



Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

**CARPARKING AT
EXHIBITION PARK IN CANBERRA [EPIC]**

Report No.30 of the Standing Committee on Urban Services

AUGUST 1999

Resolution of appointment of the Standing Committee on Urban Services

On 28 April 1998 the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory resolved to establish a general purpose standing committee, called the Standing Committee on Urban Services, to inquire into and report on:

planning and lease management, road and transport services, housing and housing assistance, government purchasing and public utilities purchasing, electricity industry and regulation, construction industry policy, parks and forests, private sector employment inspectorate, building services, environment, heritage and municipal services and any other matter under the responsibility of the portfolio minister.

Committee Membership

Mr Harold Hird MLA (Chair)

Mr Dave Rugendyke MLA (Deputy)

Mr Simon Corbell MLA (appointed on 25 June 1998, replacing Mr Wayne Berry MLA who was discharged on the same day)

Secretary: Mr Rod Power

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- that the government immediately investigate the provision of upgraded carparking spaces along Flemington Road, especially on Block 11 of Section 71—but also on Block 5 of Section 71, Block 1 of Section 60 and Block 1 of Section 76.
- that the western verges of Flemington Road be improved to facilitate pedestrian movement at large events at EPIC—and that, for such events, temporary traffic lights be installed (similar to those used on Commonwealth Avenue for Floriade).
- that the government facilitate the acquisition by EPIC of land at Block 11 of Section 71 (Lyneham), if necessary by a one-off injection of supplementary funding.
- that PALM ensure it processes the Development Application for the BRL Hardy Winery in a manner that minimises the serious traffic and safety issues likely to be generated by (a) the loss of a large number of carparking spaces traditionally used by EPIC patrons and (b) the problems associated with additional traffic on Flemington Road arising out of the Winery development.
- that the government initiate discussions between EPIC and BRL Winery to encourage the on-going use of the Winery site for carparking during major events at EPIC in the short-term at least. In the longer-term, the government should also do whatever it can to encourage cooperative arrangements between EPIC and the Winery, particularly in relation to the staging of major events.
- that PALM facilitate the involvement of all interested parties (including the ACT Racing Club) in optimising use of land at the race track and in the Racecourse Road and Flemington Road area (including for the purpose of carparking at major events).
- that improvements be made to the northern carparks of EPIC to enhance their safety and ease of pedestrian movement; that, during major events only, carparking into the area continue to be permitted off the Federal Highway with vehicles to exist only by way of the extension of Sandford Street; and that minimal improvements be made to the intersection of Sandford Street and Flemington Road to enable its more intensive use during major events at EPIC.
- that the government facilitate an overall integrated transport strategy for the entire area covered by EPIC, the BRL Hardy Winery and the

ACT Racing Club. Further, that consideration be given to vehicular entry to EPIC's northern carparks from Sandford Street.

- that the government facilitate ACTION's efforts to publicise and facilitate the greater use of bus transport by patrons to major events at EPIC, especially by way of the following: —pre-purchase of tickets at interchanges, —priority bus access along Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue, and —provision of carparks near interchanges and at convenient points along the bus routes.
- that the integrated transport strategy include consideration of the appropriate charge to park private vehicles on, or near, the EPIC site.

The inquiry by the Standing Committee on Urban Services into car parking at EPIC is an example of the committee performing a local government—or municipal—type of role. Members of the committee consider this is important given the responsibility of the ACT Legislative Assembly for both state and local government functions.

The report's structure is straightforward. The first part of the report sets out the background to the inquiry. The second part explains the committee's use of five Figures in the report—these Figures have greatly facilitated the committee's understanding of the issues. The third part of the report summarises the viewpoints of key stakeholders (as the committee understands them). The final part of the report contains the committee's conclusions and recommendations.

The Urban Services committee is pleased to have been able to examine, and suggest solutions to, problems of car parking at Exhibition Park in Canberra [EPIC]. With the presentation of this report to the Assembly, the next stage involves consideration by the ACT government.

PART I—BACKGROUND

1. On 3 August 1999 the Standing Committee on Urban Services resolved to initiate an inquiry into carparking at EPIC. This followed receipt of correspondence from the Royal National Capital Agricultural Society [the Show Society] expressing concern about 'the potential car parking problems at EPIC caused by the establishment of the BRL Hardy Winery and Tourism complex'. The letter stated:

The [Show Society] supports the concept of the Hardy development but are certainly concerned about some of the ramifications of the development that will affect the Society and its operations... [especially] the loss of up to 2000 car spaces...

[While] there appears to be sufficient land in the northern part of EPIC off Wells Station Road to cater for the lost space... [this requires] immediate infrastructure works [to] be initiated to

improved lighting, access roads, pedestrian facilities, security and general evenness of parking surfaces.

[With] Summernats only five months away and the Royal Canberra Show a month later, it is imperative that decisions are made now to ensure that the necessary works are completed in time for these events.¹

2. Members of the committee considered this correspondence at a meeting on 20 July 1999. It was agreed that, in order to gain an understanding of the extent of the problem, it would be useful to bring together representatives of the Show Society, EPIC, Summernats and the Department of Urban Services (planning and traffic areas).

3. On 30 July 1999 the committee met representatives of the following organisations at EPIC:

- *EPIC*—Mr Acworth (chairman of the National Exhibition Centre Trust), Ms Windsor (a/g general manager) and Mr Bol
- *Royal National Capital Agricultural Show Society*—Mr Beer (president) and Mr Dobie (chief executive officer)
- *Summernats*—Mr O'Hara
- *Department of Urban Services (Planning and Land Management)*—Mr Wallace
- *Chief Minister's Department (Office of Asset Management)*—Mr Stone.

