so that young people can get home from social activities without having to use taxis;[251] and

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[245] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p104
[246] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p107
[247] Submission no 64; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, pp103, 106, 109. See also: Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard* (15 March), p617
[248] Submission no 64
[249] Submissions no 7, 64
[250] Submission no 59

- flexi-bus services such as the 'Night Rider' service should be provided year round,[252] or ADART (Autonomous Dial-a-ride Transit) should be available.[253]

2.89 The *Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act 2001(ACT)* enables the introduction of demand-responsive public transport systems by carriers other than ACTION. The aim of the legislative provisions is to enable large groups of people to access transport when ACTION buses and taxis are not available or the best option.[254] This legislation requires that authorisations be issued for the operation of public transport services.

2.90 In 2003 the then Department of Urban Services commissioned a study on transport demand elasticity, and demand responsive transport options were investigated.[255]

2.91 The Youth Coalition submission reports that 51.6% of the young people surveyed said that it was difficult to use ACTION bus service at night. The Youth Coalition recommended that ACTION should make significant improvements in all areas of its night-time services, particularly working on frequency, routes and speed of service.[256] It also reported that young people were very concerned about their safety in relation to the night time service and one person was quoted in the report as saying

> There's no use improving the routes if it's not safe. I never feel safe at night catching buses, especially when I have to wait around for an hour in the interchange beforehand.[257]

2.92 The Coalition recommended that ACTION should improve the safety, amenity and staffing at bus interchanges, in particular Woden and

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[251] Submission no 49, 59
[252] Submissions no 30, 59
[253] Submission no 41, ADART is an automated dial-a-ride transport system that provides demand responsive feeder services
[254] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 12 Hansard* (23 November), p3971
[255] ACT Department of Urban Service 2003, *Final Report: ACT Transport Demand Elasticities Study*, Canberra
[256] Submission no 64, pp13–14
[257] Submission no 64, p13

Belconnen.[258]

2.93 The Committee believes that aspects of demand responsive travel could respond to young people's concern regarding safety, and significantly improve transport services for young people and other travellers needing transport at night.

2.94 The 2004 Booz Allen Hamilton report on demand responsive public transport said that some ACTION feeder bus services could be replaced as the first step leading to a fully integrated, multi-modal public transport system. The report said:

> Such a system could eventually provide a viable alternative to the private car for a much wider range of trips. Parents would be able to avoid having to ferry their children around, instead letting them use a variety of modes as well as walking and cycling. Older people and people going shopping would have a range of highly accessible and affordable travel options. Many families would be able to avoid having to purchase and operate a second car.
>
> Over time there could be significant savings in reduced car parking requirements and traffic congestion, allowing more efficient use of valuable real estate in centres and at major traffic generators such as educational institutions, recreational facilities and office complexes.[259]

2.95 The report also said that the pre-conditions for developing such a system were not yet in place. In particular, there were only a small number of vehicles suitable for demand-responsive travel; current booking and despatching systems would need to be upgraded to handle multiple-hiring; the public was not yet aware of demand-responsive travel; and integrated smart-card ticketing had not yet been introduced, creating complexities in handling fare payment for multi-mode trips.[260]

2.96 ACTION did introduce a Flexibus service for pre-booked passengers from April 2005, but the service was withdrawn in 2006. This was a demand

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[258] Submission no 64, p14

[259] Booz, Allen Hamilton 2003, *ACT Transport Demand Elasticities Study: Final Report*, p8

[260] Booz, Allen Hamilton 2003, *ACT Transport Demand Elasticities Study: Final Report*, p8

responsive evening bus service, and was intended to support the achievement of patronage targets in the Sustainable Transport Plan. This service was withdrawn to meet savings in Network 06. According to ACTION, there was no formal evaluation undertaken, beyond an operations cost-benefit analysis. ACTION advised: 'There were on-going issues with the service reliability and costs in the back-office, as well as customer complaints (having to plan ahead - needed to ring at least an hour in advance, etc). Patronage was also dropping.'[261]

RECOMMENDATION 12

2.97 **The Committee recommends that demand-responsive travel be re-examined for possible future re-introduction to the ACT, once an integrated smart-card ticketing system is in place and functioning effectively, and the Belconnen interchange has been refurbished or replaced.**

School students

2.98 The ACT Government's policy for the provision of bus services for primary and secondary students is reproduced at Appendix E. ACTION provides dedicated school bus services if at least 27 students would use the bus. Where demand is less, ACTION considers combining school services for geographically proximate schools, or encourages use of a service to a major interchange.

2.99 ACT Government policy includes provision, for eligible full-time school students, of free bus travel to and from school during school terms. Travel under this program accounts for about 20% of school term ticket travel.[262]

2.100 The service levels that school bus services are required to comply with are being reviewed as part of the development of the new service plan. The ACT Government notes that demand for peak hour services by commuters limits how many school bus services can be offered. Contracted standards include having children dropped at school no earlier than 30 minutes and not later

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[261] Email communication, 20 August 2007
[262] Submission no 65

than 5 minutes before the start of school; and picking up children no earlier than 5 minutes and no later than 30 minutes after classes.[263]

2.101 Several submissions commented on the perceived inadequacies of school bus services (as at early to mid-2007).[264] Comments included that:

- not all ACT Government schools were being provided with school bus services despite demand.[265] For example:
  - some primary school age children attending Arawang Primary in Waramanga, and primary school-age students from Rivett and Weston do not have access to a dedicated school bus. Such young children should not be expected to catch public buses and to change buses;[266]
  - services were needed for Duffy Primary School, and for Charnwood-Dunlop Primary School (from Flynn);[267]
  - insufficient seats were available on the service between the Woden Interchange and Narrabundah College,[268] and a service to Narrabundah College should depart from Civic[269]
  - a service was needed for children living in the Weston/Woden area attending Telopea Park School, for students living in Belconnen attending Lyneham High School, and for students in Tharwa attending Bonython Primary School;[270]
  - an afternoon service was needed on route 672 from Melba to Higgins;[271]
  - better timetabling and services were needed to Kaleen High School from Giralang;[272] and

[263] Submission no 65
[264] Submission no 20, 23, 36, 41, 48, 57, 64
[265] Submission no 48
[266] Submissions no 23, 36
[267] Submission no 48
[268] Submission no 48, 64
[269] Submission no 64
[270] Submission no 48
[271] Submission no 48
[272] Submission no 48

- buses from Lyneham High School should departed later than 3.05pm.[273]

2.102 Submissions and other evidence raised a range of other issues related to the quality of the service provided by ACTION buses; meeting the needs of school age passengers; and safety. The issues raised included that:

- school buses were frequently packed, to the extent that they may be unsafe;[274]
- school students in Isaacs could not use route bus 698 to arrive at the Mawson primary school in time for school;[275]
- when school buses carry children of primary school age and/or children with a disability, with older children, procedures need to be in place to ensure the safety of the more vulnerable children;[276]
- government school students, including college students, should not be treated any less favourably than other passengers and their irregular class hours need to be recognised and responded to by ACTION buses;[277]
- the Education Department should fund adequate school bus services to reduce traffic and parking congestion around schools;[278]
- if the bus is full and drives past waiting children this may expose children to danger,[279] and clear processes need to be in place for drivers to follow when passenger load limits have been met and children need transport;[280]
- some connecting services are timed too closely together. One student had only 1 minute between services;[281]
- too many schools are serviced on some routes, causing delays in pick-ups and drop-offs;[282]

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[273] Submission no 48
[274] Submission no 13
[275] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard* (15 March), p663
[276] Submission no 48
[277] Submission no 48
[278] Submissions no 7, 23 (referring to Weston Creek)
[279] Submission no 11
[280] Submission no 48
[281] Submission no 17; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard (15 March)*, p616
[282] Submission no 20

- that some parents and teachers be permitted to accompany school children on school services to help address misbehaviour and to help younger children adjust to the service;[283] and
- a safe crossing was needed on National Circuit for students attending Telopea Park School.[284]

2.103 Minister Hargreaves advised that relocated students who enrolled in Arawang Primary school, including students from Weston Creek Primary School, could use the following bus services:

- four morning dedicated school services (School Routes 404, 501, 503 and 513), and
- five afternoon dedicated school services (School Routes 401, 505, 506, 507 and 511).[285]

2.104 In relation to the traffic congestion on National Circuit near Telopea Park School, the Committee is concerned to see in the submission from the ACT Council of P&C Associations that students attending Telopea Park School do not have safe crossings on National Circuit and to the west of the School, in Griffith.[286] The Committee considered this during its inquiry into the Macquarie Hotel Redevelopment.[287] The Committee heard evidence that the proposed development create traffic risks for the 450 or so primary school age children attending Telopea Park School. Additional controls on traffic flow and street parking in New South Wales Crescent particularly, were requested, so as to reduce current difficulties for teachers, parents, students and volunteers trying to access Telopea Park School.

2.105 In its report on the proposed variation authorising the development, the Committee noted that the developer may then have been required to submit a further detailed traffic study, and that it had responded during consultations

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[283] Submission no 20. But cf submission no 56 which commented that school age passengers in Canberra are much better behaved and thankful towards their bus drivers than in other states

[284] Submission no 48

[285] Legislative Assembly for the ACT 2007, *Week 4 Hansard (3 May)*, p1016.

[286] Submission no 48

[287] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No. 238: Macquarie Hotel Redevelopment Section 27 Barton: Report No 15*, Canberra

with commitments to address various traffic issues. The Committee recommended that pay parking be used to manage traffic congestion in the area.

2.106 In response to a question from the Committee about Telopea Park, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that a traffic study was being done in the vicinity of the school to assess the impact of a new hostel development on Sydney Avenue on the school and the surrounding area. If measures were found to be necessary to mitigate the impact of the development, these would be implemented in consultation with school. [288]

2.107 In relation to other school bus issues, a School Transport Liaison Committee is being, or has been reconstituted, to provide a consultative forum for planning the provision of school services, and addressing issues as these arise. Members will include representatives of the Department of Education and Training, government and non-government schools, school Parent and Citizen Associations and the Transport Workers' Union.[289]

2.108 The ACT and Australian Governments, and a range of private organisations, also support sustainable transport initiatives such as the Walking School Bus. The ACT Walking School Bus program is managed by the YWCA of Canberra and funded by ACT Health, the NRMA – Road Safety Trust, and the Australian Greenhouse Office in the Department of the Environment and Water Resources. As at July 2007, 21 schools were involved in the program; 15 had active walking bus routes, and 'buses' walked 55 times each week.[290] The program provides many social and health benefits for participants,[291] and in the Committee's view, should continue to be supported and promoted where possible by the ACT Government as part of a broader public health/sustainable transport initiative. The program could also be encouraged to link with, or create pathways to other sustainable transport options for older children such as travelling on buses and eventually ACTION's Bike 'n Ride services.

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[288] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[289] Submission no 65

[290] YWCA Canberra 2007, *Walking School Bus: January–July 2007*, Canberra, p5

[291] See generally <http://www.ywca-canberra.org.au/walking_school_bus.htm>

2.109 The ACT Council of P&C Associations suggested that key principles and priorities for future service planning should respond to the need to meet the demand for services by government school students on at least an equal priority basis with non-government school students; create strong communication links amongst stakeholders; for service planning to be based on service standards for school bus transport; and to actively encourage students to travel to school by bus for environmental, budgetary and social equity reasons.[292] These suggestions could be progressed through the School Transport Liaison Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 13

2.110 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services include the ACT Walking School Bus Program within a broad marketing and health promotion campaign linking physical activity with sustainable transport, including ACTION bus services.**

RECOMMENDATION 14

2.111 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Australian Institute of Sport and sporting clubs in the ACT to enlist one or more high profile athletes to assist in promoting physically active sustainable transport options in the ACT.**

RECOMMENDATION 15

2.112 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assist the YWCA of Canberra to secure adequate and sustainable long-term funding to support the growth and development of the ACT Walking School Bus program.**

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[292] Such as ACTION, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, the Department of Education and Training, parent organisations, schools and colleges: submission no 48

Tertiary students

2.113 Several submissions referred to the difficulties experienced by tertiary students in getting to classes on time under the post-December 2006 cuts to ACTION services. A range of other issues were also raised in relation to tertiary students and these have been addressed in other sections of this report as they were commonly expressed concerns.[293] One noted that as college and university students have different term times to primary and secondary students, 'student term tickets and 10-rides become unusable during school breaks when other students are still attending classes, effectively doubling the cost of transport'.[294] This submission recommended that student 10-rides be useable out of the school term period and that students be able to use pensioner off-peak daily tickets when term tickets cannot be used.[295]

Women

2.114 Accessible, efficient and affordable public transport is particularly important for people with part-time and casual jobs, household shopping and caring responsibilities, and for single parents. Many would be women.[296] Several submissions argued that casual workers, young mothers, and carers, would be more reliant than others on off-peak ACTION bus services,[297] as women tend to have less access to cars as the owner or primary user.[298] Women with a disability face additional challenges when dependent on public transport.

2.115 The issue of accessibility to ACTION buses for passengers with prams, and the assistance able to be provided by ACTION bus drivers, was raised during public hearings. ACTION advised in response, that ACTION's policy was that

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[293] Submissions no 16, 20, 53, 61

[294] Submission no 20

[295] Submission no 20

[296] Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2007, *It's About Time: Women, Men, Work and Family*, Sydney, ch. 9, <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination/its_about_time/docs/its_about_time_2007.pdf >, accessed 1 August 2007, and a UK study, *Promoting Gender Equality in Transport*, discussed in submission no 67

[297] Submission no 64

[298] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August 2007, p93

providing assistance to passengers with prams was a matter for the discretion of the driver, having considered occupational health and safety matters such as their level of fitness, the strength of their back, whether the bus was too full and whether it would safe.[299]

Commuters

2.116 Commuters seem to be better served by ACTION in Network 07 than other community sectors. A legal adviser with the Human Rights Commission, Ms Jenny Earle, noted that ACTION 'caters best for the mainstream, for those who are working full-time'.[300]

2.117 Several submissions included positive comments about ACTION's services for commuters, such as:

- that the routes during peak hours are generally fairly direct and have reasonable fares;[301]
- commending the inter-town 300 express services , the 700/Xpresso services;[302]
- seeing the peak services as generally adequate except for the absence of an inter-town trunk route between Civic and Gungahlin;[303] poor services to the most distant suburbs like Dunlop, and too frequent stops on the Civic to Tuggeranong express services;[304] and
- one submission suggested that 'Gungahlin town centre urgently needs to be joined to the inter-town service, either through Belconnen or Civic'.[305]

2.118 However several submissions criticised various other aspects of ACTION's services, noting:

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[299] Oral communication, ACTION spokesperson, 15 August 2007

[300] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p100

[301] Submission no 13

[302] Submission no 4, 7, although submission no 39 asked for an Xpresso service between Gungahlin and Belconnen

[303] Submission no 54

[304] Submission no 7

[305] Submission no 19, which said that in May 2007 there were only two services per hour to Civic in off-peak times, taking about 40 minutes each

- commuter travel was too heavily subsidised with public funding;[306]
- the poor provision of services for casual and part-time employees, and shift workers, who start and finish work outside peak times;[307]
- the infrequency of the service at peak times and the lack of capacity of the service to accommodate peak hour commuters comfortably;[308]
- the inappropriate timing of peak services when many public servants do not finish work before 6.30pm, and who may work between 7.00am and 4.00pm under flexible work provisions;[309]
- the circuitous, indirect routes for some peak hour commuters, and poor connections[310] (routes 36, 38 and 39 for example, are said to take up to 40 minutes to get from Watson to Civic);[311]
- ACTION should use smaller buses in the suburbs for off-peak suburban routes but run the services more frequently;[312]
- the lack of a service from Campbell Park to Civic and return within weekday lunchtimes;[313]
- the need for more services to cater to the new office blocks on London Circuit near Rydges Lakeside;[314]
- the tendency for morning ACTION services from Woden to the City, and late afternoon services from Civic to Woden to run late, be overcrowded, or to not arrive at all;[315] and
- concern that cuts to ACTION services have caused inconvenience and social dislocation, with previous ACTION users having no choice but to use private vehicles. One described the deterioration in bus services 'a

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[306] Submission no 33
[307] Submissions no 7, 20, 41, 61; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Week 3 Hansard (15 March), p616
[308] E.g. submission no 13; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2007, p12
[309] Submissions no 35, 42
[310] Submission no 35, 41, 42, 61
[311] Submission no 5
[312] Submissions no 4, 28, 30, 32, 38, 41, 64
[313] Submission no 7; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard* (15 March), p662
[314] Submission no 23
[315] Submission no 23

disgrace'.[316]

Pay parking

2.119 One of the key mechanisms for promoting public transport is to provide disincentives for private vehicle use, such as parking fees which exceed the cost of using public transport.

2.120 Several submissions recognised that increasing public transport patronage is difficult. The reasons suggested for this include Canberra's design, our 'car culture',[317] the availability of relatively cheap parking, the relatively good roads, and relatively short peak hours.[318] One suggested that car parking fees should be 'increased at least threefold in one hit', with improvements made simultaneously to ACTION's services.[319]

2.121 The Committee continues to hold the view that the ACT Government, during consultations and negotiations with the National Capital Authority on sustainable transport policy and pay parking, should support the introduction of pay parking and other traffic reduction measures in all major employment centres in the ACT, including Commonwealth workplaces.

2.122 The Committee is also of the view that the ACT Government should introduce pay parking and/or other traffic reduction measures for those parts of these areas for which it has responsibility.[320]

2.123 The Property Council of Australia (ACT) agrees with this view.[321] It has been a vocal advocate for the provision of more car parking spaces, particularly in Canberra Central, where several Australian Government offices are relocating. The Council's Executive Director, Ms Catherine Carter, cited estimates of

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[316] Submission no 12
[317] Submissions no 33, 37
[318] See for e.g. submission no 18, 32, 33
[319] Submission no 25. See also submission no 61
[320] See earlier report recommendations, for e.g.: Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2005, *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 238: Macquarie Hotel Redevelopment Section 27 Barton, August 2005, Report no 15*.
[321] Submission no 68

increased demand for more than 30 000 car park spaces by 2017.[322] The Property Council supported an increase in the real cost of parking in town centres to encourage more public transport patronage. The Council also called for better provision of car parking. The Property Council submitted to the Committee that:

> The current low rates for all-day parking in the town centres of between $5 to $7 per day, matching current day pass bus fares, do not provide any financial incentive to give up the convenience of the car.
>
> In line with other capitals, the cost for all day car parking needs to be gradually raised to around $12 to $14 per day, to support the current competitive pricing of public transport.
>
> This level of parking rates would allow private operators to build and manage parking structures and free up additional government funds currently required for parking infringement, maintenance, insurance, staffing and management.
>
> It is recommended that the ACT Government should also periodically review car parking prices to keep pace with inflation and adjustments in the cost of living, so that the Government has sufficient funds available to it on an ongoing basis to maintain and improve access to both car parking for drivers and for those who park and ride. These funds received could then be more effectively utilised in addressing and implementing public transport and infrastructure solutions.[323]

2.124 Pay parking is currently in place in all town centres except Gungahlin and in most group centres. The price of parking in the ACT is relatively modest compared with interstate rates.[324]

2.125 Free parking on Commonwealth government occupied premises is a disincentive to the use of public transport and impacts negatively on the

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[322] C. Carter 2007, 'Parking problems demand action', *The Canberra Times, 5 June, p11;* C. Carter 2007, 'Slow progress in Canberra's bus lane: Property Comment', *Canberra CityNews*, 5 April; C. Alexander 2007, 'Business backs new transport strategy', *The Canberra Times*, 24 April, quoting the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ACT Property Council

[323] Submission no 68

[324] ACT Government 2007, *Draft ACT Parking Strategy*, Canberra, p31

ACT's ability to raise revenue from public transport. This cost is estimated to be about $0.46million annually, but this is partially offset by increased GST distribution to the ACT from the Commonwealth.[325]

2.126 The Commonwealth Government has not yet indicated that it has made a decision on the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone. The Department advised that should the Commonwealth introduce pay parking in the Parliamentary zone, this would have to be done in conjunction with similar arrangements in adjacent areas, including Barton and parts of Forrest and Yarralumla. The Department advised that the issue had been the subject of correspondence between the Chief Minister and the Commonwealth's Minister for Territories and was the subject of ongoing discussions between relevant Commonwealth and ACT agencies.[326]

2.127 The Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that parking fees for ACT Government run car parks are regularly reviewed. But rather than increasing the price of ticket and meter parking each year by a small amount, the CPI and WPI increases are assessed annually and the prices are increased every 3–4 years, taking into account rounding requirements for coins. The ACT Government does not regulate the price of private car parks, but recognises that private operators can charge a premium for the additional benefits of covered parking and security in multi-storey or underground car parks. The Department advised further that the cost of pay parking would be reviewed as part of the process of finalizing, by the end of 2007, the ACT Government's Draft Parking Strategy.[327]

RECOMMENDATION 16

2.128 **The Committee recommends that pay parking be introduced in all major employment areas in the ACT, with restrictions on long stay parking in nearby areas, but with incentives provided for multi-occupant vehicles. Where the Australian Government is responsible**

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[325] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007, p34, 47

[326] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[327] Oral communication, Department of Territory and Municipal Services, 14 August 2007

for pay parking policy, the Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage the implementation of a pay parking regime.

