

Transport for Canberra

SUBMISSION FROM G KING

Introduction

Canberra's ultimate challenge is for this affluent city to have a sustainable footprint. I therefore welcome the development of a draft *Transport for Canberra* policy.

The comments in this submission are made in light of information provided in the Summary Fact Sheet and Summary of Actions.

Broad comments

I broadly support the overarching goals of draft *Transport for Canberra* policy, as articulated in the Summary Fact Sheet and Summary of Actions.

It is pleasing to see improvements in the ACT's transport planning, including some change in the public transport language of these documents compared with previous ones that were very focussed on buses.

There is still some way to go before the details of actions proposed will deliver the major modal shifts and the integration between land use and transport planning that will be required to meet the ACT's sustainability targets, particularly the greenhouse gas reduction targets. Learning from and acting on community wisdom is also still a challenge and will be vital for successful delivery and further policy development: detailed community consultation on *Transport for Canberra* must continue, with reasonable timeframes and multiple channels for contributing. It would greatly help the conversation if submissions and comments are made easily available to the public.

The goal of 'modern ticketing, real time passenger information and efficient and accessible network planning' is commendable. However, it will only be achieved if the relevant vehicles' GPS systems actually work : it is no good if a trip from Civic to Narrabundah shows as Hibberson St, Gungahlin to Hibberson St, Gungahlin.

Specific comments

Public Transport

Although most actions proposed in the draft policy are language-neutral or indicate that alternatives may be considered, some (notably proposed actions 4 & 6) explicitly continue the ACT's focus on busses, and others imply it. Such limited thinking needs to change. Integration of land-use and transport planning, and many routes, may be better served by alternatives eg rail, midi buses.

An additional action item is needed to ensure that all MyWay GPS and ticketing systems are fully operational and accurate. This should be one of the first actions implemented, because only then can MyWay ticketing data be used for accurate planning and planning needs to occur early to ensure good use of time and resources.

Active Travel

It is great to see a separate section on active travel.

A key action that appears to be missing is ensuring that footpaths and cycle paths and lanes are connected. This should be an early action. An interim action could be to at least install notices giving fair warning about where a path or lane will end and what to do in until another one starts. One of the major dangers, inconveniences and disincentives for people using active transport is the prevalence of footpaths and cycle paths and lanes that end and begin without notice. What should a cyclist do when travelling (often at speed) along a cycle lane on a busy road and then it suddenly ends without warning (or is interrupted by an occupied bus stop)? What does someone in a wheel chair or pushing a baby in a pram to an appointment do when the footpath suddenly ends and they are confronted by a very busy road with no means of crossing it safely?

Roads, parking, freight and fleet

If 'Transport for Canberra [is to] help us to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions while increasing the number of people using active and public transport to get to work from 20% in 2011 to 23% in 2016 and 30% in 2026', then spending on active and public transport must dramatically increase – to at least equal that on motorists, but preferably along the lines of the proportions that Canberrans indicated in response to the 'How would you divide \$1m on transport' survey. The dramatic modal shift required of the public will only occur in response to a dramatic modal shift in the ACT government's expenditure patterns.

Public transport networks

The public transport networks proposed in the draft *Transport for Canberra* policy are identical to those in the draft *Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* released in 2009.

This is regrettable because it seems that the ACT government has failed to learn from and harness the community wisdom shared through public consultation. Although the broad goals and some parts of the draft *Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* and East Lake planning were welcomed, SEE-Change Inner South and others identified major shortcomings and suggested remedies.

I reiterate the changes that were identified by SEE-Change Inner South as necessary for improving the sustainability of transport in Canberra. The submissions (on draft *Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* and East Lake planning) are available at <http://www.see-change.org.au/node/256>

Infrastructure program

I welcome seeing some specific plans for delivering Transport for Canberra, as outlined in an infrastructure program, in advance.

The infrastructure planned for 2012 seems a reasonable start.

- Given the volume of motor traffic on Canberra Avenue, public transport links to Queanbeyan (or at least to the ACT populations of Harman and Oaks Estate) are vital to improving sustainability and reducing congestion : they should be included as an early priority (preferably for 2012).
- Infrastructure plans for active transport need to be included, particularly for delivering linkages and other improvements to ensure there are networks of footpaths and cycle paths and lanes.
- The plan should include a low-cost, quick and easy remedy to the congestion at the intersection of Dalrymple Street and Hindmarsh Drive, Narrabundah. Addition of a Park and Ride on the vacant land (near the old bus terminal) – or possibly at Red Hill School - and bus priority lane at the traffic lights would reduce the congestion and encourage more travelers to use public transport.
- The extension of bus services from Inner South to Canberra Hospital is very welcome. Clarification is needed (beyond the map provided by ACTION) as to how the No. 4 bus route extension will work and make it more convenient for Narrabundah residents to reach the hospital.

Infrastructure plans beyond 2012 need further detail (especially more steps) and clarity (the maps are too fuzzy to read) before comment can be made.

- I do note, however, that our wide median strips should be used for dedicated public transport (eg light rail) : newcomers find it odd that they seem to be built for this purpose but are left vacant.
- Heavy rail must be included as a priority for transport into and out of Canberra. Where and when are the plans improving services and providing easy linkage to Civic for interstate heavy rail passengers, and encouraging rail freight (much more sustainable and far less dangerous than continuing the current shift from rail to road)?

Further contact

I am happy to discuss these comments further, and would like to be involved in further development of *Transport for Canberra* and its implementation plans.