



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Select Committee on the Fiscal
Sustainability of the ACT

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Submission number: 012 - Supplementary Submission

Submitter: Bruce Paine

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Further Submission by Bruce Paine: Light Rail Stage 2B

Dear Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT,

I refer to the Select Committee's invitation (para 1.16 of the Committee's Interim report) to the Canberra community to provide further submissions.

I wish to provide further evidence for your consideration regarding LR Stage 2B:

1. LR2B will be the largest capital project undertaken by any ACT government, and it will have a very significant impact on ACT public sector finances;
2. There is plenty of time for the Government and the Assembly to fully consider the financial and other impacts of proceeding with LR2B, including on other services that will not be affordable if LR2B is constructed;
3. Despite ACT Labor committing at several Elections to constructing LR2B the cost of the project (perhaps \$3,000+ million in 2026 dollars) is not included in the ACT Budget or related documentation.

While there are technical arguments that can be used not to include it, the vast majority of Canberrans would be surprised.

The Select Committee should make a clear statement that LR2B is not included. Furthermore, the Select Committee should consider providing a ball-park estimate of the cost and budgetary impact of LR2B proceeding. Otherwise, Canberrans are being fundamentally misled about the state of ACT government finances.

4. The ACT government has never undertaken (or at least has not published) a study comparing the costs and benefits of LR2B compared to other options.

The various 'business cases' the government has published are merely comparing the claimed costs and benefits of LR2B.

Budgeting is essentially about prioritisation and meeting priorities at an appropriate cost.

At a minimum, the Select Committee should recommend the ACT government undertake and publish an independent cost benefit comparison between LR2B and an option with an exclusive 'bus only' lane between Civic and Woden.

This is particularly important given the increasing prevalence of Work from Home, the increasing use of new modes of transport (eg electric assist bicycles), and changes in shopping habits that are occurring now including due to the conflict in the Middle East which may all reduce demand for public transport.

5. The Select Committee should consider recommending fall-back option(s) to ameliorate the detrimental impact of LR2B if an ACT government decides to proceed irrespective of the evidence.

One option would be to allow LR2B to be constructed at minimum cost (subject to meeting safety and other criteria) by exempting it from the Secure Local Jobs

Code or at least the aspects of the Code that increase costs borne by taxpayers with little or no benefit to the community.

6. Very few of the written submission content focuses on LR2B, although I have not reviewed oral evidence.

Given the size of the LR2B, the Select Committee should not allow the 'elephant in the room' to be swept under the carpet.

I request the Committee consider the evidence above and include appropriate recommendations in its final report please.

Bruce Paine

8 April 2026