Car sharing and car pooling

2.129 A small minority of stakeholders doubt the environmental benefits of ACTION's services, especially when they were poorly patronised.[328] One submission suggested that car-pooling would achieve better outcomes, especially if encouraged by incentives such as lower car parking fees, and more T2 transit lanes. Another car-pooling proponent suggested that $5 electronic-voucher Transport Rewards could be payable by passengers to drivers to cover the insurance and other costs of the car pool, with $2.50 being credited to passengers who agree to be car pool drivers on future occasions.[329] One submitter noted that in their street, four working families drove in private vehicles to Barton daily.[330] Another preferable alternative suggested was free registration for hybrid vehicles as a better sustainable transport option than buses.[331] Greens MLA Dr Deb Foskey has expressed support for more car-pooling.[332]

2.130 The Committee agrees with submissions and the Sustainable Transport Plan that car sharing and car pooling can be more sustainable than poorly patronised off-peak bus services. The Draft ACT Parking Strategy also proposes the introduction of incentives for multi-occupant vehicles.[333] There are a range of Australian and international initiatives which can be adapted and developed locally.[334] In the Committee's view, car pooling should be promoted as part of the development of workplace sustainable transport plans, as recommended in chapter 4, and in suburbs where residents are

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[328] J. Geysen 2007, 'No bus benefit', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 14 May, p10

[329] Submission no 43

[330] Submission no 42

[331] Submission no 33

[332] C. Alexander 2007, 'Stalling over traffic solutions', *The Canberra Times*, 26 March, p6

[333] ACT Government 2007, *Draft ACT Parking Strategy*, Canberra, p33

[334] See for example: Australian initiatives:
http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/training/thinking_cpool.html,
http://transport.anu.edu.au/index.php?pid=85;
http://www.ridelink.org/Commuter_Services/Carpooling/Index.asp; European car pooling agency
http://www.drive2day.com/index.htm1

working to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Visitors and tourists

2.131 Some stakeholders expressed concern that visitors to Canberra were poorly serviced by ACTION and visitor information about public transport.[335] ACTION does run route 81 which passes many of Canberra's tourist attractions[336] and other routes are also available. One submission said there were no direct buses from Civic to Federation Square for most of the day, even though it is a popular tourist attraction and a significant source of employment.[337] Other comments included: that too many tourists seemed to use Route 34 when other services also travelled through the Parliamentary zone;[338] that routes should be advertised for travel to particular national institutions and attractions;[339] and that a feeder-interchange-express service model would better suit visitors and tourists who are unfamiliar with Canberra's suburbs.[340]

2.132 Another said that the Canberra Bus Map could be made cheaper and more compact and distributed for free at tourist centres, backpacker hostels and major hotels, and sold for $1 at ACTION ticket agencies.[341]

2.133 The Department of Territory and Municipal Services responded to questions from the Committee about how tourists can find out about ACTION bus services to Federation Square, and whether any review of the adequacy of this service and its promotion had been done. The Department advised that people wanting information could call ACTION's call centre on 13 17 10 and that further information could be found on the ACTION website under suburbs or routes. The service to Federation Square was to be reviewed in the context of

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[335] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, *Week 15 Hansard* (15 December), p4926; submission no 51 suggested multiple-ride tickets should be available

[336] <http://www.anbg.gov.au/anbg/bus-route/index.html>, accessed 18 August 2007

[337] Submission no 13, 26

[338] Submission no 20

[339] Submission no 32

[340] Submission no 56

[341] Submission no 26

the development of the comprehensive service plan.[342]

2.134 The Committee considered several tourism promotion publications and found that adequate visitor information about the ACTION bus services was included in an accessible way. Although the *Canberra Capital Region 2007 Holiday Planner* only included ACTION's website address rather than a phone number, the visitor information 1300 number was prominently displayed. As phones may be far more accessible to tourists than a website, it is recommended that the ACTION contact number 131710 be included in all ACT tourism publications, along with website address.

2.135 The Committee notes that the ACTION phone number is not prominent in the Canberra–Queanbeyan–Yass White Pages, although the Canberra Connect number is prominent.[343] An ACTION officer advised, in response to a Committee request, that ACTION already provides information about bus services and timetables to hotels and tourist venues and will shortly commence work on a guide on public transport in Canberra for tourists. Consideration could be given to tourist accommodation venues becoming authorised vendors for ACTION tickets and bus maps however.

RECOMMENDATION 17

2.136 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that visitor information placed by ACTION in ACT tourism publications includes both the ACTION phone number and web address.**

RECOMMENDATION 18

2.137 **The Committee recommends that ACTION ensure that its call centre number is more prominent in future telephone directories for the Canberra–Queanbeyan–Yass region.**

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[342] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June 2007

[343] Personal communication, Ms Jillian Bowen, The PR Edge, Richmond, Victoria Australia

Residents of the Causeway

2.138 The Causeway is located near the Kingston Foreshore re-development, and includes between 50 and 100[344] households of predominantly low income public tenants. Two submissions noted that since the December 2006 changes, the bus services to and from the area have not met the needs of the residents of this area. According to these submissions, changes to route 84 have been particularly inconvenient; services for school age children are inadequate; and connections amongst services to the area are poor. One submission made various detailed suggestions as to how ACTION could improve its services for the Causeway, Kingston and Fyshwick areas.[345]

2.139 In responses to questions from the Committee, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that bus services to the Causeway, Kingston and Fyshwick areas would be reviewed as part of the comprehensive service plan being developed by ACTION. That comprehensive review would evaluate the community's public transport needs and the extent to which those were being met.[346]

2.140 The Committee notes that ACTION bus services for Causeway residents are causing particular concern and agrees that these should be reviewed, taking account of the views expressed in submissions.

RECOMMENDATION 19

2.141 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that ACTION bus services for the Causeway area are reviewed, taking account of the views expressed in submissions to this inquiry.**

Environmentally aware passengers

2.142 Most submissions and some expert commentary expressed in-principle

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[344] Submissions no 57 and 20

[345] Submission no 20; see also submission no 57

[346] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

preference for public transport over car travel. Environmental and human health benefits are seen as the main advantage, including reduced greenhouse gas and toxic emissions and eventual flow-on benefits in reducing the threat of climate change. Two submissions recommended that all public costings of ACTION include an assessment of its social, health and environmental benefits.[347]

2.143 The benefits of a good public transport system are said to include:

- reduced road congestion and reduced expenditure on road infrastructure;
- less need for large car parks which are ugly and unproductive;
- commuters being able to be productive and less stressed than if driving to work, because they can pursue activities such as reading, or catching up with work or study;
- reduced health care costs associated with obesity, road accidents, and pollution-related ill-health; and
- the provision of a transport service for those unable to drive.[348]

2.144 Social equity is another important and well recognised advantage of good public transport systems, because disadvantaged social groups such as young people, low income earners and social-security recipients, people with disabilities, and the elderly, can move around the city on public transport.[349]

2.145 The Conservation Council argued that 'liveability' has become a key indicator for assessing the competitive strength of a city in terms of attracting and retaining highly mobile professional workers, and investment. Public transport and urban traffic congestion are important factors which are assessed when determining liveability.[350]

2.146 Several submissions commented on fuel types for public transport, favouring

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[347] Submission no 7, 61

[348] Submissions no 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 23, 32, 37, 38, 40, 47, 50, 51, 60, 61; 64; C. Alexander 2007, 'Stalling over traffic solutions', *The Canberra Times*, 26 March, p6

[349] Submission no 61

[350] Submission no 61. See also *The Coalition for People's Transport 2006, Transport and Liveability: The Path to a Sustainable Victoria*, Melbourne, referring to indicators such as environment, health, housing, safety, participation, mobility, employment and income and education

compressed natural gas, electricity, or the trolleybus system (as in Geneva).[351]

Cyclists

2.147 In November 2005 the ACT Government launched a trial of an innovative Bike 'n Ride service involving the provision of bike racks on the front of buses on inter-town 300 ACTION buses. Pedal Power ACT Inc strongly supported this initiative as a means for encouraging sustainable transport across complementary travel modes, because it had succeeded overseas, it enhances commuter safety and comfort; and it encourages bus patronage.[352]

2.148 Estimates of the number of bikes carried each week on Bike 'n Ride services range from between 100[353] and 400.[354]

2.149 The Bike 'n Ride trial was being evaluated in mid-2007.[355]

2.150 Several submissions to this inquiry commended the service,[356] but suggested improvements. These included better reliability for the service with more buses being fitted with bike racks;[357] promotion of bike storage facilities at interchanges;[358] and the extension of the service to buses travelling to and from Gungahlin.[359]

2.151 Pedal Power estimated that only 1 in 6 inter-town 300 series buses carry bike racks. It suggested that increasing the number of racks would increase bus patronage and personal security at interchanges, because cyclists would not have to wait long for a bus fitted with a bike rack, and would be encouraged

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[351] Submission no 10

[352] Submissions no 46

[353] Information provided by the Minister for Planning, Mr Corbell, n.d., in response to question PE27 from Ms Porter AM MLA during the Planning and Environment Committee's inquiry into 2005–06 Annual and Financial Reports

[354] Pedal Power estimates between 200 and 300 usages per week, extrapolating from its surveys in 2006 and 2007: submission no 46

[355] To access the survey go to <http://www.action.act.gov.au/bikenride.cfm#survey>, accessed 3 August 2007

[356] Submissions no 23, 30, 41, 46, 61

[357] Submissions no 23, 46, 49, 53

[358] Submission no 23

[359] Submission no 19

to use the service more often.[360]

2.152 Another submission suggested that Bike 'n Ride services should be especially promoted for off-peak bus trips because most time could be saved then. The example cited was a weekend trip from Conder to Florey which takes 1 hour 52 minutes using Bike 'n Ride services, but 3 hours 38 minutes using all off-peak bus services.[361]

RECOMMENDATION 20

2.153 **The Committee commends the initiative in the ACT Government's Climate Change Action Plan permitting cyclists who use the bike bus racks to travel without charge as this will reduce the likelihood that bus services will be delayed by cyclists using this service, as their fare payment time will be eliminated.**

RECOMMENDATION 21

2.154 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services consider better promoting the Bike 'n Ride service to increase its uptake during off-peak periods.**

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[360] Submission no 46

[361] Submission no 51

3 COMPARING ACTION WITH OTHER BUS SERVICES

3.1 It is very difficult to compare bus services around Australia because of the lack of current data, and the diversity of bus service providers, which include public-private partnerships.[362] It is also difficult to compare fares because of the different fare structures that operate, including zone, section-based and flat fares.[363]

3.2 The benchmarking data that is commissioned by the ACT Government, and which was provided to the Committee, is based on surveys which have been run for more than ten years. These surveys compare ACTION's costs, indexed against the costs of a group of private operators and most of the public bus operators. This gives the ACT Government useful information on ACTION's relative efficiency as measured against operators in other jurisdictions, and helps focus management's efforts on areas where services can be improved and/or costs reduced.

ACTION's budget 2006–07

3.3 In 2006–07 ACTION's budget was $81.460 million, as indicated in Table 1. Fares and other charges generated revenue of only about $19.067 million. The ACT Government provided $61.7 million in funding, including $1.9 million in contract payments for special need transport services. ACTION receives about $0.7 million from other sources. Employee and superannuation expenses make up around 70% of total expenditure, less depreciation expenses. ACTION estimates that some drivers' reluctance to work weekend shifts and the need

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[362] State and territory operators include: Busways, a private bus operator in the western suburbs of Sydney; Bender's Busways, a private bus operator in Geelong; Bell Street Bus Company, a private bus operator in Preston, Victoria; Grenda's Bus Lines, a private bus operator in Dandenong, Victoria;TransAdelaide/Transport SA, the government operator in South Australia; the Brisbane City Council, the government operator in Brisbane; and Transperth, the operator of urban services in Perth,Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd

[363] Submission no 65

for relief staff to be employed raises the wage costs for driver replaced by about 17%.[364]

Table 1: ACTION's budgeted revenue and expenditure for 2006–07

	Budget $'000
Revenue	
User Charges - Non ACT Government	19,067
User Charges - ACT Government	61,671
Grants from the Commonwealth	494
Interest	178
Resources Received free of charge	50
Total Revenue	**81,460**
Expenses	
Employee Expenses	47,307
Superannuation Expenses	7,689
Supplies and Services	23,278
Depreciation and Amortisation	6,218
Borrowing Costs	883
Other Expenses	437
Total Ordinary Expenses	**85,812**
Operating Result	**-4,352**

3.4 The 2007–08 ACT budget included $16.445million in capital funding and $2.0million in recurrent funding to improve ACTION bus services. The capital funding is for the replacement of ACTION's ticketing system and for 18 new buses, and to complete the installation of security cameras on existing buses. The recurrent funds will support new services in 2007–08, security improvements at interchanges, and major bus maintenance.[365]

3.5 The ACT Government's and the Commonwealth Grants Commission's analyses note that labour costs (wages) are a relatively high fixed cost in the ACT, yet lower than for NSW, and are about the same as for the Northern Territory.[366] The 2007 INDEC analysis says that 'ACTION paid its drivers $6.36 million more than a best practise operator did in 2005/06. It also paid its

[364] Submission no 65

[365] Submission no 65

[366] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007, p13, Table 8

mechanics $2.51 million and its administration personnel $2.69 million more respectively'.[367]

3.6 ACTION employed an equivalent of 678.6 full-time equivalent employees (FTE) as at 31 March 2007, including 552 (or 476.3 FTE) bus drivers. The ACT Government says that efficiency improvements in ACTION work processes, including better use of its depot facilities, will reduce labour costs, but that other changes may be needed for infrastructure and facilities.[368] The old Woden bus depot may be re-opened, and possible new sites in Gungahlin and Mitchell were under consideration.[369]

3.7 The Committee is not in a position to comment on the relative merits of the pay rates currently paid to ACTION staff. It is apparent though, that the direct cost to passengers of bus travel is relatively low in the ACT. The current fare structure is reproduced at Appendix F. Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that the fare price for commuters was substantially lower than elsewhere in Australia. Unfortunately this also means that the ACT Government's cost-recovery for providing the service was less than elsewhere in Australia, and public subsidisation was higher.[370]

3.8 The Commonwealth Grants Commission also suggests that the ACT Government's subsidy and operational deficit of non-concessional public transport use is the highest of all states and territories in Australia.[371]

3.9 Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that between 2003–04 and 2004–05, ACTION's costs increased by 14%, including by 26.2% because of diesel fuel price increases. The cost of 'dead-running' between the end of a

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[367] INDEC 2007, *Comparative Analysis of ACTION Bus Services 2005/06: Final Report*, July, p3

[368] Submission no 65

[369] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p71

[370] The ACT has about 22% recovery compared with some jurisdictions' 50% recovery: Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p82

[371] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007, p26, Table 19; see also p21 Table 13

route and the depot was about $2.6 million a year.[372]

3.10 INDEC's 2007 comparative analysis found that ACTION spent about $1.67 million more than a best practise private operator for non-driving hours, and that private operators tend to require drivers to refuel, de-litter and clean buses and do other work as directed.[373]

3.11 The ACT Government's response to these costs included increased use of CNG-powered buses, a trial use of biodiesel fuel, and a hydrogen fuel study. One aim was to reduce the diversity of bus vehicles in the fleet so that economies of scale could be achieved with respect to maintenance, spare parts, expertise etc. The Minister also acknowledged that ACTION would probably never break even or run at a profit, as government support for the provision of public transport is a recognised community service obligation (CSO).[374]

3.12 Recent initiatives, including those announced in the ACT Government's 2007–08 budget, include:

- the bus shelter initiative noted above;
- the reinstatement of some bus services that were cut in December 2006;
- provision of $32.5 million for parking at the Canberra Hospital, Acton and Woden;
- $8.0 million in capital funding over two years to replace 18 existing aged high maintenance buses with new CNG accessible buses;[375]
- recurrent funding of $1.25 million to develop a comprehensive new service plan and to strengthen security around interchanges;
- $8.0 million over two years for a new ticketing system possibly using smart card technology, to provide user-friendly, flexible and reliable ticketing for passengers and improved management information for the monitoring and review of services;
- $0.445 million to complete the installation of security cameras on buses that

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[372] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, pp70, 76; submission no 65

[373] INDEC 2007, *Comparative Analysis of ACTION Bus Services 2005/06: Final Report*, July, p6

[374] Legislative Assembly 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p85; submission no 65

[375] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June,p70

had not yet had them installed;[376] and

- $0.75 million to undertake major rebuilds on selected buses to extend their operating life from 12 years to 20 years.[377]

Woden depot

3.13 One submission suggested that the closure of the Woden Bus Depot, following pressure from ACT Treasury, was a 'mistake'. He wrote:

> [T]his greatly increased the dead running times and kilometres of buses travelling to start or complete their route or school services in the City and closely surrounding suburbs. The end result being any dollar savings in the closure of Woden Depot was exhausted by the expense of dead running.
>
> The inclusion of driver staff, clerical staff, workshop staff and equipment into both Belconnen and Tuggeranong depots caused them to become very confined and cramped. Staff morale fell to rock bottom, work related compensation claims rose, absenteeism rose, there was a high turn over in staff … [and] operating costs steeply rose and became difficult to manage.[378]

3.14 Minister Hargreaves acknowledged, in evidence to the Committee, that ACTION was assessing options to reduce 'dead running' time and that another bus depot for refuelling, including for CNG buses, may have to operate at Woden, Gungahlin or Mitchell. The Government submission also suggested that the amount of time drivers currently spend at depots and lay-overs could be better utilised. For example, since drivers are not responsible for re-fuelling, delittering and cleaning buses, the cost of paying additional staff increases ACTION's relative inefficiency compared to other private bus operators.[379]

3.15 The Committee does not wish to comment on work task comparisons as they

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[376] Budget 2007-2008, Budget speech, p10, <http://www.treasury.act.gov.au/budget/budget_2007/html/paper1.htm>, accessed 5 June 2007

[377] Submission no 65

[378] Submission no 18

[379] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June 2007, pp70, 76

are a matter better addressed as part of the enterprise bargaining which was in train at the time of this inquiry. However the provision of more fuel stations and depots seems a sensible way to reduce dead running times.

RECOMMENDATION 22

3.16 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-open the Woden depot for ACTION buses, and examine the viability of the provision of a gas re-fuelling station in north Canberra.**

RECOMMENDATION 23

3.17 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that adequate time is provided for driver rest breaks in Network 08.**

Bus fares

3.18 ACTION has traditionally had considerably lower fares than other public and private bus operators in Australia.[380]

3.19 In recent years ACTION's bus fares have been set by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission but in future are to be determined by the ACT Government. The Commission had recommended following several inquiries that fares be kept steady for 2003–2005, but be increased in 2005–06 in line with the Canberra All Groups CPI for the previous year. This resulted in a 2.5% fare increase across all ACTION's ticket categories in July 2005.[381] The Commission increased bus fares by 6% in 2006, but this was not sufficient to stem the declining trend in fare box revenue since 2002.[382]

3.20 ACTION's fares are explained at Appendix F. The ACT Government advised the Committee that bus fares have not keep pace with the cost increases

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[380] See for example Travers Morgan Pty Ltd 1993 for the ACT Department of Urban Services, 'ACTION' Bus Benchmarking Study: Summary Report, October, pii

[381] Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission 2006, *Draft Report: Determination of ACTION Bus Prices for 2006–07*, Report 9 of 2006, Canberra, p4

[382] Submission no 65

incurred by ACTION. Farebox recovery was at a record low in 2004–05.[383] Passengers contribute only 21.6% of the cost of the bus service, and in the long term this contribution should be increased to support higher levels of service and reduce the public subsidy through the ACT budget.[384] Some other jurisdictions recover about 50% of their bus service budget through farebox revenue. Only about 7.7% of Canberra's population uses the bus service.[385]

3.21 INDEC's 2007 comparative analysis of ACTION's bus services found that only one public operator of the five surveyed (including ACTION) had a lower average fare for adults than ACTION. ACTION's farebox cost-recovery rate per vehicle kilometers traveled was also very low compared with four other public transport operators and one private best practise operator.

