

2025

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

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Traffic Congestion – Assembly Resolution of 23 September 2025 – Interim Update - Government
Response**

**Presented by
Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport
December 2025**

The Government provides this interim response to update the Assembly on the National Capital Authority's (NCA) bridge works and respond to the Assembly's Resolution of 23 September 2025 on Traffic congestion alleviation measures.

The National Capital Authority are delivering critical infrastructures upgrades to the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge on behalf of the Australian Government, to ensure this critical road asset can continue to provide a connection between the north and south of our city for decades to come.

However, as the Government have previously updated the Assembly these construction works will cause significant and unavoidable impacts to our traffic network, including Transport Canberra bus services, which the Government has been preparing for.

The NCA commenced preliminary construction works last month, which has seen the closure of both the northbound and southbound lanes over and on each side of the bridge.

The NCA has also announced most significant and ongoing closures will now occur from 7 January 2026.

The ACT Government has been working with the NCA to consider the impacts of different traffic arrangements over the bridge during this period and the impacts on the transport network including public transport.

The NCA's bridge upgrades will halve lane capacity on Commonwealth Avenue Bridge from six to three lanes.

The NCA has announced the temporary traffic arrangements on the bridge will see two northbound lanes retained with one of these lanes being a dedicated bus lane. There will only be one south-bound lane which will be for mixed traffic.

As there is only one, mixed, lane southbound, our traffic modelling tells us that the southbound morning peak travel across Commonwealth Avenue will be most

impacted by the changes, with changes resulting travel times increasing by around 13 minutes. This reduces to around an additional 7 minutes by the afternoon peak.

The congestion on Commonwealth Avenue will inevitably spillover to our other arterial roads such as Kings Avenue. King's Avenue bridge travel times will also increase during peak travel, with changes fluctuating between an additional 3 and 5 minutes.

There will be flow on impacts on major roads and the broader traffic network.

Transport Canberra have developed a 'construction bus network' to commence from Term 1 next year which anticipates the impacts on travel time of these temporary traffic arrangements, based on traffic modelling.

This updated transport network, and timetable will be in effect from 2 February 2026, while an interim 'summer holiday timetable' will be in place over the relatively quiet holiday period, as is standard practice every year.

A key goal of this updated network is to preserve service reliability, by ensuring the timetable is realistic with the changed traffic conditions.

As anticipated, there are reductions to service frequency and route changes that have been required due to the construction work.

We have sought to balance these changes across the network where possible whilst retaining as much capacity as possible on highly patronised routes during the construction period.

The Government will revise the network for the second half of the year based on actual travel time impacts experienced and commuter travel patterns. The Government will also seek to increase services where there is capacity in the network.

There will need to be adjustments based on the actual experience of the disruption and we will take feedback from drivers and listen to the experience of the community to inform adjustments.

Following the two years of construction work on the Bridge, the Transport Canberra will return to normal frequencies and Rapid routes.

And we remain committed to further increasing frequencies above normal levels and adding additional Rapid routes consistent with our Labor election commitments.

Some of the major changes to the Transport Canberra bus network to support bridge construction are as follows:

- R4 services between Tuggeranong and the City will be serviced by high-capacity buses such as our articulated and steer tag vehicles. These will be used on peak services to maintain capacity on this corridor. These services will run to a reduced rapid frequency of every 15 minutes.
- To provide additional capacity on part of the current R4 route, both the R5 and R6 will be also extended through to Belconnen.
- The R2 and R3 services will now terminate at the Belconnen Interchange to preserve capacity along the busy Belconnen to City corridor, with the remainder of the previous Rapid routes serviced by new local routes 12 and 13 to provide network coverage to West Belconnen.
- There will be some adjustment to the frequency of loop services across regions which will see the head way between services change from 15-minutes to 20-minutes.
- Positively, we have been able to maintain all existing school bus services – but parents and students should check timings when the new timetable is released.

The ACT Government recognises the scale of this disruption to the Canberra community and concerns which arise with changes to the bus network during the NCA's construction work.

The Government will continue to work with Transport Workers Union and the community to ensure that Canberra remains connected and mobile, and we remain committed to clear communication and support for our community and workforce during this period.

From January Canberrans should allow extra time for their trip and consider the options possible for them, such as travelling outside of peak times or looking at other ways to travel to the city, such as choosing public transport or active travel for the last leg of their trip.

The development of the new network design and timetable for the construction period has been a significant undertaking and I want to thank Transport Canberra staff and TWU delegates for their work.

The NCA's bridge renewal project will be disruptive for the road and public transport network, but we support the long-term benefits of this important Commonwealth road infrastructure asset.

Whilst it is unclear of the impacts of what these changes will look like until they actually come into effect, and Canberrans response in adjusting their travel patterns, the Government is committed to revising the bus network once those impacts are known.

It is encouraged for Canberrans to keep up to date with traffic advice and transport updates whether they are commuting by car or by bus.