4. The committee thanks both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Urban Services for making officials available from their departments.

5. The meeting at EPIC was fruitful. However, in order to obtain further information, the committee again met on 6 August 1999—this time at the

Legislative Assembly—to discuss matters with representatives of the following bodies:

- *ACTION*—Mr Thurston (executive director)
- *Department of Urban Services (Transport Policy)*—Mr Gill
- *Department of Urban Services (Planning and Land Management)*—Mr Hawkins (executive director), Mr Liston and Mr Wallace.

6. In order to better understand the issues, the committee requested further information from some of these organisations. All of this material was authorised for publication—and much of it is referred to in this report. The committee greatly appreciates the speed with which this information was made available by all stakeholders.

7. In view of the desirability of commencing infrastructure works as soon as possible, the committee decided it should speedily put together this report for presentation to the parliament during the August 1999 sittings.

PART II—FIGURES USED IN THIS REPORT

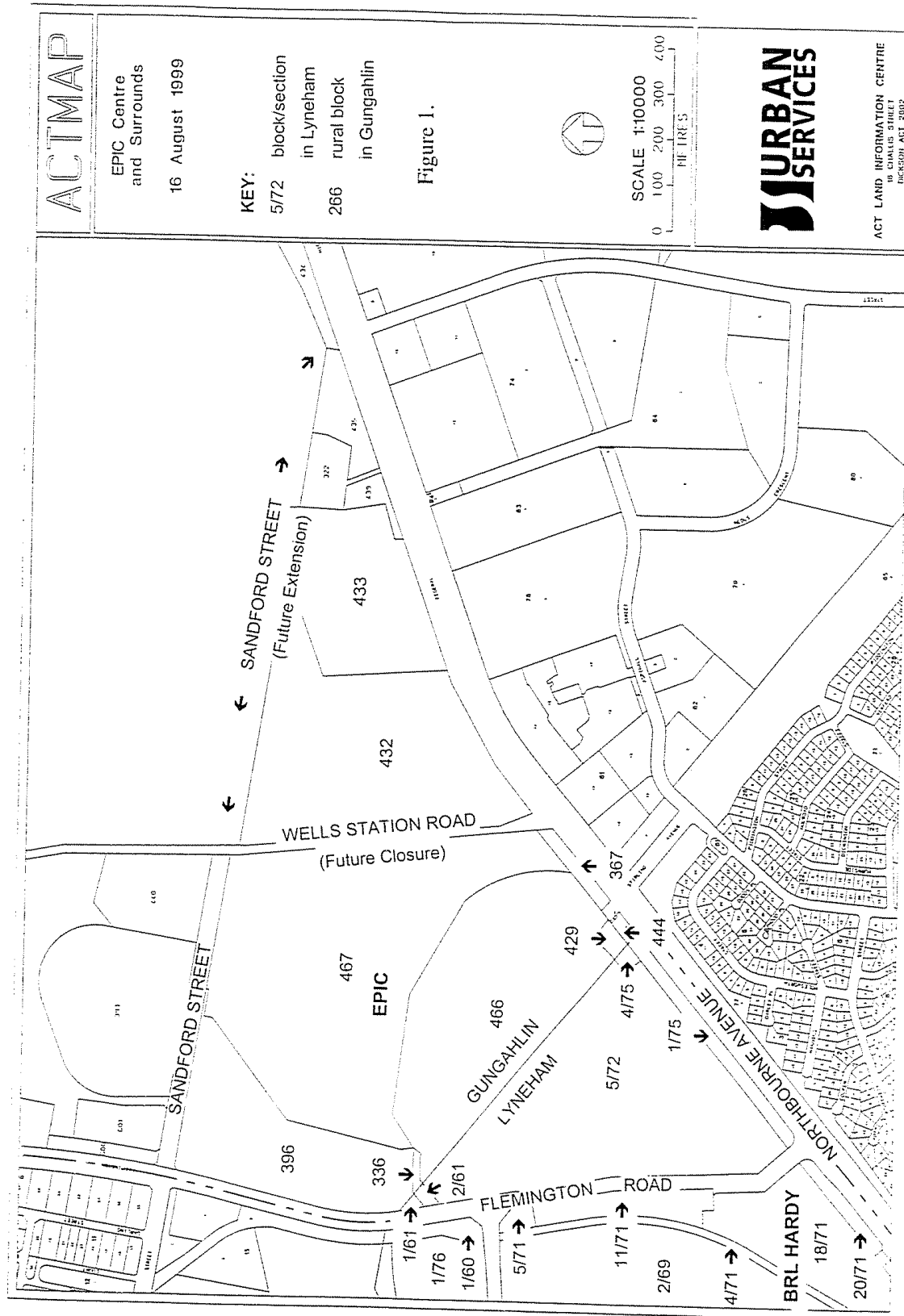
8. The report includes five Figures which have facilitated the committee's understanding of the issues. The Figures are referred to throughout the report.

