



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT MINISTER FOR TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES
MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS AND HERITAGE



MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Ms Mary Porter MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and
Territory and Municipal Services
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Porter

Please find attached responses to questions on notice from the Annual Report hearings relating to my Territory and Municipal Services portfolio on 27 February 2009. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Minister for Territory and Municipal Services

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ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0157 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

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Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services Committee
2007-08 Annual Report Estimates
Questions on Notice
Friday 27 February 2009
Territory and Municipal Services

Question 1: Page 49

How are fire management initiatives formulated and the how do you assess the environmental impacts that these activities have?

Response:

The Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Version 1 (January 2005) sets the broad strategic focus for bushfire management in the ACT. It also requires that each land manager produce an annual Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) that details activities planned to manage fuel and fire in the landscape.

The Fire Management Section of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) annually produce a BOP for all the land managed by TAMS. An initial list of activities that are required to meet the SBMP standards and address any identified risks is formulated by the Fire Management Section. This list builds on the previous years BOP activities and is finalised after extensive internal and external consultation.

All activities are initially assessed for environmental impacts by the Research and Monitoring section of Parks Conservation and Lands. Any activity that triggers an EIS under Territory or National legislation is project managed by the Fire Management Section to ensure that it meets all legislation requirements before any on ground works are commenced.

All the larger projects are monitored before, during and after the activity by the Fire Management Section to ensure ongoing compliance and feedback for future operations.

The Fire Management Section within TAMS has been working diligently over the past 18 months to produce a set of Sub Regional Fire Management Plans (SRFMP) that will look at proposed fire management activities over a 10 year period. The SRFMP will take into account all the environmental, ecological, aesthetic and cultural aspects of the landscape in determining the most appropriate fire management activities with the objective of achieving a fire mosaic pattern across the landscape. These SRFMP's will be completed by the end of this financial year and are being used to inform the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) review that is concurrently being undertaken by the Emergency Services Agency.

Question 2: Page 49

When deciding on the creation of fire trails and other fuel reduction initiatives what process is undertaken to monitor and prevent the adverse environmental impacts that occur as a result?

Response:

The construction of fire trails and other fuel reduction initiatives do not necessarily produce an adverse environmental impact.

All works undertaken by the Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) Fire Management Section are carefully planned and implemented and include ongoing monitoring where necessary. Activities are implemented with well trained and skilled staff with many years of experience to ensure the activity meets the required fire management outcome, whilst maintaining environmental values.

TAMS keep abreast of all the National and International research. We are active members of the top three groups involved in fire research nationally and internationally; the Bushfire Cooperative Research Programme (CRC), Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and Forest Fire Manager Group FFMG). As mentioned above, all proposed activities are included in the BOP and undergo a thorough and comprehensive consultation (including the ACT Bush Fire Council) and approval process before implementation.

All works undertaken require the completion of a detailed works plan prepared and approved by senior managers within PCL. These plans examine operational requirements, risk and monitoring protocols, including follow up inspections for a period of 12 months.

Question 3: Page 47

Is the willow spatial database being used in conjunction with the existing willow removal strategy? What plans are there for the continued implementation of the strategy particularly in respect of the Molonglo?

Response:

This answer assumes that the Members' question refers to the mapping (spatial information) of willows on the Molonglo and proposed management program called the Lake Burley Griffin Willow Management Plan.

Parks, Conservation & Lands (PCL) is continuing to implement Willow control work that complies with the Lake Burley Griffin Willow Management Plan 2006 (specifically recommendations 2, 8, 9, 10, 14, 21, 24 & 25). In 2008-09 there will be control work at Molonglo Reach and Molonglo Gorge. In addition PCL has put forward a 4 year funding proposal to undertake Willow control at West Basin and at the Lower Molonglo River. The National Capital Authority (NCA) also plans to undertake weed control on land around West Basin.

There has been significant Willow control work on the Murrumbidgee River in previous years and in 2008-09 there will be Black Willow control between Angle Crossing and Tharwa and follow-up control in other areas along the river. At Googong Foreshores there will be follow-up Willow control on the Queanbeyan River near Washpen Crossing.

