

inner south canberra  
community council

Transport for Canberra Submissions  
Transport Planning,  
Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra City ACT 2601

#### TRANSPORT FOR CANBERRA

The Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC) supports in general terms the directions identified in the ACT Government's draft policy – namely introducing improved and more frequent bus services on major routes, encouragement of more 'active' travel, exploration of and planning for the future introduction of light rail and encouraging the development of high speed train services to the ACT.

We are concerned, however, that the draft policy has been released for comment independently of and in advance of the *Draft ACT Planning Strategy*. This suggests that either the ACT Government is failing to take an integrated approach to planning issues, or that decisions have already been made and that the consultation process is simply a meaningless gesture. We cannot emphasise too strongly that transport is but an element (albeit an important one) of an overall Planning Strategy and should be considered in that context. Our comments therefore need to be considered as preliminary and subject to revision once the overall planning strategy has been finalised.

A fundamental concern is that there is little evidence in the draft policy that the ACT Government is working as closely and as proactively as it should on transport matters with the Queanbeyan Municipal Council and other neighbouring NSW local government authorities, as well as with the NSW and Federal Governments.

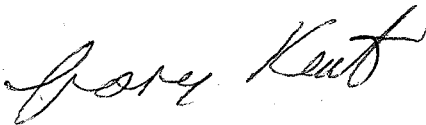
Given the projected growth of Queanbeyan/Jerrabomberra, Bungendore, Googong and other areas to the south of Canberra, it is evident that there is going to be enormous pressure placed by greatly increased commuting traffic on arterial routes into the ACT from the South and East. We would like to know how the Government plans to cope with that, or will Wentworth Avenue and Canberra Avenue through to Manuka and Forrest be in permanent gridlock?

Furthermore, Canberra is impacted heavily by the activities of the Federal Government. It is not at all clear how more certainty will be created about the impact of decisions by them – related to employment, for example, and/or the timing and quantity of their support for major projects such as the possible very fast train, and more extensive use of Lake Burley Griffin and its environs.

Our comments in relation to a number of key areas are contained in the attachment to this letter. These need to be considered in conjunction with the general reservations that have been expressed above.

We would be happy to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter and its attachments with the ACT Government, and work together in the future to develop appropriate arrangements.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Kent".

Gary Kent  
Deputy Chair

13 November 2011

### ***Traffic demand***

In recognition that the future is not certain, ISCCC considers that it is nevertheless possible to develop a number of transport planning scenarios to inform the public, and to provide a basis for making better decisions.

It would be useful for those scenarios to be developed by the ACT Government in the next few months so that they can be considered early in 2012.

Some issues would include:

- Employment trends (location, type, source)
- Retail, education and health facilities (location, size)
- Transport options (including light rail, very fast train)
- Likely impact of mitigation and management measures (education and awareness campaigns, traffic levies, parking fees, etc.)

Recommendation 1: That the ACT Government include scenario planning as a key tool to inform long term planning in its draft transport policy, and undertake initial scenario planning by early 2012, for further consultation with the ACT community.

### ***Inner South Infrastructure – Actions 14, 17 and 18 refer***

Inner – and older – areas of Canberra were designed to meet contemporary needs of the time, and clearly times have changed.

While it is desirable to have public transport which is worth walking to, the infrastructure (footpaths, lighting, bus stops, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings) have not generally been maintained, nor are they adequate and appropriate for current and emerging needs (unlike newer and greenfields suburbs which are being designed as fit-for-purpose). This needs to be meaningfully addressed.

ISCCC considers that public lighting needs to be appropriate for both place and purpose – design must be in keeping for the area (unlike recent experience), and should not unnecessarily create adverse impacts to residents.

Since “active travel” and use of public transport is a desirable goal, attention needs to be directed at providing appropriate support and encouragement for behavioural change to occur and improved outcomes achieved.