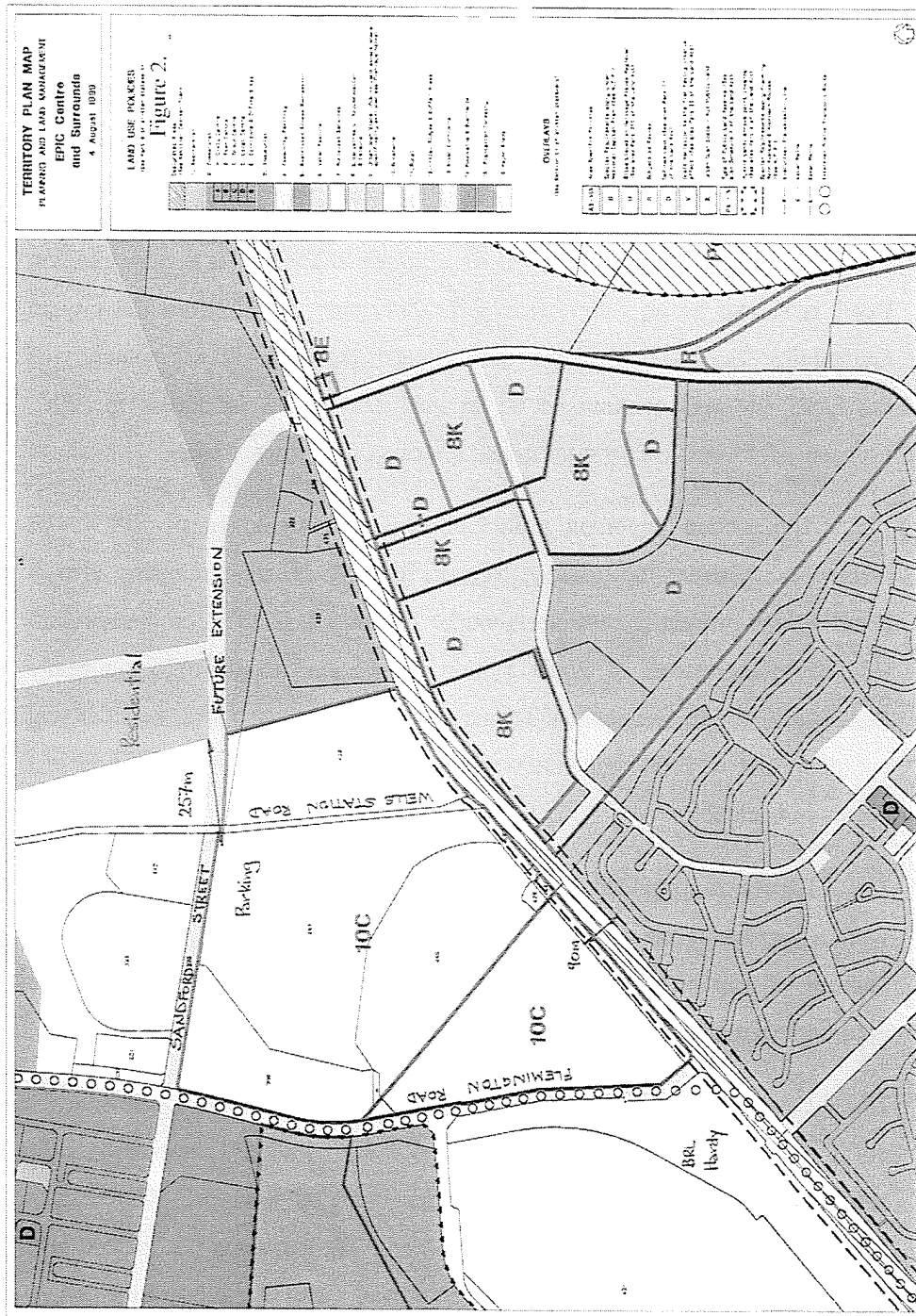
9. **Figure 1** is entitled *EPIC Centre and Surrounds*. It shows the block and section numbers of the area around EPIC (in the suburb of Lyneham), as well as the rural block numbers of the area north of EPIC (in the district of Gungahlin). The built-up part of EPIC is located in Lyneham on Block 5 of Section 72, though it extends into Gungahlin as shown on Figure 1—which

¹ Correspondence from Mr Beer (president of the Royal National Capital Agricultural Society) dated 16/7/99

Carparking at EPIC

also shows the route of the planned extension of Sandford Street from Mitchell to intersect with the Federal Highway opposite Antill Street, Watson.





10. **Figure 2** shows the land use policies for the area. It shows that the whole EPIC area is classified as *Broadacre*, extending northwards to the extension of Sandford Street and then even further to the north (and north-east) of that street. The *Broadacre* classification also extends to the east past Wells Station Road and eventually abuts the *Hills, Ridges and Buffers* Landuse area alongside the Federal Highway.

11. Two important points emerge from Figure 2. The first is that Flemington Road is shown as an *Intertown Public Transport Route* (from the city to Gungahlin). The location of this route suggests that the southern boundary of the EPIC site will continue to be an important means of access to EPIC, especially for travellers on mass transit systems (as distinct to cars).

12. The second important point concerns the interaction of EPIC with residences. Whereas the distance from EPIC to the nearest suburban area is about 90m at present (across Northbourne Avenue), it is 257m on the northern side (from the corner of Wells Station Road/Sandford Street to the future *Residential* area in Gungahlin). This suggests that problems with noise arising out of events at EPIC will not worsen, even when residential development occurs in Gungahlin.

13. **Figure 3** (provided by Summernats) shows the approximate size of various carparking places in and around EPIC. It also shows the approximate number of cars able to be parked in these places, as estimated by the Summernats management (using an estimate of about 120 cars per acre).

14. Further, Figure 3 shows the Gate numbers at EPIC. Gate 1 is toward the north of Flemington Road; Gate 2 is the main public entrance toward the southern end of Flemington Road (also the bus stop for EPIC); Gate 3 (not shown) is a pedestrian access off Northbourne Avenue; Gate 4 is located near the service station on Northbourne Avenue; and Gates 7 and 9 are located on EPIC's northern side.