Table 2: Farebox revenue per kilometre (2005–06) compared[386]

Measure 2003/2004	ACTION ($/km)	Public operator 1($/km)	Public operator 2 ($/km)	Private operator (best practice) ($/km)	Public operator 3 ($/km)	Public operator 4 ($/km)
Farebox per total vehicle km ($)	0.73	1.47	0.84	0.94	2.60	2.02
Farebox per total vehicle km (excl dead running) ($)	0.95	1.84	1.01	1.11	3.37	2.61
Farebox per total vehicle km (excl charter/SNT & dead running ($)	0.98	1.86	1.02	1.34	3.42	2.65

[383] Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission 2006, *Draft Report: Determination of ACTION Bus Prices for 2006–07*, Report 9 of 2006, Canberra, p4

[384] Submission no 65

[385] P. Ottesen, ACT Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, 'Stats'n Facts' slide, Water and Climate Change, Presentation to UK Parliamentary Delegation, 13 August 2007, ACT Legislative Assembly

[386] Table 4.5.1 reproduced from INDEC 2007, *Comparative Analysis of ACTION Bus Services 2005/06: Final Report*, July, p12

3.22 As noted above, some community organisations are concerned that Seniors Card holders cannot be used outside peak periods when services have been cut. The ACT Office for Aging has commissioned a survey to assess whether and how patronage of ACTION's services might change if the holders of Seniors cards had access to the full range of concession tickets.[387]

3.23 The Sustainable Transport Plan recognises the importance of concession fares.[388]

3.24 According to the Commonwealth Grants Commission, concession fares on urban public transport are usually claimed by:

- students (5–14 years of age, and people 15–24 years of age not in the labour force) who use urban transit services 25 per cent more often than the total population; and
- other concession users (people aged 60 years and over and not in the labour force, and unemployed people aged 15 years and over) who use urban transit services at a rate twice more than the general population.[389]

3.25 Concession fares on ACTION buses are available to:

- full-time ACT school, college, and university students (at 38% of the full adult fare)
- pension recipients, both Centrelink and Department of Veterans Affairs (at 50% of the full adult fare)
- recipients of Centrelink Health Care Cards (at 50% of the full adult fare)
- ACT pensioners and Seniors Card holders for off-peak services (at 50% of the full adult fare)[390]

3.26 Several submissions addressed ACTION's low farebox recovery. The Property Council of Australia (ACT)'s submission supported increased parking fees.[391]

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[387] Submission no 65

[388] ACT Government 2004, *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*, p41

[389] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007, p7

[390] Submission no 65

[391] Submission no 68

Some called for lower bus fares,[392] free bus travel to major events,[393] and discounts for multiple travellers.[394]

3.27 Others suggested that more families would choose public transport if a family ticket was available for weekend and off-peak use as travelling by car was currently more economical than bus travel for families.[395] A related suggestion was that family-friendly bus routes with bike-rack buses should be available for weekend cycling activities for families.[396]

3.28 Others, however, suggested that fares should be increased to enable more off-peak afternoon services to be provided.[397] The ACT Transit Group submitted that non-concession fares could be raised to fund better services.[398]

3.29 The Committee agrees that fares should be increased, but that any fare increase must maintain an appropriate level of concession protection for disadvantaged or low income passengers.

RECOMMENDATION 24

3.30 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase bus fares for Network 08, but that an appropriate level of concession protection should continue for disadvantaged and low income passengers.**

RECOMMENDATION 25

3.31 **The Committee recommends that ACTION consider the introduction of family fares on ACTION buses.**

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[392] Submission no 41, 40
[393] Submission no 40
[394] Submission no 51
[395] Submission no 41, 51; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p107
[396] Submission no 41
[397] Submission no 41
[398] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, pp26–27; see also C. Alexander 2007, 'Inquiry hears of bus lane proposal', *The Canberra Times*, 16 May, p3

Commonwealth Grants Commission data

3.32 Since 2004 the Commonwealth Grants Commission has compared Australian, state and territory government expenditure on urban transit to determine what each state would need to spend to provide the average level of urban transit services to its residents.[399] The assessments includes:

- subsidies to service providers to fund concessional fares;
- capital subsidies for the provision of services to the general public;
- pricing subsidies for the provision of services to the general public; and
- central administration and other overhead costs that relate to urban transit.[400]

3.33 Some of the findings of the 2007 assessment update were that:

- urban transit expenses per capita in the ACT were higher than the average for all Australian jurisdictions and second to NSW; and
- the percentage of concession users of public transport per urban population in the ACT is 0.30%, which is slightly less than in other Australian jurisdictions except the Northern Territory, but the number of concession passengers in the ACT (94 000) is higher than in either the Northern Territory or Tasmania.

3.34 The ACT Government's submission provides additional explanations for why ACTION's services are more expensive: the population density in urban Canberra is relatively low and passenger turnover is less because many passengers stay on the bus for relatively long distances, decreasing fares revenue.[401] These factors are recognised in the Sustainable Transport Plan.[402]

3.35 In response to questions from the Committee about more recent benchmarking, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised

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[399] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*, <http://www.cgc.gov.au/>, accessed 24 July 2007

[400] Commonwealth Grants Commission 2007, *Update: Working Paper Volume 3 Assessments Results: Expense: Urban Transit*

[401] Submission no 65

[402] ACT Government 2004, *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*, Canberra, p13–14

that INDEC Consulting had completed a benchmarking assessment of the operational and financial performance of ACTION relative to other Australian public and private bus operators for the 2003–04 financial year and analysis of that data had been referred to in the Government submission. [403]

General comparative comments

3.36 In the view of several stakeholders, ACTION bus services fall well below international and Australian best practise. A senior lecturer in transport planning at the University of Melbourne, Dr Paul Mees, is reported as having described Canberra's bus system as the worst of any Australian city, with passengers treated like 'losers'.[404]

3.37 The Canberra Branch of the Transport Workers Union advised the Committee that there are no current comparative analyses of bus services around the country. The most recent comparative study, to their knowledge, were reports commissioned by the Bus Industry Council 12 to 13 years ago.[405]

3.38 Features of services interstate that stakeholders referred to in submissions as commendable included the Perth city bus service, the Adelaide busway, Melbourne's trams, the Sydney monorail, Brisbane's central city buses and the Arafura taxi service in Darwin.[406]

3.39 A correspondent to *The Canberra Times* in April 2007 compared the bus services available in Christchurch, where a free bus service is provided for the inner-city. The city central bus terminal is located in a building opposite a major department store with a modern food hall, has theatre-like seating and display monitors showing bus departure times. Real-time bus arrival information is available at each bus stop. Electronic Metrocards can be purchased.[407]

3.40 One submission noted that Perth's free and accessible bus for inner-city travel

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[403] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[404] C. Alexander 2007, 'ACT rated Australia's worst for bus system', *The Canberra Times*, 24 March, p5

[405] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, p4

[406] Submission no 32

[407] J.F. House 2007, 'Apples and oranges', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 16 April

had plenty of room for wheelchair-bound passengers, space for wheelie walkers, and lowered automatically when doors opened for passengers to alight. All seats had grab rails and drivers who seemed to have been appropriately trained ensured that persons with a disability had priority access to seats. This submission said that ACTION buses rated poorly in comparison as they lack grab rails and it is too difficult for the frail aged to lift their wheelie walkers into the space provided for carried-on items.[408]

3.41 The ACT Transit Group suggested that the service offered by Metro in Hobart has been superior to that in Canberra since the early 1990s as it offers services at 10, 15 and 20 minute frequencies in off-peak periods and operates for more hours on Friday nights and at weekends.[409]

[408] Submission no 14
[409] Submission no 7

4 ACTION AND THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN

4.1 *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*, launched in April 2004, is a 25-year plan for sustainable transport in the ACT. It is a component of *The Canberra Plan*, and is consistent with some of the strategic directions in *The Canberra Spatial Plan*. For example, the Spatial Plan supports urban consolidation by encouraging future population growth in the ACT within 7.5 km of the city centre over the next 15 years. The Spatial Plan also includes strategies to improve pedestrian and cycle access.

4.2 The Sustainable Transport Plan includes strategies to:

- integrate transport and land use;
- improve transport infrastructure such as dedicated busways, pedestrian facilities, lighting and signage, cycleways and shared paths and parking infrastructure;
- promote transport vehicle technologies which are less reliant on fossil fuels;
- encourage behaviour change, such as TravelSmart programs, travel access plans and community awareness;
- introduce intelligent transportation systems to the ACT, such as smart cards, global positioning systems and real-time information;
- implement economic and institutional reform concerning transport pricing, regulatory reform, parking supply and charging, and taxation reform;
- promote alternative modes of transport, including public transport, demand-responsive services and non-motorised transport; and
- use planning models for transport modelling, data collection and analysis, investment assessment and levels of funding.

4.3 Some of the studies that informed the development of the Sustainable Transport Plan include: the *Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study*,[410] the ACT *Transport Costing Study*,[411] the *Transport Elasticity Study*[412] and *The Sustainable Transport Plan Issues Paper*.[413]

How appropriate is the Sustainable Transport Plan and its targets?

General comments on the Plan

4.4 Several submissions endorsed the Sustainable Transport Plan as essentially sound,[414] whilst recognising that its implementation would require significant investment. The ACT Transit Group expressed disappointment that the Plan was to be reviewed so soon after introduction as it was 'an excellent blueprint for the development of public transport in the ACT'.[415] The National Capital Authority expressed general support for the Sustainable Transport Plan and its targets. It described these as

> a vital initiative which together with *The Canberra Spatial Plan* provides a policy framework to guide land release programs and infrastructure programs which have short, medium and long term horizons.[416]

4.5 The Authority cautioned, however, that targets need to be carefully implemented, integrated with land release and infrastructure programs, and be set within a budgetary context. The Authority submitted:

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[410] Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd 2004, *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study – Final Report: Economic And Financial Implications of Transport Options*, Sydney

[411] Sinclair Knight Merz 2003, The ACT Transport Costing Study, consultancy report commissioned by the ACT Planning and Land Authority, < http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/tp-intro/tp-archive/transportstudy.pdf>, accessed 25 May 2007

[412] Booz, Allen Hamilton 2003, *ACT Transport Demand Elasticities Study: Final Report*, Commissioned by ACT Department of Urban Services, Canberra, <http://apps.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/tp-intro/tp-archive/ACTElasticityStudy_FinalReport.pdf>, accessed 25 May 2007

[413] Australian Capital Territory. Planning and Land Management Group 2003, *Sustainable Transport for the ACT: An Issues Paper*, Canberra

[414] including submissions no 23, 53, 61, 66

[415] I. G. Cooper 2007, 'ACTION Update', in *Transit Australia* 7/2007, p198

[416] Submission no 66

> The 2004 Sustainable Transport Plan appears to be focussed on transport … the crucial relationship with the timing and location of urban development, urban form and transport infrastructure is not adequately integrated. Once these factors are identified the costs and benefits of achieving these targets can be evaluated and the crucial allocation of funds can be programmed within a budget context. In other words both the Government and the community are aware of the costs and benefits (direct and indirect) of achieving the targets. Such a program would ideally have a twenty year time frame.
>
> Any target set in isolation of these factors could be criticised as arbitrary. Benchmarking has an important role in establishing targets and provides useful data to compare ACT with other states in terms of mode split, travel speed, congestion etc. It would be useful to benchmark with other appropriate international medium sized cities.[417]

4.6 The Transport Workers Union described the targets as 'essential' to good forward planning for public transport in the ACT, but said that more community consultation about the targets was needed.[418]

4.7 Other favourable comments included that ACTION meets its target of providing a simple fare structure because it has a flat fare, although fares are expensive for short trips.[419] A contrary comment was that the advantages of the 90 minute single fare, and the off-peak daily fare, were being eroded because of the long delays between services.[420]

4.8 ACT Peak Oil criticised the Plan and other ACT policy documents for not referring to the implications that declining oil production will have for transport generally, including road maintenance.[421] Advancement of Public Transport also stressed the need for improved public transport to be considered as part of the necessary policy responses to climate change and

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[417] Submission no 66

[418] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May, pp4, 5; G. Downie 2007, 'ACTION morale low: union', *The Canberra Times*, 11 May, p11

[419] Submission no 13

[420] Submission no 7; see also submission no 23 which advocates more flexibility in off-peak ticketing

[421] Submission no 62

declining fossil fuel supplies.[422]

4.9 One stakeholder said that in his view the Sustainable Transport Plan was too complex and criticised its charts, graphics and references to advanced technology, suggesting that what is really needed is increased funding for ACTION so that passengers are attracted to more frequent services.[423]

4.10 The Committee shares the concerns expressed by ACT Peak Oil, that public policy documents need to be raising public awareness about the finite supply of fossil fuels and to plan for alternate energy futures.

4.11 The Committee supports policy development in relation to the provision of incentives for increased travel by public transport. The Committee notes that the U.S. National Petroleum Council released a draft report on the future supply of fossil fuels in July 2007. Amongst its many findings, the report recognised that policies designed to reduce demand for transportation fuel can contribute to reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions, and that government incentives to increase the use of public transport would help to reduce transportation fuel consumption.[424]

4.12 The ACT Government estimates that the implementation of the Sustainable Transport Plan's target of reducing travel to work by private car from 87% of all trips to 70% of trips would reduce road congestion by about 30%, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by about 14%, vehicle operating costs by 13%, travel time by 6%, and road accidents by 3%.[425] The estimated value of the outcomes from implementing the plan are between $800 and $900 million over 25 years, with implementation costing between $300 and $400 million over the same period.[426]

4.13 In the ACT, about 23% all greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be

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[422] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p59

[423] Submission no 34, Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p66

[424] National Petroleum Council, *Draft Report: Facing the Hard Truths about Energy A comprehensive view to 2030 of global oil and natural gas*, July 18, 2007, <http://www.npc.org/Facing_Hard_Truths-71807.pdf> accessed 23 July 2007, Chapter 5, p7

[425] Submission no 65

[426] ACT Government 2004, *The Sustainable Transport Plan*, Canberra, piii

produced from the use of transport fuels (excluding aviation fuel).[427] Commuting to work has declined between 1991 and 2001 and a higher rate than anywhere else in Australia. Canberra now has the lowest modal split than any of the capital cities.[428]

4.14 Several stakeholders recognised the opportunity that improved public transport patronage presented for making substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.[429] The report of the Australian Government's Prime Ministerial Task Force on emissions trading also noted that a cost efficient way of abating greenhouse gas emissions relates to transport issues, and that urban design and public transport planning could potentially reduce the cost of a given emissions cap.[430] The Committee agrees with this, and notes the advantage that the ACT has with its integration of land use and transport planning under the National Capital Plan and Territory Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 26

4.15 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government's strategic policy documents better engage with and more explicitly address the challenges likely to arise from declining supplies of fossil fuels.**

Specific comments on targets

4.16 The targets in the Sustainable Transport Plan for the percentage of 'journey to work' trips by walking, cycling and public transport, are:

MODE	2001	2011	2026
Walking	4.1%	6%	7%
Cycling	2.3%	5%	7%
Public Transport	6.7%	9%	16%
Total	13.1%	20%	30%

[427] ACT Government 2007, *Weathering the Change: Action Plan 1 2007–2011*, p30

[428] Submission no 60

[429] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p23

[430] Australian Government, Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading 2007, *Report of the Task Group on Emissions Trading*, Canberra, p136

4.17 The Sustainable Transport Plan targets represent more than a doubling of the current proportion of journey to walk trips made by walking, cycling and public transport. It proposes a reduction of more than 16 per cent in car use in 2026. The Plan ranks its preferred transport modes in the ACT as:[431]

- walking;
- cycling;
- public transport;
- commercial vehicles; and
- private cars.

4.18 The Sustainable Transport Plan recognises that many factors will influence whether the targets can be achieved, the most important being improved public transport services and increased patronage. To improve public transport a range of factors are identified as important. These are:[432]

- competitive travel time
- simple route structure
- low operating cost
- passenger information
- advanced technologies
- high service frequency
- simple fare structure
- integrated with other modes
- quality vehicles
- rail-like stations

4.19 2006 Census data for journeys to work will not be available until October or November 2007. According to ACT Government figures, commuters have consistently been exceeding the work journey targets in the Sustainable Transport Plan. For example, adult journey to work trips for March 2007 were above target by 40,000 boardings.[433]

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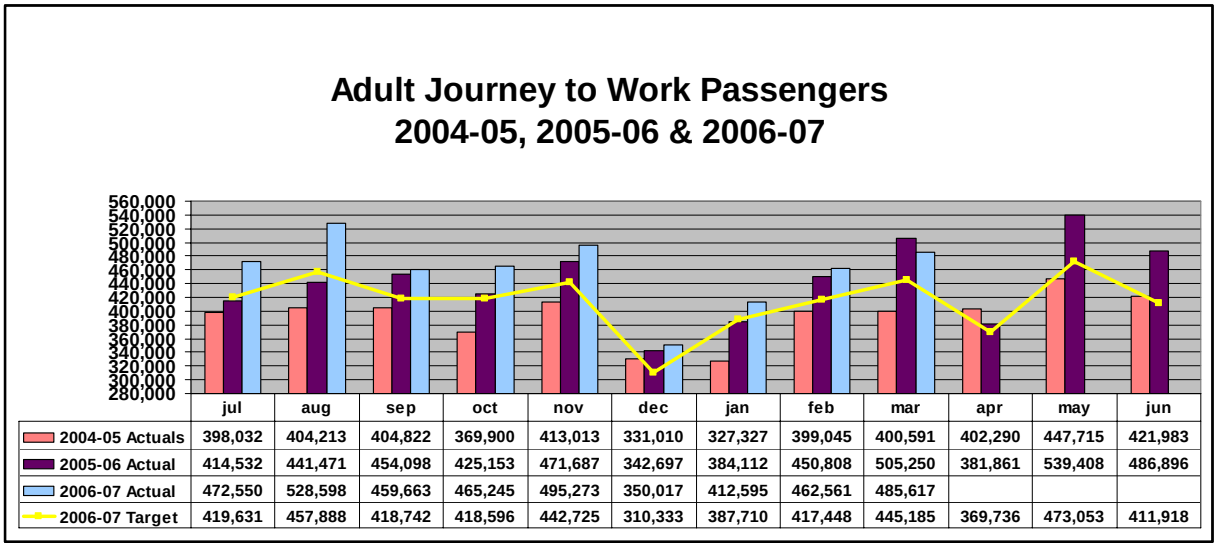
[431] Based on *Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning in the ACT*

[432] ACT Government 2004, *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*, p31

[433] Submission no 65; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 2 Hansard* (6 March), p189; see also Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 3 Hansard* (15 March), p660



	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun
2004-05 Actuals	398,032	404,213	404,822	369,900	413,013	331,010	327,327	399,045	400,591	402,290	447,715	421,983
2005-06 Actual	414,532	441,471	454,098	425,153	471,687	342,697	384,112	450,808	505,250	381,861	539,408	486,896
2006-07 Actual	472,550	528,598	459,663	465,245	495,273	350,017	412,595	462,561	485,617			
2006-07 Target	419,631	457,888	418,742	418,596	442,725	310,333	387,710	417,448	445,185	369,736	473,053	411,918

4.20 The Sustainable Transport Plan recognises that there are some constraints inhibiting some public transport journeys. Some trips involve physical or objective limitations. For example, walking for more than 2 kilometres and cycling more than ten kilometres would not be expected of most travellers. Similarly, other trips not considered suitable for public transport would involve the transportation of luggage, goods or shopping, multiple destinations, or dropping off passengers.

4.21 One submission suggested that the Sustainable Transport Plan 'does not set out a serious, credible suite of policies to achieve the desired shift in travel patterns', and in particular lacks any credible proposals for remedying the deficiencies of public transport.[434]

4.22 ACTION operates under standards of service which influence the level of employment, fleet size, and cost of the service. Several submissions argued that targets or indicators based on service standards should be publicly accessible and reported against. The ACT Transit Group submitted that ACTION's Standards of Service should also be consistent with the ACT Sustainable Transport Plan.[435] Another suggested that clear statistical benchmarks should be set by the ACT Government (such as that a % of buses must run on time), and that the results should be published monthly.[436] The

[434] Submission no 60
[435] Submission no 7
[436] Submission no 41

ACT P&C Council submitted that ACTION's service standards for school bus services should include:

- waiting time standards for before school drop offs and after-school pick-ups; and
- waiting times for connecting services and at bus interchanges.