ISCCC is concerned that because of generally poor infrastructure, risks relating to personal injury have not been effectively mitigated, and therefore there should be no extension of shared spaces without extensive consultation with residents and users in those areas under consideration, to ensure that what is proposed is appropriate to ensure personal safety.

ISCCC is strongly opposed to allowing cycling in pedestrian plazas and malls in Town and Group Centres or along footpaths in these Centres, as well as at local centres because of the danger they pose to pedestrians (especially children and the elderly).

Recommendation 2: That the ACT Government include the need to review infrastructure needs in inner south suburbs in its draft transport policy, to occur on a suburb-by-suburb basis in conjunction with residents groups, with an initial implementation plan in place by July 2012 including an appropriate level of funding identified in the 2012-13 Budget and outyears to meet initial and ongoing needs.

### ***Aging in place***

With the trend to an older population and a higher proportion of retired but still active residents appropriate support needs to be provided to ensure that they are not discriminated against.

As long term residents of their suburb, with networks well established, support should be provided to aging residents so that they are safe and secure, and have mobility (Action 20 refers).

Measures which will enable this to happen include those outlined in relation to Inner South Infrastructure (refer above) but more specifically:

- Provide safety and security (street lighting, pedestrian crossings) and
- Ensure mobility with adequate unobstructed footpaths (including wide enough for electric vehicles).

Recommendation 3: As for Recommendation 2.

### ***Commuter traffic, and parking***

Inner south suburbs are affected disproportionately by increasing population in surrounding areas and outer suburbs. The draft policy does not provide enough clarity with respect to how people movement will be effectively managed through the inner south while at the same time delivering appropriate amenity to existing and future inner south residents.

In the period under consideration by the draft policy there will be some 50,000 new residents in Molonglo/North Weston. While Peak Express Services are indicated (by 2031) their general needs in attending to employment, schools and for shopping outside these times have not been adequately addressed, and this will inevitably lead to an increased volume of motor vehicle traffic through the inner south.

Planning should include improvements to the method of public transport, as well as effective traffic mitigation measures to limit commuter traffic through quiet suburban streets, and extend to appropriate short and long term parking (including pay parking) with local residents needs being appropriately addressed and given priority (especially with increased urban intensification).

The Federal Government – as a major employer in the inner south – should have a key role in setting in place appropriate arrangements and it is not clear from the paper how this is to successfully occur, and the extent to which that government will provide strategic information about demand, and/or financial support to meet that demand.

The *Strategic Parking Framework* is a useful start (Action 24) especially with the commitment that parking plans are to be delivered for city and town centres every 3 years from 2012.

Importantly, travel demand management issues (Actions 28-31) need to be balanced with delivery of supply of sensible and appropriate options (including sound infrastructure, and effective public transport) as indicated elsewhere in this paper.

Some detailed elements within the document appear inappropriate – for example the proposed bus stop at the intersection of Hopetoun Circuit and Adelaide Avenue. It is not clear how this could be achieved given the current built form at that intersection, and the need to provide park-and-ride and other facilities. It is also not clear why this site has been identified rather than one at the intersection of Kent and Adelaide (to meet West Deakin employment needs) or elsewhere along Adelaide Avenue (to meet needs arising from more intensive residential development).

Recommendation 4: That the ACT Government review the draft transport policy and incorporate elements that reflect the impact of commuter traffic to inner south suburbs, including as identified in this paper.

Recommendation 5: That the ACT Government identify in the draft transport policy the specific measures whereby it will obtain information and funding appropriate to the impact of the Federal Government on transport planning in Canberra, including the Inner South Canberra.

### ***The Lake Environs***

The major employment, shopping, tourism and residential areas in Canberra surround Lake Burley Griffin and this can be expected to be the case in the period under review (to 2030) and beyond. Not only is pressure evident now in relation to people movement, but this will become a profound problem if solutions are not adequately identified now.