The goal of the PCL Willow control program is to control all Willow varieties (except for permitted varieties) on a catchment basis. The removed Willows are replaced with suitable species. This has taken place at Molonglo Reach and will also occur at West basin if that project is approved.

Question 4: Page 30

The Annual Report talks about disposing of 'surplus government properties'. What are these and how are you disposing of them?

Response:

A surplus property is a property that is:

1. Declared surplus by an ACT Government agency that no longer requires the property for existing service delivery requirements; and
2. Surplus properties are evaluated by the ACT Property Group through a process to determine the best future use option of the property which includes possible retention for other ACT Government purposes, retention for non government uses (community or commercial), demolition or sale. All ACT Government agencies are included in the consultation process.

A property assessed as permanently surplus that can be sold is transferred to the LDA for disposal in the private market.

Question 5, Pages 204-205

The progress report on *Weathering the Change* said that a consultant was developing guidelines for agencies' Sustainability Action Plans to promote carbon neutrality in government buildings and agency operations. Are those action plans complete and available? Does TaMS have one? Please provide an update.

Response:

Sustainability Action Plans have not yet been completed.

Question 6: Pages 204-205

Is there an ACT agency equivalent to the Commonwealth level Government Agency Environmental Network (GAEN). Is the Government going to create such a network? Does an ACT Government observer attend meetings of the Commonwealth GAEN?

Response:

The Government Agency Environmental Network (GAEN) is a voluntary group. It does not have formal terms of reference established by the Commonwealth Government. Participants in GAEN are motivated volunteers who work for a variety of government agencies. There is no equivalent group of voluntary participants from ACT agencies. The ACT Government has no plans to formally establish such a voluntary network. The ACT Government does not send an observer to the meetings of the GAEN.

Question 7: Pages 204-205

Has the TaMS Property Group investigated the cost and emissions savings benefits of installing video-conferencing facilities for use by ACT Government agencies? Could video-conferencing facilities be funded from the ACT Government's \$1M Energy Efficiency Fund?

Response:

ACT Property Group has not investigated video-conferencing facilities as this is an operational concern for individual agencies rather than a property matter

Video conferencing facilities will be considered as part of the current review of the Energy Efficiency Fund Guidelines.

Question 8: Pages 204-205

What has TaMS been doing to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Transport Plan?

Response:

TAMS have been implementing the Sustainable Transport Plan by:

- identifying engineering works to provide bus priority along the corridors identified in the plan
- designing and constructing of new bus system arrangements in Belconnen by extending Cohen Street and integrating bus interchange with the Mall development
- constructing cycle and walking paths in accordance with the master plan prepared to redress the gaps in the infrastructure network.
- providing bike racks on buses
- undertaking TravelSmart program in Belconnen
- constructing park and ride and bike and ride facility at Mawson
- undertaking feasibility investigation on bike and ride and kiss and ride options planning and providing additional bus services

Question 9: Pages 204-205

Does TaMS have in-house initiatives and contact officers to encourage modal shifts to more sustainable transport options? 31

Response:

TAMS in-house initiatives include:

- bike parking and shower facilities at Macarthur house
- availability of ACTION passes and bicycles for travel to meetings

Question 10: Pages 204-205

Could the Energy Efficiency fund be used to pay for improved bike parking facilities in government buildings? 32

Response:

Guidelines for the fund are currently being revised and this is one matter under consideration. Currently the fund is for measures that generate agency energy savings and it would need to be demonstrated that the bike facilities would meet this outcome.

Question 11: Pages 204-205.

Can you provide the Committee with briefings that were prepared for COAG working group meetings on climate change matters, including the national energy efficiency strategy? 33

Response:

The COAG working group on climate change is continuing, and reports regularly to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

The outcomes of COAG meetings are contained in communiqués released at the end of each meeting and published at www.coag.gov.au.

Question 12: Pages 204-205

Does TaMS encourage its staff to travel to meetings on ACTION buses? 34

Response:

Units within TAMS offer their employees use of bus tickets to attend meetings.

Question 13: Pages 75-56

Why hasn't there been a government response to the former P&E committee report on ACTION Buses and the Sustainable Transport Plan, the proposed nomination of the 35

ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, or to the P&E Committee's report on 06-07 annual and financial reports?