4.23 The Council also submitted that ACTION needed to be able to demonstrate that children travelling to public schools had access to services on a basis that was comparable with private school students.[437]

4.24 Critical comments in submissions and in the media about the Sustainable Transport Plan and its targets include:

- the goals for the bus system have little practical value as they do not include target dates or details as to how they will be implemented, and implementation would require more government funding, not funding cuts.[438] Mr Steve Pratt MLA has also suggested that one of the main weaknesses of the plan was 'the absence of set dates by which many of the government's objectives might be achieved';[439]
- that more public investment should be made in roads and car parks rather than on busways and light rail because cars are likely to remain the preferred transport option. The commercial property sector wants more parking spaces in Canberra Central, to have older less environmentally efficient buses replaced with cleaner, greener buses, and informed community debate about the extent to which public transport should be subsidised by the ACT community;[440]
- the outcomes in the Plan (reduced greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and energy use, reduced accidents, reduced user costs, reduced travel time,

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[437] Submission no 48

[438] Submission no 13

[439] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 1 Hansard* (15 February), p93

[440] C. Carter 2007, 'Parking problems demand action', *The Canberra Times, 5 June, p11;* C. Carter 2007, 'Slow progress in Canberra's bus lane: Property Comment', *Canberra CityNews*, 5 April; C. Alexander 2007, 'Business backs new transport strategy', *The Canberra Times*, 24 April, quoting the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ACT Property Council

more transport options and equity in transport) are commendable, but require a commitment by the Government;[441]

- ACTION does not meet is target of competitive time travel because traffic congestion makes the service slow, and often late. A solution would be to provide a bus lane down the centre of Northbourne Avenue which could later be converted to light rail.[442] Increased use of ACTION services would also reduce traffic congestion,[443] as noted above;
- the targeted reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 14% is too low in view of worsening predictions about the impacts of climate change;[444] and
- the targets are 'social engineering by stealth' and walking and cycling should not be encouraged because personal security is not being adequately protected by the police, the buses are unreliable and private cars offer more benefits.[445]

4.25 Women with Disabilities ACT suggested that ACTION should not adopt 100% occupancy targets because this would discriminate against passengers with disabilities who may be discouraged from travelling on full buses because of the additional challenges they create for passengers with a disability.[446]

4.26 Proponents of private car travel using clean vehicle technologies such as electric, electric-hybrid or photovoltaic cells and clean fuels, criticised the Sustainable Transport Plan. Mr Geyson, for example, analysed the Plan in some detail and found it to be based on flawed data and 'riddled with contradiction, exaggeration and unsupported supposition'. Its targets were 'small, slow to implement, unrealistically expensive and potentially harmful'. This submission also criticised the lack of adequate car parking in Canberra and suggested that business and tourism was being adversely affected.[447] The

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[441] Submission no 13

[442] Submission no 13. See also C. Alexander 2007, 'Inquiry hears of bus lane proposal', *The Canberra Times*, 16 May, p3

[443] Submission no 7

[444] Submission no 47

[445] J. Geysen 2007, 'Change horse-and-cart mentality, the car's here to stay', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 28 April, p6

[446] Submission no 51

[447] Submission no 33; see also Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August, esp pp111, 113

use of a poor public transport service by working parents might also be at the expense of time with schoolchildren, he suggested.[448]

4.27 Others criticised the targets for various reasons, including that they were 'too timid and conservative' given climate change and peak oil.[449]

4.28 Some submissions suggested that the Sustainable Transport Plan should include a target for comfort. Comments in submissions included:

- reference to ACTION's customers 'being packed in like cattle'[450]
- buses being so overcrowded that some users had to stand for the entire journey[451]
- the buses being 'hot, crowded and slow'[452]
- ACTION buses being uncomfortable for tall people and for people of above-average weight.[453]

4.29 Some submissions suggested that the Sustainable Transport Plan should include a target for reliability as some bus services fail to arrive, and other are often late.[454]

- ACTION does not meet its target of providing high service frequency as off-peak services only run hourly;[455]
- ACTION does not meet is target of providing simple route structures because on some routes commuters have to alight on different sides of the road, depending on the time of day and whether it is a weekend service;[456]
- ACTION could better meet its target of integrating with other transport modes if:

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[448] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p114
[449] Submission no 26
[450] Submission no 11
[451] Submission no 13
[452] Submission no 5
[453] Submissions no 25, 40, 41
[454] Submission no 13
[455] Submission no 13
[456] Submission nos 7, 13

- Park 'n Ride services were available at places like Gungahlin, EPIC or Mitchell, Southwell Park and Dickson with a frequent bus service to Civic;[457]
- Park 'n Ride services were better promoted and their administration was more streamlined, flexible and computerised;[458]
- buses met trains at Canberra Railway Station[459] and train services were more frequent and faster, with a link to Yass;[460]
- more information about ACTION was available at places like hospitals, the Jolimont Centre,[461] and the Canberra Railway Station;[462]
- ACTION's website was easier to use and more helpful for planning travel;[463]
- ACTION re-instated its website information to passengers on services to popular destinations;[464]
- ACTION had an 'optimum route finder' like Brisbane and Perth have, and include walking directions to and from bus stops;[465]
- ACTION had an SMS service for patrons along a route who should be texted when a service has been cancelled;[466] and
- more data and information was available which explained the relative costs of transport infrastructure and services in the ACT.[467]

4.30 The ACT Transit Group commended ACTION's record in providing passenger information, including route and network maps, paper timetables, user-friendly internet site and telephone line, and a helpful SMS service. It suggested however that 'the provision of timetable information at bus stops is patchy at best' and particularly poor at many suburban stops where routes are

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457 Submission no 13, 24, 40 54
458 Submission no 13
459 Submissions no 15, 61
460 Submission no 10
461 Submission no 20
462 Submission no 7, 61
463 Submission no 40, 41
464 Submission no 13
465 Submission no 41
466 Submission no 50, 53
467 Submission no 55

sometimes particularly complicated.[468] Other submissions agreed that better information about routes and timetables should be accessible at more bus stops and on buses.[469] The group recommended that detailed information specific to each stop be available at each stop; that information about alternate routes nearby be provided at stops and that the generally high standard of timetable brochures, system map, internet and SMS information continue to be provided.[470]

4.31 The Transport Workers Union referred to the sore backs many drivers suffer from because of the old seats in the older buses, and would likely welcome targets for occupational health and safety improvements.[471]

4.32 The Committee appreciates that ACTION's passengers are clearly expressing a wish for their communication strategies to be enhanced, with much better provision of information.

4.33 The Committee strongly supports public transport services as a public good and a community service obligation. The Committee notes that industry appears to be well aware of the costs of traffic congestion, to which private motor vehicle use substantially contribute. These costs include increased fuel consumption, increased vehicle operating costs, decreased staff punctuality, possible medium and long-term health impacts, and reduced productivity.[472] As noted above, in August 2007 the national costs of urban congestion nationally was estimated at $20 billion annually.[473]

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[468] See also submission no 26, 35, Exhibit 1

[469] Submission no 20, 51, 61, 63

[470] Submission no 7

[471] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May, p10

[472] NRMA 2007, 'Business hurt by traffic congestion', NRMA Media Release 12 April, <http://www.mynrma.com.au/cps/rde/xchg/mynrma/hs.xsl/4719.htm?cpssessionid=SID-3F5768EC-03ECF765>, accessed 21 May 2007 [reproduced in *Open Road*, May issue, p48]

[473] Public Transport Users Association 2007, *Moving Australians Sustainably: Transport Policy in the National Interest*, August 2007 <http://www.ptua.org.au/federal/moving_australians-web.pdf>, accessed 16 August 2007

RECOMMENDATION 27

4.34 **The Committee recommends that Park 'n Ride services be extended to new sites as a priority action under the Sustainable Transport Plan.**

RECOMMENDATION 28

4.35 **The Committee recommends that ACTION's information services be improved and that targets be developed to assist with monitoring the implementation of those targets.**

What progress has been made towards implementing the Sustainable Transport Plan?

4.36 The Minister for Territory and Municipal Services has been responsible for transport strategy and policy since April 2007. The Minister has had responsibility for public transport and associated legislation[474] since April 2006 under the administrative arrangements issued pursuant to the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* (Cwlth) and the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (ACT).[475] Before April 2006 responsibility for ACTION buses and the (now repealed) *ACTION Authority Act 2001* (ACT) lay with the Minister for Planning.

4.37 Until April 2006, the ACT Government had a Sustainable Transport Steering Committee which guided the implementation of the Sustainable Transport Plan. Key agencies were represented on that committee. In addition, the ACT Planning and Land Authority coordinated implementation of the Plan, with members of the implementation team drawn from the Authority, the then

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[474] *Gungahlin Drive Extension Authorisation Act 2004; Interstate Road Transport Act 1985 (Cwlth); Interstate Road Transport Charge Act 1985 (Cwlth); Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989 (Cwlth); NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust Act 1992; Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1977; Road Transport Charges (Australian Capital Territory) Act 1993 (Cwlth); Road Transport (Dimensions and Mass) Act 1990; Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Act 1999; Road Transport (General) Act 1999, except part 10; Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act 2001; Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999; Road Transport Reform (Dangerous Goods) Act 1995 (Cwlth); Road Transport Reform (Vehicles and Traffic) Act 1993 (Cwlth); Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act 1999; Roads and Public Places Act 1937*

[475] Administrative Arrangements 2006, Notifiable instrument NI2006-140, 20 April 2006; Administrative Arrangements 2006 (No 2), Notifiable instrument NI2006-206, 19 June 2006.Administrative Arrangements 2007 (No 1), Notifiable instrument NI2007-108, 17 April

Department of Urban Services, Procurement Solutions and ACTION.[476]

4.38 The Planning and Land Authority's *Annual Report 2005–06* states that the 'Strategic Planning and Land Services Branch was responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of *The Canberra Spatial Plan* and the Sustainable Transport Plan; preparing and providing advice on environmental and social sustainability, particularly in regard to the built environment and land development; undertaking transport planning and modelling and developing transport-related policies to support the future development of the Territory.'[477]

4.39 In its *Annual Report 2005–06*, the Authority reported that substantial progress had been made towards implementing key initiatives of both plans, including 'investigations into Molonglo Valley's future development and East Lake urban renewal; through the Canberra Central Program, a comprehensive agenda for achieving the potential of the City; and work to establish the best Belconnen to City transitway route.'[478]

4.40 Progress included:

- the identification of two preferred route options for the Belconnen-City transitway and the initiation of Preliminary Assessment work;
- the undertaking of studies to improve public transport in the Belconnen Town Centre to better integrate with the transitway, and a further study for transport operations within the City Centre was underway;
- the conduct of a planning study on bus priority measures for the Gungahlin-City transitway had been carried out, and as stage one, a bus lane and cycleway on Flemington Road had been constructed;
- the undertaking of a feasibility study of the introduction of a real time passenger information system (but the tender for implementation was withdrawn due to changes in budget priorities);

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[476] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, *Government Response to Standing Committee on Planning and Environment Inquiry into Referred Annual and Financial Reports: Report No 8*, 5 December.

[477] ACT Planning and Land Authority 2006, *Annual Report 2005–06*, Canberra, p28

[478] ACT Planning and Land Authority 2006, Annual Report 2005–06, Canberra, p9

- introduction of the TravelSmart schools walking school bus program to 17 schools, supported by the Canberra YWCA;
- implementation of a TravelSmart 'Households on the Move' pilot program;
- development of the ACT Parking Strategy;
- preparation and release of a new cycling and walking map for Canberra and Queanbeyan;
- the placement of bicycle racks on the 300 series buses; and
- the release of *Draft Bicycle Parking Guidelines* to ensure adequate bike parking, showers and lockers in new developments.[479]

4.41 Appendix G provides relevant extracts from the Sustainable Transport Plan and the Committee's broad-brush and reactive assessment to progress with implementation. In its *Annual Report 2004–05*, the ACT Planning and Land Authority referred to its responsibility for implementing the Sustainable Transport Plan under the *Planning and Land Act 2002* (ACT). Implementation had then focussed on several areas, including planning for the Belconnen to City Busway and the Gungahlin to City bus corridor, and associated bus priority measures along Flemington Road. Work had then also begun to update and expand the cycle map. Work also started on various projects to promote change in people's travel behaviour.[480]

4.42 ACTION has had some responsibility for implementing the Sustainable Transport Plan also, working cooperatively with other agencies.[481]

4.43 But some stakeholders recognise that the implementation and monitoring of initiatives and investment is wanting.[482] This Committee's report on annual and financial reports for 2003–04 recommended:

> 4.27 …that, under the supervision of the ACT Planning and Land Authority, agencies' focus on sustainable transport issues should be treated as a fundamental whole of

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[479] ACT Planning and Land Authority 2006, Annual Report 2005–06, Canberra, pp32, 76

[480] ACT Planning and Land Authority 2005, *Annual Report 2004–05*, Canberra, p67

[481] ACTION undated, *2004-–07 ACTION Authority Strategic Plan*, pp6, 8, <http://www.action.act.gov.au/docs/STRATEGIC%20PLAN_2004_07_final.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2007

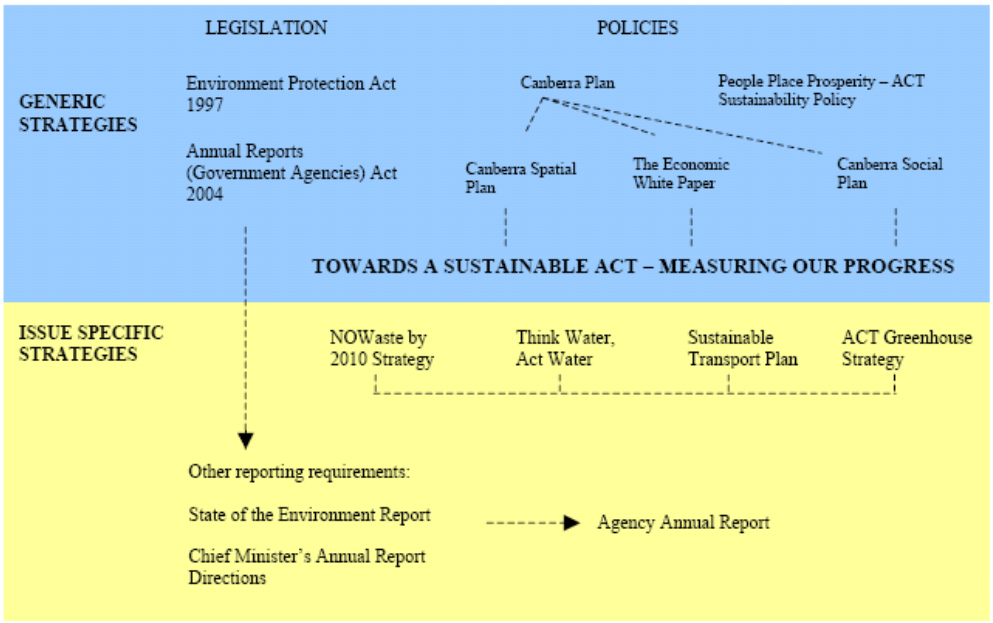
[482] Submission no 68

> government issue. Attention and commitment should be given to high level integrated planning, research, advocacy and marketing, to demonstrate the rationale and efficacy of sustainable transport approaches. This priority and need for integration should be reflected throughout planning processes and reporting.[483]

4.44 Each government agency is required to report under s.158A of the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (ACT) and the *Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions* on various aspects of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). In relation to the implementation of key government policies such as the Sustainable Transport Plan, agencies should report their contribution as part of their 'core business', and on aspects of their vehicle fleet, as part of their 'operation'.[484]

4.45 The Auditor-General explained the reporting process as follows:

Figure 2.1 ACT Legislative Requirements for ESD Reporting and whole-of-government Strategic Policies



Source: Compiled by the ACTAGO using information from the Department of Justice and Community Safety and other ACT Government documentation.

[483] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment; *Report on Annual and Financial Reports; 2003–2004*: *Report 8*, Canberra, p18

[484] ACT Government 2006, *Chief Minister's 2006-2007 Annual Report Directions*, pp33–35, < http://www.psm.act.gov.au/publicationsaz.htm>, accessed 3 August 2007

4.46 The ACT Auditor-General reviewed the ACT Government's performance on ESD reporting in 2005 and 'found that there was 'scope for considerable improvement to the ESD guidance and information contained in annual reports'.[485] The Auditor-General's audit found that in some agencies, such as the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA), the Land Development Agency (LDA) and ACTION, although ESD was not specifically discussed at senior management meetings, it was discussed within the context of agency operations and tended to be included in progress updates of relevant projects, such as ACTION's implementation of its Greenhouse Challenge Agreement.

4.47 The Committee considered a range of government agencies' annual reports and found that few, if any, had developed and were implementing a workplace level sustainable transport plan, or other initiatives to support employees' use of sustainable transport.[486] A workplace sustainable transport plan could be part of an agency level environmental management system (EMS) or a stand-alone plan. Such plans might promote cultural change within the organisation by, for example, encouraging staff to use a range of sustainable transport modes (including walking, cycling, ACTION buses and car-pooling), and by removing incentives for private car travel such as subsidised car parking. A workplace sustainable transport plan may aim to ensure that staff are satisfied with workplace end-of-journey facilities, and that staff are familiar with the targets and actions in the ACT Government's *Sustainable Transport Plan*.

RECOMMENDATION 29

4.48 **The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions be amended to require that each agency report on the actions it has taken to implement specified actions in the Sustainable Transport Plan, including initiatives to support employees' use of sustainable transport.**

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[485] ACT Auditor-General's Office 2005, *Performance Audit Report Reporting on Ecologically Sustainable Development*, July, <http://www.audit.act.gov.au/auditreports/reports2005/Reporting%20on%20ESD.pdf>

[486] Goal 8.2 of *The Sustainable Transport Plan*

What measures are needed to ensure targets are met?

4.49 Sustainable transport planners tend to emphasise integration of services, convenience, frequency, safety, comprehensibility and accessibility as the features of a good public transport system. The Committee agrees, based on the weight of the evidence it has considered.

RECOMMENDATION 30

4.50 **The Committee recommends that when developing Network 08, that ACTION focus on the integration of services, convenience, frequency, safety, comprehensibility and accessibility of services.**

4.51 In the Committee's view, promoting behavioural change and public awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of using ACTION buses are also needed to ensure the targets in the Sustainable Transport Plan are met. This is partly addressed in other sections of this report dealing with the promotion of sustainable transport, marketing, and supply side and demand side incentives and disincentives. Individual behavioural change and cultural change is needed, across the generations, and in homes and workplaces. Vision, commitment, sacrifices, and a public discourse which champions sustainability, and makes it sociable and fun, is needed.

4.52 The Committee is firmly of the view that Canberra should aspire to, and become, a national leader in sustainability. The vision for Canberra in *The Canberra Plan*[487] – is that

> Canberra will be recognised throughout the world – not only as a beautiful city, uniquely designed in harmony with its environment, the seat of Australia's government and home of its pre-eminent national institutions, but also as a place that represents the best in Australian creativity, community living and sustainable development.[488]

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[487] including *The Social Plan*, the *Economic White Paper* and the *Sustainable Transport Plan*

[488] ACT Government (2004), *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, Vol. 1: Our Story, Canberra, quoting from *The Canberra Plan*, p7

4.53 One of the aims of the proposal to nominate the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is 'to create a model for a sustainable city-state that can inspire the world'.[489] Sustainable transport is very much part of sustainable, liveable cities. Around the world cities are committing their citizens to more sustainable development paths because of the pressing need to respond to climate change, biodiversity decline, and ecosystem degradation. Investment in, and promotion of sustainable transport is a key way that cities can become more sustainable.

4.54 One submission said that ACTION should aspire to deliver best practise public transport. This, based on reports developed for the European Union, requires:

- a single agency in charge of planning the entire network;
- high frequencies on all services across the network, in off-peak periods as well as peak periods;
- a simple, easy-to-understand route structure that remains stable throughout the day and week;
- reliance on transfers for flexibility to minimise the number of routes and allow direct services (thus saving costs and permitting high frequencies);
- high-quality transfer facilities and coordinated timetables and fares.[490]

4.55 The Conservation Council essentially agreed, submitting that good public transport systems, as analysed by Dr Paul Mees (submission no 60), tend to have:

- an integrated route structure which maximises opportunities for interchange and reduces duplication and overlap;
- fast, frequent, reliable service on the trunk routes;
- high frequency on all routes;

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[489] J. Stanhope MLA 2005, 'Making Canberra sustainable', in Bryan Furnass, Sebastian Clark and Penny Ramsay (eds) 2005, *Making Canberra Sustainable*, Ginninderra Press, Canberra, p14

[490] Submission no 60

- convenient, attractive and safe interchange facilities;
- matching hours of operation on the different routes serving interchanges and either co-ordinated timetables or very frequent services;
- multi-modal fares (free interchanges);
- easy to obtain, well presented route and timetable information covering the whole multi-modal network.[491]

4.56 The Committee considers that the targets in the Sustainable Transport Plan need to be better embedded in workplace culture, and for resources to be provided for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of workplace sustainable transport plans. A toolkit or operational guidance is needed. Senior executives should be required to report, and be held accountable, for the realisation of sustainable transport outcomes. This can be achieved through systematic and regular reporting requirements, and the evaluation of policy implementation. The Committee can pursue this through its scrutiny of annual reports, but mechanisms within Government and the private sector also need to be developed.

RECOMMENDATION 31

4.57 **The Committee recommends that resources be provided for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of workplace sustainable transport plans.**

[491] Submission no 61

5 PRINCIPLES AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR PLANNING FUTURE ACTION SERVICES

The centrality of human rights considerations

5.1 Earlier in this report the Committee discussed the submission from the Human Rights Commission. The Committee endorses the Commissioners' affirmation of the importance of human rights considerations to the delivery of public services in the ACT.

5.2 Under the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions, ACTION is already required to report on its compliance with the Human Rights Act. An obligation to report assumes an obligation to comply. Some of the policy objectives leading to the passage of the Human Rights Act also include the promotion of a human rights culture in the ACT and the development of legislation and policy consistent with human rights principles and standards.

5.3 The ACT has been a leader in human rights recognition, but submissions to this inquiry demonstrate that some aspects of the ACT human rights regime should be strengthened, to ensure that those who are least advantaged in our community enjoy equitable access to services in the ACT.