The precinct surrounding Lake Burley Griffin involves the Parliamentary triangle (and its various components), the Kingston Foreshore, Russel, Civic, ANU, CSIRO, New Acton and West Basin.

Demand derives from tourism, office workers, families, aging in place, with substantial and increasing external pressure over time.

The paper does not sufficiently address the requirement for increased use of public transport within this precinct.

A solution needs to be found to more fully address the need for fast, efficient, affordable and frequent transport within and around the lake environs, as well as managing the need for people – including increasing numbers of tourists – to enter the precinct.

The paper also does not address the use of Lake Burley Griffin itself as a source of transport, and the lake could be expected to provide a number of benefits as a source of alternative transport into the future.

Recommendation 6: That the ACT Government fully address in the draft transport policy the need for fast, efficient, affordable and frequent transport within and around the environs of Lake Burley Griffin, including on the lake itself.

### ***Local and Group Centres***

The ISCCC is a strong supporter of the role of group and especially local centres in supporting their local communities.

It is especially important that the inherent characteristics of each be maintained and enhanced, and that local residents are not disadvantaged through decisions which limit access to these, whether by increased traffic, limited parking, or poor infrastructure which militates against “active travel” (Action 17 and 18 refers).

Recommendation 7: That the ACT Government identify in the draft transport policy specific measures to support and enhance the inherent characteristics of group and especially local centres.

### ***Active travel***

ISCCC fully supports “active travel” as a key objective including efforts being made in this direction – Actions 21 and 22 refers – but we do not support across the board increased parking fees, traffic levies or special taxes/surcharges on car purchases as a way of encouraging behavioural change.

It is necessary for infrastructure to be updated – as outlined elsewhere – and this should be supported by well designed safety and awareness programs.

We also wonder whether it may be appropriate to review the current requirement for helmets for cyclists, especially if improved awareness campaigns and updated infrastructure are in place, and balanced against experience in other countries which are more advanced in this area.

Recommendation 8: That the ACT Government amend the draft transport policy so that increased parking fees, traffic levies or special taxes/surcharges on car purchases will not be used as a key way of encouraging behavioural change, and to provide a balanced and appropriate set of measures to support and achieve “active travel” objectives.

### ***Light rail, and very fast train***

The ISCCC is concerned that the draft paper only gives superficial support to the notions of light rail (within Canberra) and very fast train (to other major centres).

There is a very high probability that within the time period under consideration some form of light rail will be in place throughout the Territory. It is also highly probable that a very fast train link will become a reality, linking Canberra with other major centres, including Sydney and Melbourne.

Both of these elements need to be more specifically addressed and accommodated within planning, so that pathways to implementation are identified and barriers removed.

Significantly, the implementation of these initiatives can and will impact on peoples choices about travel, especially if they are fully integrated into the city's activities.

Recommendation 8: That the ACT Government amend the draft transport policy to more specifically identify the likely impact of implementing both a light rail and a very fast train link to major population centres, with this incorporated into the scenario planning identified in Recommendation 1.

### ***The role of public transport***

We note that ACTION's Vision is "To be the preferred provider of quality public transport.". Within this, its number one priority is customer service.

ISCCC considers that ACTION's role needs to be more closely examined, and more clearly articulated.

The ambiguity arises through a lack of clarity about who the customers are. For example:

- is it ensuring the that the more socio-economically disadvantaged sections of the community have a more effective means of transport?, and/or
- is it providing special needs – for example for school services?, and/or
- is it providing a fast, efficient, affordable and frequent transport option for high demand users of transport living in higher density areas close to major routes and so encouraging a significant move from car to public transport use?

ISCCC would like these issues to be addressed so that alternative options can be identified and provided – such as subsidised taxi vouchers.

Recommendation 9: That the ACT Government amend the draft transport policy to include a review of the objectives of ACTION by 30 June 2012 as a basis to inform decision making with respect to the provision of public transport services, and funding for those services.