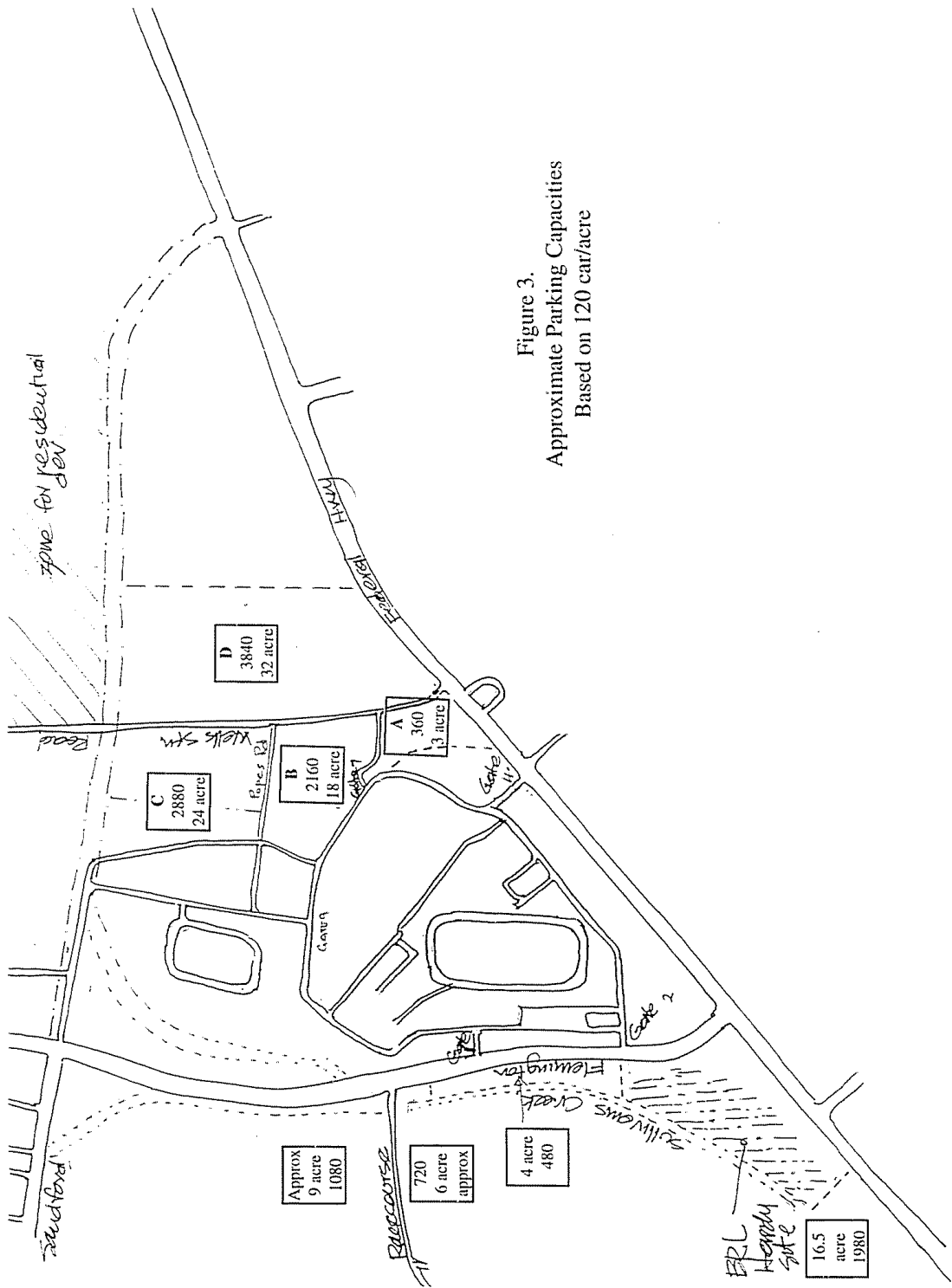


Figure 3.
Approximate Parking Capacities
Based on 120 car/acre

15. Figure 3 indicates the significance of the carparking spaces on the BRL Hardy Winery site, namely, that approximately 2000 vehicles can be parked there. Figure 3 also indicates that the amount of carparking spaces along the Flemington Road side of EPIC is under half those available to EPIC's north (once the BRL Hardy site is excluded).

16. **Figure 4** (provided by the Royal National Capital Agricultural Society) shows all of this carparking space in use during the Canberra Show. The area marked with asterisks is the northern part of EPIC's lease; area (1) on the photograph is an area of Territory land on the northern side of Randwick Road where it intersects Flemington Road²; area (2) is also Territory land, on the eastern side of Flemington Road at the north of EPIC; area (3) is another portion of Territory land to the east of Wells Station Road [also shown as 'D' in Figure 3]; area (4) on the photograph is land within the horse race track, and area (5) is land on the outside of the race track (both controlled by the ACT Racing Club).

17. Figure 4 adds a new element to the calculation of possible carparking spaces as outlined in Figure 3. If it was possible to utilise the areas marked as (5) on Figure 4, then the number of carparking spaces along the Flemington Road side of EPIC could be significantly increased. The committee understands that this land is controlled by the ACT Racing Club. Its use for carparking would not only involve the agreement of the Club but would involve substantial infrastructure works, especially those associated with crossing the Sullivans Creek channel.

18. Figures 1, 2 and 3 all serve to show that the BRL Hardy Winery site extends northward up Flemington Road to approximately Gate 2 (the main

² Randwick Road runs from the Barton Highway along the nor-western side of the ACT Racing Club race track.



Figure 4.

entry into EPIC). This has implications for the continued use of that gate as the principal entrance by the public to EPIC.