5.4 The Committee agrees with the Human Rights Commission that the ACT Government's compliance with the Human Rights Act would be practically enhanced if the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) were to be amended to impose a positive duty on ACT Government agencies to promote substantive equality.

5.5 In the Committee's view, implementation of this duty should require a careful assessment of needs, the development of targets which aim to ensure that needs are met, and a rigorous monitoring and evaluation regime.

5.6 The Committee agrees with the view expressed in several submissions that ACTION should involve disadvantaged user groups in the planning and review of public transport. This may require additional consultations over and above face-to-face and on-line surveys. The Human Rights Commission urged that people with a disability, and ACTION passengers who fell within

recognised categories of disadvantage, be consulted appropriately, and that the data elicited be dealt with in a disaggregated way.[492]

5.7 The Committee notes that the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services has invited submissions to its review of government concessions in the ACT.[493]

RECOMMENDATION 32

5.8 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government amend the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) to require public bodies to promote access, equity and equality.**

Bus fleet replacement

5.9 Most of the initiatives in the 2007–08 budget that are relevant to the delivery of ACTION's services for the coming year were noted in chapter 3.

5.10 The development of a Bus Fleet Replacement Strategy is one of the significant projects that will inform the review of the Sustainable Transport Plan and the future delivery of public transport in the ACT. The project will provide ACTION with advice on a short and medium term (to 2012) strategy for ACTION's bus replacements. According to the ACT Government's submission:

> The project will build on recent modelling of ACTION's future services, operating costs, population and passenger demographics, patronage, and bus fleet and depot scenarios in relation to the cost benefit analysis of options for reusing the former Woden bus depot for ACTION bus services from Property ACT.
>
> The project will look at scenarios of traffic flows below, at and above those underlying the government's sustainable transport plan with a view to either confirming or updating ACT Government policy with

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[492] Submission no 67; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p6

[493] *The Canberra Times*, 18 August 2007, Public Notices pB10 <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/community/concessions.default.htm>

respect to that plan. Bus composition options, including fuel types, size and the need for articulated bodies will be assessed with regard to the influence of expected developments in ACTION's three key markets (commuter, school and community). The optimal Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant bus composition of the fleet will also be assessed.

Research will be undertaken to advise on optimum triggers for bus replacement and how factors such as maximum and average fleet age, maintenance and operating cost, vehicle condition, passenger requirements and expectations should be factored in to policy decisions on bus replacement.[494]

5.11 Fleet replacement is expected to reduce maintenance costs which tend to be higher for older buses. It should also lessen the number of disruptions to services caused by mechanical faults.

Climate Change Action Plan 2007–2011

5.12 The ACT Government's *Climate Change Action Plan 2007–2011*, released on 27 July 2007, commits the ACT Government to a range of initiatives to improve sustainable transport in the ACT. The purchase of more CNG-fuelled buses has been noted above. The Climate Change Action Plan summarises a wide range of current policies and programs and proposes new initiatives. For example, it provides that:

- the implementation of *The Canberra Spatial Plan* will continue to limit urban sprawl and long vehicle journeys and provide more opportunities for people to walk and cycle to work. Planning in the ACT will continue to integrate transport planning at both strategic and individual development levels so as to reduce travel distances and increase the use of more environmentally friendly transport modes;
- a Park 'n Ride strategy will be implemented;

[494] Submission no 65

- the adequacy of the current concessions regime will be assessed in relation to climate change impacts on low income, disadvantaged and vulnerable ACT residents;
- the new network and service design plan for the public transport network will be completed by the end of 2007;
- the ACT Government will respond promptly to the recommendations of this Committee report;
- from late 2007 bicycle riders will be able to travel at no cost when using the on-bus bike racks on ACTION buses;
- during 2008 the ACT Government will consult with business and employer groups (including the Commonwealth) to encourage and support sustainable transport by commuters. Options to be included in the review include increased use of public transport and cycling, car pooling and more flexible working arrangements, such as increased working from home options.

Sustainable Transport Contribution Fund

5.13 A voluntary Sustainable Transportation Contribution Fund has been proposed in the ACT Government's 2007 *Draft ACT Parking Strategy*. It is proposed that the fund would comprise voluntary financial contributions from developers in lieu of their providing up to 50% of required on-site parking spaces. Guidelines for the use of the funds would be developed in consultation with stakeholders, but could be used to provide accessible facilities, cycling facilities, lighting to improve pedestrian access, shuttle bus services, real time information services etc.[495]

5.14 The Committee did not receive submissions on this issue but in principle would welcome the creation of such a fund as an innovative mechanism for implementing sustainable transport in the ACT. The Committee notes that the Public Transport Users Group has called for the establishment of a Commonwealth Sustainable Transport Fund to fund infrastructure (and

[495] ACT Government 2007, *Draft ACT Parking Strategy*, Canberra, pvii, 41–43

rolling stock where applicable) for walking, cycling and public transport.[496]

RECOMMENDATION 33

5.15 **The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transportation Contribution Fund proposed in the ACT Government's 2007 *Draft ACT Parking Strategy* be progressed.**

Human resource management

5.16 The Committee heard evidence, noted above, of the low morale of ACTION drivers, and stakeholders' concern has also been noted. Several submissions made suggestions about improving ACTION's management. One called for the re-creation of an ACTION statutory authority and said that only managers with expertise in bus service management should be appointed to manage ACTION.[497] One submission suggested that ACTION staff should undertake a professional management program at the University of Canberra on Business Kinetics which is taught by a specialist in organisation transformation and improvement.[498]

5.17 At least two submissions suggested driver rosters may need to be reviewed. One suggested that ACTION's policy of employing drivers part-time (20 hours per week) has had questionable results. Drivers no longer have a career path and often have to seek second jobs, which puts pressure on home life.[499] Driver-turnover is also high, and training new drivers is expensive. In 2002 it cost more than $10 000 to train a new recruit and put them in uniform.

5.18 The Committee considers that the Minister and senior executives in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services need to invest significantly in rebuilding morale in ACTION. A necessary step in this process will be developing a strategic plan outlining the ACTION vision, purpose, values and

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[496] Public Transport Users Association 2007, *Moving Australians Sustainably: Transport Policy in the National Interest*, August 2007 <http://www.ptua.org.au/federal/moving_australians-web.pdf>, accessed 16 August 2007

[497] Submission no 13

[498] Submission no 12

[499] Submissions no 18, 55

key strategic priorities. The key priorities in the former ACTION Authority's Strategic Plan were:

- increase patronage;
- improve economic sustainability; and
- improve environmental sustainability.[500]

In the Committee's view, these priorities are consistent with the Sustainable Transport Plan and should be continued.

RECOMMENDATION 34

5.19 **The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services favourably consider the strategic priorities of increasing patronage, improving economic sustainability, and improving environmental sustainability.**

Marketing and promotion of ACTION services

5.20 The Committee considers that marketing and promotion of ACTION bus services should be a priority for future ACTION service delivery. The Committee agrees with the Property Council (ACT), the ACT Transit Group, and other submissions, that ACTION should increase its marketing efforts and public education about the benefits of public transport use.[501] The ACT Transit Group suggested that a general publicity campaign was needed to market ACTION bus services to community sectors such as tertiary students, commuters and others, and to raise public awareness about the environmental benefits of public transport.[502]

5.21 The Committee agrees that information should be provided to the public about total and per capita transport-related emissions and the social, environmental and economic benefits of public transport use, such as is done in the Sustainable Transport Plan and the ACT Climate Change Strategy and Action

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[500] ACTION undated, *2004-–07 ACTION Authority Strategic Plan*, pp6, 8, <http://www.action.act.gov.au/docs/STRATEGIC%20PLAN_2004_07_final.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2007

[501] Submissions no 7, 23, 47, 68

[502] Submissions no 7, 61; see also Submission no 18

Plan. This information can be updated when the 2006 Journey to Work data and the ACT State of the Environment Report 2007 are available.

5.22 ACTION currently raises some revenue through advertising on buses (estimated at about $1million per year), but the Committee heard evidence that there was room for improvement in the promotion and uptake of that service.[503]

5.23 The Committee welcomes the Poetry in Action initiative as an imaginative way of promoting both poetry and public transport. The 'What am I' poem at the front of this report poignantly represents a range of possible passengers' experiences using ACTION bus services.

5.24 As noted above, several submissions said that bus route information needed to be accessible at each bus stop so that passengers know which route they would be taking. The change of route numbers and route directions during peak and off-peak times are seen as particularly confusing.[504] Other submissions called for better communication of schedule changes.[505]

5.25 While some submissions called for real time information at bus stops,[506] and memory timetables,[507] the more common view was that real time information screens were very expensive and should not be a priority.[508] Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that the new ticketing system ACTION was purchasing would be capable of interacting with real time passenger information and geographic positioning systems (GPS). A tender process would be followed, and various technologies would be considered, including paper tickets, a magnetic stripe, and a 'smart card/swiping' system. As part of this project the Government would be considering whether or not to adopt a partnership with a jurisdiction utilising an existing system or to acquire a

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[503] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p83

[504] Submission no 23, 26, 41, 63

[505] Submission no 41

[506] Submission no 23, or at least at interchanges: submission no 63

[507] Submissions no 26

[508] Submissions no 34, 56, Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, p11; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 4 Hansard* (3 May), p922

stand-alone system.[509]

5.26 The Committee is of the view that real-time information has the potential to offer safety, security and transport planning benefits.

RECOMMENDATION 35

5.27 **The Committee welcomes the proposed introduction of real-time information for ACTION bus services.**

RECOMMENDATION 36

5.28 **The Committee recommends that bus travel time relative to cars be measured and reported.**

RECOMMENDATION 37

5.29 **The Committee commends the Poetry in ACTION initiative and recommends that it be continued.**

5.30 The Committee would like to see ACTION bus routes and cycling paths marked in the maps in the Yellow Pages, and a sustainable transport theme for telephone directory covers around the country sometime in the near future. The public relations company working for the Telstra subsidiary Sensis, PR Edge, advised that Sensis selects the broad theme for the covers for the 59 regional directories in Australia. The theme for the 2008 directory is 'food' for example. PR Edge provides six or seven options for consideration, and is open to suggestions for consideration.

5.31 Several submissions also suggested that buses should have route numbers and names on the rear of the bus as well as the front so that people can see what bus has recently departed or is waiting at the interchange.[510] Another said that bus numbers need to be easier to read,[511] and that buses should not display the wrong route number.[512]

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[509] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp79, 81; submission no 65

[510] Submission no 20, 26, 38, 61

[511] Submission no 35

[512] Submission no 41

RECOMMENDATION 38

5.32 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services suggests to PR Edge that the cover theme for future White Pages telephone directory for Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass, relate to a sustainable transport theme, and if possible, include an image of the Canberra Bus Map on the front cover for the local directory.**

RECOMMENDATION 39

5.33 **The Committee recommends that the maps in the Yellow Pages include ACTION bus routes and bus stops.**

RECOMMENDATION 40

5.34 **The Committee recommends that ACTION should increase its marketing efforts and promote public awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of public transport use.**

5.35 The Committee also agrees with many submissions that the provision of information at all bus stops should be enhanced, with an easily legible timetable and route map at every stop,[513] with web-based real-time information being accessible by mobile phones. Or at least information at bus stops which advises the direction and destination of the bus. It would also assist bus passengers on an unfamiliar route if information could also be provided about the closest alternate route bus stop.

RECOMMENDATION 41

5.36 **The Committee recommends that every ACTION bus stop should provide a user-friendly current timetable and route map, and information about the closest alternate route bus stop.**

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[513] Submission no 61; see also C. Alexander 2007, 'Stalling over traffic solutions', *The Canberra Times*, 26 March, p6

Integrated transport, urban development and infrastructure

5.37 The National Capital Authority identified a range of measures that would improve the provision of public transport in the ACT. The Authority submitted:

> *Integrated transport, urban development infrastructure program* – this will establish the timing and location of urban development/redevelopment and the transport infrastructure required to serve this development over the short, medium and long term.
>
> *Transit oriented development* - adjacent or within existing centres and in key locations along the IPT route. Through techniques such as value capture improvements to public transport, bicycle paths etc can be made.
>
> *Bus priority/HOV along the IPT routes* - in principle this should not be implemented by adding lanes as it sends the wrong signal and encourages more dispersed settlement patterns.
>
> *New and improved passenger transfer facilities* – focusing on civic and town centre interchanges (with real time information) as well as providing new facilities on IPT routes. An example is on Adelaide Avenue near Deakin local centre (where NCA has amended planning policies to increase densities adjacent the IPT route) where it would be appropriate to provide a new stop in the central median adjacent Hopetoun Circuit
>
> *Park and ride* – identify opportunities for new park and ride facilities which are combined with other services and facilities. Locations such as the town centres as well as other on the IPT route should be considered (e.g. Mitchell, Bruce, Deakin, Mawson, and Erindale). This should be consideration as part of planning for Molonglo.
>
> *City Circulator* – consider a free circulator within the city (e.g. CATS service in Perth and Fremantle). This could be a frequent service routed around London Circuit.
>
> *New transit technologies* - the NCA supports the ongoing investigation of new transit technologies.[514]

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[514] Submission no 66

5.38 The Committee notes that the Authority's submission is consistent with many initiatives proposed in the Sustainable Transport Plan, the draft ACT Parking Strategy, and some of the recommendations of this report which respond to submissions.

Light rail

5.39 In 2004 the Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study assessed the economic and financial implication of a range of short and long-term transport options. It found that while a light rail system would be significantly more expensive than a bus based system, over time these differences would reduce as buses have higher annual operating costs and energy usage, and higher long-term maintenance costs. Light rail integrates well with bicycles. The study recommended that public transport system route corridors should be secured and that the Belconnen to Civic and Gungahlin to Civic routes be established as bus based public transport corridors.[515]

5.40 The ACT Government has progressed these recommendations, consistent with the Sustainable Transport Plan.

5.41 In 2005 Mrs Dunne MLA, for the Canberra Liberals, described 'a light rail transit system or some rapid transit system' as 'the obvious answer' for sustainable transport in Canberra.[516] Dr Foskey MLA, ACT Greens, has also advocated forward planning for light rail given the declining oil supply and climate change.[517]

5.42 In 2006 despite various suggestions that sustainable transport options, including a light rail system, should be introduced as part of Canberra's centennial celebrations,[518] public transport was not addressed in the report of

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[515] Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd 2004, *Canberra Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study: Final Report: Economic and Financial Implications of Transport Options*, pp13.2–13.3

[516] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, *Week 15 Hansard* (15 December), p4946

[517] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2005, *Week 15 Hansard* (15 December), p4943

[518] Canberra 100 Celebration of a Century 2006, Community Engagement/All Ideas/Planning and Infrastructure, <http://www.canberra100.com.au/all_ideas.htm>; Canberra 100 Celebration of a Century 2006, *Community Engagement Report*, <http://www.canberra100.com.au/ideas/idea_planning.htm>; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2006, *Week 1 Hansard* (15 February), p150

the Centenary of Canberra Task Force.[519]

5.43 Several submissions and commentary in the media suggest that the ACT Government should consider again the light rail option.[520] One potential route could be from West Basin, through Civic, Constitution Avenue, and Barton through to Kingston.[521] Another suggested alight rail route and the stages that could precede its introduction.[522]

5.44 Others warned that accessing light rail can be dangerous for people with disabilities, and that these safety considerations would have to be addressed very carefully.[523] One submission dismissed suggestions that light rail or O-bahns should be reconsidered, because they were too expensive and would not service the inter-town route better than buses.[524]

Busways and bus priority measures

5.45 As noted above, the National Capital Plan states that Canberra should have busways.

5.46 A major initiative proposed under ACT Government's Sustainable Transport Plan is to improve the public transport system, including through the development of busways on all trunk routes. Busways can be any of several roadways or traffic management mechanisms, such as an exclusive bus roadway, an exclusive bus lane, a road where buses share with cars, and/or a bus priority measure at traffic signals and intersections. An example of an existing busway is on Barry Drive, between Fairfax Street, O'Connor to Northbourne Avenue in Turner.

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[519] Centenary of Canberra Task Force, 2006, *Canberra 100: Celebration of a Century: Report*, March, <http://www.canberra100.com.au/images/blueprint.pdf>

[520] Submission no 10, 13, 30, 40, 49, 62. See also C. Bryant 2007, 'Light rail benefits', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 21 May; G. Macafee 2007, 'LA by the Molonglo', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 24 April, p12; C. Alexander 2007, 'Stalling over traffic solutions', *The Canberra Times*, 26 March, p6

[521] Submission no 26

[522] Submission no 54

[523] Submission no 52

[524] Submission no 56

5.47 Bus rapid transit systems involve infrastructural improvements and some adjustments to bus schedules, but are said to be the least expensive rapid transport alternative in terms of capital costs and operating subsidies.[525] Busways are a recognised way of encouraging more travel by public transport.

5.48 The conclusions of a major consultancy, the Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study, informed the development of the Sustainable Transport Plan.

5.49 According to sustainable transport experts at the University of New South Wales:

> Brisbane has two grade-separated bus-only corridors, the Translink South-East Busway and the Inner-Northern Busway, with three more proposed and expected to be completed in 2012. Sydney has the Liverpool-Parramatta Transitway or T-way, which has 20km of bus-only roads and 10km of bus-only lanes on existing roads. The real-time information displays in T-way stations show details of the next bus: actual arrival times, route numbers, destinations and connecting services. Special technology on T-way roads detect when buses are coming into intersections, so they don't have to stop at traffic lights, cutting travel time for T-way passengers.
>
> Adelaide has one of only a few guided busways in the world: the O-Bahn Busway, which is the world's longest and fastest guided bus route, operating reasonably successfully since 1986. Guided buses are steered for part or the entire route by external guidance systems, usually on a dedicated track. Because the track excludes all other traffic, reliable schedules can be maintained on heavily used corridors even during rush hours.[526]

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[525] International Energy Agency 2002, Bus Systems for the Future: Achieving Sustainable Transport Worldwide, pp22–24, 27–40; Transport Policy Discussion Group n.d., 'Urban Transport Fact Book: Competitively Tendered Bus Services: Cost Effective Rapid Transit for Low Density Urban Areas', <http://www.publicpurpose.com/ut-ccrt.htm>, accessed 12 June 2007

[526] M. Ramirez and C.B Nawangpalupi 2006, 'MOB Assessing Scenarios for Sustainable Transport in Australia', in Proceedings: Sustainable Consumption and Production: Opportunities and Threats, 23–25 November 2006, <http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/staff/Mariano.Ramirez/score2006.pdf>, pp199–217 at p203, accessed 21 May 2007

5.50 Several submissions called for more bus priority measures near Civic.[527] One called for the use of Eastern Valley Way and Belconnen Way for express inter-town services rather than the current College Street and Haydon Drive route because the latter route compromised the express nature of the service.[528]

5.51 Some stakeholders expressed reservations about busways. Mr Bayliss said they were a good idea if they were affordable.[529] Advancement of Public Transport expressed ambivalence about the Belconnen to Civic busway because of all the land and vegetation lost to the Gungahlin Drive Extension.[530]

5.52 Several submissions advocated the creation of more busways in Canberra, including short bypasses around traffic gridlock points. The advantages of busways over standard road routes are said to include more reliable timekeeping because of the separated traffic, faster transit and clearer routes.[531] Other advantages of busways include:

- improved travel convenience; and
- increased residential and commercial property values along the transitway route.[532]

5.53 The Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, advised the Assembly in May 2007 that the ACT Government would continue to forward plan for the Belconnen to Civic busway, but that its construction would occur well in the future. He said:

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[527] Submissions no 23, 26

[528] Submission no 56

[529] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p63

[530] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p61

[531] Submissions no 26, 32, 40, 54; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp58, 59, 61; See also: E. Sherlock 2007, 'Public transport outcry: Hargreaves 'outdated'', *The Sunday Canberra Times*, 29 April, p3

[532] median property values for suburbs adjacent to the Brisbane's South East Busway reportedly increased between 4 and 21 percent within a few months of the opening, and within one to two years to between 13 and 64 percent, compared with minus 1 percent and 33 percent for suburbs further from the busway: ACT Government 2006, 'Transitway benefits will turn critics', Media Release Minister for Planning Mr Simon Corbell MLA 16 March. See also J. Legge 2006, 'Our trams are far from the end of the line', *The Age*, 26 December referring to a 15–20% increase in property values along tram or light rail routes

> The Belconnen busway planning work undertaken by ACTPLA in recent years is vital to the future of this city; vital to the development of an effective and efficient public transport system; vital to the future of our capacity to deal with issues around greenhouse gas emissions and climate change; and vital to the capacity of this city to live within reasonable and sustainable constraints in terms of our future development.[533]

5.54 Minister Hargreaves described busways and priority measures as a 'great idea' but that they were unlikely to be created on some major roads, such as Johnson Drive in Tuggeranong, for another 20–30 years. The Minister said that reservations had to be included in the Territory Plan in anticipation of future need, as it was much more difficult to retro-fit existing roads.[534]

5.55 The Committee agrees with the current ACT Government's approach; that it is responsible forward planning to reserve the corridors for busways and public transport. Rapid bus transit systems are likely to become very popular as Canberra grows, and traffic congestion inhibits travel times. Of course whether private car use might decline in future may well depend on the development of alternative fuels and mobility technologies.

