

2009

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
(6TH ASSEMBLY)
REPORT NO 33**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2006-2007

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister**

Government Response

Standing Committee on Planning and Environment Report No 33 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2006-2007 (6th Assembly)

Introduction

The Annual Reports of All ACT Government agencies are referred to the Standing Committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly for examination and report.

The 6th Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Environment reviewed annual reports for:

- the Department of Territory and Municipal Services;
- the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority;
- the ACT Planning and Land Authority;
- the Land Development Agency; and
- the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

The Committee made six recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

3.4 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the ACT Planning and Land Authority is adequately resourced to be involved in significant national projects.

Government Response

Agreed. The ACT Government has ensured that ACTPLA is adequately resourced to be involved in significant national projects. Examples of funding for significant national projects are:

- \$1.7 million for the East Lake Urban Renewal Project for Sustainable Design and Planning. This project has national recognition under the CSIRO sustainable communities' initiative;
- \$1.65 million for planning and future development of affordable housing in Molonglo, North Weston and Gungahlin. Affordable housing is a COAG agreed national policy; and
- The Government contributes an agreed amount of funds on an annual basis to the operation of the Australian Building Codes Board and the Planning Officials group in order to enable ACTPLA to engage in the national forums.

Recommendation 2

3.31 The Committee recommends that the ACT Planning and Land Authority consider the Committee's recommendations in report No 24: *Review of Draft Management Plan for Urban Open Space and Public Access Sportsgrounds in The Gungahlin Region*, particularly that the ACT Government continue its efforts to diversify the water resources it relies on for irrigating sportsgrounds in the ACT.

Government Response

Agreed. ACTPLA has considered the Committee's recommendations. The ACT Government entered into a Deed of Agreement with the Commonwealth to undertake a comprehensive review of all non-potable water sources in Canberra, and received a \$10.2 million grant, with the Territory providing \$6.8 million, for studies and some construction work under the project Canberra Integrated Urban Waterways.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water (DECCEW) previously the Department of Territory and Municipal Services as the responsible agency, has in conjunction with ACTPLA, over the past 24 months, worked with CSIRO to provide a scientific basis for allocating non-potable water, including from existing lakes and ponds.

Over this time there have been a number of workshops and meetings (many with government agencies, and particularly Sport and Recreation) resulting in the production of CSIRO Draft Feasibility Study stage 1 report of June 2008.

Some work has been done in conjunction with the CSIRO report to address the needs of end users. However, to bring this program to fruition it will necessitate additional capital expenditure and this is being considered by the Government.

The CSIRO draft report includes consideration of stormwater, treated effluent and use of underground aquifers with indicative potable water savings of possibly 4.4 giganlitres per annum. The CSIRO report includes cost benefit analysis and is producing a triple bottom line analysis. The CSIRO analysis has included end users as advised by agencies and departments. The needs of the construction industry are also being sought.

Much work has been done in conjunction with the CSIRO report to address the needs of end users and more needs to be done. For example:

- The Steering Committee of TAMS, ACTPLA and the Commonwealth (National Water Commission) at its meeting on 4 June 2008 discussed a non potable water price at \$1.00 less than the potable water price (\$3.14/kl), and is continuing discussing with the ICRC, Treasury and the ACT Government Solicitor.
- One pond at Flemington Road has been constructed and a contract for the second is in progress. The NW pond at Weston Creek is presently being designed.
- With the CSIRO report near finalised ACTPLA and DECCEW have identified priorities for reticulation from existing lakes and ponds.

To bring this program to fruition it will necessitate additional capital expenditure, being approved as per budget bids.

Sport and Recreation Services continues to work on the long term strategy for sportsgrounds that will ensure that the vision in the Government's *Where will we play?* masterplan that states: "By 2013 no sportsground in public or private ownership in the ACT will rely solely on the use of potable water to guarantee sporting operations..." will be achieved.

Recommendation 3

3.41 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government clarify the future of the two busway projects and the progress of the Real Time Passenger Information System implementation.

Government Response

Agreed. The Sustainable Transport Plan identified the transport corridors from Belconnen to the City and Gungahlin to the City as key short-term priorities. It

acknowledged that a bus based system offers the flexibility to reinforce transport corridors progressively through bus priorities and right of way arrangements.

In relation to the Gungahlin to City corridor, the Government has already constructed a bus lane on Flemington Road and completed a feasibility study in relation to a segregated bus lane along Northbourne Avenue. The Government considers the Northbourne Avenue project is a medium-term priority, which would only be progressed once more fundamental improvements are made to ACTION bus services.

A Preliminary Assessment (PA) of the possible route for the Belconnen to City busway has been completed, which will enable the reservation of a route for a future transitway to be made. The 2008-09 Budget committed funding of \$3.5 million to progressively construct bus lanes and priority measures at the key intersections along this corridor. This will improve the travel time of bus commuters.

The Government has completed a concept design for a Real Time Passenger Information System (RTPIS). This process identified that RTPIS would be most cost-effectively provided in conjunction with an upgraded bus ticketing system. As the first stage, the Government has provided funding of \$8 million to upgrade ACTION's bus ticketing system. RTPIS will be considered as a medium term project.

Recommendation 4

3.42 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the implementation of the Sustainable Transport Plan is adequately resourced.

Government Response

Agreed. The Government's *Sustainable Transport Plan (STP)* is aimed at supporting alternative transport modes. To date, the Government is on track to meet its 2011 targets for alternative transport.

The 2008-09 Budget committed significant funding to progress a range of initiatives, consistent with the STP framework, for road infrastructure, public transport, parking management and cycling and walking. Specific STP implementation initiatives, committed in the budget process, include:

- Construction of bus lanes and bus priority measures (\$3.5M).
- Construction of *park 'n' ride* and *bike 'n' ride* facility (\$0.53M).
- Belconnen town centre bus system improvement (\$16.5M).
- The replacement of around 100 buses over the next four years to improve the efficiency and accessibility of the ACTION fleet \$49.5M.
- Additional bus services by implementing ACTION's *Network 08* (about \$38M).
- Implementation of bike on bus initiative \$0.189M.
- Concession bus travel for seniors (\$1.173M).
- Providing free travel on ACTION buses for residents over 75 years of age \$0.5M.

- Cycling and walking infrastructure upgrades (about \$1.5M).
- Improving Cotter road on-road cycle connections (\$2.3M).

Recommendation 5

4.10 The Committee recommends that, in the event the Australian Railway Historical Society's lease is withdrawn, the ACT Government work with the Society to establish an appropriate permanent home and provide financial assistance to support the Society's relocation.

Government Response

noted. The Government commits to working with the Australian Railway Historical Society to establish an appropriate permanent home for the Society in the event that their current lease is withdrawn or the site is deemed to be not suitable for their long-term operations.

Recommendation 6

5.4 The Committee recommends that the report into the role of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment and government response be made publicly available via the website of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

Government Response

Agreed-in-principle. As the report into the role of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment was prepared for the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, there is no government response to this report. This report will be made available on the Departmental website.