19. The extent to which the BRL Hardy winery site was used as a carparking area during the 1999 Canberra Show is indicated by **Figure 5**. It shows that cars were parked between the Sullivans Creek channel and the trees at the junction of Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue, extending well south of the proposed public entry to the BRL Hardy Winery opposite Phillip Street, Downer.

20. Figure 5 also shows cars parked within the boundary of the ACT Racing Club to the south of the Randwick Road/Flemington Road intersection.

PART III—VIEWPOINTS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The view of the Royal National Capital Agricultural Society

21. The Show Society is concerned that the BRL Hardy development will lead to the loss of a significantly greater number of parking spaces than government authorities expected.

22. With reference to Figure 4, the Society calls for the following action:

- It is important that the existing northern area of the EPIC lease (marked with an * on photograph 1) is confirmed as parking space and the necessary improvements and infrastructure established prior to Summernats and the Royal Canberra Show. These improvements include the following:
 - adequate lighting
 - levelling of the surface for pedestrian safety and formalisation of parking arrangements
 - upgrade existing track through the paddock to Sandford Street to all-weather standard;
- Have the Randwick Road area (1) on [Figure 4] prepared for car parking during major events;
- Have area (2) on [Figure 4] allotted to EPIC as part of their lease, along with area (3) on the northern side of Wells Station Road;

Carparking at EPIC



Examine the possibility of parking within the confines of the ACT Racing Club race track by moving the proposed grape growing area to the south of the track as per area (4) in [Figure 4]. The possibility of utilising areas (5) should also be investigated, although this would necessitate the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the stormwater drain;

- The clearing of trees and shrubs in the current Flemington Road carpark would generate a substantial number of extra car parking spaces;
- Now that the main entrance to BRL Hardy is to be located opposite the main entrance to EPIC, the traffic and safety issues in Flemington Road will need to be examined. At the same time, the need for temporary pedestrian traffic lights, similar to those installed in Commonwealth Avenue for Floriade, needs to be examined;
- With the desire to attract as many people as possible onto the buses, we have discussed with ACTION buses the costs of operating a continuous free shuttle from the Civic and Belconnen interchanges to the Show. We would like to see the government assist in the cost sharing of this service because, based on anticipated costs, the [Show Society] would not be able to cover these costs alone. This type of service has the potential to enormously reduce the number of cars travelling to the Show.³

The view of Summernats

23. Summernats expresses concern about ‘the forecast loss of approximately 2,000 parking spaces as a result of the BRL Hardy development’. Summernats suggests the following action (with reference to Figure 3):

- Lay an all-weather two-lane road surfaces on Sandford Street from Flemington Road to Wells Station Road intersection;
- Tidy verges and road surfaces of Wells Station Road from Northbourne Avenue to Sandford Street;
- Install lay-by entry for northbound Northbourne Avenue traffic to enter Wells Station Road;

³ Correspondence dated 3/8/99

Carparking at EPIC

- Develop parking zone between Popes Road and Sandford Street⁴ which will include:
 - (a) all-weather grass car parking
 - (b) centre North/South Road through car park
- Entrance/exit gates in Sandford Street, Wells Station Road and Popes Road fence lines for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic;
- Safety lighting in northern car parks;
- Upgraded ticket facilities at Gate 7 (ten-window temporary/mobile facility)
- Formalise parking area opposite main Gate [1 and] 2 ticket area. Remove some trees, repair verges and [utilise] all-weather grass surface [rather than crushed granite surface or such surface];
- For pedestrian and traffic safety, widen and seal western verge of Flemington Road from Northbourne Avenue to Racecourse Road;
- Utilise land, off Flemington Road directly opposite Racecourse Road intersection, for parking. Possibly fence this area for either internal or external access;
- Temporary pedestrian traffic lights on Flemington Road for larger EPIC events.⁵

The view of EPIC

24. EPIC has drawn attention to the loss of carparking spaces associated with the BRL Hardy development. EPIC points out that successive ACT governments have allowed EPIC to utilise this area ‘and the proposed new use should not be progressed at the expense of clients of EPIC’.⁶ EPIC would have liked ‘alternative arrangements... to be firmly in place prior to any development’.

25. EPIC points out that, throughout the development of its existing site:

The major exhibition precinct and administration centre has been located adjacent to Flemington Road and the car parking area in question. This location has been sanctioned by

⁴ Popes Road runs off Well Station Road to the west toward the trotting facilities

⁵ Correspondence dated 2/8/99

⁶ Correspondence about the Preliminary Assessment from EPIC to Smith Kostyrko Cohen Pty Ltd dated October 1998

all concerned with the facility, resulting in on-going development of the specific area to cater to the requirements of the clients.⁷

26. In 1998 EPIC noted that the land to be taken over for the BRL Hardy winery:

has historically been used as the main car parking area for the many events conducted at EPIC since 1964. Our assessment of requirements for the area, to be used by visitors to events at the site, suggests that on 126 days from 4 April 1998 to 19 April 1999, parking will be required for 45 events. Of this, on 64 days there will be a requirement for parking which would use the area for the proposed BRL Hardy development. The financial return for EPIC from these events is estimated to be \$948,030 and considerably more for the economy of the ACT.⁸

27. EPIC would like:

That in the development application process, consideration to be given for a whole of precinct parking and management plan, including the following:

- ceding of land to EPIC as part of the process, solving the needs of the smaller events and establishing long-term answers to the situation [this should include Lots 9 and 5 of Section 71, and Lots 1 and 2 of Section 61⁹];
- the addressing of land to the east of EPIC for possible annexation for long-term parking facilities and complementary development potential [This would require a re-alignment of the existing Wells Station Road¹⁰];
- the identification and incorporation of a northern access to the new car parking area and resolution of traffic management problems for the BRL Hardy site;
- with the development of an overall precinct plan... that a “slipway” off Northbourne Avenue be included...
- that consideration be given to the construction of a pedestrian bridge from the car parking area to the Flemington Road entrance of EPIC;

7 Correspondence about the Preliminary Assessment from EPIC to Smith Kostyrko Cohen Pty Ltd dated June 1998

8 *ibid*

9 *ibid*. Note that Lots 9 and 5 of Section 71 are now Lots 11 and 5 of Section 71, as shown on Figure 1. The adjustment followed finalisation of the boundary of the BRL Hardy Winery. Lots 1 and 2 of Section 61 retain their original classification.