5.56 The Committee is of the view that the ACT Government should develop and implement effective strategies to reduce car dependence and promote more use of public transport. As noted below, this has other associated public policy benefits such as enhanced physical activity. The high externalised costs of private car use need to be better recognised and costed, including its economic, social and environmental impacts.

RECOMMENDATION 42

5.57 **The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transport Plan not be substantially amended in relation to its references to busways.**

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[533] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Week 4 Hansard* (3 May), p923

[534] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June, p90

Loop service around the Parliamentary Zone and through Civic

5.58 Inner-city congestion led some submissions to suggest the reconsideration of a free 'downtown shuttle' or loop service,[535] free travel for aged pensioners,[536] or free services for all or part of selected journeys,[537] or even for only for a day to promote use of public transport.[538] One said that there was 'a clear emerging need for a continuous hop on-hop off circular service' through the Parliamentary Zone and Civic.[539] Another suggested that shuttle services be provided from long stay car parks outside the town centres.[540]

5.59 In response to a question from the Committee about the reasons why the free Downtowner service that ran in the early 1990s was withdrawn, the Minister and Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that local businesses had sponsored the service, but later withdrew because of poor patronage. The Department advised that the provision of a free shuttle service would need to be evaluated against other service priorities, including the demand for additional school services.[541]

5.60 Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that Perth City Council runs the free central area transit (CAT) service over an area of about one square kilometre in the city but that the Council receives substantially more revenue from city ratepayers and a car parking levy than Canberra does.[542]

5.61 The Department also advised that under the Park 'n Ride facility that operates in various car parks around Canberra, drivers can purchase a periodic ticket,

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[535] Submission no 40

[536] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, p63

[537] R. Dace 2007, 'ACTION plans', *Letter to the Editor: The Canberra Times*, 21 May, p10 suggested free inter-nodal travel between town centres

[538] Submission no 61

[539] Submission no 23

[540] Submission no 55

[541] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June 2007, p84; Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[542] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp72, 84

park for free, then catch an ACTION bus to their place of employment. There is scope for expansion of the scheme to areas such as EPIC. The Park 'n Ride scheme is currently under review.[543]

RECOMMENDATION 43

5.62 **The Committee recommends that ACTION assess the feasibility of re-introducing a loop bus service or city circulator through Central Canberra and the Parliamentary Zone.**

Free bike scheme for town centres and universities

5.63 In addition to considering a reassessment or resurrection of an inner-city loop bus service, the Committee considers that there may be merit in assessing the feasibility of free bike scheme for town centres, and in encouraging universities and large employers that do not currently run bike fleets, to consider doing so. The ANU currently runs a bike fleet – the 'Timely Treadlies Departmental Bicycle program',[544] and TravelSmart provides information on how to establish a bike fleet.[545]

5.64 Adelaide City Council currently operates a free bike hire within city limits. On provision of a drivers licence, proof of identity card or passport (which is held as a deposit for the duration of the hire and returned when the city bike is returned), bikes can be hired for free.[546]

5.65 Melbourne City Council has been considering an initiative which is currently operating in the inner-city areas of Paris, Lyon, Vienna and Brussels. In those cities, since 2005, an outdoor advertising company, JCDecaux, has established multiple inner-city bicycle stations in return for advertising rights at premium outdoor locations such as phone booths, bus-shelters and free-standing illuminated signs, for an agreed number of years. The system allows

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[543] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[544] <http://transport.anu.edu.au/index.php?pid=89>, accessed 14 August 2007

[545] 'How to set up a successful BikeFleet', <http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/toolkits/bikefleets/index.html>, accessed 13 August 2007

[546] 'Free City Bikes brought to you by Adelaide City Council and Bicycle SA - A national first!', <http://www.bikesa.asn.au/City%20Bikes/City%20Bikes.htm>, accessed 13 August 2007

subscription and casual riders to take a bicycle from one rack, after registering and giving their credit card details, and to return the bike free of charge to any of a number of racks across the city. The bike remains free if it is returned within a specified time, but is charged at a relatively expensive rate for extended loans, as the scheme aims to keep the maximum number of bicycles accessible to users.[547] If the bike is not returned, users can have up to $1000 debited from their credit card.

5.66 The Melbourne City Council has had discussions with JCDecaux, Connex (Melbourne's train service), Yarra Trams and Adshell, about the possibility of introducing a bike scheme within a radius of about a 30minute cycle ride of the CBD, train stations, and universities. The Council has advised the Committee informally that it has yet to consult with a range of local councils, to address issues such as provision of helmets, and to decide possible procurement paths for the scheme.[548]

5.67 Sydney City Council is reported to also be running a feasibility study for a free city bike program as part of its new bicycle strategy, which aims to increase cycling from 2 per cent of trips now to 10 per cent by 2017.[549]

5.68 For ACT stakeholders, such as ACT Government employers and universities in Canberra, the introduction of bike fleets at workplace or educational institutions would be consistent with the Sustainable Transport Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 44

5.69 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage major employers in the ACT, including the ACT public service, to introduce bike fleets at their workplaces.**

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[547] Personal communication, JCDecaux, 13 August 2007

[548] Ms Alison Lee, Melbourne City Council, personal communication, 13 August 2007

[549] stuff.co.nz 2007, 'Free bikes plan for Melbourne tourists', *ETN Travel Industry News*, April 14, <http://www.travelindustrydeals.com/news/2505>; H. Paget 2007, 'Sydney could get free ride with rent-a-bike proposal', < http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=256968>, accessed 9 August 2007

RECOMMENDATION 45

5.70 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney initiatives on inner-city cycling as part of an assessment of a possible trial of a free bike hire service for Canberra's town centres and universities.**

Timetabling

5.71 Many submissions advocated more frequent bus services for Canberra. The ACT Transit Group submitted that ACTION should be better funded to enable it to meet community expectations. The groups suggested that service frequency should be:

> at a base level of every 30 minutes in every suburb on weekdays and more frequently in the peak periods, a standard which had until recently been, in general, the standard for the last 40-odd years in Canberra, and we still believe that that is appropriate. It is a standard that is being progressively adopted throughout Australia. We also recommend that ACTION funding be sufficient to enable the service to meet the requirements of the disability discrimination act and current community expectations, such as air-conditioned buses.[550]

5.72 A submission from a former ACTION Manager of Operations, South Region, Mr Southwell, suggested that 'the core basis of scheduling route services is to commit to a fifteen (15) minute timetable on all inter town express services' and to connect feeder services to inter-town services half hourly or hourly. Mr Southwell also suggested that if school hours in public and private schools could be staggered, this could lead to significant savings for ACTION. [551]

5.73 One submission suggested that the priorities for the service should be, in descending order frequency, reliability, price, comfort, with services running every 20 minutes.[552] The preferred frequency of off-peak services seems to be at

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[550] Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 15 May 2007, p22

[551] Submission no 18

[552] Submission no 10

least half-hourly.[553]

5.74 One submission suggested that an improved bus service should be paid from with savings from other projects, higher fares or loans.[554]

5.75 Several submissions identified timetabling inconsistencies. Manuka for example, was said to have three services per hour to Civic, all departing within a few minutes of each other.[555] Mr David Bastin also noted that two services per hour departing Belconnen for Gungahlin along William Slim and Gundaroo Drives leave within 10 minutes of each other.[556]

5.76 In response to questions from the Committee about services that 'clustered', the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that these would be addressed as part of the comprehensive service plan review.[557]

RECOMMENDATION 46

5.77 **The Committee recommends that ACTION review the frequency of services as a priority issue and increase frequency where that would be consistent with human rights principles, stakeholder feedback and the goals of the Sustainable Transport Plan.**

ACTION's consultation processes

5.78 Various submissions said that consultation with stakeholders was a necessary part of public transport planning.[558]The ACT Transit Group's submission criticised the lack of consultation in relation to the December 2006 network changes and suggested that ACTION's Standards of Service should be reviewed before any reviews of networks were undertaken, and that funding to ACTION be sufficient to enable it to meet its Standards of Service. The group, Advancement of Public Transport, also called for the convening of a

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[553] Submission no 47

[554] Submission no 3

[555] Submission no 19. See also Submissions no 7, 20, 61

[556] Submission no 19

[557] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

[558] Submissions no 3, 7, 23, 29, 47, 54, 67

community-based (and not ministerially-appointed) Citizens' Advisory Group on public transport.[559] The ACT P&C Council welcomed the proposed re-establishment of ACTION's Schools Transport Liaison Committee.[560]

Ticketing

5.79 Several submissions advocated the introduction of smartcard contactless tickets as used in Europe.[561] Or the integrated ticketing system that is used in Sydney.[562] The current Wayfarer system is said to be cause unnecessary delays in passenger boardings,[563] and does not allow for more than one passenger to debit a ticket per ride.[564] Others suggested that disincentives should be introduced to discourage the payment of fares on buses,[565] and that ticket validation should take place outside the bus, to save time.[566]

5.80 One submission said that it was very inconvenient not to be able to purchase fare-saver tickets from bus interchanges, and especially when passengers do not have change for the fare.[567] Others suggested that there should be automatic ticket distributors at interchanges,[568] and more retail outlets selling tickets.[569]

5.81 The ACT Government indicated that ACTION would be assessing the benefits of implementing a real time passenger information system (RPTI) involving the use of smart card tickets.[570]

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[559] Submissions no 27; Legislative Assembly of the ACT, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 15 June 2007, pp55, 56

[560] Submission no 48

[561] Submission no 23, 26, 41; see also C. Alexander 2007, 'Inquiry hears of bus lane proposal', *The Canberra Times*, 16 May, p3

[562] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, p14

[563] Submission no 26, 41

[564] Submission no 51

[565] Submission no 26, 41

[566] Submission no 10

[567] Submission no 16

[568] Submission no 20

[569] Submission no 28, 41; see also submission no 56 which says pre-purchase of tickets should be encouraged

[570] Submission no 65

Bus shelters and interchanges

5.82 Several submissions and oral evidence suggested that there was a need for more security measures at bus interchanges to address the current lack of safety and security,[571] particularly at night.[572] This has also been a campaign issue for the ACT Opposition,[573] and the Transport Workers Union.[574] A young person wrote in the ACT Youth Advisory Council submission that people who drank alcohol or took drugs at interchanges could be threatening and violent towards waiting passengers, and that smoking created health risks.[575] Articles in *The Canberra Times* had also been highlighting the personal security threats at bus interchanges.[576] At least two transport officers on duty after-hours on a trial basis at Woden interchange were attacked in 2007. One was stabbed, and one had his nose broken.[577] 'Punch-ons' that start at several high schools were said to continue at Woden where there were less disciplinary consequences.[578]

5.83 Submissions called for 'panic buttons' enabling help to be called during emergencies at interchanges;[579] regular foot patrols by police officers;[580] security cameras at high-risk stops;[581] and for more accessible and better maintained public toilets and facilities at interchanges.[582]

5.84 Responding to questions about safety and security issues, Minister Hargreaves advised the Committee that reported incidents of violence had fallen slightly in the four months to April 2007 compared with the same period in 2006, and

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[571] Submissions no 23, 32, 33, 35, 37, 41, 46, 48, 51, 52, 59, 61, 63, 64; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, pp7, 16

[572] Submissions no 20, 52; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence,* 7 August, p104

[573] G. Downie 2007, 'Labor fails on buses: Pratt', *The Canberra Times*, 14 May, p2

[574] G. Downie 2007, 'ACTION morale low: union', *The Canberra Times*, 11 May, p11; G. Downie 2007, 'Bus woes the 'root cause' of aggression', *The Canberra Times*, 5 May, p9

[575] Submissions no 59

[576] B. Watts 2007, 'Call to clean up crime at interchanges', *The Canberra Times*, 14 April, p8; C. Alexander 2007, 'Time for action on buses fiasco', *The Canberra Times*, 24 March, p4

[577] G. Downie 2007, 'Youths kick, punch bus supervisor at Woden', *The Canberra Times*, 24 April, p6; G. Downie 2007, 'Minister silent on security delays', *The Canberra Times*, 9 May, p4

[578] N. Towell 2007, 'Call to stem bus violence', *The Canberra Times*, 3 June, p3

[579] Submission no 41

[580] Submission no 52

[581] Submission no 61

[582] Submission no 41

that a formal relationship was in place with ACTION management, the Transport Workers Union and the police, concerning strategies for the bus interchanges. Other safety and security measures that had been or would be introduced include:

- by the end of 2007 closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) would be installed on nearly all buses, and all by 2008;[583]
- staffing in interchanges would be increased, as would supervision and communications centre resources;
- safety and security refresher training would be provided;
- safety reporting systems would be enhanced to make it easier to report less serious incidents and to enable better transmission of information to the police;
- ACTION's radio system, security measures, and risk assessment procedures would be audited;[584] and
- free travel is available on ACTION buses for police offices, whether in uniform or not, but Minister Hargreaves would prefer that uniforms were worn.[585]

Belconnen bus interchange

5.85 In response to questions from the Committee, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that the upgrading of the Belconnen Interchange facilities was part of a larger plan to improve bus operations, the redevelopment was linked to Westfield's proposed expansion of their shopping centre. Westfield had lodged a master plan with ACTPLA for approval that provided for a new interchange and passenger lounge facility as part of the expanded centre. Negotiations between Westfield and the Land Development Agency were ongoing. In June 2007 it was reported that the ACT Government had signed a $255 000 contract in November 2004 for a design to replace the interchange.[586]

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[583] Submission no 65; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, *Transcript of Evidence* 15 June 2007, p78
[584] Submission no 65
[585] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Week 3 Hansard (15 March), p661
[586] G. Downie 2007, 'Bus interchange decision imminent', *The Canberra Times*, 25 June, p5

5.86 The Department also advised that changes to land use policies and the Inter-town Public Transport Route had been detailed in a draft variation to the Territory Plan and would be incorporated in the new Territory Plan.

5.87 The Department advised that the design work for the extension of Cohan Street between Lathlain Street and Benjamin Way was being finalised in June 2007. ACTPLA had received $2.8m in capital funding for that work. The aim was to improve east/west connectivity within the town centre and provide a direct route for buses accessing the new interchange within the redeveloped shopping centre.[587]

Woden bus interchange

5.88 In relation to the Woden Bus Interchange, the Department advised that a detailed design of a bus operating system that could replace the existing Woden bus interchange had been completed, and would be implemented over coming years. The first stage involved the construction of Wilbow Street and the round about at Easty Street. That work had design funding in 2006–07 and construction funding for 2007–08. [588]

5.89 The Department advised that the second stage of the Woden bus interchange redevelopment would involve the construction of a temporary bus station in Bowes Street, and the recommissioning of long stay bus layover at the Woden bus depot. Funding and timing for this stage had not been determined as at June 2007.[589]

5.90 The Department advised that whether the existing interchange would be demolished depended in part on whether Westfield decided to expand the retail centre. Minor upgrades to the existing interchange would be carried out as required meanwhile. [590]

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[587] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[588] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[589] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June
[590] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June

Other safety matters

5.91 Two submissions complained about footpaths,[591] and one about the need for better street lighting to encourage use of buses at night.[592] Sustainable transport proponents support the call for improvements to urban form, such as direct and well-lit paths which encourage walking and cycling.[593]

5.92 The Conservation Council for the South East Region and Canberra suggested that safety needed to be addressed for all sustainable transport modes and not just at interchanges and on buses. The Council submitted:

> A package of measures should be introduced to improve safety for walkers, bikers and public transport users to increase the attractiveness of these modes of transport.[594]

5.93 Some submissions criticised the inaccessibility and lack of shelter at the City and Woden interchanges. One said that the City Interchange provided inadequate shelter for bus patrons and may discourage use of ACTION services.[595] Another suggested that the Belconnen bus interchange should be moved as soon as possible because it was too far from supermarkets for elderly people to take their shopping.[596]

5.94 The ACT Government has promised more security cameras on buses, and more staff at interchanges and refresher safety training for ACTION employees. In May 2007 Minister Hargreaves announced that 76 per cent of ACTION buses would be fitted with CCTV security cameras by the end of 2007.[597]

5.95 One submission suggested that there should be a coach and bus terminal at the Canberra Rail Station which has more space than Jolimont, and that it would revitalise the area,[598] or at least that services should connect with rail

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[591] Submissions no 61, 63
[592] Submission no 61
[593] C. Alexander 2007, 'Stalling over traffic solutions', *The Canberra Times*, 26 March, p6
[594] Submission no 61
[595] Submission no 18
[596] Submission no 11
[597] Anon 2007, 'Action for ACTION', *Canberra City News*, 10 May.
[598] Submission no 20

services.[599] Another suggested a terminus at the Kingston Foreshore.[600]

5.96 Some submissions suggested that basic shelters should be provided at suburban bus stops.[601] This was a higher priority than 'rail-like stations'.[602]

5.97 The Transport Workers Union advised the Committee that ACTION liaises with the police 'all the time'. There are usually about 2 to 3 incidents of rock throwing at buses each week. The worst place for this was the overpass between Lyneham and North Lyneham.[603]

5.98 In response to a question from the Committee about whether the Government had plants to install safety grilles to prevent rock and brick throwing at vehicles from the overpass in Lyneham/North Lyneham, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services advised that a 'Bridge Safety Screen' policy has been endorsed by the Minister. The pedestrian overpass over Ginninderra Drive was one of the bridges identified for safety screens. Hardened glass had also been installed on some buses. [604]

5.99 The Committee was alarmed to hear that bricks and rocks are often thrown at ACTION buses as this is a hazard for both bus drivers and passengers, and that some locations are recognised as being high risk for this criminal behaviour. The Committee notes that as these are important occupational health and safety issues for ACTION staff, that measures must be, and are being, implemented to reduce the recognised risks.

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[599] Submission no 38
[600] Submission no 26
[601] Submissions no 13, 40
[602] Submission no 13
[603] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May, p17
[604] Department of Territory and Municipal Services 2007, Answers to supplementary questions raised by the Planning and Environment Committee, received 20 June 2007; Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Transcript of Evidence 15 June 2007, p79

RECOMMENDATION 47

5.100 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government progress the upgrading, at the earliest opportunity, of the bus interchanges at Woden and Belconnen.**

Mick Gentleman
Chair
August 2007

APPENDIX A: Additional and dissenting comments

Mr Zed Seselja MLA

Introduction

The Planning and Environment Committee held an inquiry into ACTION Buses and Sustainable transport.

The Committee met regularly and engaged with stakeholders effectively. A total of 68 submissions were received.

Whilst agreeing with the majority of the recommendations of the Committee there are some that I particularly disagree with, and I have therefore chosen to make some additional comments.

It is important that we improve public transport in Canberra, and the Committee inquiry will hopefully contribute to this process. I have concerns that, instead of focusing on delivering an effective and efficient public transport system, the Government's focus is on punishing car users. This is evident in the Sustainable Transport Plan, the Government's Draft Parking Strategy and also comes through in parts of the Committee's report. I do not favour this punitive approach to sustainable transport.

There was clear evidence of dissatisfaction with the bus service and the Sustainable Transport Plan itself. The Committee was given a tight time frame to finalise the inquiry, which limited its ability to go into greater depth. A more substantial review of the service including looking at service provision, target goals and economic strategies would have been much more useful, but would have needed a realistic time frame for reporting. Notwithstanding this, I believe the tenor of the committee report does not adequately reflect the level of concern expressed over the performance of ACTION buses.

Negativity in the Community, particularly amongst transport professionals and key stakeholders about services provided was evident in some of the submissions and I have taken those comments into account in formulating my position. It was clear

from the inquiry that there is widespread concern about the performance of ACTION, particularly in relation to timetabling.

A snapshot of some of the concerns raised in relation to ACTION include:

- compared to international best practice, 'ACTION fails all the relevant tests';[605]
- serious decline in quality, badly maintained routes, inadequacy of maintenance, increased workload and hostility of drivers;[606]
- buses perceived to be less punctual, less reliable, overcrowded and difficult for senior citizens;[607]
- ACTION is cited as the worst bus service of any Australian city, with passengers treated as 'losers';[608] and
- worst timetable in 30 years.[609]

The Report notes that the Commonwealth Grants Commission suggests that 'the ACT Government's subsidy and operational deficit of non-concessional public transport use is the highest of all states and territories in Australia'. The Minister, Mr Hargreaves is also recorded as saying that 'the fare price for commuters is substantially lower than elsewhere in Australia.'[610] The service is highly subsidised at tax payer expense, and the community therefore has a legitimate expectation of a high quality service. This does not appear to be occurring at present.

I have set out some specific concerns with the report.

Recommendation 16: Introduction of pay parking in all major employment areas.

I opposed this recommendation.