Response:

A comprehensive and detailed report was prepared in response to the former P&E committee report on ACTION Buses and the Sustainable Transport Plan, containing 47 recommendations. These included recommendations relating to the development of Network 08; accessibility standards and services for the elderly and people with disabilities; promotion of Park 'n Ride, Bike 'n Ride and the walking school bus and the economic, social, and environmental benefits of public transport use. A Government response was in the process of being finalised prior to the election. Work has now recommenced and a response will be provided shortly.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Energy and Water is finalising the response to the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The Chief Ministers Department is responsible for the coordination of the response to P&E Committee's report on 06-07 annual and financial reports.

Question 14: Pages 204-205

What is the ACT doing to encourage the Commonwealth to introduce pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone and to introduce incentive measures for improved use of ACTION services?

Response:

ACTION continues to introduce improvements to its bus network to encourage more Canberrans to use public transport. For example, in February 2009, ACTION introduced a number of new services such as:

- a new express route (704) from Kippax (Hawker, Weetangera) to Russell and Barton.
- a new off-peak route (Route 71) from Belconnen to Kaleen and return, connecting the south end of Kaleen with the main shopping centre in the north of the suburb.

There have been discussions with officers of the National Capital Authority on the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone since the publication of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Australian Capital Territory, titled *"Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone"*. The Committee recommended undertaking a further study to develop a detailed proposal in relation infrastructure requirements, parking fees and contingencies if people working in the Barton/Forrest office areas further encroach into the Parliamentary Zone.

The National Capital Authority is yet to approach the Department of Territory and Municipal Services about the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone. The need for additional on-site and off-site parking has been drawn to the NCA's attention during presentations on a number of proposals for development and/or lease purpose clause changes requiring Commonwealth approval

Question 15: Page 206

I understand that the OSCAR database, which records activity reporting, is now operating. Can you now provide information on greenhouse gas emissions.

Response:

At this stage, due to data gaps, it is not possible to provide accurate information on greenhouse gas emissions.

Question 16, Page 205

Could you provide an update on the programs and the energy efficiency fund for government agencies programme – the amount that has been spent and any returns paid back to the fund as a result of the efficiency measures?

Response:

The EEF is a rolling fund to provide loans to agencies to effect energy savings. There have been three loans from two agencies, and no funds received back to the fund as yet.

CIT: two applications - \$80,000 & \$33,000

- \$80,000 - reticulation of hot water from the co-generation plant for heating
- \$33,000 - solar hot water pre heating system for shower/toilet facilities

Canberra Stadium - \$15,000 - establishing energy saving initiatives through the services of an electrical consultant assessing the Stadium's existing services and providing cost- effective solutions

Question 17, Pages 54, 202

The annual report's climate change initiatives mention a sustainability policy. Where is this up to? Is there a concerted effort towards a single and comprehensive sustainability initiative within the Department?

Response:

The Annual Report refers to an overall sustainability framework for the ACT Government. The new Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water with responsibility for environmental sustainability policy is currently reviewing this work in consultation with the Chief Minister's Department that has sustainability policy coordination as a function under the Administrative Arrangements for 2008.

Question 19: Page 24

Will the government consider a portal on the Canberra Connect website to direct people to all government consultation open at the time, and to any government grants open at the time?

Response:

The Canberra Connect website specifically relates to ACT Government payment and non payment services, so is not necessarily appropriate for this purpose. A link to Government consultation and Grant programs could be added from the ACT Government website www.act.gov.au however, which deals more broadly with the business of Government. Canberra Connect operates www.act.gov.au on behalf of CMD, and would consider any requests made to have such links established.

Question 23: Page 29

How successful has the green duties scheme been? Has it encouraged greater take up of green vehicles?