- construction of a vehicle traffic bridge over the existing drainage system [Sullivans Creek], allowing for utilisation of unused areas on the ACT Racing Club site for parking purposes by EPIC, BRL Hardy and ACT Racing Club.¹¹

28. EPIC is also concerned that, while the major public entry to the BRL Hardy winery will be off Northbourne Avenue (opposite Phillip Avenue), the working entry to the site will be off Flemington Road opposite main gate 2.

29. The cost of upgrading the carparks to the west of Flemington Road and to the north of the EPIC site has been assessed by consultants to EPIC.

30. In relation to the carpark to the west of Flemington Road (Blocks 5 and 11 of Section 71), EPIC's consultant stated that:

Block 5 on the corner of Randwick and Flemington Roads was landscaped many years ago with well-established trees and shrubs. It would only be suitable for use as a carpark with significant clearing and improvement to the subgrade by filling and surfacing with gravel...

[Block 11 has a] surface [which] is rough and the potholes hold water during wet periods. This causes inconvenience to users and possible risk of injury to the public. The public risk and resulting liability to EPIC will continue if the block is leased to the EPIC Trust. To minimise this risk, complete design and reconstruction of the carpark to modern standards will be required...[though] a gravel surface should perform adequately if given some regular maintenance...

[This would cost about] \$125,000 [which would include] a new entrance off Flemington Road to improve access... [and] the addition of 100mm thickness of gravel to the aisles...

[If 25mm of gravel is applied] directly over all of the existing surface [and not just the traffic aisles—and if minor drainage works are included—the cost of upgrading the carpark is] \$230,000.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid. This is land in Block 432 in Gungahlin, on Figures 1 and 2; and the area marked as 'D' in Figure 3.

¹¹ Correspondence from EPIC to Smith Kostyrko Cohen Pty Ltd dated October 1998

¹² Correspondence to EPIC by its consultant [W.P.Brown & Partners Pty Ltd], dated 22/6/99

31. The consultant added:

Vehicle and pedestrian control is needed to ensure safe use of the site... [especially considering that] one entrance is proposed opposite the main entrance to EPIC as a four-way junction as part of the BRL Hardy development...

Pedestrians need to be directed to the main entrance and to the secondary entrance near Randwick Road. A paved footpath is needed along the southern side of Flemington Road to improve the control of pedestrians and provide greater safety in busy periods. During events such as the Royal Canberra Show and the Markets, additional control is required to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing the road. The use of Traffic Police seems to be the most cost-effective means of achieving this. Temporary pedestrian crossings would not be suitable without some control of the crowds to form them into platoons crossing the road. (As information, the traffic lights for Floriade on Commonwealth Avenue have cost \$65,000 to date and have additional costs for installation and de-installation for each use.)

The edge of Flemington Road does not have kerb and gutter, installation of this would improve the safety for pedestrians...¹³

32. In relation to the carparks to the north of the EPIC site, access is from Wells Station Road off the Federal Highway. There is also some limited access off the extension of Sandford Street (beyond Flemington Road) past the trotting sheds onto Sandford Street, but traffic consultants state that 'this is not a desirable access way as the trotting facilities need to be isolated to avoid any public interference'.¹⁴

33. Hence, the first option being considered by EPIC is to upgrade the existing track that runs from a point between gate 7 and gate 9 on Figure 3 northwards to the extension of Sandford Street. On figure 3, this is the track to the west of carparks B and C. The consultants state that the existing track:

has the topsoil removed and is generally in reasonable condition. [However,] there are two areas where water is holding after rain and [these] would need re-grading to make them drain... [A floodway crossing would be required, preferably construction of] a culvert of

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ EPIC's consultants [W.P.Brown & Partners Pty Ltd], correspondence dated 5/8/99

minimal size to allow the public to cross clear of water in events less frequent than the two-year ARI event... [Also,] the connection onto the existing gravel surface on the extension of Sandford Street... [would] require some earthworks and pavement construction.¹⁵

34. The consultant estimates that the above work would cost about \$70,000.

35. The second option being considered by EPIC is to upgrade the extension of Sandford Street (from the point where the above track meets it) eastward to Wells Station Road. This involves removing some fill material, raising the level of the road near its intersection with Wells Station Road and deviating the latter past the existing cattle grid, constructing drains and culverts, providing a compact gravel base and erecting new fencing. The work is estimated to cost \$265,000.¹⁶

36. The third cost estimate obtained by EPIC is to seal the surface of Sandford Street from the point where the above north-south track meets it westward to Flemington Road. The consultant states that:

the existing gravel surface was apparently bitumen sealed at some stage as remnants of the seal are present... [Also,] seal is present at the intersection of the track past the trotting facility and the gravel road extension. The existing surface is corrugated and has some potholes.¹⁷

37. The cost of upgrading the surface of Sandford Street is estimated to be \$30,000.

38. Both EPIC's consultant and the traffic section of the Department of Urban Services are concerned about more intensive use of the Sandford Street/Flemington Road intersection. Some means of controlling traffic at this intersection would be required, perhaps involving the police or temporary

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid*

traffic lights or other means. Also, some minor work would be needed to the existing kerb.