Whilst I accept that pay parking in Civic and other employment centres is

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[605] Submission no 60

[606] Submission no 27

[607] Submission no 41

[608] Action Bus Inquiry Report para 3.36

[609] Legislative Assembly of the ACT 2007, Standing Committee on Planning and the Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p3

[610] Refer page 81 of the main report

reasonable, I have concerns about this recommendation as it may apply to Gungahlin Town Centre and the Canberra Hospital. Gungahlin, as Canberra's newest Town Centre would be severely disadvantaged by the introduction of pay parking. It would hurt young families in Gungahlin as well as local traders. It is important that Gungahlin Town Centre is given the ability to grow into a more vibrant centre before pay parking is considered. Prematurely moving towards pay parking in the Gungahlin Town Centre has the potential to stunt its growth.

The pay parking regime at Canberra Hospital has been a complete failure. It caused great distress and inconvenience to patients and visitors in particular. It was abandoned by the Government after a strong public backlash and having cost the taxpayer over $500,000 in net terms. I would therefore be concerned if the Government accepted the Committee's recommendation to extend pay parking to all major employment areas, as this would have to include Canberra Hospital.

Recommendation 35: Real Time bus information

I opposed this recommendation.

The introduction of such a system was welcomed by the Committee even though it was dropped by the Government for budgetary reasons and has not been reconsidered. I am not opposed to the concept of real time information services per se, I simply do not see the $6 million system as a priority when measured against some of the pressing needs raised in submissions to the inquiry, and generally recognised elsewhere. There is some merit in the comment in one submission that 'real time information systems are no substitute for systems whose operating principles are simple and easily understood'.[611]

Recommendation 41: Busways

I opposed this recommendation.

It should be noted that the approach taken by the Government to the planning of dedicated busways has been piecemeal and costly. At least $3.5 million has been spent on a feasibility study associated with a dedicated busway between the City and

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[611] Submission no 56

Belconnen. This expenditure included marketing of the project and environmental studies, despite the fact that the Government now claims that it was a long term planning exercise for a project which wouldn't go ahead for many years, or in the words of the Transport Minister, 'not in my lifetime'.

The proposed busway was to cost in excess of $115m for a projected saving of around 3 minutes. This cost would run into many hundreds of millions if busways linking all of the Town Centres were constructed. The potential benefits of such a system would not appear to justify such a massive outlay.

Zed Seselja MLA
Deputy Chair
Planning and Environment Committee

APPENDIX B: Committee consultations

The ACT Legislative Assembly adopted the terms of reference for this inquiry on 15 March 2007. On 20 March 2007 the Committee agreed that the closing date for submissions would be 18 May 2007.

The terms of reference and an invitation for submissions were advertised in *The Canberra Times* on Saturday 24 March 2007, and in *The Chronicle* on Tuesday 3 April 2007. A wide range of stakeholders were invited by email and letter to participate in the inquiry. Articles in the local print media referred to the inquiry on several occasions.

On 20 March 2007 the Committee chair, Mick Gentleman MLA, wrote to state and territory ministers with transport responsibilities, inviting their participation in the inquiry. Few substantive responses were received; the most helpful being provided by the Queensland Government.[612]

As noted above, on 7 June 2007 the Legislative Assembly resolved to extend the Committee's reporting date to 30 August 2007.

The Committee received 68 submissions to the inquiry. Contributors who made submissions and attended public hearings are listed here:

Submissions received

No 1 Ms Lenore Hodgkinson
No 2 Mr Ross Morton
No 3 Mr Reg Dyett
No 4 Mrs Catherine Ross
No 5 Mr Ivan Cooper
No 6 Mr Geoff Warren-Smith
No 7 ACT Transit Group
No 8 Deane's Buslines
No 9 Mr Sam Wilson
No 10 Mr Greg Marks
No 11 Mr Charlie Tompson
No 12 Ms Anne Marks
No 13 Mr Charles Body
No 39 Ms Louise Rihova
No 40 Gungahlin Community Council Inc
No 41 Belconnen Community Council
No 42 Name withheld
No 43 Mr Kevin Cox
No 44 Mr Chris Marshall
No 45 Name withheld
No 46 Pedal Power ACT
No 47 Mr Christopher L. Watson
No 48 ACT Council of P&C Associations Inc

[612] Submission no 58

No 14 Ms Jean Lewis Love
No 15 Association of Independent Retirees (AIR) Ltd
No 16 Ms Susan Kohlsdorf
No 17 Mr John Hardwick
No 18 Mr Lester Southwell
No 19 Mr David Bastin
No 20 Ms Eirlys J Chessa
No 21 Mr Frank Kerin
No 22 St Brigid's and St Patrick's Branch Catholic Women's League
No 23 Mr Douglas Laing
No 24 Mr Dinh Nguyen
No 25 Ms Shirley Pipitone
No 26 Mr Henry Hatch
No 27 Advancement of Public Transport
No 28 Mr V F H Bayliss
No 29 People with Disabilities ACT Inc
No 30 Mr Gosta Lynga
No 31 Communities @ Work Inc
No 32 COTA (ACT)
No 33 Mr Jamie Geysen
No 34 Ms Karen van den Broek
No 35 Ms Rosemary Roth
No 36 Arawang Primary School
No 37 Ms Rosemary Blemings
No 38 Ms Kate Beckett
No 49 Mr Patrick Stein
No 50 Mr Eamon Lindsay
No 51 Mr Leon Arundell
No 52 Women with Disabilities ACT
No 53 Australian National University Students Association (ANUSA) and the ANUSA Environment Department (ANUED)
No 54 Mr Ian Ruecroft
No 55 Mr Alan Hatfield
No 56 Mr Geoff Quayle
No 57 Ms Donna Fitzgerald-Verrent
No 58 Queensland Transport
No 59 Ms Kristy Pope for Youth Advisory Council
No 60 Dr Paul Mees, University of Melbourne
No 61 Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra
No 61A Conservation Council supplementary comment
No 62 ACT Peak Oil
No 63 Ms Gabrielle Watt
No 64 Youth Coalition of the ACT
No 65 ACT Government
No 66 National Capital Authority
No 67 Human Rights Commission
No 68 Property Council of Australia (ACT)

Exhibits received

Exhibit 1 – 'Senior Transport Needs Survey', Notes provided by Mr Bruce McKenzie, Convenor, Ministerial Advisory Council for Ageing: Transport Sub-Committee,

15 May 2007

Exhibit 2 – Map of Canberra/Sydney service area provided by the Department of Territories and Municipal Services to assist comparative analysis of ACTION bus service

Witnesses

The following witnesses attended the Committee's public hearings for the ACTION bus inquiry and responded to Members' questions:

8 May 2007

- Mr Scott Connolly, Secretary, Transport Workers Union (TWU)
- Mr Ray Smith, Drivers Delegate, TWU
- Mr Michael Scott, Transport Officer Delegate, TWU

15 May 2007

- Mr Ian Cooper, ACT Transit Group
- Mr Victor Isaacs, ACT Transit Group
- Mr Bruce McKenzie, Convenor, Transport Sub-Committee, Ministerial Advisory Council for Ageing (MACA)
- Ms Maureen Cane, Member, MACA
- Ms Barbara Silverstone, Member, MACA

14 June 2007

- Ms Liz Ampt, Director, Behaviour Change, Sinclair Knight Merz

15 June 2007

- Mr Paul Flint, Executive Director, COTA (ACT)
- Mr Rod Templar, board member, COTA (ACT)
- Mr Bill Tully, President, Advancement of Public Transport
- Dr Chris Watson, Secretary, Advancement of Public Transport
- Minister for Territory and Municipal Services (TaMS), Mr John Hargreaves MLA
- Mr Mike Zissler, Chief Executive, TaMS
- Mr Tom Elliott, General Manager, ACTION
- Mr Phillip Tardif, Executive Director, TaMS

- Mr Brian MacDonald, Business Manager, ACTION
- Mr Vic Bayliss, retiree

7 August 2007

- Dr Helen Watchirs, Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights Commission
- Ms Linda Crebbin, Children and Young People Commissioner, Disability and Community Services Commissioner, Human Rights Commission
- Ms Jenny Earle, Discrimination and Human Rights Legal Policy Adviser, Human Rights Commission
- Ms Meredith Hunter, Director, Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Mr Sid Chakrabarti, Policy and Communications Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Mr Jamie Geysen, private citizen

APPENDIX C: ACTION's MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS[613]

These Standards exist to protect the public interests of the ACT community and represent levels of service equal to or below which no service through intention or omission shall reduce without the prior written agreement of the Purchaser.

These Standards are to be observed in all areas and on all routes within the contract area of operation.

Route Type Definitions

Primary routes carry passengers to/from the suburbs, through the interchanges wherever possible and operate seven days a week;
Feeder routes carry passengers to/from the suburbs to interchanges wherever through-routing cannot be achieved and operate seven days a week;
Trunk services carry passengers between Tuggeranong, Woden, Canberra Central and Belconnen interchanges and operate seven days a week.;
Supplementary and **special events** services meet special needs or are designed as patronage generators.

Frequency of Services

Primary and feeder services: a minimum service of 30 minutes during peak times and 60 minutes during off-peak times. Minimum off-peak services should not extend past an hourly frequency.
Trunk services: should operate at least every 15 minutes and will link with the last route bus.
Night services: should operate at intervals of no more than 90 minutes on all routes, with the aim of more frequent services on higher patronage/major routes particularly on Friday/Saturday nights.
Saturday, Sunday and Public holidays: should operate at intervals of no more than 90 minutes on all routes. Trunk services should operate at least every 30 minutes.
Special events: additional services for special events may be provided on a commercial basis or as agreed with the Purchaser.

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[613] As defined in contract between (former) ACTION Authority and the then Department of Urban Services, provided by the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services to the Committee in May 2007

Span of hours[614]

The span of hours is from the time of first bus at the departure point until last bus reaches the finish point of the route. The actual times will depend on scheduling and service headways (the time between each service on a route).

This does not mean that the first bus in the morning must leave departure points at 0600 or that every last bus must reach its finish point at 2300 on week nights. The Purchaser is prepared to negotiate variations for specific services on a case by case basis on provision of supporting documentation and data by the Provider.

peak	0700 – 0900, 1600 – 1830
off-peak	0600 – 0700, shopping 0900 – 1600
week night	1830 – 2300
Saturday	0600 – 2300
Sunday and Holidays	0800 – 1800

Route Criteria

Because of spatial and urban design characteristics, it may be that some areas should be excluded from these criteria. These areas will be agreed by negotiation with the Purchaser.

As a general guide, **primary and feeder** service routes should be designed so that:

- 95% of residences are within 500 metres (600 metres at nights, weekends and public holidays);
- 85% of major employment centres are within 500 metres;
- 85% of the major retail and major recreational areas are within 500 metres; and.
- for at least 85% of all passenger journeys, the point-to-point travel distance is no more than 30% longer than the comparable distance by private vehicle.

Route Numbering

This is to be kept as simple and logical as possible with minimal variation.

Service Headways

Service headways (the time between each service on a route) are based, wherever possible, on the concept of a clock face or memory timetable, i.*e.* departures at a fixed time in each hourly time block.

Where appropriate, supplementary services are operated to meet specific requirements that arise at particular times of the day. These operate at headways dictated by demand.

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[614] also known as spread of hours

Services operating along common roads, or within the immediate vicinity of each other are to be arranged, if possible, so that departures from and arrivals to interchanges and bus stops alternate, to effectively halve headways for those passengers within walking distance of the adjacent routes.

As far as possible, bus arrivals and departures are spread out to maximise services and to make effective use of resources.

Service Reliability

All services should be managed so that all buses run on time and passengers can be assured of connecting with other scheduled services in 99% of connections.

Connecting services shall be held for a maximum of five (5) minutes where they connect with, and have implications for, other scheduled services.

No service will miss two consecutive days in a row.

The objective is that all buses should leave timing points on time and not run early between timing points.

The service level goal is that no bus will run more than five (5) minutes late.

Timing points will be located not less than an average of every two (2) kilometres along routes in the suburbs.

APPENDIX D: Draft provisions of the Restructured Territory Plan

The following text, selected using the keyword 'public transport' has been reproduced from the Planning and Land Authority's *Draft Restructured Territory Plan for Consultation* (2007):

Social Sustainability

1.24 New suburban areas will be planned with a legible and permeable hierarchy of roads; conveniently located commercial and community facilities; a network of open spaces; an off road system for pedestrians and cyclists; and provision for accessible public transport.

2. Spatial Planning and Urban Design Principles Urban Areas

2.3 Commercial and retail activity will be concentrated in centres and other planned nodes of intensive activity that are well served by public transport to ensure an efficient pattern of development. Primary emphasis will be placed on strengthening and enhancing existing and new centres and nodes, including improved urban design and encouragement of more mixeduse development.

2.6 Higher density development will be encouraged within and near major centres, and in other suitable locations that are well served by public transport.

2.7 Development will be planned to encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling, including commuter cycling. Routes will be reserved for an enhanced inter-town public transport system. Requirements for vehicle parking will be related to commercial needs and transport policy objectives.

Residential Zones

General Objectives: 5. Create an urban form that promotes greater accessibility and sustainable transport options by containing new development and focusing redevelopment in strategic locations.

R1 Suburban Low Density Zone: Prohibited[615]: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

R2 Suburban Core Zone: Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

R3 Urban Zone: Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport

[615] A development application may be lodged for a development that is listed as prohibited if an existing lease permits the use, in which case a development application will be assessed in the impact track (see section 134 of the Planning and Development Act 200*).

facility

R4 Urban Medium Density Zone: Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

R5 Higher Density Zone: Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

Commercial Zones

C1 Core Zone: Zone Objectives…d) Encourage an attractive, safe pedestrian environment with ready access to *public transport*.

C2 Business Zone: Development Development Code TP: Ref Minimum Assessment Track: Public transport facility Commercial 3.2.3 Merit

C5 Mixed Use Zone: Zone Objectives

b) Provide higher density residential development in locations with convenient access to public transport, employment and retailing activities.

C5 Mixed Use Zone: Schedule 1: Additional Prohibited Uses: Kingston (area 'b'): Place of worship, Public transport facility, Religious associated use; Kingston (area 'b'): Place of worship, Public transport facility, Religious associated use.

Kingston (area 'd'), Emergency services facility, Hotel, Public transport facility.

Kingston (area 'e'), Boarding house, Child care centre, Emergency services facility, Hotel, Motel, Place of worship, Public transport facility, Religious associated use.

C2 Business Zone: Zone Objectives: a) Provide for office and business sites which are accessible to public transport and convenience retailing centres.

C6 Leisure And Accommodation Zone: Zone Objectives

c) Ensure provision of leisure and accommodation facilities with convenient access to public transport.

Schedule 1: Additional Prohibited Uses: Belconnen Section 65 and 187: …Public transport facility,

I1 Industrial General Zone

Assessable: Development application required and assessed against a code, merit or impact track: Public Transport facility Industrial 3.2.4 Merit

West Fyshwick: Schedule 1 Additional prohibited uses: public transport facility

Broad acre Zone

Prohibited[616]: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

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[616] A development application may be lodged for a development that is listed as prohibited if an existing lease permits the use, in which case a development application will be assessed in the impact track (see section 134 of the Planning and Development Act 200*).

Rural Zone

Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

Hills, Ridges and Buffer Areas Zone

Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

River Corridor Zone

Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

Mountains and Bushland Zone

Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

Community Facility Zone

Zone Objectives: a) Ensure that adequate sites are available to meet community needs for community services and facilities in appropriate and convenient locations, close to public transport routes and other community facilities.

Community Facility Zone Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

PR2 Restricted Access Recreation Zone Prohibited: A development application can not be made: Public transport facility

TS1 Transport Zone

Zone Objectives

a) Make provision for a transport network that can provide for the efficient, safe and convenient movement of people and goods;

b) Ensure that major roads and transport infrastructure are developed in a comprehensive manner, including the provision of appropriate landscaping, street furniture and lighting, traffic control devices, and noise attenuation measures; and

c) Make provision for public transport.

TS1 Transport Zone: Zone Objectives Assessable: Development application required and assessed against a code, merit or impact track: Public transport facility Transport and Services 3.2.8 Merit

TS2 Services Zone: Zone Objectives Assessable: Development application required and assessed against a code, merit or impact track: Public transport facility Transport and Services 3.2.8 Merit

Franklin Model Precinct Code

General Objectives: The underlying planning principles to achieve the design outcomes are as follows: Community facility sites must be located, where possible, close to public transport and in places where, for reasons of safety, people already have a cause to congregate such as the local centre or activity node.

Part 3: General Controls: R1.1.4: To the extent that planning intentions are known, the

proposal identifies and maps land use relationships within the suburb of Franklin, and in surrounding areas within 2 km of the holding lease boundary of the proposed estate. In addition to C.1.1 above, the following existing and proposed land uses are shown: public transport routes and bus stops

C1.4.3: Higher density development is concentrated around: public transport;

3.2. Public Transport R3.2.1 Bus routes are provided as shown in Figure 1. C3.2.1: Bus routes achieve the following objectives: a) provide access to the local centre in the Flemington Road Corridor, Mitchell and the Inter-town Public Transport (IPT) route to City Centre; and b) provide for transit nodes on the Flemington Road Corridor IPT route in accordance with the Flemington Road Corridor Concept Plan and Territory Plan.

Stromlo Settlement

Element 4: Parking and Access Intent: To facilitate pedestrian movement as well as the use of bicycles and public transport.

Part A: Residential Estate Planning and Design Process: The three levels of planning that lead to the creation of new neighbourhoods are summarised below.

Structure Plan: The structure plan is prepared by the ACT Planning and Land Authority in consultation with government agencies and external stakeholders. The structure plan is approved by the ACT Government and represents the policies prevailing at the time with regard to protection of natural systems, provision for public and private transport, urban form and spatial planning objectives, retail and employment hierarchies, and other environmental and social policy objectives.

… to provide adequate infrastructure for all modes of transport, and incorporate accessible, efficient and safe public transport that is an attractive alternative to the private car

Part B1: Estate Development Plans supported by a Precinct Code

Element 1: Neighbourhood Design: Intent:

• To provide safe, convenient, accessible and attractive neighbourhoods that meet the diverse and changing needs of the community. This encompasses offering a wide choice in good quality housing and associated community and commercial facilities, providing for local employment opportunities, encouraging walking cycling and use of public transport, minimising energy and water consumption, and promoting a sense of place through neighbourhood focal points and the creation of a distinctive identity which recognises and, where relevant, preserves the natural environment.

Rules: 2.2. Corridors and Precincts R2.2.1: Streets within any neighbourhood do not operate as through traffic routes for externally generated traffic (other than for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport).

R2.5.5: The impact of measures intended to restrain traffic speeds and traffic volumes take account of the needs of other road users and adjoining dwellings, by avoiding: a) unacceptable traffic noise to adjoining dwellings and b) devices that reduce convenience or safety levels for cyclists and public transport.

2.10. On-street Parking: R2.10.1: C2.10.1 Car parking is provided according to projected

needs, which are determined by:…availability of public transport

Element 4: Public Transport

Intent:

- To increase opportunities for choice in mode of transport, and provide cost-effective and energy-efficient public transport services that are accessible and convenient to the community

Rules	Criteria
4.1. Bus Stop Location and Design	
R4.1.1 a) At least 90% of dwellings are within 400 m safe walking distance from an	C4.1.1 A network of public transport routes is provided that takes account of:

24 of 61

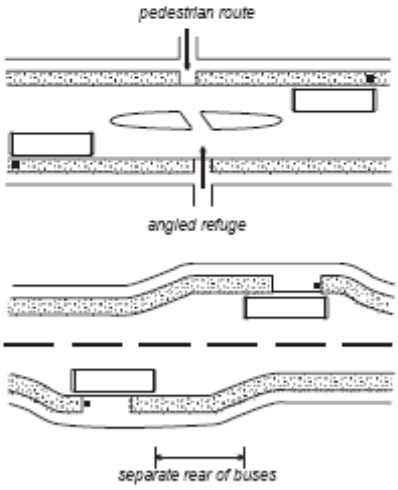
Rules	Criteria
existing or potential bus route, or 200 m safe walking distance from an existing or proposed demand-responsive or community bus service route. In addition, at least 90% of dwellings are within 500 m from the nearest existing and proposed bus stop. OR b) at least 90% of dwellings are within 750 m of a high frequency trunk service bus stop that has, or is projected to provide, a minimum of eight outbound buses an hour during the morning peak.	• projected travel demand • distribution of likely demand • scale and time of demand • characteristics of travellers • travel time • operating characteristics • cost of providing the service.
R4.1.2 The siting of bus stops is related to the pedestrian path network.	C4.1.2 Public transport stops provide for pedestrian safety, security, comfort and convenience.
R4.1.3 Bus stops are located within 400 m of sporting, community, retail and educational facilities.	C4.1.3 Public transport stops provide for pedestrian safety, security, comfort and convenience.
R4.1.4 Bus stops are in accordance with *Disability Access Standards for Public Transport*.	C4.1.4 Public transport stops provide for pedestrian safety, security, comfort and convenience.
R4.1.5 Bus stops are designed in accordance with Figure 2.	C4.1.5 a) Bus stops are designed to prevent vehicles from overtaking a stationary bus, or vehicle speeds are reduced to ensure safe pedestrian crossing. b) Bus stops are located and designed to be overlooked from nearby buildings and are located to minimise adverse impact on the amenity of nearby dwellings.