Response:

Since the Green Vehicles Duty Scheme commenced in September 2008, over 500 “A” or “B” rated vehicles (around 12% of new vehicles sold) have received duty discounts based on their above average or leading edge environmental performance. There has been a trend in greater sales of “A” rated vehicles since the scheme commenced, with 75 of these top environmental performers sold in the five months from 3 September 2008 to 3 February 2009, up from 52 in the same period in 2007-2008. This trend may be a combination of the 100% stamp duty discount for these vehicles, a larger variety of A-rated vehicles coming onto the market (up from 5 “A” rated vehicle models to 9 “A” rated vehicle models), increasing environmental awareness, and higher than average fuel prices.

Question 24: Page 30

What were the results of the TravelSmart program?

Response:

Background: The National Travel Behaviour Change Project (of which the ACT’s component was called TravelSmart Belconnen) targeted 11,000 households in the Belconnen district between September 2006 and April 2007. Forty-three percent of the households that were contacted agreed to participate in the project.

The primary aim of TravelSmart Belconnen is to help householders reduce car use (and therefore greenhouse gas emissions) by encouraging participants to utilise healthier, more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or public transport.

A team of professional TravelSmart workers were engaged to conduct the household intervention. The team used a “community development approach”. Team members sought to understand how each person in the household travelled and then assisted them to “help themselves” find ways to use their cars less. Relevant tools/information were then provided (such as bus timetables, provision of the cycling/walking map etc) to help the participants make the change.

Results: The TravelSmart Belconnen project has shown a very positive outcome. An evaluation, conducted by an independent consultant, concluded that householders in the target area had reduced their car travel by 12.7% over the course of the project. The evaluation methodology was statistically robust and the reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled has been estimated with 95% confidence.

The longer term impact of the TravelSmart Belconnen project will continue to be monitored until 2012.

TravelSmart Belconnen was recognised in the Keep Australia Beautiful “Sustainable Cities Awards – 2008”. It won overall winner and first place in the Sustainable Transport Category for the ACT (state level). It also won two awards at the national level (winner of the Community Partnerships category and highly commended for the Environmental Innovation category).

Question 25: Page 30

What work was done on the feasibility of a city public transport loop? Is this implemented?

Response:

An investigation is underway to identify public transport options, including the feasibility of City shuttle services, to meet the current and emerging demand due to

the city developments. A consultant has been engaged to undertake this investigation and the consultant's report, once finalised, will be considered in the context of future transport planning included reviews of bus network operations.

Question 26: Page 31

Are the sustainability targets of the sustainable transport plan being monitored and revised?

Response:

The Sustainable Transport Plan (Plan) identified targets for 2011 and 2026 coinciding with ABS census years. The ACT Government monitored and assessed the progress using the 2006 census data and other data sources such as bus ticketing data as part of the development of the *Integrated Transport Framework (ITF)* in 2008. The assessment indicated that the ACT is on track to achieve the 2011 targets identified in the Plan. The ACT will continue to implement measures that promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives to help reduce transport emissions and improve the health and well being of the ACT's people and economy.

Question 27: Page 31

What coordination and liaison has occurred with the NCA on your sustainable transport planning?

Response:

The ACT has been liaising with the NCA on:

- the issue of pay parking for the parliamentary triangle; and
- options to improve the public transport corridor between Gungahlin and the City.

On the issue of pay parking, there have been discussions with officers of the National Capital Authority since the publication of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Australian Capital Territory, titled "*Not a Town Centre: The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone*". The Committee recommended undertaking a further study to develop a detailed proposal in relation infrastructure requirements, parking fees and contingencies if people working in the Barton/Forrest office areas further encroach into the Parliamentary Zone.

On the issue of the Gungahlin to City public transport corridor, ACT officers have organised four workshops with NCA officers to examine options to improve the corridor. Mutually acceptable options were identified for medium to long term implementation along Northbourne Avenue.

Question 28: Page 31

How have you been progressing the green vehicle policy?

Response:

The ACT Green Vehicles Duty Scheme commenced on 3 September 2008. The ACT is the first Australian jurisdiction to charge stamp duty on new vehicles based on vehicle environmental performance. Every new vehicle sold in the ACT is now charged stamp duty based on its "Green Vehicle Rating", a rating of "A", "B", "C" or "D" which correlates directly to the Commonwealth *Green Vehicle Guide* star ratings.