39. Further, the traffic section of the Department does not favour the Wells Station Road/Sandford Street/Flemington Road track remaining open to the public at all times—for it could become a short-cut carrying through traffic rather than ‘special event’ traffic. Therefore, the respective ends should be controlled in some way, such as gates and/or levees.

The view of ACTION

40. ACTION notes that encouraging people to travel on buses, even if it involves subsidising some portion of the travel, can be considerably cheaper than constructing large carparks that may only be used for a few occasions each year.

41. ACTION also notes that Canberrans have a well-established preference to use cars to access major events. It will take deliberate government-funded inducement to wean people away from cars and onto mass-transit systems. In this regard, it is very important that—where governments do seek to encourage bus usage to major events—the buses are seen to have priority over normal traffic, resulting in them accessing the facility with minimal traffic delays. It is also important that bus passengers have easy entrance to the facility, rather than queue for some time.

42. In order to facilitate speedy access by buses, it is helpful if drivers do not have to collect money during the trip to a major facility; in other words, if tickets are pre-paid. During the 1999 Show, ACTION utilised its ticketing offices at the interchanges to this effect; and the results appeared promising.

43. Where carparking is provided some distance away from the main venue—such as carparking in EPIC’s more northern areas—ACTION is able to provide a shuttle service for patrons from their cars to the events. Again,

however, it is useful if drivers do not have to collect money. Also, ACTION needs to be reimbursed for providing the service—and this would appear to mean the cost of entry to the carparks would need to be raised above what it has been in recent years.

PART IV—CONCLUSION

44. The committee shares the concern of the Show Society, EPIC and Summernats about the loss of a large number of carparking spaces on what is now the BRL Hardy Winery site. The number of spaces lost appears to be considerably more than PALM calculated when it processed the Preliminary Assessment for the Winery.

45. However, in expressing its concern, the committee acknowledges that the land was not reserved for the exclusive use of EPIC. In fact, in 1993 the land was leased to the ACT Racing Club which did not develop the site and in 1998 surrendered the lease to the government. Over time, the land has consistently been used for carparking by patrons of EPIC; hence, the public has become used to its availability.

46. While it is clear that the carparking spaces can be replaced in the northern areas of EPIC, there are significant problems in doing this. These include:

- access off Northbourne Avenue
- egress from the site to the extension of Sandford Street
- traffic problems at the intersection of Sandford Street and Flemington Road
- the issue of whether the Sandford Street extension should carry traffic into the carparks or only out of them

- the cost of upgrading the carparks to improve motorist and pedestrian safety (and amenity) in all weathers
- the distance from the carparks to the events at EPIC, and
- the likely preference by EPIC patrons to park along Flemington Road rather than to EPIC's north, given its proximity to EPIC's main infrastructure.

47. In view of these issues—and recognising the continuing importance of the Flemington Road entrance to EPIC for mass-transit patrons—the committee considers that immediate attention should be given to the provision of carparking spaces along Flemington Road.

48. The committee recommends:

- ***that the government immediately investigate the provision of upgraded carparking spaces along Flemington Road, especially on Block 11 of Section 71—but also on Block 5 of Section 71, Block 1 of Section 60 and Block 1 of Section 76.***

49. If these areas are upgraded, then it is essential for improvements to be made to facilitate pedestrian access along Flemington Road, and across Flemington Road. It appears to the committee that the latter necessarily involves (for major events at EPIC) the installation of temporary traffic lights similar to those used on Commonwealth Avenue for Floriade.

50. The committee recommends:

- ***that the western verges of Flemington Road be improved to facilitate pedestrian movement at large events at EPIC—and that, for such events, temporary traffic lights be installed (similar to those used on Commonwealth Avenue for Floriade).***

51. The committee understands that EPIC has applied for a direct grant of land at Block 11 of Section 71. The application is currently being assessed by

Territory departments, but necessarily involves payment of ‘the current market value’.¹⁸ It appears to the committee that this parcel of land is extremely important to the future of EPIC and that, given what has happened to the adjoining portion of land now given over to the Winery, the time has come to secure the land for use by EPIC.

52. Depending on the valuation of the site, it may be unreasonable to expect EPIC to pay for it from its own funds. The committee considers there is a strong case for government to provide one-off assistance to enable EPIC to acquire this land. The justification for such action relates to the significant investment of public money in EPIC to date and the folly of compromising this investment by failing to provide adequate carparking opposite the two main entrances to EPIC.

53. The committee recommends:

- ***that the government facilitate the acquisition by EPIC of land at Block 11 of Section 71 (Lyneham), if necessary by a one-off injection of supplementary funding.***

54. The committee is concerned by the proposed entrance off Flemington Road to the BRL Hardy Winery. The committee understands this entrance is opposite EPIC’s main gate (Gate 2). While the Winery has obtained consent by the National Capital Authority to utilise an entrance off Northbourne Avenue (opposite Phillip Avenue)—and traffic lights are being installed at this intersection—the Winery does not intend to immediately construct a roadway at this point. Also, it appears that heavy vehicles entering and existing the Winery will use Flemington Road – even when the Phillip Avenue entrance is operational.