Rules	Criteria
R4.1.6 The geometry of streets identified as bus routes are suitable for turning, stopping sight distance, grade and parking requirements of buses (as determined from appropriate design documents) has a carriageway width of 7.5m or within ranges specified in Tables 4 and 5.	C4.1.6 Bus routes have a carriageway width to allow for the movement of buses, unimpeded by parked cars, safely accommodate cyclists, and avoid cars overtaking parked buses.
R4.1.7 Bus routes linking residential areas across roads that carry in excess of 6000 vpd are designed to enable a left turn into the road from one area followed by a right turn from the road into the adjoining residential area.	C4.1.7 a) Convenient connections to adjoining areas and other public transport routes (including future routes), provide for ease of movement of buses between neighbourhoods, and link activity centres within and external to the neighbourhood. b) Buses are able to safely gain access to the neighbourhood and cross arterial roads without complicated turning manoeuvres when travelling between neighbourhoods.

Table 5: Performance check for bus routes

Street Carriageway Widths	
One-way:	6.75 m
Two-way:	7.50 m
Minimum Geometric Layout	
R 12.5 m for single bus unit	
Note: some routes may require geometry to suit articulated buses.	
Roundabouts	
Maximum desirable pavement crossfall:	3%
Maximum desirable gradient:	6%
Absolute maximum gradient:	12%

Figure 2: Traffic Control at Bus Stops



Element 6: Block Layout and Building Envelope Plans Intent: R6.1.3: Smaller blocks and blocks capable of supporting higher density are located in sections adjacent to commercial centres, public transport, or high amenity areas such as parks.

C6.1.3: The distribution of block sizes and types enhances accessibility to amenities and reduces the need for use of vehicles.

6.3.1: Multi-unit sites are located within 200 m of activity centres, public transport, or are

adjacent to high amenity areas such as parks and foreshores.

Part B2: Estate development plans not supported by a precinct code

Element 1: Neighbourhood Design: Intent: This encompasses offering a wide choice in good quality housing and associated community and commercial facilities, providing for local employment opportunities, encouraging walking, cycling and use of public transport, minimising energy and water consumption, and promoting a sense of place through neighbourhood focal points and the creation of a distinctive identity that recognises and, where relevant, preserves the natural environment.

C1.1.2: The layout optimises the walkable access to centres, schools and public transport nodes through compact and legible transport networks.

C1.1.5: The block layout provides for higher densities in areas close to services, public transport and public open space, or with high levels of amenity.

C1.2.3: The vehicle, cyclist, pedestrian networks, land use mix and block density minimise fossil fuel use by reducing local vehicle trips, travel distances and speeds, maximising public transport effectiveness, and encouraging walking and cycling to daily activities.

C1.2.5: Public transport, pedestrian and cycleways, and street networks complement each other and are accessible to people with disabilities, older people, and people with prams.

Element 3: Pedestrian and Cyclist Facilities: Intent: To encourage walking and cycling by providing safe, accessible, convenient and legible movement networks to destinations within and beyond the neighbourhood:

C3.1.2: A network of pedestrian ways and cycle routes is provided in accordance with: • the need to encourage walking and cycling • likely users (e.g. school children, parents with prams, the aged, people with disabilities, commuter and recreational cyclists) • opportunities to link open space networks and community facilities, including public transport stations, bus stops, local activity centres, schools • topography • cyclist and pedestrian safety.

Element 4: Public Transport

Intent:

- To increase opportunities for choice in mode of transport and provide cost-effective and energy-efficient public transport services that are accessible and convenient to the community

Rules	Criteria
4.1. Planning	
R4.1.1 Neighbourhood residential densities are not less than 12 dwellings per hectare or net residential densities are not less than 16 dwellings per hectare.	C4.1.1 Net residential densities within walking distance of public transport stations and stops are set at levels that take advantage of the infrastructure investment and support the economic operation

Rules	Criteria
	of services.
R4.1.2 Routes for regular bus services are designed in accordance with Table 5.	C4.1.2 The street network offers opportunities for cost-effective operation of demand-responsive services should the need arise, providing for both peak and off-peak regular services and the potential future provision of demand–responsive services.
There is no applicable rule.	C4.1.3 The alignment and geometry of the streets that form the bus route allow for the efficient and unimpeded movement of buses without facilitating high traffic speeds.

City Centre Core 1 Zone

Rules Criteria: Ainslie Avenue: R4.1.1: Ainslie Avenue between Ballumbir Street and Bunda Street remains permanently opened to the public for pedestrian access at ground floor level. The Territory retains the right, through relevant provisions in any lease for the land, to utilise this section of Ainslie Avenue as a public transport corridor.

C2 Business Zone: Office Sites outside Centre

Objectives: The objectives for office sites outside centres are to: concentrate employment in activity nodes that are well serviced by public transport …

Element 2: Building and Site Controls: C2.3.1 The maximum height of buildings in Bruce is generally two to three storeys. Buildings up to five storeys may be considered where they mark appropriate focal points and key activities in landmark locations such as in the vicinity of Haydon Drive, Battye Street, Watkins Street and Braybrooke Street, or the inter-town Public Transport Route

C6 Leisure and Accommodation Zone

The objectives for the C6 Zone are to: … ensure leisure and accommodation facilities have convenient access to public transport

C4.4.1: Safe and convenient movement of public transport passengers, pedestrians and cyclists is provided.

Element 1: Building and Site Controls: Intent: To ensure development is compatible with, and does not adversely impact on, the urban

Environment. C1.1.1 The development application is accompanied by a Statement of Environmental Effects (Land Regulations 200#) that addresses, but is not limited to, the following: e) whether public transport services are necessary and, if so, whether they are available and adequate.

Element 3: Parking and Site Access: 3.4. Pedestrian Movement

C3.4.1: Safe and convenient movement of public transport passengers, pedestrians and cyclists is provided.

Element 1: Use and Form: C1.1.1 A proposal for works on land identified on the map as

forming part of the Inter-town Public Transport Route does not jeopardise the future provision of a separate right-of-way within the road reserve to accommodate this service.

C1.2.1: The development application is accompanied by a Statement of Environmental Effects (Land Regs 200#) that addresses, but is not limited to, the following: d) whether public transport services are necessary and, if so, whether they are available and adequate

Element 3: Parking and Site Access: Intent: C3.4.1 Safe and convenient movement of public transport passengers, pedestrians and cyclists is provided.

4.7 Inter-town Public Transport Route: The Map indicates by symbols the approximate alignments of inter-town public transport (IPT) route.

Definitions: Public transport facility means the use of land for the assembly, transport or dispersal of passengers travelling by any form of public transport, whether or not such public transport is provided by a public or private agency, and excludes any facilities required for the parking, and manoeuvring of any public transport vehicle. Bus interchange; Bus terminal (interstate); Driver rest facility; Inter-town public transport route; Transport ticket service

APPENDIX E: ACT Government policy for school student transport

This policy for School Student Transport was developed by Department of Urban Services in 2002 as part of the contract with the ACTION Authority:

SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT

General

It is the intention that ACTION Authority be the primary provider of school transport services in the ACT. Services must be offered where practical to all ACT government and non-government schools.

From beginning of Term 1, 2002, the ACT Government will introduce a Student Transport Program. This replaces the previous School Student Transport Scheme abolished in December 2001.

All students not eligible for free travel under the Program remain eligible for the existing range of discounted school term and Faresaver tickets issued by the Provider.

Service Conditions and Requirements

In designing dedicated school bus routes to provide services the following principles should be observed:

The current version of the Code of Conduct for Students on Public Transport may be applied. A copy of this document is attached.

Unless exceptional circumstances can be shown to apply, no school-aged student who would normally utilise a school or regular route service shall be left without safe and timely transport to and from school. It is acknowledged that a penalty applied under the Code of Conduct is sufficient grounds for this condition to be waived.

Dedicated school bus services are separately identified because of their special requirement to transport large numbers of students safely within a relatively narrow time frame.

School transport services are to ensure, as far as possible, that all students have access to a bus service(s) which enables them to travel safely to and from school in a reasonable time and at times which are in line with the school's advertised commencement and finish times.

As a general principle, dedicated school services should not be specifically provided for students living within 1.6 kms of a primary school and 2.0 kms of a secondary school.

Measures to ensure the most efficient use of school services may include:

- using normal route services;
- interchanging from one school service to another, from one school service to or from a route service, or from one route service to a school service; and
- using one school route bus to service two or more schools.

School children will have priority on dedicated school bus services.

The factors to be considered by the Provider to assess whether to provide a new or additional dedicated school service may include:

- the distance the student walks from home to school;
- the availability of existing route services;
- physical bus access to the school;
- the availability of existing dedicated services and the feasibility and cost effectiveness of diverting/extending the service to accommodate the new request;
- the marginal cost of the additional service;
- the distance and time taken to complete the journey (these factors add to the cost);
- whether the service can be provided outside the "peak" when some spare capacity may exist;
- the availability of a bus (the need and cost to add to the fleet);
- the ability to rationalise existing services to free up a bus (or provide a larger bus); and
- potential patronage (particularly relevant to developing areas and those affected by school amalgamations/closures). As a general rule, dedicated services will not be provided where regular patronage falls below 27 persons on a sustained basis.

Route Design and Safety

Wherever practicable, school bus services will operate on streets utilised by standard route services and use the public bus stops.

Where feasible, school services will load and set down within the school grounds subject to the school ensuring that the bus has free and safe access to the school grounds with safety of students being the most important criterion.

The maximum school bus load will not exceed the licensed or agreed capacity of the bus.

Where loads exceed this limit an additional bus or other arrangements will be put in place to carry the additional school passengers. These arrangements will be negotiated with the schools concerned and agreed by the Purchaser.

Operating Times

School bus services will arrive at schools no earlier than thirty (30) minutes before, and no later than five (5) minutes before, the notified start of classes.

School bus services will depart schools no earlier than five (5) minutes after, and no later than thirty (30) minutes after, the notified time classes end.

Arrival and departure times of school services outside these hours will only be allowed after consultation with the school(s) concerned and the specific agreement of the Purchaser.

Service changes will be negotiated with affected schools and the Purchaser will be informed immediately such changes are agreed. Schools and students will be given two weeks notice of any changes unless otherwise agreed with the school.

The School Transport Liaison Committee, a community based forum convened by the Purchaser, must be advised of all school services changes implemented at its next regular meeting. The Provider shall nominate a representative to attend meetings of this Committee.

Reliability of School Services

All school services will operate and no school services will be cancelled.

APPENDIX F: ACTION TICKET TYPES and FARES

Ticket types:

Concession: The concession tickets are available to persons with an ACTION Concession Card, such as (Centrelink) Pensioner Concession Card, Dept' of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or ACT Seniors Card (during off-peaks only)

School Student: The Student tickets are available to persons under the age of 15 or students who carry a valid and accepted Student Concession Card

Adult: The Adult tickets provide bus travel for all other people

Prices effective 3 July 2006:

Adult	
Faresaver 10^	$22.00
Weekly	$24.60
Monthly	$82.00
Daily	$6.60
Shopper's Off Peak Daily*	$4.10
Concession	
Faresaver 10^	$11.00
Weekly	$12.30
Monthly	$41.00
School Student*	
Faresaver 10^#	$8.20
School term	$56.00

^ 90 minute transfer option available at no extra charge

* Off Peak: Weekdays 9am - 4.30pm and after 6pm, and all day weekends and public holidays

~ Students are not eligible to use the Pensioner Off Peak Daily tickets

This ticket provides ten individual bus trips that can be used on school days (Monday to Friday) excluding public and school holidays

Faresaver tickets include the transfer option - Transfer tickets allow you to transfer to other bus services within 90 minutes of first validating your ticket at no extra charge.[617]

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[617] ACTION buses 2007, 'Ticket information', <http://www.action.act.gov.au/onlinetickets.cfm>

APPENDIX G: Extracts from *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*

The Sustainable Transport Plan prescribes a range of goals and actions to promote more sustainable transport in the ACT.

The following provides extracts of some of the actions most relevant to ACTION bus services:[618]

GOAL	ACTIONS	Progress assessed by the Planning and Environment Committee
Travel Modes		
Goal 2: Shift the balance of travel from private vehicles towards greater use of walking, cycling and public transport	2.15 Upgrade and implement selective bus right of way measures on all trunk public transport routes to improve trunk services	Ongoing
	2.16 Progressively construct the trunk public transport routes for transit services and enact measures to encourage more intensive land use activities to develop around stations and at interchanges.	Ongoing
	2.17 Ultimately, develop a separate right-of-way system on all trunk routes. This right of way should be able to be used by bus, light rail or other future technologies.	Limited
	2.18 Provide public transport services using separate right-of-way and priority systems into newly planned and developing areas, including areas identified for development in *The Canberra Spatial Plan*.	Limited
	2.19 Improve the existing public transport services through:	Very limited/poor progress – see now Climate Change Action Plan
	~ service improvements – including more express services, higher frequency services on trunk corridors, more direct routes and opportunities to combine several modes	
	~ reduced travel times, through bus and taxi priority measures	Ongoing
	~ improved facilities – including better interchanges, shelters, 'park and ride' and intermodal opportunities	Ongoing
	~ improved customer information – 'real time' and	

[618] ACT Government 2004, *The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*, Canberra, pp38,

	other systems, smart card ticketing technology and improving the legibility of services.	Ongoing
	2.20 Investigate demand-responsive feeder services, initially for after-hour services and possibly for other feeder services.	Trial undertaken. Initiative withdrawn
	2.21 Develop new and upgraded arterial roads in line with growth but after giving attention to public transport services and opportunities for cycling and walking.	Ongoing
	2.22 Develop policies to encourage car-pooling and car sharing, for instance, car parking incentives.	Limited
	2.23 Implement TravelSmart and Workplace Access Plans for workplaces, households and schools.	Limited
Cost of transport		
Goal 3 Reduce the per capita total cost of the transport system including external costs	…	
	3.2 Complete the conversion of the ACTION bus fleet to CNG fuel and continue to upgrade the ACTION fleet to achieve lower greenhouse gas emissions and better fuel-efficiency.	Good progress
	…	
Contribution to economic goals		
Goal 4 Ensure the transport system contributes positively to the ACT economy	…	
	4.1 Investigate opportunities for strategic investments in transport that support the ACT's spatial and economic strategies.	Limited
	4.2 Revise parking guidelines to … support sustainable transport goals.	Ongoing
	…	
Contribution to social justice		
Goal 5 Ensure the transport system helps make Canberra a more socially just city	5.1 Introduce more demand-responsive transport services particularly for feeder services and outside of peak times.	Trial not continued
	5.2 Review and develop standards to ensure a reasonable coverage and level of public transport services across metropolitan Canberra.	Ongoing
	5.3 Investigate the future transport needs of the population as it ages and develop strategies to address these needs.	Ongoing
	5.4 Continue to implement the ACT Accessible Public Transport Action Plan to ensure the public transport system is progressively made fully accessible.	Ongoing
	5.5 Recognise the importance of concessions for use of public transport and the cost of car transport for people on low incomes and people with disabilities.	Ongoing

Meeting future needs		
Goal 6 Provide for future needs by maintaining future options and flexibility in the transport and land use systems	6.1 Retain and protect the trunk corridors and provide options for trunk services through the town centres and major activity centres. 6.2 Ensure planning for trunk corridors is capable of accommodating light rail and other technologies in future. 6.3 Integrate local public transport systems with external and regional transport systems. 6.4 Improve the quality of data for transport planning and management. 6.5 Review the role, opportunities and constraints for emerging personal transport technologies such as electric bicycles, motorised wheelchairs and other motorised mobility devices.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Integrate transport and land use and support *The Canberra Spatial Plan* goals		
Goal 7 Support a more sustainable urban structure and form, which will increase accessibility, facilitate an improved quality of life and respond more effectively to environmental factors.	7.1 Introduce a Transport Impact Assessment process to ensure sustainable transport goals and strategies are incorporated into land use planning at structure plan and local planning levels. 7.2 Implement the Australian Transport Council's National Charter of Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning into ACT Government transport and land use planning. 7.3 Ensure that sustainable transport goals and strategies are included in master plans and subdivision plans. 7.4 Revise planning guidelines for access to public transport to include frequency and travel time criteria in addition to walk distances to bus stops.	Ongoing Ongoing Good progress and ongoing Partial – see draft planning codes
Government transport resources and policies		
Goal 8 Community attitudes and behaviour are important to achieving sustainable transport goals. The Government can take a leadership role in key areas.	… 8.2 Review employee arrangements in relation to vehicle purchase, parking availability, public transport use and cycling and other measures to ensure these policies encourage sustainable transport.	Limited
Pricing of transport		
Goal 9	9.1 Manage and price parking to encourage greater use of public transport, cycling and walking,	Ongoing

Price transport use to make it efficient, equitable and transparent.	particularly for commuter and peak period trips and to encourage more efficient use of motor vehicles. Ensure the pricing of parking reflects the costs of parking supply and management. At the same time, pricing policies should ensure centres are not unreasonably constrained and remain competitive. 9.2 Investigate road pricing/cordon pricing systems that reflect usage of the system. 9.3 Lobby the Commonwealth Government to bring taxation and tax concessions for public transport and sustainable transport in line with car taxation concessions.	Not implemented Ongoing
Community attitudes		
Goal 10 Change community attitudes and behaviours to support sustainable transport throughout the city.	10.1 Review school transport system to investigate opportunities to spread traffic peak periods, increase the use of sustainable transport and improve access and safety of transport at schools. 10.2 Encourage the Commonwealth Government to reverse the concessional taxation treatment for private cars in favour of public transport and environmentally friendly modes. 10.3 Investigate varying transport charges on the basis of contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and health costs to account for the apparent undervaluation of these externalities and use these funds for sustainable transport projects. Outcomes ■ Community is aware of the benefits of sustainable transport. ■ Community support for sustainable transport. Performance Indicators ■ Use of sustainable transport modes within the community.	Limited Ongoing Not implemented STP targets have been exceeded for commuter travel. Journey to work data for 2006 not yet available.

GLOSSARY and ABBREVIATIONS

accessibility	describes how easily people can access places or services; the term is also used to describe improvements to transport for people with physical and other disabilities
active transport	means travel requiring physical exertion, including walking and cycling
APTG	Australian Passenger Transport Group is a sub-committee of the established by the Standing Committee on Transport within the Australian Transport Council
bus lanes	are on-road traffic lanes either exclusively for buses and or shared with taxis and high occupancy vehicles
busways	are roads, rights-of-way, or short stretches of roads which are for the exclusive use of buses
CCTV	closed circuit television
CSO	community service obligation
EBA	enterprise bargaining agreement
ESD	ecologically sustainable development
externalities and external costs	are the costs and benefits of activities that are not borne by the person or entity doing the activity, such as emissions generated by private vehicle use. The internal costs of private vehicle use, which are usually directly borne by the vehicle user, include fuel and wear and tear of the vehicle.
feeder routes	carry passengers to and from the suburbs to interchanges and do continue through the interchange
frequency of services	how often bus services run on a route
FTE	full-time equivalent
CNG	compressed natural gas
GPS	global positioning system
IPT	inter-town public transport route
legibility	means how easily a transport system works, including how to move around and how to access and use the system
memory timetable	bus services depart from a stop at the same time each hour
minimum service levels	are performance standards specified in the contract between the (former) ACTION Authority and the then Department of Urban Services.
NCDC	National Capital Development Commission
nodes	are centres of human activity such as commercial and retail centres, retail centres, education facilities etc. In the transport context they include trip origins and/or destinations
off-peak services	off-peak times in the ACTION timetable as at April 2007 were: 0600 –

	0700, shopping 0900 – 1600, week nights 1830 – 2300, Saturday 0600 – 2300, Sunday and holidays 0800 – 1800
opportunity costs	are the costs that result from not taking up an alternate use of a good, service or asset. For e.g. residential or commercial development might be among the alternative purposes for a car park site.
peak hour services	0700 – 0900, 1600 – 1830
pedestrian access plans	are plans usually developed for an office, industrial facility, business, school, university of some other activity that show how users of the facility might maximise opportunities to walk to the facility rather than use their cars to access the site. Such plans might also include opportunities to access a site using cycling and public transport.
primary routes	carry passengers to and from the suburbs, through the interchanges wherever possible
Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study	was prepared by the ACT Government to identify and analyse the options for future public transport in Canberra. It provided analysis of options such as light rail and buses and was one of the main pieces of technical analysis for the Sustainable Transport Plan
real time information systems	display arrival times for public transport vehicles
SCOT	Standing Committee on Transport, which supports the Australian Transport Council. SCOT members are ministerial nominees and are usually heads of departments or agencies
service headways	the time between each service on a route
span of hours	the time during which buses run on a route, from first bus departure until the last bus reaches the end of the route
supplementary and special events services	meet special needs or are designed as patronage generators
sustainable transport modes	walking, cycling and public transport
timing points	these are located not less than an average of every two (2) kilometres along routes in the suburbs
trunk services	carry passengers between Tuggeranong, Woden, Canberra Central and Belconnen interchanges