Posters and other promotional materials were distributed to local motor vehicle dealers prior to the commencement of the scheme. The Motor Trades Association of the ACT – the peak body representing ACT motor vehicle dealers – remains

supportive of the scheme and its main aim, which is to encourage Canberrans to purchase the best environmentally performing vehicle that meets their needs.

Question 29: Page 31

What work have you done on examining rapid transport options, such as light rail, and is this info available?

Response:

A 2004 study into future transit options for the ACT by transport consultants Kellogg, Brown and Root found that both light rail and bus rapid transit systems could be economically viable for the ACT. Copies of this report can be made available to the committee on request.

Although the 2004 study established an economic case for a light rail system, the level of investment required was too large for the ACT to fund alone. The establishment of Infrastructure Australia (IA) in April 2008 provided an opportunity for the ACT to partner with the Commonwealth on light rail, and address shared economic, environmental and social objectives.

The Government directed TAMS to oversee the development of an updated business case for an ACT light rail system for IA's national infrastructure audit. Alternatives to light rail such as bus rapid transit were not assessed in the light rail submission due to the short timeframe required by IA.

National accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers was engaged in September 2008 to develop the light rail submission. A draft submission was provided to IA in November 2008 in line with IA's timeframes, and the light rail proposal was included on Infrastructure Australia's 'longlist' of projects in an IA Report to the Council of Australian Governments on 19 December 2008. The projects on the longlist – including the light rail proposal – could potentially be supported by Commonwealth funding through the \$12.5 billion Building Australia national infrastructure fund when it is announced in the coming weeks.

The final light rail proposal was provided to IA and to the members of the "Light Rail Reference Group" in January 2009, and the Chief Minister announced on 9 December 2008 that he planned to table the final light rail submission in the Legislative Assembly once it has been formally considered by the government.

Question 30: Page 221

How many members are involved in the decisions made by the Development Applications Task force?

Response:

Three members of the ACT Heritage Council are involved in the decisions made by the Development Application Taskforce.

Question 31: Page 221

How many development applications were referred to the Development Applications Taskforce? How many developments did the taskforce approve and reject?

Response:

Nine applications were referred to the DA Taskforce during the 2007-2008 financial year. Seven applications were approved, and two rejected.

Question 32: Page 221

Were any decisions taken involving properties in which Mr Zivko may have an interest?

Response:

No.

Question 33: Page 221

What procedures/protocols are in place to avoid conflict of interest issues considering Mr Zivko's commercial interests?

Response:

DA Taskforce and Heritage Council members are always sent an agenda prior to meetings. The taskforce members are required to declare any conflict of interest either before or at the time of the meeting.

Question 34: Page 221

How does the Department ensure that heritage grants are spent within the grant guidelines? Are compliance audits undertaken or are inspections carried out on the work after the grant has been completed? If so, what have been the results?

Response:

- Heritage Grant recipients are required to sign a Deed of Grant upon acceptance of the Grant.
- The Deed of Grant requires recipients to:
 - Provide written reports to the Territory relating to the progress of the Funded Activity and expenditure of the Grant.
 - Second payment for grants over \$10,000 are issued on acceptance of the progress report.
 - Obtain the Territory's prior written approval for any variation to the Funded Activity, including: Funded Activity's objectives or outcomes; variation of more than 10% in expenditure for a specified item of the approved budget; or the grant period.
 - Submit draft project material for the Territory's comment.
 - Provide a detailed written final report on the Funded Activity including a detailed list of expenditure, and certified copies of receipts for all purchases of \$500 and over.
 - Provide an audited financial statement concerning the expenditure of the Grant prepared by a qualified accountant if over \$10,000
 - Provide the Territory with a statement of expenditure of the whole of the Grant; and repay any or all of the Grant that remains unacquitted.
 - Provide copies of final product of proof of the final product.
- Final payment of approximately 20% of the grant is issued on acceptance of the final report.

- Internal audits are undertaken and no issues have been brought to the Heritage Unit's attention by the Department.

Question 35: Page 35

How many dead runs do buses make because of depot locations and route starting points?

Response:

As there are no services that start directly adjacent to Belconnen or Tuggeranong bus depots, all services have a varying proportion of dead running to commence their first service.