¹⁸ Disallowable Instrument No.78 of 1996 *Determination of Criteria for the Direct Grants of Crown Leases*

55. The combination of these factors will add to the traffic and safety pressures on Flemington Road. The committee considers it is important that the Development Application for the Winery addresses these factors—and that PALM ensures the best possible outcome is obtained, taking into account not only the interests of the Winery but also of EPIC and traffic generally along Flemington Road.

56. The committee recommends:

- ***that PALM ensure it processes the Development Application for the BRL Hardy Winery in a manner that minimises the serious traffic and safety issues likely to be generated by (a) the loss of a large number of carparking spaces traditionally used by EPIC patrons and (b) the problems associated with additional traffic on Flemington Road arising out of the Winery development.***

57. The committee recognises that the Winery will take some time to construct and that it may be possible to stage its construction so that EPIC patrons may continue to use at least some of Block 4 of Section 71 (the Winery site) for major events set down for early 2000. This would provide a breathing space for longer-term measures to be finalised.

58. While still on this point, the committee hopes that EPIC and the Winery will work together to stage their major events in a manner that does not see simultaneous events—leading to excessive traffic problems (not just of carparking).

59. The committee recommends:

- ***that the government initiate discussions between EPIC and BRL Winery to encourage the on-going use of the Winery site for carparking during major events at EPIC in the short-term at least. In the longer-term, the government should also do whatever it can to encourage cooperative arrangements between EPIC and the Winery, particularly in relation to the staging of major events.***

60. The recommendations set out above address some of the short-term issues affecting carparking on the southern side of EPIC. A longer-term issue affecting this area relates to land controlled by the ACT Racing Club and, in particular, whether the Club may wish to become involved in long-term planning for carparking along the western side of the Sullivans Creek channel, as well as in the area to the immediate north and south of the Racecourse/Flemington Roads intersection—and within the race track itself.

61. Again, the committee considers that PALM should facilitate any long-term planning of this nature. Therefore, the committee recommends:

- ***that PALM facilitate the involvement of all interested parties (including the ACT Racing Club) in optimising use of land at the race track and in the Racecourse Road and Flemington Road area (including for the purpose of carparking at major events).***

62. Turning now to the northern side of EPIC, the committee accepts that carparking facilities will need to be upgraded in this area. With access off the Federal Highway to remain as one-way into the site (and not out of it, due to traffic problems on the Federal Highway if vehicles were allowed to cross northbound traffic to turn back to the city), the traffic flow in the carparks is easier to manage. But it is important to ensure all-weather access and undertake some levelling of the surface to aid pedestrian movement.

63. As well, the existing track through the carparks (shown as ‘B’ and ‘C’ in Figure 3) needs to be upgraded in order for vehicles to exit onto the extension of Sandford Street. This road itself, in the committee’s view, should be upgraded to its intersection with Flemington Road. As noted already by EPIC, more intensive use of this intersection will require some infrastructure works, as well as the possible installation of temporary traffic lights.

64. Lastly, the committee agrees with the advice of traffic specialists that the above thoroughfare should be open to the public only on those occasions involving a major event at EPIC.

65. The committee recommends:

- ***that improvements be made to the northern carparks of EPIC to enhance their safety and ease of pedestrian movement; that, during major events only, carparking into the area continue to be permitted off the Federal Highway with vehicles to exist only by way of the extension of Sandford Street; and that minimal improvements be made to the intersection of Sandford Street and Flemington Road to enable its more intensive use during major events at EPIC.***

66. In order to increase the flexibility of these northern carparks, it appears to the committee to be desirable to permit entry to the carparks from Sandford Street, that is, from the northern end of the site. However, this would seem to involve additional expenditure to upgrade and signpost Sandford Street and would also complicate the intersection with Flemington Road. It remains a matter which the committee would like to see addressed in an overall integrated transport strategy for the whole area.

67. The committee recommends:

- ***that the government facilitate an overall integrated transport strategy for the entire area covered by EPIC, the BRL Hardy Winery and the ACT Racing Club. Further, that consideration be given to vehicular entry to EPIC's northern carparks from Sandford Street.***

68. The committee considers that the integrated transport strategy should provide for a gradually increasing emphasis on bus transport to the area, especially for major events. The committee concurs with the view that Canberrans are so used to easy car access to big events that it will take some time to wean them onto public transport—but this is a desirable longer-term aim.

69. In order to facilitate the use of public transport, it is important that buses be given priority access in congested traffic around EPIC and also priority access into the site itself. Further, the buses can be operated more efficiently if tickets are pre-paid, meaning that drivers do not have to handle money on the day. An additional encouragement to use buses is to widely advertise the fact that tickets to big events (such as the Show) can be purchased from ACTION's interchanges—and for that ticket to include return bus travel. The committee commends ACTION's initiative in this area.

70. The committee recommends:

- ***that the government facilitate ACTION's efforts to publicise and facilitate the greater use of bus transport by patrons to major events at EPIC, especially by way of the following:***
 - pre-purchase of tickets at interchanges,***
 - priority bus access along Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue,***
 - and***
 - provision of carparks near interchanges and at convenient points along the bus routes.***

71. Within the northern carparks themselves, it appears to the committee that—particularly if free shuttle bus transport is to be provided from the carparks to the main EPIC site—it is important to re-examine the cost of private carparking. This issue, of course, also bears on the greater encouragement of bus transport.

72. It appears to the committee that the parking fee, in the past, has not adequately reflected the environmental cost of private vehicle usage. It is likely that a more appropriate parking fee would be approximately \$10-\$15 per vehicle rather than the \$2 charge applying in the past.

73. The committee recommends:

- ***that the integrated transport strategy include consideration of the appropriate charge to park private vehicles on, or near, the EPIC site.***

Harold Hird
Chair

25 August 1999